LATIN PROSE PREFACES

Studies in Literary Conventions

By

TORE JANSON

ALMQVIST & WIKSELL
STOCKHOLM
GÖTEBORG UPPSALA
The series includes theses and other studies by members of the University. Subscriptions to the series and orders for single volumes should be addressed to any international bookseller or directly to the publishers:

*Almqvist & Wiksell*
Postbox 159, Stockholm 1, Sweden

Universities, libraries, learned societies, and publishers of learned periodicals may obtain the volumes of the series and other publications of the University of Stockholm in exchange for their own publications. Inquiries should be addressed to Kungliga Biblioteket, Stockholm 5, Sweden or Humanistiska Biblioteket, Postbox 6076, Stockholm 6, Sweden.

Études de Philologie Slave
Romanica Stockholmiensia
Stockholm Contributions in Geology
Stockholm Economic Studies. New Series
Stockholm Economic Studies. Pamphlet Series
Stockholm Oriental Studies
Stockholm Studies in Classical Archaeology
Stockholm Studies in Comparative Religion
Stockholm Studies in Educational Psychology
Stockholm Studies in English
Stockholm Studies in History
Stockholm Studies in History of Art
Stockholm Studies in History of Literature
Stockholm Studies in Modern Philology. New Series
Stockholm Studies in Philosophy
Stockholm Studies in Psychology
Stockholm Studies in Sociology
Stockholmer Germanistische Forschungen
Studia Graeca Stockholmiensia
Studia Juridica Stockholmiensia
Studia Latina Stockholmiensia
Studies in North-European Archaeology
LATIN PROSE PREFACES

Studies in Literary Conventions

By

TORE JANSON
fil. lic.

INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

by due permission
of the Faculty of Arts and Letters
of the University of Stockholm
to be publicly discussed in lecture room C
on Friday, May 22, 1964, at 10 a.m.
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Tore Janson

Latin Prose Prefaces
LATIN PROSE PREFACES

Studies in Literary Conventions

By

TORE JANSON
CONTENTS

PRELIMINARIES

| Introduction | 7 |
| The Greeks | 14 |
| Rhetorical theory and practice | 24 |

PART I. TO THE TIME OF TRAJAN

| Rhetorical treatises | 27 |
| The historians | 64 |
| Agricultural handbooks | 83 |
| Cato 84. Varro 88. Columella 92. |
| Other specialists | 95 |
| Brevity 96. Predecessors 97. Nocturnal studies 97. The author's qualifications for his subject and in rhetoric 98. |
| Attitudes in front of the Emperor | 100 |
| The spread of epistolary prose prefaces | 106 |

PART 2. LOCI COMMUNES IN LATER PREFACES

| Extant texts | 113 |
| Requests and dedications | 116 |
| Words for requesting and accepting 117. The author's dilemma 120. The impossible made possible 121. Responsibility of the dedicatee 124. |
INTRODUCTION

Beginning a book is no easy matter. The first impression conveyed to the reader may be vital to his appreciation of the work as a whole. The author concerned to make a good impression must therefore be especially careful to fashion the overture to his work as attractively as possible.

There are several approaches. One is to plunge directly in medias res, either without a prelude or, as Homer, with an invocation, in order to catch the reader's interest in the content. The author who does not choose to do this may treat one or more of the themes: work, reader, author. The first generally involves commending in some way the subject he is writing about. In the second he addresses his readers, or one of them, to whom the work is then normally dedicated. The third means that the author presents himself to his public.

Clearly the possibilities of variation are limited to the author who does not choose to begin with the subject itself. The invocation of a deity cannot be made in an unlimited number of ways, nor can the praise of the subject, nor the author's introduction of himself. And the possible variations on the different themes will be limited still more if the authors and readers have definite ideas of what ought to be in the beginning of a work. Such expectations, of course, are formed through the reading of earlier works, and so constitute what is usually termed the power of tradition. The limited range of variation and the influence of tradition often result in the same chains of thought being repeated in preface after preface from the same period.

The present work deals with some of the traditional thought sequences and modes of expression in prefaces to Latin prose writings from pre-classical times up to the beginning of the Middle Ages. The purpose of the investigation is to show how, in Latin literature, there were gradually formed certain conventions as to how a book should be begun and to demonstrate what these conventions were in late Latin.

The purpose of the investigation and the character of the material necessitate a rather complicated arrangement of the book, which has two main parts. In the first are treated some recurrent lines of thought
and modes of expression in Latin prefaces up to the time of Trajan. On the whole it has been natural to devote separate sections to prefaces from the same literary genre, and in this way it has been possible to show how in different genres there developed different modes of writing prefaces, and how certain thought sequences became usual in the different genres. The prefaces of rhetorical treatises have been treated at some length, in order to demonstrate in every one of them the same coherent sequence of thoughts, forming a common skeleton of content. The analyses of other genres are concentrated more to certain recurrent themes. At the end there are two sections on phenomena not confined to one particular genre.

The second, and shorter, part contains a survey of the fixed lines of thought and clichés to be found in Latin prefaces from the time of Trajan and up to about 500 A.D. This part is sub-divided according to the content of the themes, and thus constitutes a systematic record of the themes in general use in late Latin prefaces. Even the headings in this part make it clear that the skeleton of these prefaces is the one demonstrated in the prefaces to rhetorical treatises.

These two main parts are preceded by a short account of some phenomena in Greek prefaces, necessary to an understanding of Latin trends, and a couple of pages on the only existing Latin theory of prefaces, the rhetorical one, and its application.

The different arrangement of the two main parts is occasioned by the fact that in the Golden and Silver Ages, Latin literature presents a number of fairly well defined genres, whereas late Latin literature is characterized, among other things, by a mixing and dissolution of genres. In other respects, too, the arrangement has proved to suit the purpose of the investigation. In the first part, it has been possible to throw light on the origins of the most usual themes through a quite thorough analysis of the oldest and most important instances. On occasion, the exposition has been extended to cover relevant questions about the situation of the several authors, their attitude to the task of writing, etc., questions that are both relevant to the inquiry and of considerable interest in themselves. In the second part particular themes are traced, in varying detail, from their origins up to the beginning of the Middle Ages. This illustrates the gradual development from classical themes to the system of preface conventions used in the Middle Ages, a system which has been treated already by Curtius and Simon.\(^1\)

\(^1\) For the titles etc. of works by modern authors, see bibliography, pp. 169 ff.
Inevitably, this arrangement has its disadvantages. The exposition in the first part cannot be strictly systematic; in the second it is seldom possible to pay very much attention to individual authors. Further, it is often impossible to trace the development of a single theme all at once. These drawbacks do not, however, seem particularly serious to me, and the last of them is offset, as far as possible, by cross references.

More serious, perhaps, is the distortion of perspective necessarily caused by every cut in the description of a development which is in reality continuous. For of course the old genres did not cease to exist in the year 117 A.D. or at any other fixed time, but mingled gradually and often quite imperceptibly into each other, while works following the classical traditions still appeared occasionally up to very late times. However, I believe my division misrepresents the truth less than would any attempt at continuous description, because there really is a great difference between the late Latin literature and the classical, and we cannot follow the continuous development from the one to the other very closely. For such is the scarcity of extant literature from the second and third centuries A.D. that one is almost entitled to speak about a great lacuna. Although the remains from that period are treated in part two, this section is of necessity devoted mainly to the study of prefaces from the late fourth and the fifth centuries.

Then there is the extent of the inquiry. The most important of its limitations are apparent from the title and sub-title. First, it is Latin prefaces that are treated. The only contemporary or older ones are Greek. Of course, attention has had to be paid to Greek literature throughout, and there are not so few references to it, as well as a special section on pre-Latin development. However, developments in Latin and Greek in this very special field of study do not seem to me so closely correlated as to warrant a combined treatment. Further, it is the Latin instances that are more numerous (in early times, at least) and more interesting, so that a study of the Greek material would probably yield less of value.

Second, the study is confined to prose prefaces. This limitation is due, not to any belief in essential differences in content between prose and poetry, but simply to practical considerations. The introductory passages in poetical works from classical times, as well as dramatic pro-

*Of all Latin introductions, that to the first book of Lucretius seems to be the most fully discussed, though others are not far behind. Lately Giancotti has written a volume of more than 300 pages about it. Before him it has been studied by Diller, Jacoby, Reitzenstein and several earlier scholars. As to other poets, the (lost) introduction of Ennius has been treated by Marconi, the prefatory elegy of the second
logues, have been treated in so many special studies that little remains to be said. The recurrent themes that can be traced have been demonstrated, as a rule, in these studies. What is perhaps the most interesting motif has been very fully treated by Wimmel. The present book, however, does discuss the prose prefaces to the poetical works of Statius and Martial, as well as a theme which appears in both poetry and prose—dedication to or invocation of the Emperor. Naturally, I refer to poetry in the very few cases in classical times when I have found the same themes there as in prose. In late Latin, one instance of the general mixing up of genres is that the prefaces of poetical works are often similar in content to those of prose works. Examples are to be found from Ausonius and onwards. Even so, I have only seldom referred to these late poetical introductions.

The word "literary" has been used here in a very wide sense, as is usual in classical philology. In principle, all remaining texts containing prefaces, have been taken into consideration; this does not mean, of course, that all Latin prefaces extant have been discussed, or even mentioned. The majority, I should say, have not.

Finally, I deal with conventions in prefaces, not with individual prefaces. Interest is centred on the development of common modes of expression and accordingly I have, as a rule, treated only those parts of the prefaces that are of interest in this respect.

An important limitation that does not appear from the title, is the time range. I pretend to be able to show that the conventions of the Middle Ages, demonstrated by Curtius and Simon, are already more or less developed in the literature of the fifth century A.D. and I have conducted my investigation up to about the time when theirs begin, or around 500 A.D. I have not hesitated to cite still younger Latin literature on occasion, but in these cases I have explicitly stated the approximate date.

The modern literature on preface conventions and prefaces is not insignificant; indeed, in the case of some particular prefaces, it is quite overwhelming and a survey of the research done seems called for.

E. R. Curtius, who traces in his great work Europäische Literatur und book of Propertius by Kühn, the beginning of Ovid's Ars Amatoria by Lenz, Lucan's introductions by Griset, the preface of Statius' Thebais by Schetter and Kytzler, just to name a few specimens from the scholarly work of recent years.

3 Greek and Latin dramatic prologues have been dealt with comprehensively by Stoessl in RE in the article Prologos (Halbband 45, publ. in 1957). Important earlier works about Latin prologues have been written by Leo, Abel, Fabia, Anliker; about Greek, by Meridier, Nestle, Gollwitzer.
lateinisches Mittelalter (first published in 1948) the development of literary motifs and forms of thought through the Middle Ages and up to modern European literature, has studied, among other things, the conventional modes of expression in mediaeval prefaces. His inquiries into conventions, or *topoi*, as he prefers to call them, and his demonstration of the possibility of a "historische Topik"*, have been most important to the present dissertation. This investigation is made within a domain which Curtius can justly be said to have revealed, and the kinds of problems I discuss are often akin to those with which he deals. In the last part of this book I even touch on the very results he has reached. This book is not meant, however, as a supplement to Curtius' along his lines. His great sweeps through huge masses of material in order to demonstrate recurrent *topoi*—a kind of macroscopic study of literature—is no doubt more applicable to mediaeval Latin literature than to most other material. His deductions, and his general view of literature as it appears in the cited work, are clearly connected with the method he has used. Thus his book has been an inspiration mainly in the second part of the present work, where I have used a method similar to his.

A couple of dissertations published after Curtius take his results as their starting point. Simon's inquiry into the "Topik" of mediaeval historians' prefaces (with a large material also from hagiographic and theological writings, etc.) is mainly a collection of material. The reasoning and deduction included is mostly in the spirit of Curtius; where it is not, it is mostly of no great value. The arrangement of the material resembles that in the last part of this book. More interesting works, in themselves, have been written by Porqueras Mayo and Pabst. The former deals with introductions in classical Spanish literature, the latter with short stories from the Renaissance, and among other things their prefaces. Both authors refer to the research done by Curtius. The texts on which these scholars work, however, are so different from those I treat that only their most general remarks have any bearing on the present work.

The same thing is true, on the whole, of a dissertation on prefaces in German novels by Ehrenzeller.

---

4 There are also some notices on current themes of hagiographic prefaces in Festugièrè, pp. 129–137.

5 This scholar stresses, as has been done here, the limited possibilities of variation in prefaces. The reader is referred to the bibliography in Porqueras Mayo for titles of a number of minor works on the introductions of mediaeval French and German epics, etc.
Of greater importance to this work is, of course, the literature on ancient prefaces. First of all there are some minor dissertations from the time before World War I. Engel reviews epic, didactic, and historical prefaces from the whole of antiquity, relates their contents, and classifies them under eight sub-headings which, according to this scholar, can be used to describe the contents of all prefaces. They are: *Indicatio*, *dispositio*, *recordatio*, *causa*, *dedicatio*, *commendatio*, *scriptor de se ipse loquens*, *invocatio numinum*. For the rest, this work is of little interest beyond that of being a collection of material. The same thing goes for the two dissertations on dedication by Graefenhain and Ruppert, of which the latter, however, is clearly the better.

While no such comprehensive studies on ancient prefaces have been published in recent years, several valuable investigations have been made into the prefaces of singular authors or into singular prefaces. First there should be mentioned the large book by Ruch on the prefaces in the dialogues of Cicero. Wimmel’s work on a theme that appears in several poetical introductions, has already been alluded to. Further there are several papers on the prefaces of Roman historians. The works now mentioned are of such importance that I have thought it right to exclude here what has been satisfactorily treated in them. Further, there are some studies on particular prefaces, as for example on two rhetorical prefaces by Barwick, on Gellius by Faider, and on Scribonius Largus by Deichgräber. In these, however, it is mostly very special problems of the preface in question that are treated so they are of secondary interest in this comparative study.

Finally, some questions concerning definition and method. Two important problems present themselves with the word preface. The first may be formulated: What, in a given work, is the preface? or: How does one recognize a preface? The answer must be a definition: A preface, to me, is the introductory part of a long text, where the author has not yet begun to treat the main subject. As will be seen, this defi-

---

6 See below pp. 68–72.
7 See below, pp. 32 and 33.
8 The several Latin words for beginnings of books should be mentioned. The normal classical word for the introduction of a prose work is *prooemium*. A synonym is *praefatio*, which is not used, however, until the Silver Age. *Exordium*, and sometimes the very general *principium*, are the terms for introductions in speeches (cf. below, p. 24). The beginning of a drama is named *prologus*. A preface in the form of a letter is of course very often called simply *epistula*. Porqueras Mayo has devoted a whole chapter to the Spanish terms (pp. 47–74), which is of some relevance also for those interested in the terminology of the late Middle Ages.
nition includes practically all kinds of introductions written by the author himself. Theoretically, great difficulties might be expected in putting such a definition into practice, both when deciding which texts should be regarded as having a preface and when settling exactly what belongs to the preface in each case. In practice, almost no such difficulties have been encountered. Latin prose writings either have no introduction at all (as, for instance, the majority of legal writings) or have fairly clearly separated prefaces with a particular type of content. The exceptions to this are few.

The second problem is that of prefaces as literary phenomena. Have prefaces sufficiently much in common to justify bringing them together in one class and studying them as such? In the case of Latin prose prefaces, a positive answer seems to me to be relatively safe. But if the question is extended to cover all prefaces, or all prefaces in European literature, I am inclined to answer no. Porqueras Mayo is of another opinion. His main hypothesis is that el prólogo (a concept of his which, as far as I can see, must be given the same wide definition as I have attributed to the term preface) is a literary genre with its own tradition and its own laws. He considers this as being proved by his study on the prefaces in classical and pre-classical Spanish literature. No doubt his work shows that the classical Spanish authors obeyed laws and tradition, just as the present book is meant to show the same thing about Latin authors. But it does not follow from this that all prefaces have to obey laws and tradition; still less that all should obey the same or similar laws and tradition. On the contrary it appears that the content of Spanish prefaces is not, for the most part, paralleled in the prefaces of ancient literature, and that the formal resemblances are by no means close. Similar observations will result from a comparison of any of these groups of material with that collected by Ehrenzeller. Thus I hold that it is not justifiable to speak about the preface as a genre in the same sense that the drama is referred to as a genre. It is possible to write a history of the drama, but probably impossible or at least senseless to write a general history of the preface, as prefaces of different periods often have so little in common.

9 The full title is El prólogo como género literario su estudio en el Siglo de Oro español.

10 This is not to deny that there are certain connexions between classical and later European prefaces. On the contrary, it is clear that modern prefaces are partly derived from the classical. But the factual similarities are limited and, even when they appear, often seem to be a result more of the limited possibilities of variation than of any influence.
This also warrants paying some attention to the concept of genre. "Genre" is used to denote groups of mutually connected texts. There is nothing approaching agreement as to whether the criteria should be of form or of content, or both, in establishing this mutual connexion, and still less about the degree of connexion to be demanded of works pertaining to the same genre. This is clear even from handbooks like Wellek-Warren and Kayser. In view of this, it is almost nonsensical to try to "demonstrate", as Porqueras Mayo does, that a certain group of texts constitutes a genre. And to me, it does not even seem appropriate to extend the term beyond normal usage and relate it to prefaces, which are only parts of texts. Here, at least, I have seen no reason to put any special label on the class of prefaces. The word genre I use in the common way, in phrases like historical genre, epic genre, etc.

In this connexion it may be pointed out that the first part of this work has been arranged with regard first, to the prefaces and only second to the works. Thus no importance has been attached to the fact that of the rhetorical works with similar prefaces, two are dialogues and the others are not.

In this type of investigation, influences between authors must be considered almost all the time. As a general rule, it is extremely difficult to prove direct influence from one author to another by means of similarities in the expression of general thoughts such as those most often spoken about here. Hardly ever can one exclude the possibility of a common source or an intermediary. On the other hand, it is often safe to presume that there is a connexion of some kind between two or more passages. Thus, in this book, and especially in the last part, resemblances and parallels are often noted without any attempt at defining the exact connexion. That there is a connexion of some kind I have tacitly supposed, unless there is a statement to the contrary.

Lastly I must point out that I have not endeavoured a complete collection of instances in the last part of the book. The aim has been to note and discuss the themes that are used, not to make an inventory of all the passages where they occur. Such an inventory, besides taking up a lot of space, would be of very little worth.

THE GREEKS

Almost all modern scholars who have investigated any kind of prefaces have begun with a survey of the Greek materials; this is true of Ehren-
zeller, Porqueras Mayo and Ruch. Ruch in fact devotes as much as a complete chapter of ten pages to the development in other Greek literature (pp. 93-102), in addition to the long discussion on Greek philosophical dialogues and their prefaces (pp. 23-55). But unfortunately it is not enough to refer to these scholars, for not one of them has been concerned to throw light upon the early history of classical prose prefaces. They mainly refer to older works on the beginnings of epic, drama, and history, and the precepts of the rhetorical handbooks. For this reason I have here to make some points on material of interest as a background to development in Latin literature. Of course it is out of the question to give anything like a complete account. I have chosen to discuss three important authors in particular. Hesiod provides a fitting point of departure; Isocrates is the originator of a rhetorical type of introduction in prose writings; and Archimedes has written the oldest prefaces extant of the kind popular with later Hellenistic specialist writers. In addition there are some hints on what the other material looks like.

First, some features of Hesiod which later became usual in prefaces of many genres. For one thing, Hesiod himself appears in both his prefaces. In the oldest Greek literature extant, the epic and the hymns, the poet is anonymous. The poem is represented as emanating from a deity or from the Muses, while the poet is just an intermediary. Hesiod, too, speaks about the song of the Muses, but rather more as a convention: "in den Erga fast schon metonymisch 'Musen singt' für 'ich will singen'", says Wilamowitz (p. 40). He speaks freely of himself and even, in the beginning of the Theogony, of a meeting with the Muses of Helicon. Thereby, he initiates the development from the poet's subordination to the Muses to his assuming full responsibility for the work. This development, accomplished during the fifth century B.C., has been

---

1 Further information—though not very much—is given by Engel and Ruppert.
2 Hesiod's introductions have been much discussed in recent years. Already in antiquity it was doubted whether the first ten lines of the Erga were genuine, but modern scholars from Wilamowitz (pp. 39-41) and on have adduced strong reasons for their authenticity. See for example Lattes. Also large parts of the long introduction to the Theogony have been declared not genuine because of the seeming lack of coherence of the beginning. But modern scholars such as Fritz, Siegmann, and Walcot (of whom the last seems to me the most convincing) have analysed the composition of the preface and demonstrated its intrinsic unity. The recent article by Schwabl, however, seems to be of doubtful value. Lately there has been found a piece of papyrus with some mutilated verses on it from the beginning of Hesiod's Catalogue of Women. See Treu. Evidently it included among other things an invocation to the Muse. Otherwise the fragment is of no interest here.
treated in a remarkable manner by Krantz in a couple of papers, to which the interested reader is referred.

The second thing of importance in Hesiod is the introduction of a second person. In *Works and Days*, the first didactical writing in Western literature, Hesiod addresses the preface to his brother Perses, who is then the receiver of the advice given. This, then, is the first instance in a tradition that persisted until long after antiquity, to address didactical or professional writings to a certain person—a pupil, relation, friend or patron—whom you profess that you want to edify.

The first prose genre to develop a certain type of preface is history. Already in Herodotus and Thucydides, one can see the historical type of preface with its characteristic themes: declaration of impartiality, praise of history, talk about immortalization of the things spoken of. Negatively, the type is characterized by the absence of any second person. The nature and the development of Greek historical prefaces have been observed and discussed in several earlier works. Later on, we shall have to touch on the influence from Greek historians on the Romans. Within Greek literature, the prefaces of the historians seem to have influenced other genres but little. Hellenistic and later historians, on the other hand, were clearly influenced by the orators.

The growth of Athenian oratory and the permanent victory of rhetoric are of the greatest importance, of course, to the development of prefaces. Even so, the great orators and their introductions are to us less important than the works of a man who is usually thought of as a publicist rather than a speaker, namely Isocrates.

Athenian orators, for the most part, start their speeches with a preface. This may contain, say, a short statement of the contents of the speech, an exposition of the reasons for delivering it, or an apology for the speaker's poor ability. There are certain differences, of course, between prefaces to judicial speeches and those to political speeches. But within the same kind of speeches the variations are rather limited; indeed, in many instances the same stuff is repeated over and over again. The prefaces are often formed after standard models and it is typical that several authors produced collections of prefaces for their

---

3 See Lieberich, Engel, Laqueur. The last-named tries to trace the influence from the lost prefaces of Ephorus, and to that end he analyses the introductions of Polybius, Diodorus, and others.

4 See Lieberich and Laqueur.

5 Concerning rhetorical theory see below, pp. 24-26.

6 See Stemplinger pp. 225 f.
own use.\textsuperscript{7} One such collection, attributed to Demosthenes, is extant.\textsuperscript{8} These prefaces to speeches have not so much in common with later prose prefaces, and accordingly will not be treated in detail here. Those interested are referred to Navarre and Volkmann.

As is known, Isocrates wrote everything (except some letters) in the form of speeches. Some of them may have been performed, as for example the \textit{Panegyricus}, but it can be proved for most of them that this is not the case. Isocrates' writings mainly consist of political pamphlets and panegyrics. In both kinds the author deals freely with the literary form, and it happens that he speaks himself, by way of introduction, of the speech as a fiction (in \textit{Antidosis}). Nevertheless, it is evident that he regards his writings as speeches: certainly speeches of a special character, speeches that for some reason have never been performed, but still speeches. This is particularly clear in \textit{Ad Philippum}. In the preface, the author first explains why he is now delivering another speech on united war against the Persians.\textsuperscript{9} Later on, he speaks about forwarding the speech\textsuperscript{10} to Philip of Macedonia. At the end of the preface he points out what a difference there is between speeches performed and those recited only, and states that the former kind is used, traditionally, for things of importance, the latter for mere show. However, he hopes for an attentive hearing even though he has written a speech for recital. What strikes a modern reader is that the author does not address Philip in a letter. To us, this would be the natural way of speaking directly to a particular person in a similar situation.\textsuperscript{11} But Isocrates chooses to send a speech for recital at its destination. Thereby he prepares for a very substantial widening of the domains of rhetoric. By applying his device, anything can be turned into a speech, as soon as one wants to address it to someone. As we shall see, this possibility is freely exploited by later prose authors.

The prefaces of Isocrates take various forms. The author takes complete liberty to make all sorts of personal comments before the speech proper. The beginnings of the two encomia of mythical figures, \textit{Helena} and \textit{Busiris}, are especially remarkable. For us, they represent the earliest

\textsuperscript{7} Stemplinger pp. 224 f.
\textsuperscript{8} See Rupprecht.
\textsuperscript{9} Ch. 11: δύο λόγους ... επιείν.
\textsuperscript{10} Ch. 17: λόγον πέμπειν.
\textsuperscript{11} Isocrates is also the first to use the public letter; see Sykutris, \textit{RE} Suppl. 5. 201, where it is further pointed out how subtle the difference was, even as early as this, between epistolary and rhetorical forms of prose writings.
specimens of the polemic type of preface, which appears sporadically through all antiquity, in authors whom it suited. In the preface to *Helena*, the author attacks the “eristics”, without any further specification, for writing encomia on senseless things. Then he passes on to his subject, declaring that his is an encomium of a better kind. In the beginning of *Busiris* a certain Polycrates is addressed, a man who had evidently written a bad piece on the same subject. Isocrates derides him, and promises that he will do better himself.

Isocrates’ most interesting preface, however, is that in *Ad Nicoclen*. This work, containing advice about governing a country, is addressed to a prince, Nicocles. Briefly, the preface is as follows: People often give presents to kings, Nicocles, and usually they do so for their own gain. But in my opinion precepts on the art of ruling are a worthy gift from me to you. Whether this gift will turn out in the way I intend is hard to say at this juncture, for many works have roused greater expectations before publication than they have subsequently fulfilled. Still it is worth while trying.

Here we are confronted with two themes of great importance in later prefaces, viz. the gift of the work to an addressee, and the pretended uncertainty of the author as to his ability to write sufficiently well. The latter thought is easily deduced from standard rhetorical themes. The former clearly lies near at hand to writers of display speeches and of didactical books. *Ad Nicoclen* lies somewhere between these two genres, and this particular thought may be derived from either side. At all events, the result is a development of the custom, usual since Hesiod, of addressing some particular person. Here, the address is represented as an honour paid to the addressee. Thereby, the dedication is created.

\[12\] See pp. 31, 97, 158.

\[13\] See Volkmann, p. 130, about excuses for one’s own incapacity to make a worthy speech.

\[14\] Ruppert, who has investigated the origin of dedication (pp. 12-21), also cites a fragment from a writer of elegiacs, Dionysius Chalcus, who is somewhat earlier than Isocrates, and argues that it is an instance of a real dedication. Even if this is so, the fragment is of little interest. More important is that Isocrates was perhaps not the first man to turn a speech into a gift to a prince. There remains among the works of Isocrates, though almost certainly not written by him (see Mikkola, pp. 277 ff.), a speech named *Ad Demonicum*. It closely resembles the *Ad Nicoclen*, and in both cases the author talks in the preface about the speech being a gift to the dedicatee. The date is disputed; by Brémond (pp. 109-120) there have been adduced reasons for its having been written in the decades before Isocrates was active. In this case Isocrates may well have drawn directly or indirectly upon it or upon a predecessor. However, a comparison between the two prefaces hints at priority for Isocrates (supported by many modern scholars: cf. Mikkola p. 284). The author of

18
After these glimpses from the early history of prefaces, let us turn to the practice in prose prefaces from the fourth century and up to Roman times, with the exception of philosophical dialogues, treated by Ruch, and of history, treated by Lieberich. What we have, then, is a not insignificant number of scientific and didactical works. It must be kept in mind, however, that the works extant are but a very slight part of the literature produced in these fields during the period under review.

The oldest remaining works in question are those by Xenophon. They usually have a short introduction, consisting largely of an explanation as to why the author has chosen the particular subject. It seems that no later author adopted this form of introduction.

The extant works of Aristotle are of a technical character: most of them were probably not meant to be published. They have either no introduction at all or just a few words on the content and arrangement of the work. Further, Theophrastus has no introductions at all, and neither have the writers of the Corpus Hippocraticum, who seem to have produced their works during the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. If we remember that neither Euclid (about 300), nor Autolycus from Pitane (mathematician, fl. 310), nor Aristoxenus (musical theorist, end of fourth century), nor Aristarchus from Samos (astronomer, fl. 280), have any kind of introduction, it is clear that before the third century, authors of scientific works did not usually write a preface of any sort.

Archimedes (c. 287-212) has quite another usage. Only a few of his works lack prefaces. Most of his writings are preceded by letters, addressed to one of his friends and containing a dedication of the work to the addressee as well as some personal comments on the work. Evidently these letters serve much the same purpose as, for instance, the prefaces of Isocrates, and consequently ought to be called prefatory letters, or epistolary prefaces. The prefaces of Archimedes, which have

Ad Demonicum uses the theme of a gift quite summarily, while Isocrates expands it in a way that suggests that it is novel. Further there are in Ad Demonicum some phenomena that have evident parallels in other prefaces by Isocrates: there is praise of the father, as in Enagoras, and a commending of the subject very akin to that in Panegyricus. It is hard to imagine that Isocrates should have borrowed from this obscure speech three times, while the reverse is very probable.

Examples are Respublica Lacedaemoniorum, De Equitandi Ratione, Institutio Cyri, and others.

Analytica Priora, Analytica Posterius. Ruch discusses (pp. 41-43 and 325-329) the prefaces to the lost dialogues of Aristotle. He maintains that Aristotle wrote prefaces in which he addressed the readers directly. This seems to me to be a mere guess, as we have just two meagre notices about Aristotle’s way of introducing and they do not give any support to such a theory.
been almost neglected hitherto, are of such interest, in both form and content, that they require treating in some detail. I shall begin by relating the contents of a couple of them.

In his early treatise *Quadratura Parabolae*, Archimedes addresses the prefatory letter to a certain Dositheus, a mathematician of Alexandria. When I heard, he writes, about the death of my friend Conon (another Alexandrian mathematician), who was also your friend, I became very sad. But now, I have undertaken to send you a theorem, in the same way as I used to send them to Conon, one which has not been solved before. There then follows a short survey of the contents of the treatise.

In the preface of *De Lineis Spiralibus*, too, Archimedes addresses Dositheus. The most important part is, briefly: The theorems I formerly sent to Conon, the proofs of which you are constantly demanding, have been in part proven by me earlier; some proofs I send you in this book. Do not wonder about my having published these proofs after so long a delay: I have done so in order to give my colleagues the opportunity of studying the theorems first. For how many theorems which at first seemed very difficult, have not been given a solution later on? But Conon died before he had had time to investigate these things, and after his death no one has accomplished anything of worth in this field.

There are other epistolary prefaces of similar content, and addressed to Dositheus, in *De Conoidibus et Sphaeroidibus* and in *De Sphaera et Cylindro* (Books 1 and 2). Further there is a preface of a similar kind, addressed to Eratosthenes, in the *Methodus*.

In spite of their brevity, these prefaces give a fairly clear idea of the environment in which Archimedes wrote. Hellenistic mathematical research was universal, in the same sense as are, for example, classical studies of today. That is to say, the author addresses a public that is not locally limited, but consists of comparatively few scholars in different places throughout the world. This means, first and foremost, that Archimedes, the Syracusan, has no close personal contact with his readers. On the other hand, he can count on a lively interest from the select few he addresses. From this it follows, as regards the content of

17 A short note on “Widmungsbrieve”, in which Archimedes is mentioned as a first instance, is found in Sykutris, *RE* Suppl. 5. 205 f. Cf. also Ruppert, pp. 23 f.

18 The man is not known except from Archimedes’ prefaces. The little that is known about the personal circumstances of Archimedes and of his dedicatees is related in the first two chapters of Dijksterhuis.

19 There is no extant treatise addressed to Conon.

20 Dijksterhuis declares it as his impression that Archimedes never even met Dositheus face to face.
the prefaces, that the author has no need to be especially concerned about exciting interest in his work. The main burden of the preface is a short statement on what the treatise is about (this is only hinted at in the accounts above), a dedication to the addressee and finally some general advice and hints to the reader. One of these points is particularly noteworthy, namely the relation between the author and the addressee (or, more properly, the dedicatee). In these prefaces, the dedication is normally expressed simply by a phrase of the type “I now send you”. The tone of speech is wholly devoid of affection of any kind; Archimedes seems quite indifferent to the person of Dositheus. He is treated as an interested colleague, no more and no less. He seems to have been Archimedes’ correspondent in Alexandria, the capital of learning. By sending his works to him, Archimedes could be sure that they would become known among the people for whom he was writing. The preface to Eratosthenes is much more respectful, but of the same type.

In two of the prefaces to Dositheus, the author says that the dedicatee has “commanded” him to supply the proofs of some theorems published earlier. This is very remarkable, as the prefaces do not otherwise indicate that Dositheus had any great influence over Archimedes. I consider that the phrases should be taken to mean that Dositheus had written to Archimedes, evidently several times, and asked for explanations of certain theorems. Dijksterhuis (p. 33) discusses why Dositheus should ask this. It is at least as important to consider why Archimedes made so much of these requests that he mentions them twice in his prefaces. One may suppose that the character of the works furnishes one explanation, at least. They consist of proofs to theorems published earlier. Such works might have seemed superfluous, unless it was stressed that the proofs were at least as difficult, if not more difficult to find than the theorems. One way of doing this was, of course, to relate a colleague’s desire to get the proofs.

To understand the form of the epistolary prefaces, it is necessary to consider again Archimedes’ situation. It would be natural for a man

21 Ruppert (pp. 23 f.) is of the opinion that there is no dedication in the letters of Archimedes. This point of view is justified in so far as the thought of honouring the addressee is not explicit in the letters to Dositheus. But the flattering words in the preface to Eratosthenes suggest that Archimedes really considered the act of addressing as an honour paid to the addressee.

22 De Sphaera et Cylindro 2, pref.: ἐπανευλᾶς μοι γράφαι τῶν προβλημάτων τὰς ἀποδείξεις.

De Spiralibus, pref.: τῶν θεωρημάτων, υπέρ δὲν αλλ᾽ τὰς ἀποδείξεις ἐπιστέλλεις μοι γράψαι.
living at a great distance from the centres of scientific research, and so restricted to communication by letter, to accompany his work with an explanatory note. While this letter was formally directed to the addressee only (every letter begins with a phrase of the type 'Ἀρχιμήδης Δοσιθέω χαίρειν), in reality it was meant for all its readers. In this way the letter became the real introduction of the book, and was naturally placed immediately before the work in the manuscripts.23

These prefatory letters serve the main purpose of addressing the work to a certain person, as do the rhetorical prefaces of Isocrates. Archimedes did not choose this type of introduction because he did not know about, or definitely rejected, the rhetorical type24 of preface, where the treatise becomes a fictive oration to a certain person. On one occasion he even availed himself of this method, in the little study Arenarius. This is addressed to Gelon, the tyrant of Syracuse, who is invoked in the first sentence. There is no preface, but a short epilogue in which homage is paid to Gelon for his learned interests.

Thus we find that Archimedes knew three ways of shaping his writings: without any preface, in accordance with older scientific works (an example is De Corporibus Fluitantibus); with a dedicatory letter in the form of a preface (examples above); as a fictive oration (Arenarius). The first way was of course always open, but it was seldom chosen by Archimedes. The second is the normal one for him, and he constantly uses it to address a work to a distant colleague. The third way he evidently considered more appropriate when addressing the tyrant of his home-town. If this was because he regarded it as absurd to send letters within the town,25 or whether there was some other reason, is hard to say.

There are two important novelties in the prefaces of Archimedes. As to form, they are the first instances of a hitherto unknown type, the epistolary preface. As to content, we hear for the first time of a request from the dedicatee to the author. Both phenomena become exceedingly common in later prefaces.

The further development of prefaces in Hellenistic scientific literature can be briefly sketched.

23 It is needless to speculate about whether the original letter was written at the beginning of the roll or on a separate sheet of papyrus.

24 Writings of this form of course have as their predecessors not only the "speeches" of Isocrates but also didactical works of the type found in Hesiod. Even so, it seems fitting to use the term "rhetorical" for this type of writing.

25 Cf. Sykutris, RE Suppl. 5. 200 f.
Apollonius from Perga (c. 262-190) has epistolary prefaces in his *Conica* (eight books, of which the first four are still in Greek, Books 5 to 7 in Arabic). The prefaces of Books 1 and 2 are addressed to Eudemus, one of Apollonius' friends at Pergamon. In their general outlook they recall Archimedes' letters to Dositheus. Eudemus, too, according to the preface of the first book, has been eager to get hold of the works of Apollonius. Originally, however, they had been composed at the wish of a certain Naucrates, to whom the first edition was dedicated. The third book has no preface, but the fourth has one addressed to king Attalus. In this the author reports that Eudemus is dead and that he has decided to dedicate the rest of the books to the king, who is evidently eager to know the results of the author's research. After a survey of the content and a discussion of the earlier writings on the subject, the preface ends with some talk about the justification and usefulness of the treatise. The subsequent books have no introductions.

Hypsicles, the author of the so-called fourteenth book of Euclid, and who flourished during the second century B.C., has written a preface that in its content is reminiscent of that to the first book of Apollonius' *Conica*. The author tells a colleague, Protarchus, about the man who first excited his interest in the subject. Then he explains the dedication by referring to Protarchus' great knowledge and his benevolence. The remarkable thing about this short preface is that it is not—like those of a similar content treated hitherto—an epistolary preface but a rhetorical one. That is to say, it does not begin with an epistolary formula, but invokes Protarchus in the first sentence. Further, the preface does not end with any farewell formula of the type ἔρρωσο, but with the following transition, which can be paralleled in rhetoric:26

καίρως δ' ἓν εἰς τοῦ μὲν προσομιμὸν πεπαύσασθαι, τῆς δὲ συντάξεως ἄρχεσθαι.

This shows that the two formally different ways of composing introductions may be used for similar prefaces to similar works. It is evident that these two types of prefaces, the epistolary and the rhetorical, were regarded by Hypsicles and his contemporaries27 as interchangeable variants for a type of preface of fairly fixed content.

26 See Lausberg, § 849 and § 288, and cf. below p. 155.

27 There remain a couple of other treatises with prefaces from the same period. The astronomer Hipparchus from Nicea (c. 125 B.C.) has written an epistolary preface in which he speaks about a request from the addressee. The mechanician Biton (second or third century B.C.) begins with a short preface of the rhetorical type, addressed to one of the kings Attalus.
Though the bulk of Hellenistic scientific literature is lost, we have been able to demonstrate in the remainder a type of preface peculiar to this literature. The prefaces of this kind are characterized in the first place by being addressed to a certain person, to whom the work is thereby dedicated. The prefaces are written in a personal tone, and it is customary for the author to speak among other things of his reasons for treating the subject. There is often some praise of the man receiving the work. In several cases we learn that this man or someone else has requested the work of the author. These prefaces may be formed either as letters or as the beginnings of speeches.

RHETORICAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

In antiquity there were mainly two kinds of literary theory: rhetorical and poetic. The latter is without interest here. As to rhetorical theory, this influenced prose prefaces along with everything else in ancient literature. Roman higher education was rhetorical education, and it is safe to suppose that Latin authors from classical times and up to at least the fifth century were, as a rule, quite thoroughly trained in the art of speaking.\(^1\) If Latin writers were influenced by any theory in writing their prefaces, it was doubtless rhetorical theory.

As is known, the main outlines of rhetorical doctrine were formed as early as in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. It was developed and completed in the Hellenistic period and was taken over with small modifications by Latin authors. *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and *De Inventione* are summary expositions (the latter incomplete) of this doctrine. The great independent works on the art of the speaker, Cicero’s *De Oratore* and Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria*, are also firmly founded on the same common doctrinal base.

In rhetorical doctrine the preface, *exordium* or *principium*, was treated together with the other sections of the speech under the heading *inuentio*, the finding of appropriate themes. The exposition concentrated on the theory of judicial speeches. The other kinds of speech, the political and epideictic, were not usually considered to require any detailed treatment.

\(^1\) On the importance of rhetoric in education the reader is referred above all to Clark, but also to Clarke and Marrou.
The content of the section on *exordium* was briefly as follows. An introduction might be either a *prooemium* or an *insinuatio*. The purpose of a *prooemium* was to make the listener *beneuolum, docilem, attentum*. Usually, most space was devoted to the ways of making him *beneuolum*. Here the possibilities are classified under four conceivable starting points: *ab nostra, ab adversariorum, ab iudicum persona, a causa* (Cic. *Inuent. 1.16.22*). In order to arouse sympathy for himself, the speaker might discreetly commend himself, or he might point out how he has undergone undeserved calamities, etc., or pretend to be incapable of speaking, unprepared, etc. To gain goodwill in the other ways he could of course paint his adversary black, exalt the judges, and praise his own point of view in the subject matter. The ways of attracting attention were to promise to speak about something new or important, to announce brevity, or to declare that what follows is especially relevant to the audience. The same means were used to make the listener docile. To this end it also helped, however, to enumerate the points to be dealt with in the next part of the speech, the *narratio*.

The second form of introduction, the *insinuatio*, might be used in certain special situations, especially when the audience could be presumed to have a negative bias or was very tired. The idea was to gain attention and goodwill through some surprising turn and then gradually pass over to the real subject of the speech.

As will be seen, the directions in rhetorical doctrine are mostly of a very general kind. This is quite natural, since they are meant to be applied in very various situations. However, the more universal the direction, the less precise it will be for the particular case. Most of the themes mentioned may be varied almost infinitely. Consequently it is frequently difficult or even impossible for a reader to decide if a writer has obeyed such a general direction or not. On the other hand, in such cases it does not matter very much if he has. Let me give an example. As will be noted later on, many Latin authors use expressions of the

---

2 The subject has been fully treated in Volkman, pp. 127-148; in Lausberg, §§ 263-288.

3 Quint. *Inst. 4.1.9*: *Est enim naturalis favo pro laborantibus.*

4 The extensive presentations, by Cicero in *De Oratore* and Quintilian, of course are considerably more detailed and more rewarding than appears from this brief sketch of the main precepts. Leeman, in *Orationis Ratio*, pp. 120 f., has instructively compared the dry rules of *Ad Herennium* and *De Inuentione* with the mature discussion of *De Oratore*. I regret that I have not been able to take Leeman's work into account except in some notes, as it appeared when this book was almost ready for the press. His book seems to be the most important on Latin prose for many years.
type *mediocritas mea* when they mean simply "I". Do they do this because they have learnt that the speaker may make the listener *benevolu-
olum* through pointing out his own weakness? Such a question is quite misleading. Of course the rhetorical precept may have had an influence, but it is altogether insufficient to explain such a specific example as this simply or mainly by reference to a direction of universal application. Consequently, it has proved fruitless to refer to the rules of rhetoric to any great extent when trying to explain phenomena of prose prefaces, not in spite of but precisely because of the universality of these rules. Certainly I do refer to the rules now and then, but more to hint starting points and parallels than to state causal connexions.

Another question is that of the remaining Latin speeches. From classical times there are only the fifty or so by Cicero. These have not been treated in the present inquiry, for several reasons. For one thing, they contain but few parallels to the phenomena in the prefaces treated. Further, a study of them would amount to a monograph on part of the rhetorical technique of Cicero, hardly feasible without substantial basic research into the style and composition of the speeches. Even if it were done, such a study on the works of one speaker would say little about common practice in prefaces to speeches.

The other extant speeches of interest are twelve panegyric orations dating from Pliny the Younger and up to the end of the fourth century; most of them around the year 300. The evident parallels between their prefaces and those of the prose writings from the same period make it natural to treat them in the last part of this book. No doubt the rhetorical influence over late Latin prefaces came to a great extent from panegyric, the last dying branch of ancient oratory.
RHETORICAL TREATISES

Rhetorica ad Herennium

The oldest remaining complete rhetorical treatise in the Latin language is Rhetorica ad Herennium, which was probably written some time between 86 and 82 B.C. The author is not known. It seems that it was not read at all before the fourth century A.D.¹ Jerome and some of his contemporaries mention it and ascribe it to Cicero. From Carolingian times and up to the Renaissance it enjoyed great authority and was widely studied.

From our point of view the work deserves close attention. Since it lay unread so long it cannot have exercised much direct influence until late; but in this work we have the only pre-Ciceronian² instance of the type of preface that received its classic form in Orator and came to be used later on in almost every kind of writing.

All four books of the work have prefaces and epilogues, and in all these Herennius is addressed in the second person, with or without evocation of his name. The preface of the first book is the essential one to this inquiry and will be thoroughly analysed.

The first sentence runs as follows:

(Rhet. Her. 1.1.1) Etsi negotiis familiaribus inpediti uix satis otium studio suppeditare possumus, et id ipsum quod datur otii libentius in philosophia consumere consueuimus, tamen tua nos, Gai Herenni, uoluntas commouit ut de ratione dicendi conscriberemus, ne aut tua causa noluisse aut fugisse nos laborem putas.

The author begins by declaring his personal reason for writing. Hellenistic writers had adduced the same reason before.³ For he states that

¹ On its history, see Marx in his Prolegomena, and Manitius.
² On the relation between Rhetorica ad Herennium and Cicero’s De Inuentione, see below p. 32 n. 16.
³ See above pp. 21 ff.
his friend, Gaius Herennius, has requested him to write. The theme, however, is given more weight here than in the Greek authors cited. Indeed, it serves several important purposes. First, it provides a natural motive for the dedication, which is addressed to a person who has played a decisive part in the genesis of the work. Secondly, the dedicatee is given the great compliment of having the work written entirely for his sake. Third, and most important, the author is able to motivate his having written the work by a reference to his friend’s request.

This third point should be seen against the background of the author’s general situation. Greek authors worked in a cultural climate where the writing of books was regarded as a natural and commendable occupation for anyone capable of it. Under such circumstances the authors had no need to give any reason for writing. They might wish to explain, for instance, why they wrote history (as Diodorus) or why they did not write epic (as Callimachus in Epistula ad Telchinos), but that they wrote was too natural to need any comment.

At the time of our author, conditions in Rome were quite different from this. To understand why, we must take a short look at the historical development. In Rome, literary activity had been pursued from the beginning by men of low social standing or by foreigners; before the time of Cato it seems that no work of any importance was published in Latin by a noble Roman. In senatorial circles literature was for a long time regarded as a useless and morally suspect invention of the subtle Greeks. The first major change came with Scipio the Younger and his circle, which included several eminent authors, both Latin and Greek. Even here, however, it was not the noble Romans who did the writing (with Lucilius as a brilliant exception) but men like the emancipated slave Terence and the Greek Polybius. It might behove a Roman to admire literature, but hardly to devote himself to creating it. The first true writer of senatorial rank was a homo nouus, Marcus Cato, a sworn enemy of the Scipios and also of the aristocratic philhellenism represented by them. Cato did not hesitate to publish his writings, but he was totally foreign to the Greek conception of art for art’s sake. His purposes were primarily the spread of knowledge and opinions (in the didactic treatises and in the speeches) and secondly the promotion of the Latin language and Roman values in opposition to Greece (above all through the writing of history in Latin).

4 See Leo, pp. 262-265, on the earliest authors of senatorial rank.
5 See for instance Teuffel 1.2, with references.
After Cato several noble men published their speeches (Sulpicius Galba, the Gracchi, Papirius Carbo) or wrote on Roman history (Calpurnius Piso, Cassius Hemina). It thus became acceptable for senators to write and publish, but only about such things as could be said to further, directly or indirectly, the interests of the community. A Roman statesman publishing anything pertaining to what we would call belles lettres is hardly to be found until Greek culture definitely captured Rome, in the last decades of the Republic, when there is for example Licinius Calvus.

Now, the author of Rhetorica ad Herennium was no doubt eligible for a career as a politician or an advocate, since for one thing he had studied rhetoric for practical use. Further he regards Herennius, who came from a well-known plebeian family, as a fellow-student, not a pupil, and evidently he neither is nor has the least thought of becoming a teacher of rhetoric. It is probable that he was a young man who belonged to the populares.

So, at the time he published this work, he must have felt that book-writing was widely regarded as an unfitting occupation for a man of his standing, unless the subject was something useful to the state. And opinions might be divided on whether his subject was useful in this sense. Consequently, he needed an excurse for having written the work, acceptable even to severe old senators. This he found in the request from a friend. What an excellent motive this was at the time will be discussed later on.

But the author is not content with this, and enhances the effect of his theme by pretending to be unwilling to write. For, he says, his first concern is his negotia familiaria, as befits a noble Roman. Secondly, he wants to devote what leisure time he has to philosophy.

It is easy to see how this turn serves the interests of the author. This mention, right at the start, of time-consuming occupations, gives a hint about his social position at the same time as it indicates that he is fulfilling his customary duties and is not devoting too much of his time to cultural pursuits. This gives the impression that the work is written by an amateur, and has not engaged more than a small part of his personality. This impression is strengthened when the author says that

7 Marx p. 82 et alias.
8 So Marx. Clarke (p. 14) and Marrou (p. 342) support him, but cf. Caplan pp. xxiii ff.
9 See below pp. 43 ff.
rhetoric is no longer even the chief interest of his leisure time but has been superseded by philosophy. It is as if he wanted to mark a distance between himself and the treatise, in order to divest himself of some of the responsibility for it.

So the first sentence of the preface contains a short presentation of the author, and hints at his relation to the dedicatee and to the work: a noble young Roman who for his own benefit has devoted part of his time to rhetoric and philosophy, but is more interested in the latter, has been asked by his friend to write a work on the art of speaking. As he is a kind and industrious man he has complied with this request. But the implication is that he naturally regards the writer’s task as an incidental, spare-time occupation by way of doing a service for a friend.

The author then proceeds to comment on his subject:

(Rhet. Her. i.1.1) Et eo studiosius hoc negotium suscepimus, quod te non sine causa uelle cognoscere rhetoricam intellegebamus; non enim in se parum fructus habet copia dicendi et commoditas orationis, si recta intellegentia et definita animi moderatione gubernetur.

It is only natural that an author should esteem his subject highly. There is enthusiastic praise of the matter to be found in prefaces from all times and in every kind of writing. The extraordinary thing here is that the author expresses himself so extremely carefully. His only positive statement is that a capacity for speaking gives no little profit (non parum fructus). This is immediately modified by the remark that a condition is that the art be used with sense and moderation.

To understand this attitude, it is necessary to consider the position of rhetoric at Rome in the Eighties B.C. Oratory was practiced industriously and with considerable results already in the second century B.C. Theoretical education in rhetoric, however, was given only by Greeks and was regarded with the utmost suspicion. In the year 161 the rhetoricians, together with the philosophers, were expelled from Rome (Suetonius, Rhet. 1), but probably they soon returned. After that, they had a monopoly on rhetorical education for a long time, in spite of Cato’s trying to create with his book on the subject an independent Latin tradition. These Greeks were mostly teaching members of the higher aristocracy, which was on the whole the most philhellenic stratum of Roman society. In 93 B.C., however, they met with competition from Plotius Gallus, the first Latin teacher of oratory, backed by Marius himself. He soon met with resistance, for already a year later, the censor

10 The following exposition is based mainly on Clarke, Kroll, Marrou, Gwynn.
Licinius Crassus promulgated a decree directed against certain persons teaching oratory in Latin, *rhetores Latini*. There has been much discussion about the reasons behind this decree. Some scholars hold that it was a political action by the *optimates* with the object of preventing a thorough education of the *populares*; others question such a far-reaching hypothesis. Kroll (*RE Suppl. 7. 1086*) suggests that “der wahre Grund mag darin gelegen haben, dass diese Tätigkeit als für einen Römer ungeeignet erschien”. In any case the wording of the decree makes it quite clear that instruction in the art of oratory, in Latin at least, was still regarded by many people with great suspicion. Consequently it was necessary for an author on the subject to be careful not to challenge public opinion by thoughtlessly glorifying rhetoric. Circumspect and cautious phrases were required.

In the next sentence the author speaks about his Greek predecessors. His judgement on them is well-known:

(Rhet. Her. 1.1.1) Quas ob res illa quae Graeci scriptores inanis adrogantiae causa sibi adsumpserunt reliquimus. Nam illi, ne parum multa scisse uidenterunt, ea conquisierunt quae nihil adtinebant, ut ars difficilior cognitu putaretur.

Here the author has chosen the simplest way of relating his own work to that of his predecessors and asserting its intrinsic value. He simply declares that earlier writers were incompetent. Yet his own work is clearly little more than a translation of the Greek doctrine on oratory.

Perhaps not very attractive, but one understands why he does not acknowledge his debt or even show any appreciation of his masters. For one thing, he wishes to avoid displaying his dependence on the Greeks in this way. For another, he evidently stands for a rhetorical school that maintained the value of practical instruction in Latin by Romans, and is therefore opposed to both the Greek teachers and their manuals, with their complicated theoretical constructions.

The attack on the Greeks also gives the author a convenient opportunity to put forward his own merits at their expense. The preface continues:

(ibid.) Nos autem ea quae uidebantur ad rationem dicendi pertinere sumpsimus. Non enim spe quaestus aut gloria commoti uenimus ad scribendum quemadmodum ceteri, sed ut industria nostra tuae morem geramus uoluntati.

12 Clarke pp. 12 f.
13 Marx and Marrou suppose that the author has been instructed by the afore-mentioned Plotius Gallus. Though attractive, this hypothesis cannot be proved.
The theme from the first sentence recurs. The author has no secret self-interest in writing. Money and author's glory are of no concern to him. His only aim is to instruct his friend, Herennius, in the best way possible.

In the next sentence the short preface is concluded with an exhortation to the dedicatee to exercise industriously the art of speaking; similar exhortations are to be found also in the short epilogues to Books 2, 3 and 4.

The preface, except for this ending, is about the author and his situation, his relation to the dedicatee, to the subject and to his predecessors. This general type is not unusual in Greek literature, though the actual content has only limited parallels in extant Greek prefaces. The especially important theme of a request, which occurs as early as in Archimedes, has been developed here in a quite new way. To what extent this preface may depend on now lost predecessors will be discussed after an analysis of the similar prefaces by Cicero. That the details of this preface were shaped by the author himself seems evident from the fact that the whole is so well fitted to the situation in which he must have been.

The prefaces to the other books of *Rhetorica ad Herennium* can be passed over briefly. In Books 2 and 3 they deal with problems of arrangement. The author has evidently written the books in the order they stand and has concluded the composition of each one by writing its preface.\(^\text{14}\) The preface to the last book contains a defence for the citing of one's own instead of other people's examples in the section on *elocutio*.\(^\text{15}\)

**De Oratore**

The oldest prose work by Cicero, *De Inuentione*, was written at about the same time as *Rhetorica ad Herennium*.\(^\text{16}\) It is easy to see the resemblances between the situations of the two authors. The starting point for

\(^{14}\) Cf. below pp. 73 f.

\(^{15}\) Barwick (*Die Vorrede*, pp. 311-314) argues, with good reason, that the polemic in this preface is directed against Hermagoras.

\(^{16}\) The terminus post quem for *De Inuentione* is 91 B.C. The terminus ante quem is provided by Cicero's wellknown words on the treatise in *De Oratore*, 1.2.5, to the effect that he wrote it when very young. So it seems probable that he composed it before, say, 85 B.C., i.e. slightly earlier than *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. The problem of the doctrinal similarities of the works is extremely complicated. All that is comparatively certain is that none of the authors read the other. Latest treatment of the issue by Matthes, pp. 81 ff.
both in their first prefaces is the question of justifying rhetorical study. Cicero, however, does not speak about himself but writes on precisely the uses and dangers of rhetoric. Though he naturally stresses its usefulness, he has clearly had to take into serious consideration the several objections that may be made. His position turns out to be much the same as that of the author of Ad Herennium. A detailed analysis, however, is somewhat out of place here, as the preface in question deals only with the special problems of rhetoric.17

The prefaces to the three books of the De Oratore have been treated in considerable detail by Ruch in his dissertation Le préambule dans les œuvres philosophiques de Cicéron. Notwithstanding the title, Ruch deals with all the dialogues of Cicero except Partitiones Oratoriae, i.e. also the rhetorical works De Oratore and Brutus.18 As to De Oratore, his is on the whole a good exposition of the arrangement and lines of thought in the prefaces. Nevertheless I should like to treat these prefaces again, as Ruch has starting points quite different from mine. Besides, I hold a different opinion on one particular point.

In works provided with prefaces to several of the books, the preface to Book One is nearly always the most important. It normally contains both the dedication and a presentation of the entire work. The prefaces of the subsequent books often deal only with problems of arrangement, as in Rhetorica ad Herennium, or contain, for instance, short presentations of new sections of the subject. Even when the following prefaces are of about the same size and type as the first one, as they are in De Oratore, there are seldom any completely new themes in the later ones. It is only natural that authors should prefer to touch on the essential facts concerning their approach already at the very beginning of the work. If they return to problems of the same kind later on, it is often just to expand and vary the themes already dealt with.

Here, then, is a summary of the first preface in De Oratore:

To me, my brother Quintus, it has always seemed that those men were exceptionally happy who after a successful career in public life have

17 On the preface to the second book see Barwick, who is of the opinion that Cicero has modelled it upon Hermagoras. It pictures the author's importance in a way that would no doubt fit Hermagoras better than it fits Cicero, the author of De Inventione. Unfortunately, I have not been able to study Giuffrida's bulky essay on the proems of both books of the work.

18 This selection is due, no doubt, to Ruch's special interest in the literary form of the dialogue; see below. Cicero himself never classifies his works in this way. At one point (Diu. 2.1.1-4) he brings together his philosophical and his rhetorical works, but then he includes Orator, which is no dialogue and is consequently excluded by Ruch.

3 Tore Janson
been allowed to enjoy their *otium cum dignitate*. To me, however, no peace has been granted; on the contrary, the time which ought to have carried with it peace has thrown me into the most severe storms. And in spite of our ardent wish we have not had any time for cultivating the arts that we have loved from childhood. For from early youth we have been dragged by the whirl of events. But still in this difficult situation I will use all my spare time for writing. And I shall fulfil your wish, brother; for you want me to write a work on the art of speaking more worthy of my position than that immature one from my youth, and to discuss afresh our permanent point of dispute, that of the worth of general culture for an orator.

After this Cicero goes on to ponder the question why there are so few good speakers compared with the number of successful practitioners of the other arts. In the discussion on this topic, several pages long, Cicero puts forward his view of the art of speaking as being the most difficult and the most exacting one of all.¹⁹ He concludes with the proposition that a speaker ought to have a thorough knowledge of every subject. But he proceeds: Still I put, perhaps, too great a burden upon those wanting to be trained as orators, through this demand. Accordingly, after the fashion of the excellent Greeks, I shall limit myself here to the spheres traditionally reserved for orators, namely judicial and political speeches. And I shall not deal with the usual stuff of the manuals, but relate a conversation on the subject between the most eloquent men of Rome, a conversation which I heard about when I was young. I do this not because I despise the achievements of the Greeks in this sphere but because I am able to put forward a new point of view in this way. And so the preface is concluded.

Evidently this is a preface of the same type as that to *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. The characteristics are that a dedicatee is directly addressed and that there is talk about the author’s relations to dedicatee, subject, work, and predecessors. Notwithstanding the enormous difference in size as well as in stylistic quality there are remarkable resemblances of

¹⁹ Concerning this part of the preface see Dahlmann, *Studien*, pp. 18-20. This scholar writes a very interesting discussion (pp. 5-27) on a traditional way, inherited from the Greeks, of composing *praecox cutio* (introduction to the subject) in writings describing an art or delivering a history of its practitioners (*περὶ τεχνης* and *περὶ τεχνητω*, respectively). Latin works discussed are, besides *De Oratore, De Inuentione, Brutus, Suetonius*’ *De Grammaticis* and *De Rhetoribus*, Horace’s *Ad Pisones*, and others. Dahlmann’s main attempt, however, is a reconstruction of Varro’s *De Poetis*. He has earlier proposed similar views when discussing Varro’s *De Poematis*.
lines of thought and composition between the preface of *De Oratore* and that of *Rhetaorica ad Herennium*. It is necessary to point out in detail the line of thought in *De Oratore* in order to show what resembles and what is different from *Rhetaorica ad Herennium*.

Cicero begins, as do many ancient orators, with a quite general remark, here about which course of life ought to be regarded as especially happy. This serves as an introduction to the first main section of the preface (1.1-1.3), which treats of the author and his situation. First Cicero hints at which class of society he belongs to. He then sketches his already long and varied career as a statesman, and he complains that because of more important business he has never had sufficient time for literary occupations. So he goes on to relate a request from the dedicatee, and says that he will fulfil it, for *neque auctoritate quisquam apud me plus ualere te potest neque uoluntate* (*De Orat.* 1.1.4). Then he states the subject on which his brother has asked him to write.

As will be seen, the sequence of thought in this preface is so far exactly the same as in the first phrases of the *Ad Herennium*. In both prefaces there is first an account of the author's social position and personal situation, and in connexion with this a complaint of lack of time. Then in both it is stated that the dedicatee has requested the work, and stress is placed on the links of friendship and loyalty between author and dedicatee.

Cicero then proceeds, like his predecessor, to his subject. In this second section (2.6-6.21) Cicero takes as his starting point the scarcity of good speakers. In giving his explanation he puts forward his opinions about the worth of general culture, on which he differs from his brother. This is the first major difference from *Rhetaorica ad Herennium*. Cicero, who in his early work had adopted much the same attitude of reserve towards oratory as the author of *Ad Herennium*, in *De Oratore* takes for granted the justification of rhetoric. He compares it without apology with acknowledged arts such as strategy. And he goes further still. The art of speaking is exalted as the most useful, the most desirable and the most difficult of all. Youths striving for glory and success cannot therefore do anything better, according to Cicero, than devote themselves to the extensive studies demanded in order to gain success as a speaker.

It is evident that the intellectual climate of Rome had undergone a considerable change in the three decades between *De Inuentione* and *De Oratore*. In the Fifties B.C. no one was astonished any more at a
Roman statesman pursuing literary activity.\textsuperscript{20} Political and social revolutions resulted in, among other things, the old Roman prejudice against literature being no longer of any importance.\textsuperscript{21} The resistance to Greek culture had also dissolved.

Apart from this general change of climate there is another palpable reason for Cicero's opinion, viz. his own changed position. \textit{De Inventione} was written, as was \textit{Ad Herennium}, by a quite young man without much practical experience, either in oratory or in politics. The position maintained was that of the interested student who tries to justify his studies to a practical public. At the time of \textit{De Oratore}, on the other hand, Cicero was able to voice his opinions with all the authority of the uncontested master of oratory in Rome and a not insignificant politician into the bargain. He ran no risk of not being taken seriously when speaking about the art of which he was the acknowledged master. He had no need to waste words justifying oratory: he could afford to dwell freely and at leisure on his ideas about speaking as the most exalted of the arts.

After this long panegyric on his subject, Cicero returns to the contents of the work. In spite of his ambitious aims with regard to oratory he promises to confine himself to the traditional sphere of rhetoric as defined by the Greeks, \textit{Graecos homines non solum ingenio et doctrina, sed etiam otio studioque abundantes} (\textit{De Orat.} 1.6.22).

In \textit{De Inventione} Cicero had several times mentioned Greek predecessors by name and discussed their theories when speaking about the division of his subject (\textit{Inuent.} 1.5.7-7.9). Here he refers to them collectively as \textit{Graeci} (a word which he does not use in the relevant passage of \textit{De Inventione}) and compliments them all in common. On the one hand this means that the Greek tradition is acknowledged more explicitly than in the earlier work. On the other, Cicero, precisely by detaching \textit{Graeci} as a group, puts himself to a certain extent outside their tradition. In \textit{De Inventione} he discusses the opinions and competence of several predecessors before stating his own position on controversial issues. But he does not mention that all the cited predecessors are Greek, a fact he evidently regarded as either irrelevant or self-evident. His attitude is that of an international scholar, and as a matter of course he assigns himself a place in the ranks of his Greek predecessors.

\textsuperscript{20} Compare Cicero's own words (1.1.1): \textit{fuit cum mihi quoque initium requiescendi atque animum ad utriusque nostrum praeclara studia referendi fore iustum et prope ab omnibus concessum arbitrare.}

sors. Here in *De Oratore* Cicero mentions his predecessors very appre­ciatively, but *en bloc* as Greeks, i.e. foreigners.

This first limitation of the contents of the works is followed by a statement of its formal arrangement:

(De Orat. 1.6.23) repetamque non ab incunabulis nostrae ueteris puerilisque doctrinae quendam ordinem praeceptorum, sed ea, quae quondam accepi in nostrorum hominum eloquentissimorum et omni dignitate principum disputa­tione esse uersata.

Here Cicero clearly dissociates himself from writing about rhetoric as a theory out of touch with reality. Using his authority as a public figure Cicero could justly claim to be able to produce something more important than a schematic manual. Thereby he is once again, and this time more explicitly, contrasting himself with the Greeks:

(ibid.) Non quo illa contemnam, quae Graeci dicendi artifices et doctores reliquerunt, sed cum illa pateant in promptuque sint omnibus, neque ea interpre­tatione mea aut ornatius explicari aut planius exprimi possint, dabis hanc ueniam, mi frater, ut opinor, ut eorum, quibus summa dicendi laus a nostris hominibus concessa est, auctoritatem Graecis anteponam.

Cicero acknowledges anew the *Graeci* and the doctrine they created, but at the same time he neatly assembles everything Greek and puts it aside as being not so essential as the practical experience of the best Roman speakers and statesmen. It is interesting to note the difference of outlook here and in the corresponding passage of *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. Cicero stresses, as does the earlier author, his independence of Greek predecessors, but while the latter was in fact quite dependent on them, in spite of his arrogant words, Cicero is as independent as he claims. So sure is he of his own authority that he can afford to admit unreservedly the merits of the Greeks and at the same time propose his own program.

It is worth noting here what Cicero had as his program. Notwithstanding his thorough appreciation of the intellectual achievements of the Greeks, he felt that their often rather abstract theories, rhetorical as well as philosophical, were not always useful to Romans as they stood. They had to be confronted with and adapted to Roman *mores* and Roman experience. Cicero now regarded it as his task, in rhetoric, to demonstrate how Roman practice gives substance to the skeleton of Greek theory. So while he too maintains the value of Roman practice, as did the author of *Ad Herennium*, in reality Cicero has much higher aspirations and is also able to realize them throughout in his work.
So not only does the preface of the first book of *De Oratore* have a content similar to that of the first preface of *Rhetorica ad Herennium* but even the same basic arrangement. In both, we have the following sequence of thought. First, the author has too little time for writing. Then there is the request from the dedicatee. After this the author commends his subject. And finally he speaks about his predecessors and stresses the qualities of his own exposition.

The resemblances between the two prefaces are so great as to exclude the possibility of accidental parallels. On the other hand it is easy to realize that Cicero has not imitated *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. Not only is this rather obvious from what we know about these works and their authors, but the resemblances are not of such a kind as to suggest a direct influence. What the two prefaces have in common is not any specific opinions or points of view but simply a scheme, or a skeleton, for the preface.

The introduction to the second book of *De Oratore* consists mainly of a discussion on the respective educational status of the two main personages in the dialogue, Crassus and Antonius, and more especially their knowledge of Greek. Nearly all of the first chapter is devoted to this problem, the conclusion being that both Crassus and Antonius enjoyed a high level of education. In this context, Cicero again expounds his idea that a real orator has to be abreast of the culture of his time. He further explains that he intends his work also as a memorial to these two famous men, who published hardly anything themselves. At the end of the preface he addresses his brother and compliments him on his ability as a speaker. At the same time he declares that his work is not just a few meagre rhetorical precepts but reflects the full experience of Crassus and Antonius. The preface then concludes with a phrase to the effect that it is time to pass on to the subject, i.e. the same type of concluding sentence as in the first preface of *Ad Herennium*.

Cicero’s main aim in this preface is thus to present his own views on the persons figuring as main characters in the dialogue. As his opinion of them obviously differed considerably from that of his contemporaries, it is not surprising that he should want to justify his views. That he has done this in the preface to the second book rather than the first may be explained partly by the fact that the first preface was rather long anyway, and partly by this problem not arising for the reader before he has started the dialogue.

In the preface to the third book, Cicero recalls the death of Crassus, which occurred only a few days after the conversation which the dia-
logue is supposed to reproduce. After an elaborate picture of the last
days of Crassus, Cicero deplores his death, but immediately corrects
himself by saying that Crassus ought to be considered fortunate for
having been spared the disasters that occurred after his death. He then
proceeds to describe these calamities, and especially the afflictions that
had fallen upon the other interlocutors. From here, Cicero passes to his
own situation and says that when he dwells on the misfortunes of these
men from an earlier generation and also the sufferings he has under­
gone himself, he often sees the wisdom in his brother’s advice to leave
politics. But as this is not feasible, he proceeds, and as the toil of poli­
tics is often compensated by great glory, one has to be content with
seeking comfort in literary activity. Finally, Cicero compares his rela­
tion to Crassus with that of Plato to Socrates.

The main theme of this preface, the death of Crassus, serves a double
purpose. First, it forms part of the author’s presentation of the main
character; secondly it provides a convenient background to Cicero’s
reflections on his own situation. As has been pointed out by Ruch
(pp. 194 f.), there is an implicit comparison between Crassus and Cicero.
As Crassus was denied the fruits of his long and meritorious public career,
so too Cicero has been rewarded with ingratitude for his “incredible and
unique love for the state” (De Orat. 3.4.13). It is not only the fate of
Crassus, however, that serves this comparison, but also the misfortunes
of the other persons: eorum casus, de quibus ante dixi (ibid.). The acci­
dents that befell all the former generation, here represented by the
characters of the dialogue, cause Cicero to doubt the sense of partaking
in public life at all.

Finally, a few words about Ruch’s investigation. He has strongly
emphasized the coherence of the three prefaces and has even written an
“Esquisse d’une synthèse des trois prooemia” (pp. 194-196). No doubt
this view is correct in so far as that the prefaces, which are the only
parts of the work where Cicero appears in person, have a common key­
ote. In them the author inspects his work from different angles, treats
the same themes (e.g. theory vs. practice) in two prefaces, and sum­
marizes and extends his initial statements in the later prefaces. But in
my opinion Ruch has gone a little too far in trying to show that the
three prefaces constitute a closed unit of composition.22 Certainly Cicero
has consciously interrelated the prefaces to some extent. It seems im­

22 P. 194: “Abstraction faite de leurs rapports avec le sujet, les trois prooemia con­siderés en eux-mêmes, constituent un ensemble organisé et méthodique.”
probable, however, that he should have intended them to form a single coherent composition. It is surely against all normal usage to try to construct a coherent whole out of three short pieces, separated from one another by many pages dealing with other things. I feel this is unlike Cicero. The three prefaces are for me variations on similar themes, but not forced into a rigid pattern. I prefer to liken the connexions between them to fine threads, whereas Ruch seems to regard them rather as bonds and fetters.

Further, he maintains that the centre of gravity in this cycle of prefaces is in the second one (p. 196). The grounds for this view is, if I have interpreted him correctly, that in the second preface the theoretical, dramatical, and personal aspects of the work converge in the discussion of the educational status of Crassus and Antonius. It seems probable, indeed, that he thinks so simply because the second preface is in the natural position to constitute "a centre of gravity". As I see it, Cicero in the first preface deals with all the essential themes and presents his views in a most thorough and well-considered way. For the two prefaces within the work he reserves a couple of topics, the question of the education of Crassus and Antonius and the death of Crassus, topics that he wishes to deal with but which do not need to be touched upon in the first preface. Further, the later prefaces discuss matters that have already been mentioned briefly in the first introduction. So the first preface is augmented by the other two: they vary and pinpoint what has been said before, but there is little or nothing new in them about the relations between author, work, and subject.

Orator

We have now to deal with another important preface by Cicero, that to Orator. It begins thus:

(Orat. 1.1) Vtrum difficilius aut maius esset negare tibi saepius idem roganti an efficere id quod rogares diu multumque, Brute, dubitaui. Nam et negare ei quem unice diligerem cuique me carissimum esse sentirem, praesertim et iusta petenti et praeclera cupienti, durum admodum mihi uidebatur, et suscipere tantam rem, quantam non modo facultate consequi difficile esset sed etiam cogitatione complecti, uix arbitrabar esse eius qui uereretur reprehensionem doctorum atque prudentium.

23 P. 196: "Ainsi donc, les trois prooemia semblent bien subordonnés à une unité supérieure, grâce à un ensemble de thèmes repris sur différents plans."
Again we have a personal preface with a dedication. There is also a request from the dedicatee, here of even greater importance than in the prefaces to *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and *De Oratore*. The entire preface is about Cicero's reaction to Brutus' request for a work on the accomplished orator. Cicero pretends that he has been put in a dilemma by being asked for this. For while he feels himself obliged by his friendship with Brutus to comply with his request, he also finds the task so great that he does not believe himself capable of performing it in a satisfactory way.

Here the theme of a request is for the first time exploited in the way that later became so enormously popular. With this theme, the author can emphasize as much as he wants both the difficulty of the task and his dependence on the dedicatee. It is worth while considering Cicero's reasons for giving this form to the preface of *Orator*.

Naturally Cicero wishes everyone to regard his subject as important. Every author does. In his case, however, there were special reasons for dwelling unusually much on the weightiness of the things he will treat. His book is a treatise on the accomplished speaker, and in it Cicero pronounces on the central problems of oratory, a sphere in which his word of course carries great weight. As has been said before, he was the uncontested master of speaking in Rome, with the most brilliant oratorical career behind him. In the year 46, when *Orator* was written, he was especially interested in safeguarding his position as a speaker. His political career seemed to have come to an end, and quite an inglorious end at that. In his compulsory leisure he must have felt it was by no means certain that he would be regarded by posterity as a great statesman. Consequently, he was all the more anxious to appear really great in the sphere of oratory at least. Therefore, at a time when his mode of speaking was being attacked rather sharply by the atticists Brutus and Calvus, 24 he felt obliged to repel the onslaught as authoritative as possible. Hence his insistence on the importance of his task:

(Orat. 1.2) Quid enim est maius quam, cum tanta sit inter oratores bonos dissimilitudo, iudicare quae sit optima species et quasi figura dicendi?

But Cicero is also considering the direct relation between himself and his work. The greater the task is made to seem, the more natural it is that Cicero should hesitate before undertaking it:

24 See for instance Clarke pp. 80 ff.
The author is here being modest about his own capacity, yet it is hardly likely that Cicero entertained such a fear of his subject as he pretends. As Curtius has pointed out (Eur. Lit. p. 93) we have here an evident instance of affected modesty. This is the first time we meet with this phenomenon, to which a great deal of attention will be paid in the following.

What, then, do these statements of Cicero really amount to? First he emphasizes as strongly as possible the importance and the difficulty of his subject. Then he expresses a modest doubt as to whether he is capable of complying with the request. This doubt must not be interpreted to mean that the author is not sure of his own importance as a writer. Cicero never questions his greatness in that respect, least of all in Orator. The real import of these sentences, therefore, is approximately this: The great Cicero has set about an unusually difficult task: Behold! According to the rules of rhetoric, the reader’s attention may be excited by laying stress on the importance of the subject. So Cicero’s pretended diffidence aims in reality at pointing out to the reader how well the author has succeeded.

The two themes of the preface hitherto dealt with, elevation of the subject and doubts about the author’s ability to treat it, are intimately connected with each other. But for logical reasons they cannot form a closed unit. For if the subject is so difficult that the author does not believe that he will accomplish it, why should he grapple with it? Even if the modesty is affected and not real, it will seem ridiculous unless the author adds something to make his action seem reasonable. Consequently these two themes have to be modified by a statement to the effect that the author is compelled to write the work. This compulsion, for Cicero as for his innumerable successors, is embodied in the request from the dedicatee. The preface ends as follows:

(Orat. 1.2) Malo enim, cum studio tuo sim obsecutus, desiderari a te prudentiam meam quam, si id non fecerim, benevolentiam.

This solves the dilemma we talked about in connexion with the first words of the preface. The author declares himself willing to be guided by the wish of his friend and not by his own doubts as to the possibility of performing the task.

Curtius’ and Norden’s term is “affektierte Bescheidenheit”.

42
So Cicero, like the author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, makes his friendship a reason for writing. To appreciate this theme one has to consider the importance of friendship in Roman society by this time. Over the past fifty years there has been a great deal of research into the unique social and political structure of late republican Rome. The starting point was the fundamental book by Gelzer, *Die Nobilität der römischen Republik* (1912), especially the second part (pp. 43-116), where he treated “die sozialen Voraussetzungen der Nobilitätsherrschaft”. Later research into friendship is surveyed in a recent book by Lossman, where the friendship between Cicero and Caesar is studied in the light of research into friendship in general. Another survey, from a different point of view, is made by Neuhauser (especially pp. 9-11), who has studied the pertinent concept of *patronus*. Wistrand (Chapter 2) has made a most interesting exposition of the subject, unfortunately available in Swedish only. I refer to these works and their bibliographies for detailed information. Here I can only give a short account of the Roman concept of friendship according to modern research.

Roman society, Gelzer says, was interwoven with manifold bilateral connexions between the citizens, “Nah- und Treuverhältnisse”. These connexions were of paramount importance in the life of society. Among other things, their number and their strength decided the success of every politician; for every Roman citizen was bound to one or more of the important men of the state. In the elections he voted for the men he was bound to, and also supported them in other ways as required. So the politician who had tied to him the greatest number of citizens had the greatest chance of being elected to the offices he wanted. The groups of interconnected persons tended to be very large, and their heads were the very great men, like Pompeius, Crassus and Caesar. The political battles of the late Republic were fought between such politicians backed by vast numbers of people connected to them by ties of friendship and fidelity. Of course the great politicians might also become connected to each other by ties of the same sort, whereupon their large bands of supporters co-operated. Such an agreement, on the highest level, was the first triumvirate.

We see that these “Treu- und Nahverhältnisse” can be established both between an inferior and a superior and between equals. In the first case the parties may be called *cliens* and *patronus*, respectively, or they case. In both cases the fundamental mechanism is the same. One of the may be styled *amici*, which, of course, is the normal word in the second parties receives a service or a gift from the other and thereby becomes
bound to repay this by performing such services as may be demanded from him. The prerequisite for the origination and function of this system is that there was in society a deeply rooted conception of every man's duty to repay the services he had received, or in other words to show his gratitude through action.

It is to this fundamental concept that Cicero appeals when he proposes his wish to show beneficentia towards Brutus as a reason for writing the book. In this way he can count on every Roman accepting that he writes in spite of his scruples, as he is fulfilling the duty of repaying a friend—an obligation for every citizen. It must be pointed out that this conception of friendship differs considerably from the usual notion of friendship as an emotional tie. The latter view was certainly familiar to the Romans, and in particular to Cicero, but it was paralleled, if not dominated by the much more concrete and to us perhaps crass idea of services obliging to services, quite regardless of personal feelings.

So Cicero appeals to one of the fundamental moral concepts of the Romans, the duty of showing gratia to and doing officia for an amicus. At the same time, however, his relationship to Brutus, his dedicatee, was in fact a friendship also in the more emotional sense. Cicero was very capable of making real friends, and his friendship with Brutus was no doubt the most profound one of his later years. The ties between them were such that Brutus might well have had enough influence on Cicero to induce him to write a book, especially as he was writing all the time anyhow. So there was in this case not only the general reasons for talking about a friend's demand, but also really sincere friendship between author and dedicatee.

Finally the subject matter of the book is such that it was natural that Brutus should be interested in getting Cicero to treat it. For the friends had quite different opinions about what constituted the accomplished speaker. Unlike Cicero, Brutus stood for a severe atticism, and there was a great dispute on this matter between, primarily, Brutus and Calvus on one side and Cicero on the other. Orator was a contribution to this discussion. In spite of these controversies it is mainly the friend Brutus who is addressed in the book, whereas the opponent Brutus is attacked

---

26 Benevolentia was the word used by Cicero to denote the affection for an amicus. Cf. Lossman p. 102 n. 1, and p. 106.

27 On this see, apart from the extant letters, the still very readable chapter on Brutus in Boissier, Cicéron et ses amis.
only cautiously and indirectly; for by this time Cicero had the strongest reasons, both political and emotional, for keeping Brutus as a friend.

The preface to *Orator* enables the author to stress how great and difficult his subject is, how he has hesitated to tackle it, and how amicably disposed and ready to render service he is. Cicero, as we have seen, had special reasons for emphasizing all this. On the other hand, practically every author presenting himself in a personal preface wishes to lay stress upon the same things. Consequently it is not astonishing that the line of thought in this preface has been repeated, with small changes, in so many later works.

Several important elements in the preface to *Orator* are the same as in the prefaces studied above, to *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and *De Oratore*, namely the request from a dedicatee, the praise of the subject, and the emphasis on friendship with the dedicatee. In *Orator*, Cicero has on the whole used the same skeleton of content as in *De Oratore*, though with changes to suit his aims and his situation. On the one hand there is nothing about predecessors, and the value of his own work is not emphasized in the same way as before. On the other, he clearly expresses his unwillingness to treat the subject, and in this connexion mentions the dilemma in which he is put through the request. These modifications result in the preface of *Orator* being more logically coherent than the introductions of the earlier works. Even if this preface is adapted to the actual situation of the author, it also seems to me to have more of a fixed scheme in it than have its predecessors.

*The type and its origins*

It is obvious that the three introductions considered, those to *Ad Herennium*, *De Oratore* and *Orator*, bear a strong resemblance to each other. We can say that they belong to the same group, or are of the same type. It must be stressed at once that the decisive similarity between these prefaces lies not in their formal structure but in their similar line of thought. We shall meet a similar content in, for instance, epistolary prefaces.

We have thus established the existence of a common type for the prefaces to three rhetorical works. The function and content of this type

28 Cf. the discussion of the term "type" in Wimmel (in his introduction). A "type" for Wimmel is a chain of thought or line of argument that reoccurs in the same order and with the same internal relationships several times in the literature and in different authors.
has been sufficiently clarified by our analysis of these prefaces. Its further development will be illustrated in part of the following study. It remains to say something of its origins.

It is unfortunately impossible to trace where or when the type arose. As I have already said, it seems improbable that the earliest of the extant examples, in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, is the actual archetype. In that this work was, so far as we can see, unknown to Cicero it cannot have exercised any direct influence. There remains the possibility of an indirect influence from it by a better known author having taken up the theme and in this way communicated it to later literature. But it would seem impossible to indicate any widely known but now lost work, written between *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and *De Oratore*, which could have acted as a link in this way. The preface to the *Ad Herennium* can thus hardly have been the earliest or the type preface for this particular group.

We are thus obliged to assume the existence of one or more prefaces older than the *Ad Herennium* and of the same type as those we have discussed. This gives rise to a couple of questions on which we can do little more than speculate. In the first place, should we assume Greek or Latin models, or both? Secondly, what authors and works are conceivable candidates?

In reply to the first question, there seems to be no sufficient reason for excluding either Greek or Roman models. On the one hand, the Roman rhetorical writers before the Ad Herennium were hardly of such importance that we can expect great influence from them (see below). On the other, we have already found that the arguments presented in this type of preface seem to suit a Roman author's situation at this time much better than a Greek's. But it is naturally perfectly possible for a Greek author to have been so situated as to have cause to write a preface like those we are concerned with and that the theme was then slightly modified to suit a Roman author. These and similar arguments are thus of no great help.

This brings us to the second question, as to what authors are conceivable originators of this type of preface. What is relatively certain is that they were writers on rhetoric. There is no reason to suppose that three of the earliest Latin works on this subject should all have borrowed the same theme for their prefaces from a work in a different genre. We can

29 Cf. how Callimachus' theme, as demonstrated in Wimmel's study, is modified and refashioned to meet the different needs of the Roman writers.
thus content ourselves with asking what lost rhetorical writings of importance from the period before 86 B.C. are conceivable or probable.

Of Latin writers on rhetoric we know only two by name who published their works before the Ad Herennium, namely the censor Cato and the great orator of the Nineties, Antonius. That Cato should have written anything of the same nature as the prefaces in question seems improbable from every point of view. Antonius, on the other hand, could well have published a preface of the type we are concerned with, particularly as there is some reason to suppose that he used the theme of "own unwillingness" that is such an important aspect of the type we have studied. But Antonius' book cannot have had a much greater or more enduring influence than the Ad Herennium. It was thin and probably mediocre, apart from having remained incomplete (Quint. Inst. 3.i.19). Such a work could hardly have provided any major impulses for later literature.

There remains the possibility of an entirely unknown Latin work on rhetoric. That such existed is in itself highly probable, for two reasons. The first is that the terminology in the earliest rhetorical handbooks we know of is so rich and stabilized. The other is that in order to explain the internal relationship between the Ad Herennium and Cicero's De Inuentione it would seem necessary to postulate at least one and preferably several Latin writers. But it is easy to see that these hypothesized works, even if they did exist, cannot have been particularly outstanding. Otherwise they would very probably have been recorded in the extant literature. We have two historical surveys of the development of rhetorical theory in Rome, in Quintilian (Book 3) and Suetonius (De Rhetoribus), plus Cicero's detailed account of Roman orators in Brutus. Antonius' work, on whose lack of importance the sources are unanimous, is mentioned both by Quintilian and—repeatedly—by Cicero. We can assume quite safely that none of them knew of any important work which they omitted to mention. What can and should have existed in this genre before Antonius is compendiums, schematic

---

30 Cicero makes Antonius say that it was with reluctance that he let his works be published (De Orat. 1.21.94: in libello, qui me imprudente et inuito excidit et peruenit in manus hominum). This sounds like an echo of an "unwillingness" theme that can have existed in Antonius' preface. Cf. Bardon 1.169.

31 Illux... sane exilem libellum is the description Cicero has Brutus give of it (Brut. 44.163). Cf. the above-quoted words that Cicero puts in Antonius' mouth.

32 See e.g. Matthes pp. 81 ff. Note, however, that it is not entirely impossible that Antonius' book was the only rhetorical work prior to those preserved, and that it was the common source of both.
accounts of the basis for instruction, composed without any literary ambitions, perhaps even without publication in mind. They would be works of the same nature as the _Rhetorica ad Herennium_ but considerably more modest in scope and structure. It is of course not impossible that in works of this nature there were prefaces of the type we are studying and that both Cicero and the author of the _Ad Herennium_ found in them their common starting point in respect of their prefaces, just as they did in the case of rhetorical theory. But if this was the case we must ask how these authors came to employ such prefaces. And the answer must be that if they had a special type of preface then this must in all probability have been taken from the Greeks, who provided the rest of the material used by these authors.

In other words we must turn to a study of the Greek authors. We find that here too the number of authors to be considered is very small. We admittedly know by name a number of Greek rhetorical writers from the end of the Hellenistic period (e.g. Pamphilus, Apollonius Molon). But the indisputably most influential and important work, and the only one of which we have more than the briefest of mentions, is that by Hermagoras of Temnos. We know a fair amount about the teachings of this pioneer of rhetorical doctrine via our knowledge of several of his successors, among whom we must count the authors of the _Ad Herennium_ and _De Inuentione_. Of his person we know nothing beyond that the lived about the middle of the second century B.C.

By a process of elimination we thus find that no writer other than Hermagoras is probable as the author of a preface that can have influenced both Cicero and the author of _Ad Herennium_. This cannot, however, be taken as more than a reasonable guess, above all because the argument presupposes that the type of preface we are dealing with arose by the preface of a wellknown and independent writer being imitated and refashioned by subsequent authors. It is indeed very probable that this is what happened, but we naturally cannot exclude the possibility of the type having been developed by some minor author in the genre. In a case like this, where we are obliged to assume the contents of large amounts of entirely lost textual material, it would seem wisest to leave at least these two possibilities open.

---

33 See the article by Matthes which has the form of a bibliography but is in reality a monograph on Hermagoras, consisting mainly of an exhaustive attempt to reconstruct his doctrine.

34 Cf. the above-mentioned attempt by Barwick to trace back one of the prefaces in _De Inuentione_ to the same writer.
The results of this study of possible lost sources to the type of preface described are thus very meagre. We can say with certainty little more than that there should have existed at least one preface earlier than the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and containing the themes common to that author and Cicero, namely praise of the subject, the unwillingness of the author, and a request on the part of the recipient. But the actual origins of these phenomena are not, after all, as important as the manner in which the Latin writers used and refashioned the material they had inherited.

*The Controversiae of Seneca*

The prefaces of Seneca the Elder’s *Controversiae* are of little interest to us here. The most important, that to Book 1, is addressed to the author’s three sons and begins as follows:

(Sen. *Contr.* 1 pref. 1) Seneca Nouato, Senecae, Melae filiis salutem. Exigitis rem magis iocundam mihi quam facilium; iubetis enim quid de his declamationibus sentiam qui in aetatem meam inciderunt indicare.

Seneca is the first of the rhetorical writers to clothe his preface in epistolary form. As already demonstrated, the epistolary form and what I have called the rhetorical form were interchangeable variants for late Hellenistic scholars. It is thus hardly surprising that these forms were used indiscriminately also by Latin writers.

Seneca also uses at the beginning of his letter one of the themes that we have already encountered on repeated occasions, namely the request from the recipient. This is treated in the briefest possible manner, without any explanations or secondary themes, to present his reminiscences of earlier orators and to motivate his writing of the work. Seneca then goes on to speak of his memory and its alleged inadequacy, and then of the history of *declamationes*. The preface ends with a presentation of the speaker whose declamations are contained in Book 1, Porcius Latro.

All the other extant books are also introduced by prefaces in letter form to the author’s sons, their main content being a presentation of the orator or orators dealt with in the book concerned. The preface to Book 2, however, contains a purely personal passage in which the author turns to his son Mela who has decided not to be a statesman but an orator, *paterno contentus ordine* (*Contr.* 2 pref. 3). These lines, with

---

35 See pp. 23 f.
36 Cf. also below pp. 106 ff.
their fine tone of paternal solicitude and benevolence, are without doubt the most worth reading in the writer's many and long prefaces. They also show that the dedication to his sons was made not only from formal convenience but reflected a real contact between father and sons.

Institutio Oratoria

Book I of Quintilian's Institutio Oratoria is preceded in the traditional text by a letter, the Epistula ad Tryphonem, from the author to his publisher. This contains mainly an account of the publisher's request that the completed work should be published and the writer's doubt over this request, i.e. two themes that are familiar to us from the prefaces of the rhetorical writers already discussed. Following this letter, the first book commences with a prooemium that also contains familiar themes, a request (this time from certain persons unnamed, quidam) and the author's hesitation when faced with the immensity of the subject.

The way in which the writer thus preludes his work with both an epistolary preface and an introduction in rhetorical form, is very striking.

A conceivable explanation is that the writer never intended the letter to Trypho to be published. Nothing in its form or content excludes the possibility of its being intended as a private letter. The publisher can have included it on his own initiative.

This explanation, however, is less than probable. The Institutio was published, so far as we know, while the author was alive and in the best of health. It is not likely that he would have allowed the letter to be published against his will.

We must therefore assume that the text has been handed down to us in the form that the author intended. In order to understand his reasons for the double introduction we must be quite clear as to what he had to say to the reader in this section. The question requires a more detailed analysis of the prefatory letter and the preface.

"You press me every day," the letter begins, "to publish the work I have written. I thought myself that it had not matured sufficiently, as it was written in only two years, which was insufficient for stylistic polishing. So I had thought to follow the advice of Horace and let it rest for some years before working over it again. But if there is the demand for it that you say, then let us set sail and put out from harbour. The success of the enterprise depends also very much on the care you take."

37 For this metaphor cf. below pp. 146 f.
Here, then, we have a variation on the “request” theme. The publisher has asked Quintilian to publish a work that is already written. It is easy to see what reasons the author had for using this theme. On the verge of publication, he felt a desire to excuse its real or imagined shortcomings. He therefore produces the publisher’s request as an explanation for the work appearing earlier than he had intended and before it had been given its final polish.

The uncertainty that the author here expresses as regards the stylistic quality of his own work is an important element in the attitude of many Roman writers. We should note the difference between this uncertainty as regards style and the writer’s hesitation as to his mastery of the subject. It is true that the two can in some authors be united as a single theme, but they are often independent. A writer, in other words, can express doubt as to his stylistic competence without doubting his mastery of the subject and vice versa. This rather self-evident distinction will be of some use to us later on.

Quintilian is by no means the first Roman writer to express doubt as to the formal quality of his work. A survey of this theme and its relationship to writers’ statements on their competence in their subject, will be made in a later section (pp. 98-100). Quintilian’s situation, however, is different from the authors considered there. It is much more remarkable if a professor of oratory neglects to put the final touches to his writing than if, say, an architect should fail in this respect. The reason given by Quintilian is a lack of time. But it was only the prayers of his publisher and the impatience of the presumptive reader that forced him to release it. These can hardly be called any very cogent reasons, particularly with a work like the *Institutio Oratoria* that was in no way topical and whose value was hardly likely to deteriorate from one year to the next. Quintilian has thus employed a theme that hardly reflects his true situation.

In order to understand better why Quintilian even so used this theme, we should first consider its general attraction for any writer, even if it truly belongs only to the stylistically uncertain. In actual fact even a writer who is stylistically very assured can have reasons for speaking hesitantly or even disparagingly of his own literary ability. He will always win one of two things. If the reader should find anything to criticize, then he will already have encountered an apology for this and is likely to judge the fault less harshly. If, on the other hand, the reader finds the formal treatment of the subject beyond reproach, then the author has shown proof of a becoming modesty, at the same time as he
has in the most inoffensive manner drawn attention to the very question of style. In this way an apology for an inadequate style can sometimes convey the exact opposite, namely an exhortation to the reader to note particularly how elegantly the author writes. But it is above all the demonstration of the author's modesty that makes the theme attractive. Any author not entirely convinced that he has succeeded to perfection in his formal presentation—and what author ever is?—can in this way take out a sort of free insurance against rebuke, at the same time as he demonstrates his own modesty.

This is what we can call the psychological background to the theme. It explains why this theme, once it had appeared in prefaces, became so remarkably general. Quintilian is only one of many Latin writers to use it without apparent cause. To apologize for one's poor style soon became a conventional phrase in prefaces.

A further reason why the theme should be particularly attractive to Quintilian is to be found in his personal outlook. We need read only a very few pages of this writer to notice that his is a very agreeable nature. Although he is both independent and quite frequently critical of other authors, he is strikingly free from any form of self-assertion or arrogance. There is a quiet objectiveness in his judgement that makes him an outstanding literary critic, but which can have hampered his own production. It is natural that a man of this type should see his own faults and admit them. He may therefore actually have needed some mild pressure from his publisher to overcome what may have been a hypercritical attitude to his own work.

There is no reason, however, to suppose that the author really published the work too soon, before he had had enough time to polish it. Austin's reasoning is therefore in my opinion at fault when he (p. xxx) puts forward the idea that the weak composition of Book 12 is the result of a lack of time, supporting this theory with the statement in the letter to Trypho. It seems quite improbable that Quintilian should have left the last book half-finished and published it because his publisher had told him that the public was waiting impatiently. Nor is anything of this sort related in the letter. What it does say is that the author, obviously after completing the work, had thought of putting it on ice so as to give it a final polish after some years, refrigerato inuen-
tionis amore. There is no suggestion that the last book had not been finished. If Quintilian really had been forced to hurry so much that he had not yet finished Book 12, then it is very probable that he would have pointed this out in the letter. The letter is thus strong evidence against Austin's theory, which without it would have seemed quite plausible.

Let us turn now to the preface proper to the first book. It is rather long, but may be summarized as follows: The author begins by explaining that he has been requested by certain persons (quidam) to write on the art of oratory, and he gives his reasons for consenting to this request. He stresses that, unlike previous writers, he will be treating of the entire training of the orator. There follows a dedication, and a reference to a previous work which has been falsely attributed to him. Then comes a long discussion in a very Ciceronian spirit on the ideal orator and the properties that must be combined in him. This is followed by a brief survey of the contents of the different books and, finally, a short passage on the vanity of trying to teach those who lack all talent.

The greater part of the proem thus prepares the way for the handling of the subject, and is of no relevance to this comparative study. I will therefore restrict myself to commenting on the introductory section—the request and the author's reaction to it—and the dedication (proem 1-6).

Quintilian starts by relating how, after concluding his work as a teacher he was asked by friends to write on the art of oratory. He long resisted their demands, knowing how many great authors before him had treated this subject. But they beseeched him all the more earnestly that he should help them judge the opposed views of his predecessors. He finally allowed himself to be persuaded:

(Inst. i. proem 3) non tam me uinceret praestandi, quod exigebatur, fiducia quam negandi uerecundia.

This phrase, which indicates that the author's resistance has been broken down, reminds us of that used by Cicero in a corresponding passage in the Orator:

(Orat. 1.2) aggrediar non tam perficiendi spe quam experiendi uoluntate.

The former is clearly reminiscent of the latter, perhaps even an intentional allusion of the type discussed by Lundström. The entire first part of the preface, as we notice at once, is very similar in content to the preface to the Orator. Quintilian motivates his unwillingness to comply

with the request by his doubts as to his competence. This theme has already been discussed. Quintilian, however, combines it with another and states that his negative attitude was caused by the thought of his famous predecessors.

But Quintilian found, when he started work, that he had a much more important task than to criticize and evaluate the different authorities. No previous writer had dealt with the entire schooling of the orator, and this was the task he therefore took upon himself.

There is a striking similarity between Quintilian’s way of mentioning his predecessors and Cicero’s approach in the *De Oratore*. Both writers refer to the previous authorities with great respect. The main reason given for writing a new work is in both cases that they are treating of an aspect not previously dealt with. The difference in attitude lies mainly in Quintilian’s much greater reverence for his predecessors.

Quintilian then tries to explain why a work like his had not previously been written, indicating that the subject left little play for brilliance of treatment. In this way he suggests that he has undertaken a task requiring expert knowledge and thoroughness, but leaving no room to demonstrate his rhetorical ability. As we know, it was a general tendency and even an express rule41 for orators to deny as far as possible any rhetorical brilliance and stress the importance of the facts of the case.

Then in the sixth paragraph comes the dedication: *Quod opus, Marcelli Victori, tibi dicamus.* The reason why the work is dedicated to Marcellus, says the author, is not only their friendship but the fact that Marcellus has a young and gifted son, in whose education the book may conceivably be of assistance.

Purely formally, it is remarkable that the request for publication mentioned is not presented as coming from Marcellus. It is after all the rule that the person or persons referred to as having requested the work also have it dedicated to them. But Quintilian chooses to dedicate his work not to those who have asked him to write but to Marcellus, who so far as we can see never expressed any such desire.

This approach shows above all that Quintilian can handle the traditional prefatory themes with considerable freedom. In spite of the fact that Cicero and others have the request come from the person to whom the work was dedicated, Quintilian feels perfectly at liberty to make a different arrangement. His actual reason for doing so may have been no more complicated than that he—for some personal reason—preferred

41 Lausberg § 275 β.
to dedicate his work to Marcellus than to anyone who had actually asked him to write.

In the first part of the preface to the first book Quintilian thus deals with his attitude to the subject and his relation to the dedicatee. He keeps to the same cycle of themes as Cicero, uses turns of phrase that resemble those of Cicero, but is capable of varying the pattern when it suits him.

Let us now revert to the relationship between the letter to Trypho and the preface proper. As we have seen, the latter is both long and rich in content. It provides information on all the matters customarily dealt with in a preface. The letter, on the other hand, is brief and contains little real information. The letter has thus not been intended as a factual supplement to the existing preface.

It is clear moreover that no great interval separated the writing of the letter and the preface. The preface indicates that the author is in a position to survey his work as a whole in a way that would be impossible unless he had already written at least the greater part of it. The letter, on the other hand, is written in conjunction with publication and it says that the author has not—as he had originally intended—delayed publication. The interval between the two is thus surely a matter at the most of months, perhaps of weeks or days. This makes it highly improbable that the letter reflects any sort of changed attitude to the work since the time the preface was written.

The real reason for the double preface would seem to be that the author had two themes that he was unable or did not want to combine in a single preface. We can easily see which these are. The preface contains the dedication to Marcellus, making it unsuitable to include an honourable mention of anyone else. The publisher therefore received his undoubtedly well-deserved thanks in the brief letter that Quintilian allowed to be published. In this way the author could also emphasize that many wanted to read the work, which not only—as mentioned above—gives him an excuse for any formal shortcomings but also naturally raises the reader’s expectations: if it was eagerly awaited by so many, then surely it must contain some truly valuable material.

We must also consider the introductions to the other books of the Institutio Oratoria. Reading a modern edition of the work, such as Radermacher’s, we find that Books 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 12 start with sections of varying length, under the word Prooemium. To judge the value of this heading we must turn to the textual tradition.

42 Note particularly the account of the contents proem 21-22. Appel’s view (p. 88 n. 62) that the work was published in sections is entirely improbable. Cf. Austin p. 47.
Even in the earliest Quintilian MSS we find headings in the text, dividing the books into sections. The number of such headings varies greatly from book to book, with a greater number on the whole in the earlier books. Book 2 has in most versions 21 subheadings, Book 11 has 3. These headings are generally considered to date from the Middle Ages. The usage is not consistent, and even the oldest MSS display great variation from one to another, both in the number of headings and in their wording. Nevertheless, these headings have served as the foundation for the numbering of the chapters to be found in editions from 1516 onwards.

In some of the books, the first of the headings set out in the MSS reads Prooemium. The section containing this heading is then not numbered, and the following section is called Cap. I. This was why the word Prooemium was retained over the text preceding Cap. I when the numbering of the chapters became standardized and accepted, even by editors who removed the other headings from the text. We must not be misled by this into thinking that the remaining headings are more genuine than the others, which are now always either bracketed or given only in the apparatus. In fact, modern editions have the heading Prooemium in a couple of books in which it is lacking in the earliest MSS, at the same time as they omit it in one of the books where it does stand in the MSS. This is due to the editors reproducing at this point the tradition from previous editors, rather than the MSS tradition. This editorial tradition seems to have stabilized fairly late.

---

43 See Austin p. 52, with references.
44 Ammon p. 53.
45 Ammon (loc. cit.) says that this numbering is first found in 1518, but see the edition from Badius, 1516.
46 Strangely enough, Austin seems to accept these headings unreservedly as stemming from Quintilian, in spite of the fact that he quite rightly mentions a few pages later the mediaeval origins of the other headings.
47 In Books 5 and 7 there seems to be no MSS authority whatsoever for these headings. It is impossible, however, to say anything with certainty without having seen the MSS themselves, as even the most exhaustive apparatus criticus (Halm’s) gives very meagre and incomplete information even on the headings in the oldest MSS. This I have discovered when comparing his statements with the actual readings in Ambrosianus E153 (= A in the editions). The relevant parts of this MS were checked for me by dottor Fabrizio Giordano, to whom I take this opportunity of extending my warmest thanks.
48 In Book 3 the heading in A and B reads (according to Halm): Prohoemium de scriptoribus artis rhetoricae.
49 I will give some examples. In the editions from Badius (Paris, 1516 and 1519) the first sections of Books 4 and 5 are headed Prologus, while the beginning of the seventh book is called Cap. I (and in the edition of 1519 given a chapter heading, De Divisione
We can thus establish that the modern use of headings carries no authority in itself and at best dates back to headings which probably appeared in the Middle Ages. We can now pass to a study of what is actually to be found at the beginning of the different books.

Quintilian is in the habit of starting each book with an indication of its subject and most often some form of general comment on this. In several books we find also recapitulations, of varying length, of the substance of previous books (Books 3, 7, 8, 9). After this introductory section, which can vary in length from a sentence or two (Book 9) to 7-8 pages (Book 8), the author passes on to his subject. Sometimes he does this quite abruptly, or with the interjection of some connecting word (7.1.1: *Sit igitur...*; 8.1.1: *Igitur...*). In other books he associates so closely to the themes of the introduction that it is hardly possible to say where the introduction ends and his treatment of the subject proper begins (Books 3, 9, 10).

In spite of the great variation between the introductions, they thus have a certain basic structure in common. The prefaces to Books 1, 4, 6 and 12 go beyond this framework. The common feature of these is that Quintilian speaks of his personal circumstances and situation. In Books 1, 4 and 6 we find also that he addresses Marcellus directly. I think we are justified therefore in distinguishing between two groups of introductions in the *Institution*, one consisting of the four books just mentioned, and the other made up of all the rest. Let me now first give accounts of and then discuss briefly the prefaces to Books 4, 6 and 12.

In the Loëus edition (Antwerp, 1548) the heading *Prooemium* is used in Books 4 and 5, in the former without a chapter number (as is customary in all editions in the case of Books 6, 8 and 12), but in Book 5 together with *Cap. I* and a chapter heading (*De Probationum Divisione*). Book 7 is given here as starting with Chapter I, though with a heading that stands for the entire book in Badius, 1516, namely *De Dispositione & primum de eius utilitate*. Still in Burmann's great edition of 1720 there remain certain discrepancies as compared with the tradition now prevailing. The first section of Book 7 is thus called *Praefatio. De dispositionis utilitate* (but is not, as in the earlier editions, numbered as Chapter I). Also, the first chapter of Book 11 carries here, as in all the other earlier editions I have seen, the heading *Praefatio, & de apte dicendo*.

Only Book 2 lacks all indication of its content at the beginning. But this is mentioned instead in the final sentence of Book 1.

It should be noted that the introductions to these four books are in the MSS consistently labelled *Prooemium* (with due reservations for what I have said of the incompleteness of the *apparatus*). This would seem to be due rather to their being particularly easy to distinguish from the following text than to Quintilian himself having so labelled them. This does not exclude the possibility—or probability—that he himself intended a difference between the two groups of introductions.
The fourth book starts with a direct address to Marcellus. Quintilian says that his responsibility has been greatly increased in that he has been entrusted with the education of Domitian's sister's nephews, the presumptive heirs of the Emperor. Therefore, he says, let none be surprised that I—as others have evoked the Muses at particularly difficult points of their work—now first request the assistance of and evoke all gods, and above all that god quo neque praesentius aliud nec studiis magis propitium numen est (4. proem 5). And, he goes on, this prayer is needed not only for the sake of my continued work as an educator but because I have come to a very difficult section in this work, namely an account of the different parts of a speech by counsel. The preface concludes with a list of these and a passage on the immensity and general difficulty of his task.

Marcellus is directly addressed also in the introduction to the sixth book. Quintilian tells how it occurred to him that if he should suddenly die, this work would be left for his son’s education. Instead he has seen the death of this 10-year old son. Previously, he says, his younger son and his very young wife had died. His pain-filled, loving description of the characters of his wife and sons, and the illness of his elder son, precludes all commentary.

At the close of the preface he says that he has decided in spite of everything to continue his work, to console himself. It ends:
(6. proem 16) Nos miseri sicut facultates patrimonii nostri, ita hoc opus aliis praeparabamus, aliis relinquemus.

Book 12, finally, has a preface of about a page. Quintilian speaks of how the work, which to start with was easy enough as he was on familiar ground, has become increasingly difficult. He likens himself to a sailor who has gone further and further from the safe routes around the coast and is finally quite alone out on the open sea. Although he can feel his strength failing he is unwilling to give up so near the end.

There is no doubt that these prefaces must be considered in conjunction with the first preface and with each other. It is not—as it is in the De Oratore—that the later prefaces partly treat of the same themes as the first. Quintilian rather reserves a number of the matters he wanted to deal with for the later prefaces. Some of them indeed could only with difficulty have been fitted in at the beginning. It is impossible to

52 For the metaphor see below pp. 146 f.
say with certainty whether the later prefaces were written in conjunction with the current text or afterwards. I am inclined to believe the latter, without being able to produce any strong support for this view.53

The three prefaces just discussed present new aspects of the writer's attitudes to the world about him and to his own work. The preface to the fourth book tells us of his position vis-à-vis the imperial house and contains the by then almost obligatory bow to the Emperor.54 The deeply personal introduction to Book 6, which as a human document is unique among Latin prefaces, gives us a picture of his personal background at the time he was writing. The final preface gives us something of his feelings alone with his work, at the same time as we hear him proclaiming with proud humility the greatness of his enterprise.

The information on different events provided in the prefaces to Books 4 and 6 has given rise to a lively discussion as to the chronology of the work. Although these questions are of only peripheral interest for our present purposes it can be in place to make at least a brief survey of the arguments, as they are based on an analysis of the prefaces.

The most debated question has been the date of the publication (and writing) of the *Institution*, followed by the question of Quintilian's relations to the sons of Flavius Clemens, the Emperor's heirs. The best presentation of these problems is undoubtedly that of Colson (pp. xvi-xvii). He establishes exactly what facts are available, and draws such conclusions as the material permits, namely that the *Institutio* was in all certainty published between 86 and 95. He also rejects a couple of earlier theories (p. xvii, n. 1 and 3). Cousin presents several hypotheses in respect of the chronology which are convincingly refuted by Giet. The latter, however, has in my opinion nothing new to say that is of positive value, as regards the chronology. His view that we should assume a pause of about eight months in the writing, over the period of the son's illness, is not only undemonstrable but also highly improbable in that Quintilian had both the opportunity and cause to mention such a break in the work, if it had occurred. Giet unfortunately appears not to have read Colson at all.55

53 Colson is of the same view (p. xix n. 1): "Rather the prooemia are literary embellishments, very probably added when the work was otherwise finished."

54 On its form of invocation see below p. 106 n. 16.

55 Quite fatal is that Giet, who takes as his starting point Quintilian's possible relations with Christians, has not noticed Colson's excellent article on this (*Quintilian, the Gospels and Christianity*, Classical Review 39.166-170).
The Dialogus de Oratoribus

It is impossible to treat even briefly of the Dialogus de Oratoribus without taking sides in the violent debate as to who wrote this work and when. Even quite recently the most divergent views have been put forward. Without pretending to any authority in these difficult matters I would consider that the reasons adduced for rejecting Tacitus as its author seem inadequate. On this, the majority of modern scholars seem to agree. More difficult is the question whether he wrote it around 81 or some time after the death of Domitian. After much hesitation, I have preferred the latter as a working hypothesis. It is for this reason that it is here dealt with after the Institutio Oratoria.56

The preface to the Dialogus begins with a request from the dedicatee: (Dial. 1.1) Saepe ex me requiris, Iust Fabi, cur, cum priora saecula tot eminentium oratorum ingeniis gloriaque floruerint, nostra potissimum aetas deserta et laude eloquentiae orbata uix nomen ipsum oratoris retineat.

It is obvious that this question is for Tacitus a pure convention, with no real content other than that the work is dedicated to Fabius.57 This was realized as early as by Gudeman (pp. 40 f.). He considers that the phenomenon had its origin with the Augustan poets, which as we have seen is incorrect58 in that the theme is to be found even in Hellenistic prose writings and is an integral part of the prefaces to the majority of Roman rhetorical works. The theme also occurs, however, in both poetry and most types of prose work in Tacitus' time, so that Tacitus is following both the tradition in his genre and the general practice of the age. As regards the general attitude to the convention at this time, Gudeman refers to a rather amusing passage in Pliny, showing to what extent the request had already become a formality:

56 The questions of authorship and dating are naturally discussed together as a rule. A systematic résumé of modern research is given, together with a bibliography, by Frot. Syme (pp. 670-673) and Mendell (pp. 5-11) also comment on the earlier scholarship (quoting many articles in addition to those mentioned by Frot) and present their own views. These three authors are in agreement on the attribution to Tacitus. Mendell argues for the period before Domitian, while both Frot and Syme favour the years around 107. Both these views are supported by numerous scholars. Many others support the old dating to the time of Nerva. A contrary opinion in respect of authorship has been presented above all by Paratore, who considers that the work was written by Titinius Capito around the year 100. He has won very little support for this view, however, and the same is true for Herrmann, who maintains that it was written by Quintilian in the year 88.

57 The biography of this Fabius is traced by Syme in The Friend of Tacitus. He became one of Trajan's foremost generals.

58 This view is confuted even by some of Gudeman's own examples, p. 41 n. 1.
When Priscus takes Passennus' introductory words at their face value it makes such a ridiculous and bizarre impression that Pliny can speak of insanity. This indicates quite clearly that from this time onwards a request of this type cannot be regarded as more than a conventional turn of phrase, the possible factual background of which is hardly worth studying.

After the briefly presented request there follows the indication of the subject, so worded as to make clear Tacitus' own opinion of the fate of oratory. Then comes a short mention of how the word orator has fallen into disuse. This is followed by the author's reaction to the request:

(Dial. 1.2) Cui percontationi tuae respondere et tam magnae quaestionis pondus excipere, ut aut de ingeniis nostris male existimandum sit, si idem adsequi non possumus, aut de iudiciis, si nolumus, uix hercule auderem...

Here again we meet an author faced with a dilemma. If he answers the question put by Fabius he risks—if he agrees that the art of oratory has declined—that he will prove incapable of providing a satisfactory answer, or—if he disagrees—that he will be thought to show poor taste. The only way out seems to be to give Fabius no answer at all. But he has found another possibility:

(ibid.) si mihi mea sententia proferenda ac non disertissimorum, ut nostris temporibus, hominum sermo repetendus esset, quos eandem hanc quaestionem iuuenis admodum audui. Ita non ingenio, sed memoria et recordatione opus est.

The parallel with De Oratore 1.2.4 strikes us immediately. But here it is if anything even less plausible to take seriously the author's assurances that he will not be writing independently but only recording a conversation that he has heard. This fiction was connected with the genre of the dialogue long before the time of Cicero. It was part of the mos dialogorum to put one's own opinions in the mouths of the speakers, as Cicero hints to Varro (Ad Fam. 9.8.1).

The entire layout of the preface to the Dialogus is thus strikingly Ciceronian. There is a marked difference, however, between the attitudes

59 Gudeman has discussed this convention too, pp. 45 f.
of the two authors. Tacitus stresses his own inability to handle the subject on his own, in a way that was entirely foreign to Cicero. It is true that Cicero in the *Orator* expresses doubt as to his chances of success, but this is attributed to the extreme difficulty of the subject, which surpasses the ability not only of Cicero but of any writer. Tacitus only says that he would not himself dare to assume the burden involved in answering this question. Others might conceivably manage, but not he. So he stresses far more strongly than his predecessor that he will only be reporting, not presenting any views of his own. His important instrument will be his memory. No perspicuity of his own will be required.

This naturally does not mean that Tacitus was not presenting his own views in the dialogue. Nor am I inclined to believe that this mock self-deprecation was due to the author's youth and inexperience, as proposed by Gudeman (p. 46). It is hardly a general rule that young authors are the most modest. Tacitus is quite simply employing a formula, a generally self-deprecatory form of expression that had been used so often that its real content had become diluted.

As already shown, Latin authors since the Eighties B.C. had been writing in their prefaces of their unwillingness to treat their subject. Soon afterwards this theme was embroidered with an alleged uncertainty as to the author's ability. After considerably more than a century of such prefaces (and undoubtedly there is only a small fraction extant) it is hardly strange if the theme had degenerated into a mere convention. It was obviously more or less good form at this time never to show one's eagerness or even willingness to write. I have tried above to show what circumstances caused the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and Cicero to express unwillingness. The theme was taken up already by Cicero's contemporaries for other and perhaps often less cogent reasons. The theme then spread rapidly, owing to the way in which it put the author in a favourable light. By the time of Tacitus it was certainly almost obligatory, at least in rhetorical works, to explain that one was unwilling but had given way before the pressure of demand.

To understand the function of such an apparently strange pattern of behaviour we can compare it for instance with what in Sweden at least is the procedure for choosing a Chairman, in practically any form of association. Even the most eager candidate cannot decently come forward and campaign on his own behalf. He waits to be asked, and when he is he answers first no or—if he is afraid that he may not be talked

60 E.g. Hirtius.
round with sufficient force—he asks for time to think it over. Finally, after a show of doubt, he gives in, proclaiming that he has felt obliged by the call of duty to sacrifice his personal convenience and assume this heavy and ungrateful burden. Such a pattern of behaviour is pure convention. Both a truly keen and a truly unwilling candidate behave in much the same way, simply because it is expected of them that they should do so and because the feelings that such behaviour presupposes are so natural in the actual situation that anyone can believe that he experiences them. But it must be noted that this convention, although quite natural, is not necessarily associated with this sort of situation. In African countries, for instance, a presumptive leader seems to behave somewhat differently. Environment plays the decisive role.

It seems to me that the themes of unwillingness and a request from the dedicatee to be found in Silver Age and later prefaces work in much the same way. Though they contain no actual lies, their content of fact is minimal. They reflect no extravagant hypocrisy, nor any deep confessions. They quite simply fulfil the demands for decent behaviour laid down by both the author and the reading public.

At the end of the brief preface the writer sketches what is contained in the work:

(Dial. 13) ut quae a praestantissimis uiris et excogitata subtiliter et dicta grauiiter accepi, cum singuli diuersas uel easdem sed probabiles causas adferrent, dum formam sui quisque et animi et ingenii redderent, isdem nunc numeris isdemque rationibus persequar, seruato ordine disputationis. Neque enim defuit qui diuersam quoque partem susciperet, ac multum uexata et inrisa uetustate nostrorum temporum eloquentiam antiquorum ingenii anteferret.

At the same time as he assures us that he has faithfully recorded the real conversation, the writer explains with what is basically the opposite of modesty what the reader can expect. Brilliant men are to present their well-considered views. Their characters are to be delineated through their speeches. One of them, by taking a position contrary to the others (and to the author) will give more life and excitement to the debate. This advertisement discreetly tells us what the author considers to be the outstanding merits of his work. It is striking that he emphasizes the characterization. This aspect of the Dialogus has often been discussed in the literature but it seems to have been overlooked that the author himself stresses it in his own “advertisement” for his book.

The preface to the *Dialogus* thus starts with a request from the dedicatee, followed by a statement of the author’s unwillingness by reason of his inadequacy. For this reason, he says, he has chosen only to reproduce what others have said. Finally, we find a few words on the contents of the work, from which the author’s own view of it emerges. This preface, which is of a brevity suitable to the book, constitutes an excellent example of how a skilled writer at that time could employ the conventional formulae but at the same time vary the pattern in such a way as to avoid the impression of clichés and present the essential character of the work.

It has been found in this chapter that the prefaces to rhetorical works have many features in common. We can speak with justification of a special type of preface, distinguished above all by the themes dedication, request from the dedicatee, the unwillingness of the author due to a lack of time or self-confidence, and his final submission to the dedicatee’s requests. In spite of all the variations, omissions and additions to this scheme, there remains enough of a skeleton in all the prefaces discussed for their kinship to be unmistakable.

There are also certain clear lines of development from the earlier to the later prefaces. It is evident, to begin with, that the themes just mentioned become more and more of a convention. The later writers, for instance, feel less obliged to motivate the request with reasons drawn from reality, and are content just to mention it. Also, the entire preface takes on an increasing flavour of mock modesty. Such a tone is clear even in Cicero and is to some extent inherent in this type of preface, but we see how the expressions used have become surprisingly strong even by the time of Quintilian and Tacitus.

THE HISTORIANS

The prefaces of the ancient historians have been discussed in the literature much more thoroughly than have those of other authors. This is understandable enough. The historians have a very central position in classical research. In their prefaces have been sought—and found—the answers to questions of basic importance for the assessment of their works as a whole, questions as to why the author wrote history, how he regarded history, what aims he was concerned to realize. The prefaces of the three great historians have in the course of this century been
subjected to many such analyses and at least as many conclusions have already been drawn as can reasonably be expected.

In these circumstances it is pointless to go through them in any detail here, though a brief orientation on the historical preface in general seems called for. Let me therefore give first a short survey of the theory of historical prefaces and of their usual themes, and then references to and some discussion of the literature on the different Roman historians. We shall then consider a couple of minor problems, in which a comparison between prefaces from different genres can help clarify a couple of passages in Livy and Tacitus. Finally, we must discuss in some detail a monograph on the preface that Pompeius Trogus is supposed to have written.

Theory

We have extant a methodological study of the art of writing history, Lucian’s Ἡ ἡδής ἡ ιστορίαν συγγράφειν (c. 166 A.D.). This includes a section on prefaces (Chaps. 52-54). G. Avenarius in his careful analysis of the contents of this work has shown (pp. 113-118) that the section on prefaces is—like the rest—entirely dependent on the corresponding doctrines of the rhetoricians in respect of speeches. The only difference is that according to Lucian a writer of history need not, in his preface, endeavour to make the reader well-disposed, but has only to bear in mind the other two purposes of the rhetorical preface, namely to make him attentive and ready to learn (G. Avenarius p. 115). The fact that the laws of rhetoric could be applied almost as they stood to the introductions written by historians would seem to suggest a strong similarity between prefaces in the two genres. And there undoubtedly are striking resemblances. It has been demonstrated, for instance, that Hellenistic historians, as well as Sallust, drew on Isocrates’ manner of writing prefaces. The other historians too have much rhetorical material in their prefaces. But in reality the only conclusion we can draw with any justification is that the rules of rhetoric were so general that they could be applied to any material whatsoever. What preface, for instance, cannot be said to aim at making the reader or listener attentive?

1 Hardly worth mentioning are the few lines De Historia by an anonymous orator, printed in Halm, Rhetores Latini Minores, pp. 588 f. Seven lines deal with prefaces, entirely in the spirit of the rhetoricians.

2 See Biese and La Penna.

3 See Mendell pp. 112-119.

5 Tore Janson
would seem almost as difficult to find one that did not aim at making him docile. And as for making the reader well-disposed, it is impossible in spite of Lucian's words to demonstrate the absence of this purpose in historical prefaces, any more than in rhetorical. Classical theory on historical prefaces can thus be ignored in the present context, in that it was not created on the basis of the actual practice of historians but taken over bodily from elsewhere.

*The usual themes*

There is no doubt but that the Roman historians, particularly Sallust, were influenced by the manner in which the Greek historians had written their prefaces. The general characteristics of Roman historical prefaces became the same as the Greek. For the individual characteristics in Greek prefaces the reader is referred to the systematic studies of Lieberich and Engel. These record very carefully the different *topoi* used by each historian in his preface or prefaces. A similar division into *topoi* for the great Roman historians might take the form of the short survey made below.

1. **Laudatio historiae**: As we have already seen, writers in all genres have a strong tendency to praise their own subjects. From the time of Herodotus, the rule for historians was to maintain in one way or another the general excellence of history. This could be done by stressing its usefulness, its ability to confer immortality or its richness in beauty. In this context the historian was also able to present his personal views on history. The different theoretical views on history, which were formulated at an early stage by the Greeks, were thus widely discussed in the prefaces. Modern research has paid attention to these problems, particularly the discussion as to the boundaries between history and rhetoric and between history and poetry. The basic work here is a section in E. Norden's *Die antike Kunstprosa* (pp. 81-95). More recently, two interesting essays on the subject have been published by Wehrli and Tigerstedt. The matter is also treated by G. Avenarius with reference to Lucian (pp. 13-29). Important views on theories of history among Latin writers are given in Leeman, *Le genre et le style historique à Rome*. Among the Latin authors it is above all Sallust who, by reason of his

---

4 See W. Avenarius and other authors referred to below.
5 A brief survey is also given by Mendell pp. 109-112.
6 An account of the development of this theme in historical prefaces is given by Biese.
particular situation, experiences a truly vital need to justify the writing of history as an occupation. This is pointed out also in the works by Leeman and others cited below.

2. **Reason for choice of subject:** Having shown that history in general is a worthwhile occupation, the historian must indicate why it is particularly necessary to treat of his own special field. All the Roman authors indicate their subject in the preface, and motivate their choice in one way or another. The motives vary. Tacitus explains that the periods he will be dealing with had not previously been treated satisfactorily, while Livy stresses above all the greatness of Rome and the importance of glorifying it. These and the other motives adduced have been analysed and commented in great detail by modern scholars, and the reader is referred to the references below.

3. **The historian's attitude to his work:** It was also common for the historian to say something as to his own situation and his relationship to his work and his subject. An assurance of impartiality was more or less obligatory. Such an assurance is to be found in all three historians. Tacitus gave this idea its definitive form *(Ann. i.i.6)*: *sine ira et studio, quorum causas procul habeo*. Other, more personal attitudes were also presented, e.g. Livy's "flight to the past", which will be mentioned again below.

This division, which like all schematic grouping is somewhat arbitrary, shows roughly what a historical preface normally contained. Like other types of preface it could discuss the subject, the actual work, the person of the author and the relationships between these. It has been suggested above what things are particularly emphasized by the historians. Equally important is that certain themes common in other prefaces are not to be found in the historians. This applies above all to the dedication and everything connected with it. Any form of dedication was clearly a breach of the rules of the genre. This gave the historical preface its distinctive structure.

---

7 In this he draws on the common Greek theme of criticism of the writer's predecessors. See Lieberich 1.16 *et passim*.

8 For this phrase see Ullman. For the line of thought see Vogt *pp. 1 ff.* Phrases of this kind were actually common enough to be parodied *(Sen. Apocol. i)*: *Nihil nec offensae nec gratiae dabitur* (cf. Syme, *Tacitus*, p. 204).

9 Pp. 73 f.

10 Certain minor historians, though, did dedicate their works; see Ruppert *pp. 28-31*. The dedicatory letter of the "Sothis book" that he discusses is however clearly a falsification. Particularly interesting is that Velleius Paterculus in all probability made a dedication. This presages the custom in the historians of the later Empire, see below *p. 116*.
Survey of the literature on the prefaces of Sallust, Livy and Tacitus

In spite of the similarities mentioned, the prefaces of the three great Roman historians differ widely from each other in scope, content and purpose. The longest and in many ways the most interesting are in Sallust's *Catilina* and *Bellum Iugurthinum*. These have also attracted most attention on the part of modern scholars.

In the first place there are the analyses by Leeman (*Sallusts Prologe*), Vretska (*Sallusts Selbstbekenntnisse; Studien zu Sallusts Bellum Jugurthinum*, pp. 8-22) and Büchner (*Sallust*, pp. 93-120). These three scholars clarify the composition and lines of thought of the prefaces so thoroughly that similar studies would seem superfluous for many years to come. In spite of their differences at many points and their extensive polemics against each other, their views can be said to be based on a common understanding of the construction of these prefaces. Their unanimity on important points seems to me to indicate that the detailed discussion of these prefaces during this century, above all in the past few decades, has led to a certain consensus of opinion. Personally I value most of all the articles of Leeman, chiefly for the clarity with which they analyse Sallust's associative and "cyclic" composition.

Other scholars too have recently published valuable contributions to our understanding of these prefaces, but of a less exhaustive nature. La Penna, Olivieri Sangiacomo and Rambaud in particular should be mentioned. La Penna discusses in most detail the influence on Sallust's prefaces from the rhetoricians and from Greek models, particularly among the philosophers. His work is generally very helpful, but his most original contribution, the parallels with Theophylactus Simocatta (pp. 29 f. and p. 96), is not very rewarding. Olivieri Sangiacomo (pp. 79-85 and 155-166) makes well-balanced evaluations of the prefaces without producing any new views of major importance. Rambaud supplies an interesting discussion as to the relationship between Sallust's moral reasoning in the prefaces and the structure of the actual books. His views, however, have to some extent been outdated by the later research of Büchner and Vretska in particular.

---

11 The most detailed references and discussion of the literature after c. 1900 are to be found in La Penna. A wealth of references is given also by Olivieri Sangiacomo.

12 The question of literary models is discussed also, from different points of view, by W. Avenarius, Altheim and Panzerhielm Thomas.

13 Another type of connexion between introduction and work is discussed by Steidle, who analyses both works with a view to demonstrating how Sallust consistently develops a definite theme, that has been indicated in the preface. My own impression is that he has to some extent overemphasized the importance of these themes.
For the introduction to *Historiae*, reference must be made above all
to Klingner’s brilliant interpretation of the fragments (*Einleitung der
Historien*). This introduction has been treated most recently by Büchner
(pp. 121-130).

A few words are in place on the introductions to the two letters to
Caesar, now regarded as genuine by the majority of Sallustian scholars.
The literary form is that of the exhortatory letter introduced by Iso-
crates. It follows from this, so far as the prefaces are concerned, that
they are addressed to the powerful man who is to receive the advice
given in the works. This gives them a decisive formal difference from
the prefaces of Sallust’s historical monographs, to which they are other-
wise closely related. In particular it is to be observed that Sallust con-
ducts the same type of moral reasoning in all his extant prefaces.

Vretska’s edition devotes a very detailed treatment to the epistles,
including the prefaces. For an analysis of the prefaces the reader is re-
ferred to his commentary (*Invektive und Episteln* 2. 63-66 and 185-186).
Particularly interesting is his demonstration of the parallelism in struc-
ture between the preface to the earlier letter and the introduction to
Isocrates’ *Ad Philippum* (op. cit. pp. 64 ff.).

All the above scholars have either awarded the prefaces a positive
value or else have refrained from value judgements altogether. Quite a
number of writers, however, have without closer analysis criticized
these introductions as banal rhetorical performances without originality,
or worse, e.g. Laistner (pp. 52 ff.), Howald (p. 146) and Syme (*Tacitus*,
p. 204). Such judgements, which are mainly a question of taste, cannot
be precisely confuted. Analyses, however, of the type presented by Lee-
man or Büchner would seem to provide a better foundation for under-
standing than any sweeping negative generalisations.

Recent research concerning Livy has perhaps not been quite as inten-
sive as that devoted to Sallust and Tacitus. A number of special studies
on the preface to the first book have been published, however, during
the Forties and Fifties, the 2000th anniversary of Livy’s birth celebrated
in 1943 being particularly rewarding in this respect. A number of
articles have also been published since, and the subject can be said to be
pretty well exhausted for the present. So far as I know, the most recent
treatment of the preface as a whole is that published by Oppermann.
His essay is an excellent summary of recent research and I shall be partly

following him below when presenting much-discussed problems in the preface that are of interest also as parallels to phenomena in prefaces in other genres. References will then be given to other pertinent literature.

In the beginning of his preface, Livy questions his own ability to write a work of value on the history of Rome. Several scholars have justifiably pointed to the parallel with similar statements to be found in Cicero. Livy’s attitude is strikingly like that demonstrated by Cicero in the preface to the *Orator*, analysed above. Both authors express doubt as to their own ability. Like Cicero, Livy depicts his subject as being so extremely difficult that it is granted only to the very few to handle it with success. Livy says that those who perhaps will later overshadow him must possess *nobilitas* and *magnitudo*. As Kerényi has pointed out, this does not basically imply any low evaluation of the author’s own performance. The writer is doubtful not because he considers himself incompetent but because he regards the actual subject as so enormously demanding. So far the parallel with Cicero is complete. At this point, however, Livy was obliged to depart from Cicero’s line of thought. The latter could cite the request from a friend as a reason for writing even so. Livy is prevented by the conventions for the historical preface from bringing in a second person in this way. Instead he adduces the value of reading history and the pleasure he himself has in its writing.

The view of Roman history that is reflected in Livy’s preface is clearly influenced by Sallust’s pessimistic picture of the gradual decline of Roman society. The parallels with the extant fragments of the introduction to Sallust’s *Historiae* are particularly clear and Livy is obviously consciously harking back to this model. Oppermann, however, seems to me to be correct when he states that Livy was also to some extent opposing his predecessor. His preface puts the emphasis on the brighter periods of Roman history, rather than the darker. Towards the end of the introduction there seems actually to be a sort of confession of faith in that future era of happiness, which a few years before had been fervently presaged by Vergil. For if Oppermann is right—as I myself believe—Livy’s invocation of the gods (pref. 13) associates directly to the invocation to Octavian in the beginning of the *Georgics*.15

Apart from Oppermann’s article there should be mentioned in particular the essays by Kerényi and Klingner (Zweitausend Jahre Livius), on whose results Oppermann for the most part builds. Also of importance is a short paper by Amundsen that stresses and clarifies the paral-

15 Cf. below pp. 103 f.
lels with the fragments from *Historiae*. Ferrero has made a detailed analysis of how Livy’s preface is related to the doctrines of the rhetoricians on *prooemium* and to the prefaces of earlier writers. An article by Funaioli seems to me to contain little of interest. Alfonsi demonstrates a parallel between the passage in Livy’s preface that refers to the divine origins of Romulus and a couple of passages in Cicero’s *De Republica*. Dutoit, finally, has pointed to another theme in the preface, the “power that destroys itself”, and its existence in a number of authors.  

Livy also addressed his readers in short introductions to long sections of his work that were published at later dates. We find such introductions in the extant parts in Books 6, 21 and 31. In Book 6 there is a brief statement that it will be possible to portray the next period with considerably greater reliability than the preceding. In the well-known introduction to Book 21, Livy indicates the theme of the decade—the Second Punic War—and explains why this war is of particular importance. In the introduction to Book 31, Livy reflects how his task seems to be steadily growing as he progresses, with a metaphor of men walking from the shallow beach out towards the depths of the ocean. This picture bears a striking resemblance to the ship metaphor in the preface to the twelfth book of Quintilian (see pp. 146 f.).

In spite of the grand proportions of Tacitean scholarship in general, the prefaces to this author’s major works have provoked less discussion than those of other historians. The introduction to the *Annales* is extremely short and contains very little matter for discussion. That to the *Historiae* is longer and shows more of the traditional themes, but this too contains very little of the author’s views on his subject and nothing of any more personal nature. This preface has been treated best and in most detail by Courbaud, who demonstrates the essential line of development from the relatively long, rhetorical and personal preface of the *Agricola*, over to the *Historiae* and on to the brief, impersonal and almost anti-rhetorical preface of the *Annales*. The latest

16 An article by Leggewie makes no contribution at all to our understanding of the prefaces of Sallust and Livy. Some sound views, on the other hand, are to be found in the justly harsh criticism to which this article has been subjected by Vretska (*Die Geisteshaltung*).

17 Livy has here resorted to a well-known theme. See Steidle p. 2 and Hoffmann pp. 7 f., 117 f.


20 His survey of earlier Latin prefaces (pp. 1–9), while very elegant in itself, suffers from the major fault of not even suggesting a Greek influence.
scholars, Mendell (pp. 115-119) and Syme (Tacitus, pp. 145 ff.) have contributed very little over and above Courbaud. Syme deals mainly with the exposition of the matter. The preface to the Agricola, as mentioned above, is closely related to the historical prefaces. It has recently been devoted a very competent study by Büchner (Das Proömium zum Agricola). The introduction to the Germania, which can hardly be termed a preface, has also been treated satisfactorily in recent years, by Melin.

Earlier a matter of heated debate but in the past few decades almost forgotten is the question of the hexameter introducing the Annales (Tac. Ann. 1.1.1): Vrbem Romam a principio reges habuere. Lundström maintained in his article Nya Enniusfragment (1915), against E. Norden in particular, that this line—like the first words of Livy’s preface and the introductory phrase after the preface to the Bellum Iugurthinum—is to be regarded as a conscious loan from Ennius. This question was widely debated during the following ten years but seems to have been overlooked by the majority of modern scholars. Lundström considers himself able to demonstrate that it was a common practice of Roman authors to quote in their introductions some predecessor and in this way confess their dependence on this author, or their appreciation of him. That the whole or half hexameters given are quotations or allusions of some kind seems quite probable. It has been maintained however by Furneaux (pp. 67 f.) and Syme (loc. cit.) that the historians themselves did not hear these hexameter rhythms. And it is extremely bold of Lundström to indicate Ennius as a source, without further evidence. Lundström’s main excess, however, lies in the way he draws conclusions from his hypothesis that this sort of allusion was a general practice, as when he interprets the introduction to the Germania (Lundström, Germania) in this way. Melin also rejects several of his conclusions. Following Lundström, Wijkström demonstrates various parallels, e.g. between the introductory words to the Agricola and a quotation from Cato in the Tusculanae Disputationes 4.2.3. Lately, Alfonsi has noted the same parallel and has also adduced similar passages. A number of similar phenomena will be discussed below (pp. 155-157).

21 For the subtle discussion as to the genre to which the work belongs the reader is referred to Cousin, Histoire et rhétorique dans l’Agricola.
22 On the phrase incondita ac rudi voce in this preface, see below pp. 132 f.
23 Cf. also Thielscher (Das Herauswachsen).
24 See BJ 224.378.
When did Livy write his preface?

An article on Livy's preface published fairly recently warrants an excursus on what is otherwise a not very remarkable matter. Kajanto, in his Notes on Livy's conception of history, points first to one of the best-known themes in the preface, namely the steady decline of the Roman state. He first points out, and exemplifies, the undeniable fact that Livy admires the Romans of old. But for the time after 146 B.C. he considers that Livy's view was consistently pessimistic (p. 61-63). Apart from the fact that this interpretation of Livy's view on history as expressed in the preface must be regarded as extremely one-sided (see the above studies by Amundsen, Klingner and Oppermann, of which not one is cited by Kajanto), the argument itself has a serious fault. Kajanto assumes that the views presented in the preface were held by Livy throughout his entire work. In actual fact, all we can read from the preface is Livy's opinion at the time he wrote it. We must therefore ask when the preface was actually written.

This question was long ago very convincingly answered by Dessau, who shows that it must have been written in 27 or shortly afterwards. Livy published his first pentad—or at least his first book—between 27 and 25. The preface indicates his view of history at this time. What his views were at the close of his work forty years later it is impossible to say, but there is every indication that the man of seventy had different views from the man of thirty.

This is sufficient to refute Kajanto's argument. But the composition of the preface can be dated even more exactly. It is wellknown that an introduction is usually composed after the actual work. Numerous examples can be cited. Cicero puts into Antonius' mouth words to the effect that he usually thinks out the beginning of a speech last (De Oratore 2.77.315). There is no doubt but that Antonius here as elsewhere in the second book functions as Cicero's mouthpiece, and that the passage tells us what Cicero's practice was. We have already had reason

26 A similar method is used—with greater caution—by Walsh (Livy's Preface) to demonstrate certain deviations from the course of impartiality.
27 In his book God and fate in Livy, pp. 23 ff., Kajanto assesses another statement in Livy's preface, this time with greater caution.
28 Cf. also Schanz-Hosius 2.300.
29 See Walsh, Livy, pp. 5-8.
30 A parallel phenomenon is treated by Anderson, who emphasizes very sharply that Juvenal's satirical "programme" in his first satire really applies to the first book alone and to some extent to the second, but not at all to the following books of satires.
to point out that Quintilian wrote his preface to the first book after completing the work as a whole. The author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium* clearly wrote the preface of each of the later books after he had completed the book in question. For modern instances, cf. Ehrenzeller p. 185. In the case of poetry we can mention the striking and quite special example of the beginning of Ovid’s *Fasti*. See also on Horace’s *Odes* 1.1 Kiessling-Heinze p. 2, on Columella Lundström, *Litteraturhistorisk bidrag*, p. 174, and on Ausonius Pasquali p. 413. Examples of the reverse case, the preface being written first, are difficult to find. It is possible to quote Manilius i.113-117:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Hoc mihi surgit opus non ullis ante sacratum} \\
\text{carminibus. Faueat magno fortuna labori,} \\
\text{annosa et molli contingat uita senecta,} \\
\text{ut possim rerum tantas emergere moles} \\
\text{magnaque cum paruis simili percurrere cura.}
\end{align*}
\]

But all this passage shows with certainty is that the author had not completed the entire work at the time of writing. In other words, he can have written this introduction during his final revision of the first book (or books).

Let us now return to Livy. His preface was undoubtedly written for the publication of the first part of his work, whether this consisted of the first book alone, as Walsh believes, or the five first books together. This means that at the time of writing he was in the midst of a portrayal of Rome’s earliest history. If we bear this in mind it becomes easier to understand several of the shades of meaning in the introduction. This is particularly true of the following passage:

\[
\text{(Liu. i. pref. 5) Ego contra hoc quoque laboris praemium petam, ut me a con-} \\
\text{spectu malorum quae nostra tot per annos uidot aetas, tantisper certe dum} \\
\text{prisca illa mente repeto, auertam.}
\]

In his natural attempt to motivate the writing of his work, Livy produces a train of thought that gives excellent cause for employing himself with precisely what he was busy on, Rome’s earliest history, but gives no justification for a Roman history with the emphasis on the civil wars, which is what his work turned out to be. Livy surely realized himself that his wording would not apply to his work as a whole and added the modifying clause *tantisper certe, dum* ... But in the situation in which he found himself, the “escapist” cause was still the most natural one to adduce.

\[31\] See Bömer’s edition, 1.15-20.
Tacitus, in a couple of passages in his prefaces, refers to a future work on the happy time in which he lived. This gives us cause to note how several authors under the Empire referred in a similar manner to plans of writing at some future date on the reigning Emperor and his fortunate age.

The theme appears to have its origins in poetry. The first example is the introduction to the third book of the *Georgics*. The poet asks after the new subject that is to help him to fame and honour. He supplies the answer himself, that his great work will be to sing of Octavian and his deeds (3.16-39). In the meanwhile he will complete the work that Maecenas has requested. The prologue concludes with a renewed assurance that he will soon be singing the praises of Caesar.

This line of thought has been imitated by Statius. In the introduction to his *Thebais* he explains that he is contenting himself for the present with singing of Thebes. Later, however, he will be presenting a work of a different kind:

*(Theb. 1.32 f.)* Tempus erit, cum laurigero tua fortior oestro facta canam: nunc tendo chelyn.

Even when starting the never-completed *Achilleis* Statius had not carried out his promise, which he repeats with a prayer for forgiveness:

*(Achb. 1.17 ff.)* da ueniam ac trepidum patere hoc sudare parumper puluere: te longo necondum fidente paratu molimur magnusque tibi praeludit Achilles.

This theme was practical for one group of prose writers, namely the historians, who could face the same conflict between their own interest in material remote in time or space and the more or less open demand for treatment of their own society and its ruler. Two historians of the first century advertised in this way works on the fortunate era under the current regime. The first was Pliny the Elder. The passage in the preface to the *Naturalis Historia* in which he discusses his historical work reads as follows:

*(Plin. Nat. pref. 20)* Vos quidem omnes, patrem, te fratremque, diximus opere iusto, temporum nostrorum historian orsi a fine Aufidii. Vbi sit ea, quaeres.

---

32 3.8 f.: *Temptanda via est, qua me quoque possess l tollere humo victorque uirum uolitare per ora.*

33 3.46 f.: *Mox tamem ardentis accingar dicere pugnas l Caesaris.*
Iam pridem peracta sancitur et alioqui statutum erat heredi mandare, ne quid ambitioni dedisse uita iudicaretur.

The familiar theme of the historian’s impartiality is somewhat comically combined here with the most obvious deference to the feelings of the Emperor. The mention of Pliny’s historical work in this preface, which is addressed to Titus (te in the quotation above) can hardly have been made for any other purpose than—when publishing a work so relatively unimportant from the recipient’s point of view as a natural history—to cheer him up by referring to the great laudatio that was to come. As in Vergil and Statius, the theme has the double function of promising and postponing the treatment of the subject most dear to the Emperor.

Tacitus, finally, writes in the introduction to the Agricola: (Agr. 3.3) non tamen pigebit uel incondita ac rudi uoce memoriam prioris servitutis ac testimonium praesentium bonorum composuisse. Hic interim liber...

He clearly indicates here that a larger historical work is to be expected and that the present book should be regarded as a sort of prelude. The future work of history is to cover both the unfortunate period under Domitian and the happy time that followed. In his introduction to the Historiae, which covered only “the time of evil”, he once more points to a continuation: (Hist. 1.1.6) Quod si uita suppeditet, principatum diui Neruae et imperium Traiani, uberiorem securoremque materiam, senectuti seposui, rara temporum felicitate, ubi sentire quae uelis et quae sentias dicere licet.

In Tacitus’ case we need not assume any active external pressure of the kind experienced by Statius, for instance, to write on contemporary subjects. It is very conceivable, on the other hand, that Tacitus felt—like Vergil—a conscious responsibility for the commemoration of contemporary events, and at that time he may well have felt it his patriotic duty to record the fortunate period in which he lived.  

---

34 Cf. interim here and interea in Verg. Georg. 3.40!
35 Tacitus’ interest, as we know, was later turned elsewhere. In his introduction to the Historiae (1.1.2) he remarks that Roman history had been satisfactorily recorded only so far as the loss of freedom, with the battle of Actium. In the Annales he chooses the period preceding that dealt with in the Historiae, not that after. Now, however, he says (Ann. 1.1.4) that also the time of Augustus, with certain limitations, has been well portrayed and he thus starts with Tiberius. This seems, however, to have been a transitory view as after a few books he indicates (Ann. 3.24.4) that he will subsequently deal with the Augustan age. Concerning these somewhat confusing facts see Syme, Tacitus, pp. 364-374, whose views however are open to debate.
The preface of Pompeius Trogus

As the fourth great Roman historian certain classical authors mention Pompeius Trogus, though to us he is little more than a name. All that remains of his work are some extracts in Justin, none of which stem with certainty from any preface. Seel, however, published some years ago a monograph that is mainly devoted to an analysis of fragments with a view to recovering parts of the preface that Trogus can be assumed to have written. This monograph is worth studying in detail.

Seel, in his introduction, discusses two passages from Cassiodorus and John of Epiphania (a Greek historian from the 6th century A.D.), passages that Rühl has mentioned as having been influenced by the preface of Justin. Seel would have us believe that both passages are derived directly from Trogus' preface, which he suggests was also used by Justin in his introduction. Seel then (pp. 14 ff.) goes on to discuss other passages in Justin's preface that he considers probably stem from Trogus' preface, too. He concludes this section with the following words (p. 18):

"Damit aber gewinnen die Einzelangaben des Justin in der praefatio einen bisher unerwartbaren Rang, nämlich als ein in nur geringfügiger Brechung doch noch deutlich erkennbares Selbstzeugnis des Pompeius Trogus. Und als methodischer Grundsatz ist dabei festzustellen, dass der Interpret gehalten ist, dieses Zeugnis so lange für wahr und zutreffend zu halten, als es nicht durch zwingende Erwägungen als unhaltbar erwiesen ist, und nicht umgekehrt zu fragen, ob es nicht ebenso gut auch anders denkbar wäre."

The method given is open to criticism. Consistently applied, it could hardly result in more than a series of undemonstrable speculations. Even if Seel, in his later arguments, is more cautious than we might fear from this quotation, he still does not refrain from presenting theories that to me at least seem overly speculative.

After the introductory section, Seel expands his argument to cover the basic problems surrounding Pompeius Trogus' life and work. The views presented are supported by—and used in their turn as support for—the subsequent more detailed analysis of the supposed fragments of Trogus' preface. The overall picture of Trogus that Seel gradually builds up is in itself of great interest. In my own view, however, there are pronounced weaknesses in the basic premiss on which the analysis is made, namely

---

36 Seel, Die Praefatio des Pompeius Trogus. In an edition of fragments of Trogus published shortly afterwards, all the passages discussed in the monograph are presented as coming from the preface.
the attribution to Trogus of almost the whole of Justin’s preface as well as of the passages from John and Cassiodorus. The most important criticisms are given below.

Seel is most certainly correct in his assumption that Trogus did write a preface. All tradition shows that a historical work from that time normally had one. With almost equal certainty, Seel is in error when he suggests that Trogus’ preface probably took the form of a letter of dedication (pp. 35 ff., p. 39). His only ground for this theory is that Justin’s preface is in such a form. Now, to begin with, Justin’s preface lacks the formal marks of an epistolary preface, namely an initial address and a letter ending. Nor is any recipient mentioned by name. All we find to indicate that it is written as a letter are some sentences towards the end (§§ 5-6) in which the author turns to some other person with a request for emendation and a hope that his work will be appreciated. If these sentences, as Seel believes, are borrowed from Trogus then his preface must undoubtedly have been in letter form. But these sentences contain nothing beyond certain highly conventional phrases, and there is no support for the attribution to Trogus other than the fact that they occur in Justin’s preface. In these circumstances it is a highly improbable supposition that Trogus wrote an epistolary preface, thus breaking with the tradition not only from Sallust and Livy but from the whole body of Greek historians, with whom Trogus must have been more familiar than perhaps any other Roman. Because the rule with historical prefaces, as has been pointed out, was that they were not dedicated. There is no reason that I can see to believe that Trogus departed from the traditional type of preface.

The manner in which Seel uses the above-mentioned passages from Cassiodorus and John also deserves discussion. Both passages are briefly quoted by Rühl as early influences from Justin. Rühl gives no other evidence of such influence than the similarities between these passages and certain passages in Justin’s preface. These similarities, as we shall see, are far from literal, and relate to only very brief passages in the text. In both cases, the passages in Justin are no more than a couple of lines long. Seel admits this, but considers nonetheless that Rühl’s “Spürsinn” (p. 26) has put him on the right track. The differences he explains by assuming that Justin’s relationships with Cassiodorus and John consist of a mutual influence from Trogus. He supports this assumption with

37 Cf. below pp. 142 f.
38 Seel does not seem to have noticed this. The introductory letter to Book 8 of De Bello Gallico, which he quotes, is in a work outside the classical genre of History.
analyses—in themselves very ingenious—of the contexts in John and Cassiodorus. In this way he considers that he can demonstrate parallels between their situations and the situation Trogus can be thought to have faced.

The weakness of this method is obvious. It is difficult enough in any case to establish a connexion between brief passages of text with only faint similarities. They can easily reflect similar, but independent lines of thought. To postulate, from two such vaguely similar passages, a definite common—but no longer extant—source and draw conclusions as to the content of that source is even more risky. It is worth showing in detail how such a method leads to untenable suppositions and conclusions.

Rühl quotes the following passage from John of Epiphania:

(Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum 4.273) τὸν ἐμπροσθὲν μοι δοκεὶ διὰ βραχὺν μνημονεύοντα πρῶτον, οὔτω καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀφικέθαι λέγων ὡς τοὺς μὲν ελεύτερα ὑπομνημόνημα τῶν κεχινημένων, τοὺς δὲ μηθενελοὺς ἀποκοστάς τὰς ἀφορμὰς ἔχειν εἰθέναι σαφῶς ἀφ’ ὅν τὰ μετὰ ταῦτα πραγματεύεται ἔγγονοι.

This Rühl takes to be an imitation of Justin, pref. 4:

(florum corpusculum feci) ut haberent et qui Graece didicissent, quo admonereantur, et qui non didicissent, quo instruerentur.

To explain the strange circumstance that a 6th century Greek author should have imitated a little known Latin epitomist, Rühl simply remarks that Latin learning was at that time experiencing a renaissance in Constantinople.

So far as I can see, the similarity between the two passages is restricted to the fact that both contain an intention of communicating knowledge—expressed by clauses with ut and ὡς respectively—in two phrases, the first indicating the author’s intention of reminding those who already know, the latter his intention of teaching those who are ignorant. The parallel thus exists in the general train and syntactical expression of the thought, but not in the choice of words (not a single word except the conjunction can be said to have been directly translated), nor in the concrete expression and aim of the thought. The similarity consists, in fact, of a figure of thought of a quite trivial nature. Even if we knew that John had read Justin we could hardly describe this passage as more than a recollection of an earlier work. To assume a direct influence on the basis of this similarity, in spite of its inherent improbability, is strange, to say the least. Even if we believe that there is a connexion between the two passages it need not be more than very indirect. To indicate the
exact nature of this putative connexion would perhaps be impossible even if we were acquainted with all the classical literature ever written.

Seel, however, tries to show that the connexion must consist of a common influence from Trogus. He considers that Justin has borrowed the entire phrase more or less literally from Trogus, while John has changed it to suit his purposes. To this we must reply for the first that it is no more probable that John had read Trogus than that he had read Justin. Furthermore, Seel’s analysis of the passage from John gives no further support for his hypothesis than that John—like Trogus, according to another of Seel’s hypotheses—needed to explain why he had recalled earlier periods, to give the reader the necessary background. The parallel is not proved and even were it correct, it says nothing as to any influence.39

Seel, having established to his satisfaction the influence from Trogus in respect of the passage quoted, goes on to ask whether also other parts of John’s preface should not be regarded as stemming from the Roman historian (pp. 48 f.). He considers this highly probable and in his publication of the fragments he presents a large portion of John’s preface as a loan from Trogus (fragm. 16 c). This applies above all to John’s variations on the enormously common theme of the “use of history and its conferring of immortality” (cf. below pp. 149 f.). Lieberich (2. 13-15) has shown, however, that John’s preface, and this section in particular, is shaped entirely in accordance with current Greek tradition for the writing of history. He even shows that several parts of the “Trogus fragment” as presented by Seel have close parallels in Agathias, a somewhat earlier Byzantine historian. Lieberich has in all modesty found the true parallel between two contemporary authors writing in the same city on similar subjects, while Seel, in spite of his high aspirations, has extracted nothing of any value from his far-fetched comparison between John and Justin.

Let us turn to the second parallel drawn by Rühl and discussed by Seel. Justin writes in his preface:

(pref. 4) cognitione quaeque dignissima excerpsi et omissis his, quae nec cognoscendi uoluptate iucunda nec exemplo erant necessaria, breue ueluti florum corpusculum feci.

39 The argument as to the putative relationship between John and Trogus contains also an error of translation. The phrase τοις δὲ μητρίως ἀκακοδοτας does not, as Seel maintains at great length (pp. 46 f.), mean “solchen, die es ‘nur nicht mehr so richtig wissen’ ” but “those who do not know at all”, which refutes his explanation of how John is supposed to have adapted the Trogus passage to his own situation.
The author likens his work of compilation to a bouquet of flowers. Seel (pp. 23-26) regards this idea as stemming from Trogus (with the exception of the words *cognoscendi voluptate iucunda*) and considers that an influence from Trogus can be demonstrated also in the passage by Cassiodorus that Rühl regards as influenced by Justin:

(Var. 9.25.5) Originè Gotica històriam fecit esse Romanam, colligens quasi in unam coronam germen floridum quod per librorum campos passim fuerat ante dispersum.

Seel considers that Cassiodorus’ mode of expression, which stresses the new whole created from the selected material, suits better than Justin’s phrase the situation in which Trogus must have found himself and he concludes that Cassiodorus keeps more closely to the putative model than Justin does. He indicates particularly as material from Trogus the metaphor of the garland and the actual wording *colligens in unam coronam germen floridum*.

This hypothesis of Seel’s is considerably less improbable than in the case of John of Epiphania. We know from other evidence that Cassiodorus had probably read Trogus’ *Historiae Philippicae* or at least another version of his history than Justin’s. An influence from this is thus not in itself incredible. It is only reasonable, however, to seek other evidence of a similar nature before postulating a lost source. Let us consider certain relevant passages.

We can start by comparing the passage in Justin with the statement of Gellius, who was roughly his contemporary, possibly a generation older:

(Gell. 1. pref. 12) eaque sola accepi, quae aut ingenia prompta expeditaque ad honestae eruditionis cupidinem utiliumque artium contemplationem celeri facilique compendio ducerent aut homines aliis iam uitae negotiis occupatos a turpi ... imperitia uindicarent.

Seel maintains that Justin’s phrase about “selecting” harks back to a passage in Trogus, where the author speaks of what he has selected from the Greeks (p. 32). Gellius, however, shows a practically identical approach, which he words in a manner strikingly reminiscent of Justin. All I am concerned to show is that the thought is an entirely natural one for compilers and is

40 The idea of selecting from a large material only what is most valuable reoccurs very frequently in later authors. Cf. Curtius *Eur. Lit.* p. 168, particularly n. 8, and for a special variant below p. 154.

6 Tore Janson
frequently to be found in them and that it is idle to postulate from such phrases the nature of any supposed source.

Turning to the more unusual features in Justin and Cassiodorus, namely the metaphors of the flowers and the wreath, we find a great deal of material worth quoting. In the first place, Cassiodorus himself repeatedly uses similar expressions elsewhere. His introduction to Historia Tripartita contains two metaphors from the picking of flowers:

(pref. 2) necessarium duximus eorum dicta deflorata in unius stili tractum domino iuuante perducere et de tribus auctoribus unam facere dictionem.
(pref. 3) iudicauimus de singulis dictoribus deflorata colligere.

But there is a still more interesting parallel. The passage treated by Seel, Variae 9.25, is about Cassiodorus’ History of the Goths (a work not extant). This work is alluded to also in the preface of the Variae, and there, too, a similar metaphor is used:

(Var. pref. 11) duodecim libris Gothorum historiam defloratis prosperitatibus condidisti.

It can be added that Jordanes, when he shortened this same History, used in his epilogue almost exactly the same image as in Var. 9.25:

(Iordan. Get. 316) Haec qui legis, scito me maiorum secutum scriptis ex eorum latissima prata paucos flores legisse, unde inquirenti pro captu ingenii mei coronam contexam.

Jordanes also used a similar metaphor in the introduction to his later work:

(Iordan. Rom. pref. 2) ex dictis maiorum floscula carpens.

All this taken together gives us cause to assume that Cassiodorus also in the introduction to the lost History of the Goths used the metaphor of “picking flowers and binding a wreath”. The supposition is not entirely safe but is very probable. If we are concerned, like Seel, to study Cassiodorus’ possible sources for the metaphor then we must at all events take all these passages into consideration and not just the one quoted by Seel.

Even so, it is not enough to consider all the passages in Cassiodorus, Jordanes and Justin. Other authors, too, must be brought into the pic-

42 These words are put into the mouths of friends who are presented as if they were speaking to Cassiodorus and persuading him to publish the Variae.
ture. Jerome, for instance, almost 200 years before Cassiodorus, discussing his predecessors in the preface to one of his best known works, wrote:

(Hier. Vir. Ill. pref.) Illi enim historias ueteres annalesque replicantes potuerunt quasi de ingenti prato non paruam opusculi sui coronam texere.

Here we have both the meadow and the wreath. In Eugippius, half a century before Cassiodorus, we find:

(Eugipp. CSEL 9:1.2) quaedam uelut ex ingenti prato floribus asperso caelestibus ex librorum eius quae data est copia inops aegerque conlegi.

and in Isidorus a century later:

(In Gen. pref. 2) ueluti ex diuersis pratis flores lectos ad manum fecimus.

It is naturally possible to try to determine the exact relationships of all these quotations with each other, and on the basis of such an analysis perhaps search for a common source. I doubt, however, whether such a method can give any tenable results in a case like the present. It is clear, anyhow, that Seel's analysis of only the two passages in Justin and Cassiodorus is misguided, in that he has not noticed that the metaphor analysed is common property in late Latin prefaces.

AGRICULTURAL HANDBOOKS

For long stretches of Rome's period of greatness, Italian agriculture was the subject of anxious concern. The recurrent crises and painful structural changes were one of the most important indirect causes of the terrible conflicts during the last century of the Republic. Even when there was no acute crisis the governing circle in Rome had its attention continually focussed on the problems of agriculture, partly of course because the leading men in the city were invariably great landowners.

In these circumstances it is only natural that agricultural handbooks should have been written from early on. Such works could safely count on attracting the interest of a relatively wide public. Nor—as was the case with rhetorical theory—were there any social prejudices to be overcome. On the contrary, agriculture had from olden times enjoyed the very highest social prestige. Writers on the subject had in principle simply to maintain the validity of the traditional judgements. Even so, such authors were seldom free from problems. A work on agriculture was necessarily in part a proposal for the solution of vital questions.
Basically, it seldom sufficed to refer to the beliefs of the men of old. Let us now study how three Latin writers on agriculture, Cato, Varro and Columella, give in their prefaces accounts of their own views on the subject.

_Cato_

The entire preface to Cato's book on agriculture is devoted to a comparison between different ways of earning a living, with on the one hand agriculture and on the other trade and banking.\(^1\) The disposition of this brief preface requires some clarification.\(^2\) In his first sentence Cato states that trade and banking could be (economically) preferable (to agriculture), were it not for their riskiness and dishonesty respectively. The plan of the rest of the preface is clearly to deal first with banking, then with trade and finally with agriculture. The second sentence obviously approves the custom of “our ancestors” of condemning a thief to double fine, a _fenerator_ to quadruple. After this discouraging dismissal of the banking world, the writer does not continue at once with the merchant but—since he has now mentioned the Romans of old—takes the opportunity of describing their attitude to agriculture in a passage that is worth quoting:

(Cato _Agr._ pref. 2) *Et uirum bonum quom laudabant, ita laudabant, bonum agricolam bonumque colonum. Amplissime laudari existimabatur qui ita laudabatur._

Then follows a sentence on merchants, paying tribute to their energy but summing up their occupation with a repetition of what has already been said of its risks. Finally comes the writer’s own assessment of agriculture:

(_Agr._ pref. 4) *At ex agricolis et uiri fortissimi et milites strenuissimi gignuntur, maximeque pius quaeusus stabilissimusque consequitur minimeque inuidiosus, minimeque male cogitantes sunt qui in eo studio occupati sunt._

\(^1\) As Klingner (*Cato Censorius* p. 254) has pointed out, Cato most certainly took the actual idea of writing a preface with this type of content from the Greeks.

\(^2\) Leeman analyses this preface in _Orationis Ratio_ pp. 22 f. He there points out a fact of great importance, namely that the division of the arguments for agriculture into one line concerning its freedom from _periculum_ and another concerning its _honestas_ has its background in rhetorical theory. For in the _genus deliberatium_ the arguments for the usefulness of something are divided thus: _Vtilitas in duas partes in ciuili consultatione diuiditur: tutam, honestam_ (*Rhet._ Her. 3.2.3). This has no direct bearing on Cato's factual reasons for the composition of the preface, which is what I treat here, but is extremely interesting as a proof of rhetorical influence in an author where one would least expect it.
The preface then concludes with a brief transitional phrase.

In this preface are interwoven two different types of argument in favour of agriculture, the ethical and the economic. In order to clarify Cato's manner of argument we must distinguish as far as possible between them.

The ethical argument aims to show that the farming life is morally better than any other. Two lines of thought are presented. The first comprises a reference to the view of the Romans of old. In a society as enormously bound by tradition as that of the Republic it was of the greatest importance to be able to quote the opinions of the men of old. Cato himself was also a traditionalist of the purest water. Emotionally, he knew of nothing more strongly attractive than what he felt to be a heritage from the early Romans.

The other moral argument is of a more practical nature. From the farming class come the bravest men and the best soldiers, and persons in this occupation are the most upright (minime male cogitantes).

These two arguments are naturally interrelated. In Cato's view, the reason why the Romans of old valued the life of the farmer so highly was above all its beneficient effect on the character (even if he does not expressly say this). Cato follows the ideology of the old Italian farming class. His ideal was the type probably represented by his own father, farmers who looked after their estates, took part in war and were active in political life.4

If we confront these views on the merits of the agricultural life with the reality that is reflected in the work that follows,5 the result is somewhat surprising. In fact, there is no place at all for a farmer on the sort of holding that is described. Cato rather describes a small estate, looked after by a uilicus, a steward. The owner himself is not assumed to live on the estate for more than brief periods.6 It is hard to conceive how this occasional visitor could be fostered by country life to be fortis or strenuus. Even more difficult, however, would it be to conceive Cato as meaning that it was the persons living on the farm, the uilicus and his subordinates, who were blessed with these outstanding qualities. Cato's

3 See Klingner, Cato Censorius pp. 243 f.
4 Cf. Frank p. 162.
5 Frank gives a survey of the conditions of agricultural economics implied by Cato's work (pp. 160-172) with a wealth of quotations but unfortunately few comments.
6 See Chap. 2.1. In Chap. 4 the owner is urged to build himself a good villa urbana on his estate, to entice him there more often.
entire view of life is patriarchal. There is no doubt but that he regarded people of his own social class as in all respects the most important, and that it was them he was addressing in his work. It is hardly reasonable to suppose that he would have consciously portrayed these people as morally inferior to their subordinates.

One is also struck by the type of farm Cato chooses to describe. Its most important products by far are wine and olives. In the very detailed descriptions of the staff and equipment needed for the olive grove and vineyard he departs from the idea of a farm of 100 iugera and a varied production as hinted in the first chapters, and assumes instead exclusive cultivations of olives on 240 iugera and wine on 100 iugera. These cultivations are conceived as equipped with presses of what—to judge from the exhaustiveness of the description—must have been a quite unusual size and kind. This is a far cry from the type of farm we can imagine as run by a bonus agricola bonusque colonus of the old Italian farmer class. What would he have done with such quantities of wine and oil? He could never have disposed of them either to his neighbours or in the market.

The reality portrayed in Cato's book thus chimes very badly with the moral argument presented in the preface. On the other hand it fits the economic arguments very well indeed. The picture of Cato and his environment that emerges when we study the introduction from this aspect is most interesting.

Cato is concerned to show that from agriculture there comes maxime pius quaestus stabilissimusque, as compared with trade and banking. He ought therefore, in all reason, to be writing for people who had some possibility of choosing between these different forms of livelihood. To carry out the dangerous trading activities that Cato envisaged it would be necessary to live in a port. Both merchants and moneylenders must

7 See in particular Chap. 1.7, though Cato reverts to the cultivation of these two products throughout the entire book.
8 Chaps. 10 and 11 respectively.
9 It is beyond my competence to judge how far this and many other inconsistencies in the construction of the book can be explained by the hypothesis put forward by Hörle. This scholar maintains that the book preserved is a compilation of a number of smaller works, originally entirely independent of each other, with short sections inserted in between.
10 Chaps. 12-13, 18-22.
11 Frank pp. 171 f.: "Cato's book shows the beginnings of specialized farming with slave gangs on a relatively large scale."
obviously have abundant access to cash. The circle for whom Cato was writing and to which he himself belonged was thus in a situation as unlike as possible that of the resident farmer. They were capitalists in a Rome that had already started to develop into a commercial metropolis of Hellenistic type, with a good flow of capital and markets for large volumes of desirable products. The majority of these men were without doubt landowners by inheritance, if not by purchase, but their interest in land was not that of the farmer, only that of the owner.

The two lines of argument interwoven in Cato's preface thus have no real connexion in fact. Cato's moral arguments presuppose conditions that no longer existed—at least not in the type of agriculture with which Cato was concerned. This is not to say that they were meaningless. They are presented in the preface to assure to agriculture the high renown accorded by the traditional Roman standards. The ancestors—the old Roman farmers—are mobilized as revered ghosts to give prestige to an economic investment. The economic arguments, on the other hand, are aimed to recommend a realistic and so far as we can judge advantageous form of financial investment. Such arguments should have aroused the interest of the persons at whom they were directed.

12 A wealth of literature is available on Cato's personality, social position and political convictions. Consideration has been paid in the present study above all to Klingner and Kienast, who represent largely opposing views. The former sees Cato above all as a farmer's son from the land of the Sabines, a champion of the farming population of Italy and the sworn enemy of the senatorial aristocracy. The latter regards him as an upstart who had quickly allied himself to the ruling class and become the central figure in the majority side of the senatorial aristocracy, in opposition only to the few leading families, the Scipios and others. The plentiful but often contradictory sources permit both interpretations (and perhaps others). The picture gained from the book on agriculture fits Kienast's view rather than Klingner's. Naturally, however, it is impossible to assume without further argument a direct connexion between Cato's political activities—which is what Kienast is primarily discussing—and his private financial position and transactions. Politically it is perfectly possible for a capitalist in Rome to have represented the Italian farming population. It is clear enough, on the other hand, that it is the economist and capitalist who is speaking in the work under discussion here.

13 See the calculations on the profitability of the olive plantation put forward by Frank, p. 171.

14 It should be noted how Cato has selected the forms of livelihood to be contrasted with agriculture. Moneylending and its shamefulness provide an effective foil to agricultural pietas in the moral argument. The dangers of being a merchant are set off against the security of the farm in the economic argument. Plutarch postulates in fact that Cato devoted himself to both trade and usury. His source is probably a pamphlet aimed against Cato (see Kienast p. 24) and this information should therefore perhaps be viewed with greater scepticism than is shown by Klingner (p. 256) and Kienast (pp. 35 f.).
Varro

When Varro, more than a century later, wrote his handbook on agriculture, the situation in Italy had changed greatly. The economic development whose beginnings can be traced in Cato's book had proceeded at an increasingly rapid pace. The burden of the continual wars was borne above all by the farmers. The riches of the provinces passed more and more into the hands of the affluent upper class, which in this way acquired the funds to purchase more and more of the old agricultural land. Cheap imports of grain from the provinces made the situation still worse for the small and medium-sized farms, which gradually disappeared in favour of the *latifundia*, which produced less per surface unit and which were operated with the help of slaves. One of the results was a strong flow of population from the country to the towns.\(^\text{15}\)

Varro thus saw Italian agriculture in a critical, almost catastrophic situation and could hardly avoid adopting some position on current problems. This he does above all in the preface to Book 2:\(^\text{16}\)

\[\text{(Varro Rust. 2. pref. 1)}\] Viri magni nostri maiores non sine causa praeponebant rusticos Romanos urbanis. Vt ruri enim qui in uilla uiuunt ignauiores, quam qui in agro uersantur in aliquo opere faciendo, sic qui in oppido sederent, quam qui rura coherent, desidiosiores putabant.

Varro, like Cato, maintains the value of farming as an occupation by citing the opinion of the old Romans. Unlike Cato, however, he addresses himself to a clearly defined theme, the superiority of country life to town life when it comes to fostering citizens. The Romans of old preferred, according to Varro, the life of the farmer mainly for moral reasons.

This argument naturally signifies that Varro himself was concerned to maintain the moral value of the agricultural life, and sought support in the views of the early Romans. We can mention in passing that there is no reason to doubt that the members of the old Roman farming

\(^{15}\) See Ruelens. Cf. also della Corte, pp. 91 ff.

\(^{16}\) The general problems of agriculture are not treated in the preface to Book 1. I therefore do not deal with it here, and just mention it in the section Other specialists. The introduction to Book 3 deals in part with the same themes as the preface here analysed, but less extensively. I have considered it unnecessary to take up this preface for discussion, as the writer's attitude is in principle the same as in the introduction to Book 2. It should be pointed out that Varro writes unusually independent introductions to his different books. The three prefaces in De Re Rustica are thus dedicated to three different persons. In a similar way, Books 2-4 of De Lingua Latina are dedicated to one Septimius, but Book 5 and the following to Cicero. See the article by Barwick on this.
society did in fact maintain that value. More interesting, however, is the extent to which the traditional high opinion of country life survived in Varro's own time. It is probable that those who set the tone really did tend to exalt country life in theory even at this time. Vergil's Georgics, to take just one example, were published a few years after Varro's work. A subject on which the great poet of the age wrote one of his great works can hardly have been regarded as uninteresting or trivial in the circles in which he moved.

Some evidence can be found, on the other hand, of a contrary attitude. Sallust, speaking of his reasons for devoting himself to history, says:

\[(Sall. \textit{Cat. 4.1})\] non fuit consilium socordia atque desidia bonum otium contere, neque uero agrum colundo aut uenando, seruilibus officiiis, intentum aetatem agere.

This is a violent attack against the very core of Varro's reasoning. Far from being morally edifying, agriculture is a \textit{seruile officium}, a job for slaves. Sallust's ideal, as we know, was the man who performed great deeds by the force of his spirit. He has no sympathy at all for tasks that do not lead to a higher goal. Such should in his opinion be assigned to slaves, not performed by free and competent men.

There can hardly be any doubt but that Varro's view of the moral value of agriculture lay closer the general opinion of the time than Sallust's, which was bound up with his very particular outlook, influenced in many respects by Greek philosophical thought. But that Sallust could actually put forward such a view, which must have shocked many people, is a sign that circles existed in which agriculture was held in no great esteem.

Varro, too, goes on to paint a dark picture of the contemporary attitude to farming. After further praise of the wisdom from the Republic's early days comes a scornful reference to \textit{Graecorum urbana ... gymnasia} (2. pref. 2). He then describes how the contemporary Romans were not content even with occasional \textit{gymnasia} in their villas, but had a wide variety of different premises with Greek names.\(^\text{17}\) There follows, with no clear logical connexion, a complaint that grain and wine were now imported into Italy, because the heads of families preferred to

\(^{17}\) Varro's attack on the Greek way of life is from his point of view quite justified. Greek culture was very much an urban culture, with no counterpart to the Roman esteem for agriculture. The Greek way of thought, in so far as it was spreading, was undoubtedly also weakening the feeling for the great value of agriculture. Sallust has already given us an example of this.
applaud at circuses and theatres rather than till the earth. Then comes a remarkable sentence:

(Varro Rust. 2. pref. 4) Itaque in qua terra culturam agri docuerunt pastores progeniem suam, qui condiderunt urbem, ibi contra progenies eorum propter avaritiam contra leges ex segetibus fecit prata, ignorantes non idem esse agri culturam et pastionem.

Varro's condemnation of the new age here culminates in an effective contrast between the Romans of old and their corrupted heirs, ending with the powerful phrase *propter avaritiam contra leges ex segetibus fecit prata*. But—and this is the remarkable thing—the period does not end here. As an explanation over and above the already given *propter avaritiam*, the author adds “because they are unaware that agriculture and cattle-breeding are not the same thing”. This breaks the point of his entire moral criticism of the age, as given in the main part of the sentence. For, if their behaviour is due to ignorance, then it is nothing to be morally indignant about. The sensible thing would be to enlighten these ignorant persons. This seems to occur also to Varro, as from the word *ignorantes* onwards the preface contains no further condemnation of the age. Instead the writer passes to a lengthy analysis of the theoretical difference between agriculture and cattle-breeding, and the practical points at which they touch.\(^\text{18}\) Gradually, he comes round to indicating the subject of the book, which is precisely cattle-breeding.

The composition of the preface is hardly brilliant. Its first half is devoted to condemning contemporary society for its effeminacy and lack of interest in agriculture. But just when this moral argument reaches its peak the author changes his approach in mid-sentence, and the second half is devoted entirely to the division of his material. This is indeed a sorry anticlimax.

But it is not only from the formal point of view that this sudden termination of the first line of argument is unsatisfactory. Varro breaks off just when he has begun to concretize his attack on contemporary society in an interesting way. While the main bulk of his accusation is very general and traditional, he notes—in the sentence just quoted—as a very special crime that cultivated land has been turned into pasture. We could have expected Varro at this point to have adopted some position on the practical solution to this question, one of the great prob-

\(^{18}\) On Varro's marked delight in careful divisions of his subject, see Fuhrmann p. 163.
lems of agriculture at that time. Instead he goes on to analyse the not particularly subtle distinction between agriculture and cattle-breeding.

Varro’s attitude to agriculture, as it emerges from the preface under discussion, is worth comparing with that of Cato. Their moral arguments as to the superiority of agriculture as an occupation are largely parallel. The main difference is that Varro attacks what he considers to be the attitude of contemporary society. Unlike his predecessor he thus sees and maintains that the situation of agriculture is unsatisfactory. In fact it must have been difficult by this time not to see this. But it is striking how negative and inadequate his criticism appears. It contains no proposals for improvement, merely points back to the old days. Nor does Varro specify what persons he is attacking—his most precise expression in this respect is *patres familiae*—and only on a couple of points does he indicate specific developments of which he disapproves, namely the *Graecorum gymnasia* and the use of land for pasture. Basically, his criticism seems to consist largely of irritated complaints that things are no longer what they used to be. Varro sees the great problems facing agriculture but lacks the force to penetrate them: he contents himself with deploring the changes in the old order, making a purely moral problem of what was basically an economic and social question.

This attitude can be explained in terms of what we know of Varro and his situation at that time. First and foremost he was an old man, according to the preface to Book 1 in his eightieth year. At this age it is only natural to look backwards rather than forwards, and he can surely be forgiven if he was unable to penetrate contemporary problems. Also, his active political career was by this time far behind him, the decades immediately preceding having been devoted mainly to the academic study of early Roman history. He certainly also had a romantic longing for this period. Such a man was bound to have a strong propensity to refer to the attitude of the early Romans as exemplary in any situation whatsoever.

Finally, it can be of interest to compare the attitudes of Varro and Cato in practical and economic questions. On this level they work entirely after the same pattern. Varro, too, describes the type of farming practiced in his day, and to which he had successfully devoted himself. This means that of the three books, the whole of the second (whose pre-
face we have just analysed) is devoted to cattle-rearing, the excessive spread of which he castigates so strongly in the preface. Even more remarkable is that this champion of the simple customs of Rome’s ancestors should devote an entire book (Book 3) to the breeding of delicatessen. The moral aspects of the matter are stressed in the preface but kept carefully distinct from the author’s description of his own activities in practice.\(^{21}\)

**Columella**

Columella, unlike his predecessors whom we have just discussed, is known only as a writer on agriculture. His work, like theirs, is a practical handbook in agriculture, but is a step ahead in both scope and quality. Its volume (twelve books) makes it, in fact, more of an encyclopaedia than a handbook. It provides information that is far more exhaustive in character than that in Varro, not to mention Cato. Almost every page bears witness to the writer’s thorough theoretical studies and practical experience. Columella devoted his entire life to agriculture, and his insight was naturally much deeper and wider than that of Varro, who was occupied mainly with the study of other subjects, or of Cato, whose main concern was politics.

Columella has introductions of varying length to every book except Book 7, which contains only the address to Publius Silvinus that is to be found in all of them.\(^{22}\) For our present purposes we need consider only the preface to Book 1, which gives a good picture of the author’s literary personality and in which he states the essentials of his attitude to the subject.

I have often heard,\(^{23}\) the preface begins, our state’s leading men complain of the poorness of our soil and the unsuitableness of our climate. Some people reply that the earth has become unfruitful through excessive fertility. These reasons I consider to be far from the truth. For it is unreasonable to imagine that nature, which has been endowed by its creator with eternal fertility, should be struck by unfruitfulness, and that she who has received eternal youth and been called the Mother of All should have aged like a human being. The difficulties encoun-


\(^{22}\) On questions of dating in connexion with the prefaces, see Lundström, *Litteratur-hist. bidrag*, pp. 174 f.

\(^{23}\) On the allusion of these first words to passages in Cicero and Seneca, see Lundström, *Nya Enniusfragment* p. 7. Cf. above p. 72.

92
tered are the fault not of the climate but of ourselves, in that we leave the care of the soil in the hands of incompetent slaves.

This introduction (1. pref. 1-3) to the long preface has been analysed by Suaudeau. He shows that Columella here and in a section of the preface to Book 2 presents a general theory of agriculture that ran counter to the doctrines generally current in classical antiquity (but which have been revived in modern times, first by the Physiocrats). Columella’s argument is briefly that the earth will never deteriorate if it is tilled with care and well fertilized.

What does this mean in practice? Columella was a farmer in Italy during the greater part of his adult life. He belonged to or at least had contacts with the leading circles in Rome. He was writing of Italian conditions and addressing himself to his peers, the landowners of Italy. As already mentioned, development was towards larger farm units with lower exploitation and smaller yields per surface unit. This development was naturally favoured by the theory of the aging of the earth. Columella was attacking a view that gave landowners an excellent reason for using land for pasture, as the cultivation of aged land would not pay in any case.

Columella shows by this attack that he was really interested in more intensive and more efficient farming in Italy. He also demonstrates that he had sufficient insight to be able to indicate practical approaches to his goal. In this he goes beyond the limits of his predecessors, who had neither the will nor the ability to come to grips with the basic problems of Italian agriculture and seek a solution. His optimistic doctrine won, however, no support in classical times, and it was only some fifteen hundred years after its original presentation that it had any important influence.

Columella continues his preface with a pessimistic review of the agricultural situation. There are no schools in this subject, he says, although it would be of much greater value to teach this than many other subjects now studied. Agriculture, the best of all occupations, is moreover held in contempt and has to make way for other occupations that are useless or shameful. Worst of all, the landowners no longer cultivate their property themselves, but leave their farms in the hands of the worst of the slaves. The Romans of old regarded farming as the

24 Exemplified in Sergeenko, p. 70.
25 It should be noted, however, that Columella was not opposed to cattle-breeding in itself, only to its excessive spread. Cf. Olson pp. 70 ff.
26 See Suaudeau pp. 7 ff.
best of occupations. Now we only live at our ease within the city walls. In the olden days, when the Romans were a physically fit people, townsmen were regarded as duller than country people. In spite of all the wars, farmers produced more than now, when we are forced to import to keep ourselves alive. Agriculture is regarded nowadays as easy to learn and not particularly demanding. But I fear that life will prove insufficient when I survey the enormity of the subject (there follows a long list of the different aspects and problems of agriculture). Presumptive students of the subject should not, however, be deterred by all this.

This brief account of the preface, which is some ten pages long, should suffice to give an idea of its spirit and general structure. Occasionally Columella points to the lack of important possibilities for improvement, which have been neglected by others. This applies particularly to his strong emphasis on the importance of teaching and training. But on the whole we recognize the contents of this main section of the preface all too well. Columella stresses the general superiority of agriculture above all other occupations, just as Cato did in his preface. He also castigates the contemporary way of life, above all naturally its lack of appreciation of agriculture, and longs for a return to the time of the truly virtuous—viz. the farming—Romans of old, all this being in harmony with the preface of Varro. We can say that almost the entire preface, apart from its beginning, is a fusion of the introductions of Cato and Varro, padded with reminiscences of other authors and made many times longer by rhetorical elaboration.27 A presentation of this kind is not worth further consideration for our present purpose. What remains interesting in the preface to Columella’s first book is the brief introductory section on his general theory of agriculture. In this he puts forward original, well-founded views. For a moment he frees himself from disconsolate complaint and allows the light of optimism to shine briefly on his subject.

The three agricultural writers we have just considered have three widely disparate attitudes to their subject. Cato is the enterprising man of business, Varro the reminiscing scholar and Columella the expert enthusiast. In spite of this they write introductions that bear striking points of resemblance just in respect of their attitude to the subject. Our study of these prefaces has shown, I hope, how their different starting

27 Lundström says on the subject of a reminiscence from Seneca in this preface (Litteraturhist. bidrag, p. 173, translated here): “Columella’s entire preface is little more than a patchwork of ideas, expressions and turns of phrase (from Varro and Cicero actually long plagiarisms) from different authors…”
points and their common interest—in promoting the subject of agriculture—both influence the composition of their prefaces.

One particular detail they have in common is the way in which they all emphasize the high appreciation in which agriculture was held by their forefathers. As we have shown, this reference to the ancient Romans was inadequate even in Cato’s time. But the exceptional reverence of the Romans for tradition gave this theme a high propaganda value, and it reoccurs in prefaces to works dealing with forms of agriculture that the old Romans would certainly not have accepted. This is a type example of how a theme can lose its background in reality and still remain useful to the author.

OTHER SPECIALISTS

So far, we have considered three easily distinguishable types of preface, namely those to rhetorical works, historical works and certain prefaces to agricultural handbooks. The remaining introductions cannot be classified so neatly since they occur in works of very disparate types and therefore differ widely. Apart from the prefaces to be found in Statius and Martial, which will be dealt with in a later section, they are mostly in works of a didactic, scientific or technical nature. These are generally in direct dependence on Greek predecessors, and most often their literary form—when such is discernible—follows a Greek model. The structure of many of these works has unfortunately been scantily studied, although Dahlmann and Fuhrmann have shown that analyses of the disposition of material in such works can give very interesting results.

It is highly probable that the prefaces to these works, too, were written largely under the influence of Greek models. Several phenomena that have already been pointed out in Greek authors reoccur. The majority of these prefaces, for instance, are dedicated and they include examples of both the rhetorical type (Vitruvius) and the epistolary type (Pliny’s Naturalis Historia). In most of them the author indicates that he is writing at someone’s request (as e.g. in Book i of Varro’s De Re Rustica and in Scribonius Largus), though in none of them is the theme structured as in the rhetorical authors.1

1 In p. 88, n. 16, I have explained why this preface is taken into account here and not in the section on agricultural handbooks.

It can naturally be maintained that these themes arose from the imitation of prefaces in the rhetorical genre. It seems to me, however, far more likely that they resulted—at least in most cases—from a direct influence from Greek writers in the subjects concerned.

2 It can naturally be maintained that these themes arose from the imitation of prefaces in the rhetorical genre. It seems to me, however, far more likely that they resulted—at least in most cases—from a direct influence from Greek writers in the subjects concerned.
Owing to the great differences between these prefaces, it is hardly worth investigating them individually and in detail. This can be left to future special studies of the writers concerned. It can be in place, however, to consider a number of phenomena that appear in several authors and which are of interest as a background to the development of later prefaces.

**Brevity**

A well-known rhetorical rule prescribed brevity in the *narratio* of judicial speeches. Curtius (*Eur. Lit. pp. 479-485*) has shown how people in the Middle Ages gradually came to regard brevity as a stylistic ideal in itself, regardless of the situation or the purpose in hand. He points only to the above rule of rhetoric as the classical background to this view. Even from the early Empire, however, we find authors assuring the reader that they will be brief and presenting this as a general virtue. Vitruvius, for instance, says:

(Vitr. 5. pref. 3) cum animaduertissem distentam occupationibus cuitatem publicis et priuatis negotiis, paucis iudicaui scribendum, uti angusto spatio uacuitatis ea legentes breuiter percipere possent.

The idea is that the reader, whose time is valuable, can avail himself of the contents in a short space of time because the book has been kept as brief as possible. A slight variation of this theme is to be found in Horace, *Epist. 2.1.1 ff.* However, it is not a question of the reader in general but of Augustus himself, who is the dedicatee. Unbounded approval of brevity seems to be one of the literary ideals of the poet Phaedrus, who writes of his own work:

(Phaedr. 4. epil. 7) Si non ingenium, certe breuitatem adproba.

In contradistinction to these champions of brevity stands Quintilian, who seems hardly to regard his alleged brevity as praiseworthy:

(Inst. i. proem 25) breuiter omnia demonstraturi. Nam si quantum de quaque re dici potest persequamur, finis operis non reperietur.

This author presents brevity (which in fact is hardly one of his outstanding merits) as more of a necessity than a virtue. This attitude seems to have been uncommon, however. The ideal of brevity is praised in preface after preface from the early authors quoted above until far into the Middle Ages. See, in addition to Curtius, below pp. 154 f.

*Quoted below p. 101 in another context.*
Predecessors

We have seen how the author of the *Ad Herennium* and Cicero in the *De Oratore* adopt an attitude to the performance of their Greek predecessors. Writers in the majority of other disciplines could often with considerably less difficulty refer to earlier studies, which in nearly all cases had been carried out by Greeks. Most often there was not—as in rhetoric—any basic theoretical difference between Greek and Roman. The author’s predecessors and their views could thus be discussed purely objectively, regardless of nationality. Scribonius Largus, for instance, does this in his introduction. Sometimes the references given to previous authors could swell to formidable catalogues, clearly designed to give the reader an impression of great learning. This is the case, for instance, with Varro’s introduction to Book 1 of *De Re Rustica*. The attempt to impress is even more apparent in the passage of Pliny’s preface (*Nat.* pref. 17) in which he speaks of the 2000 or so volumes that he has read and digested.

Even these authors, of course, could avail themselves of the opportunity to attack their literary or other adversaries, as had previously been the practice of both Greeks and Latin writers of comedies. A good example is given once again by Pliny (*Nat.* pref. 28 ff.), who attacks those who have criticized his earlier work.

Nocturnal studies

While Latin authors usually expressed themselves very modestly on the subject of their own gifts, they seldom hesitated to maintain their diligence. We have just noted how Varro and Pliny boast of the wealth of books they had read to gather material for their own work. Perhaps the most common way of emphasizing one’s diligence, however, was to mention the nights spent in study. This may have been bound up with a popular conception of men of learning sitting at night and working by candlelight when the rest of the world was asleep. Numerous writers, anyway, are careful to stress that they have worked through the hours of darkness. The earliest I have encountered is Callimachus, who even creates a word for the practice: ἀγρυπνία or “nocturnal studies” (*Epigr.* 27.4 in Pfeiffer’s edition of Callimachus). In Latin authors, the theme is to be found from Cicero onwards:

*(Cic. Parad. 5)* Accipies igitur hoc paruum opusculum lucubratum his iam contractioribus noctibus, quoniam illud maiorum uigiliarum munus in tuo nomine apparuit.
Cicero thus wittily says that the little book *Paradoxa* has been a suitable occupation for the short nights of spring, while the larger work that had appeared in the name of Brutus (i.e. the *Brutus*), was the result of the long nights of winter.

From the early Empire we can quote a couple of poets. The author of the pseudo-Vergilian poem *Ciris* (probably from the beginning or middle of the first century A. D.) says:

(*Ciris* 46) accipe dona meo multum uigilata labore.

Statius concludes his *Thebais* by apostrophizing his work:


Finally, we can quote Pliny who combines emphasis of his literary diligence with an assurance—intended for the Emperor, to whom the work is dedicated—of his devotion to his official duties during the daytime:

(Plin. *Nat*. pref. 18) Homines enim sumus et occupati officiis subsiciuisque temporibus ista curamus, id est nocturnis, ne quis uestrum putet his cessatum horis. Dies uobis impendimus, cum somno ualetudinem computamus, uel hoc solo praemio contenti, quod, dum ista, ut ait M. Varro, musinamur, pluribus horis uiuimus; profecto enim uita uigilia est.

For the handling of this traditional theme by certain later authors, see below pp. 147 f.

*The author's qualifications for his subject and in rhetoric*

All writers quite reasonably set a high value on their subject. Latin specialist writers often “campaign” for these subjects in their prefaces, concentrating naturally enough on the usefulness of the knowledge in question. Scribonius Largus, for instance, starts the preface to his collection of medical prescriptions with a long defence of the medical treatment of disease. Frontinus in *De Aquae Ductu* contents himself with a few phrases on the usefulness of his work.

4 The meaning of the words *cum somno ualetudinem computamus* is obscure. In *TLL* (3.2182.66 ff.) the expression is said to be equivalent to *comprehendimus ad scribendum historiam et somni tempus et valetudinem*; in English: we consume both the time for sleep and our health in writing history. I cannot grasp how Pliny's words can be interpreted thus. The translator Beaujeu (Paris, 1951) gives: “j'équilibre au plus juste la santé avec le sommeil”, a translation which is for me no less unintelligible. Nor is the translation of Rackham (London/Cambr., Mass., 1938) satisfying. I am not able to translate the words myself; fortunately, whatever they mean, the general context is sufficiently clear for our purpose.

5 For a more detailed discussion of this preface see Deichgräber.
Other writers describe instead how vast, and thus how difficult to handle, their subject is. This is the approach, for instance, of Vitruvius and Pliny the Elder. It stresses the interest and usefulness of the subject and at the same time emphasizes what a difficult job the writer is faced with. The theme of the subject’s great difficulty also implies praise of the writer’s own performance. It is so reminiscent of what was encountered in the section on the rhetoricians that further commentary would seem superfluous.

The theme of the work’s usefulness can also, however, be coupled with another line of thought, which is of great interest. The first sentence in Pomponius Mela runs:

(Mela 1.1) Orbis situm dicere aggredior, impeditum opus et facundiae minime capax (constat enim fere gentium locorumque nominibus et eorum perplexo satis ordine, quem persequi longa est magis quam benigna materia) uerum aspici tamen cognoscique dignissimum.

The writer thus apologizes for his subject being such as to render impossible an artistic, i.e. a rhetorical treatment. Such an excuse can seem very natural for someone writing on a subject undeniably less than rewarding from the point of view of style and in an age when higher education consisted of rhetoric. But we need not read very far in the De Chorographia before realizing that Mela both has this education and utilizes it when he writes. Many of his digressions seem to serve mainly as embellishment.6 His apology for the dryness of the subject may well have been intended seriously, but it also serves discreetly to draw attention to the way in which the writer masters these difficulties. The more ungrateful the subject, the greater the merit of the writer who succeeds in presenting it artistically. What we have here is a new brand of mock modesty.

Vitruvius presents a similar line of thought in the preface to his first book. After a very long account of all that is needed to be a good architect, he concludes:

(Vitr. 1.1.17) Cum... ratio propter amplitudinem rei permittat non iuxta necessitatem summas sed etiam mediocres scientias habere disciplinarum, peto, Caesar, et a te et ab is qui ea uolumina sunt lecturi, ut si quid parum ad regulam artis grammaticae fuerit explicatum ignoscatur. Namque non uti summus philosophus nec rhetor disertus nec grammaticus summis rationibus artis exercitatus sed ut architectus is litteris imbutus haec nius sum scribere. De artis uero potestate... polliceor, uti spero, his uoluminibus non modo

6 E.g. 1.53; 3.51; 3.95. See Schanz-Hosius 2.654.
This writer too couples the greatness and difficulty of the subject with an apology for its inadequate presentation. Basically, however, the situation here is different. Vitruvius does not put forward the nature of the subject as a direct obstacle to its artistic treatment, although this would be as justified in his case as in Mela’s. He suggests rather that his mastering of the art of architecture and its ancillary disciplines has demanded so much of his energy that he has been unable to acquire any schooling in rhetoric. Knowledge of his subject and ignorance of rhetoric are here set up as complements to each other. This is strikingly reminiscent of a common rhetorical device, namely to praise one’s adversary’s formal presentation at the expense of one’s own but at the same time to throw suspicion on his objectivity. The best known example of this is in Plato’s version of Socrates’ apology. Vitruvius is not disputing against any adversary and the similarity between the themes is not so great that we need assume any influence from rhetoric. What is interesting is that the writer, influenced or not, finds it to his advantage to stress his formal shortcomings in a manner that was common among speakers. Vitruvius also has roughly the same motive for his deprecatory remarks. He is concerned to emphasize by contrast his knowledge of the actual subject, at the same time as he wins sympathy with a demonstration of modesty. The preface thus exemplifies the force of the misconception—widespread since at least the time of Plato—that artistic presentation is a sign of factual incompetence.

ATTITUDES IN FRONT OF THE EMPEROR

The revolution in the structure of Roman society that followed the creation of the Empire is clearly reflected in the prefaces of the age. Now that the state had been transformed into a de facto monarchy, the literary public was also different. Previously it had been possible to regard all readers as more or less equal. Now, however, the attitude and judgement of one man had become far more important than that of all

7 Vitruvius has also in fact similar ambitions to Mela. Thielscher (RE R2. Halbband 17.430) says: “Wenn man V.s eigentümlicher Sprache gerecht werden will, beschreibe man einmal das Innere seiner Taschenuhr mit dem Wortschatze und im Stile von Ciceros catilinarischen Reden.” See also Hagendahl in Gnomon 17.262 f.
8 See Volkmann p. 130.
others. An author approved by the Emperor had his future assured. An author in disfavour might admittedly be allowed even so to disseminate his works and attain popularity, but he could never feel secure, as is demonstrated by the fate of Ovid. In such circumstances authors were obliged to pay special consideration to the Emperor. A very common practice to this end was to harangue him in some way or other in the preface.

To address the Emperor was as suitable a practice for poets as it was for prose authors. There developed in this respect a prefatorial theme that could be employed in all genres. We must therefore relax for a moment our confinement to prose writers.

The two great Augustan poets, Horace and Vergil, both addressed the Emperor in their introductions. Each demonstrated one way of bringing him into a preface, namely dedication and invocation. The development of these two types is best treated separately.

The first lines of Horace’s second book of Epistles run:

```
Cum tot sustineas et tanta negotia solus
res Italas armis tuteris, moribus ornes,
legibus emendes, in publica commoda peccem,
si longo sermone morer tua tempora, Caesar.1
```

Horace had received complaints from Augustus at not being mentioned in his works.2 In this somewhat difficult situation the author gives evidence of tactful independence. He naturally gives the Emperor the honour of a dedication. The Emperor is in this way conferred respect in the same way as Maecenas and others before him. The few lines on the important duties of Augustus stand at the same time as an apology and an explanation why no major work has previously been dedicated to him.3 This excuse is impeccable, but its character of an excuse is none the less obvious. Horace then passes with an elegant turn of phrase to his subject, which is in no way associated with the person of Augustus. At the end of the poem he touches upon the reasons that prevent him from singing the praises of Augustus.4 In this way Horace succeeds in writing a poem to the Emperor without really praising him or even in fact writing about him, but at the same time without offending him.

Naturally, numerous authors came in the future to dedicate their

---

1 Horace’s turn of phrase is a special variation of a familiar oratorical theme, the assurance of brevity. See above, p. 96.
2 According to Suet. Vita Hor.
3 Cf. the very similar line of thought in Epist. 1.13.2 ff.
4 The theme is exhaustively analysed by Wimmel.
works to the Emperor. Homage to the Emperor was in this way incorporated into a familiar type of preface, the dedicatory preface, that could be used in the majority of genres. Random examples are Seneca’s preface of the rhetorical type to the De Clementia and Pliny the Elder’s prefatory letter to the Naturalis Historia, both containing prolonged and immoderate praise of the Emperor. These bear no more than a formal resemblance to Horace’s brief introduction, but two other authors chose the same approach as Horace. Ovid hints very briefly at the Emperor’s preoccupation with more important matters:

(Oct. Fast. 2.17 f.) Ergo ades et placido paulum mea munera uultu respice, pacando si quid ab hoste uacat.

That the idea is a reminiscence of Horace can hardly be questioned. An allusion of the same type is to be found at the end of the Metamorphoses.\(^5\)

The same line of thought is developed at much greater length by Vitruvius. The passage is worth quoting as a typical example of how a simple idea can be expanded and prolonged ad libitum:

(Vitr. i. pref. 1-2) Cum diuina tua mens et numen, imperator Caesar, imperio potiretur orbis terrarum inuictaque uirtute cunctis hostibus stratis, triumpho uictoriaque tua ciues gloriarentur et gentes omnes subactae tuum spectarent nutum populusque Romanus et senatus liberatus timore amplissimis tuis cogitationibus consiliisque gubernaretur, non audebam, tantis occupationibus, de architectura scripta et magnis cogitationibus explicata edere, metuens ne non apto tempore interpellans subirem tui animi offensionem. Cum uero attendere me non solum de uita communi omnium curam publicaque rei constitu tione habere sed etiam de opportunitate publicorum aedificiorum, ut ciuitas per te non solum prouinciis esset aucta, uerum etiam ut maiestas imperii publicorum aedificiorum egregias haberet auctoritates, non putaui praetermittendum quin primo quoque tempore de his rebus ea tibi ederem.\(^6\)

\(^5\) Cf. Met. 15.875 ff. and Hor. Carm. 3.30.6 ff.

\(^6\) The passage from Vitruvius quoted here has been cited as an argument in the troublesome question of the dating of the work, most recently by Thielser (RE R2. Halbband 17.431 f.) He takes it as obvious that Vitruvius must have been influenced by Horace’s epistle to Augustus, dating the preface to 14 or later. Since no other argument favours such a late date the matter can hardly be considered disposed of. It is true that Vitruvius’ line of thought is strikingly like that of Horace, but it is not more remarkable than that the author can have conceived it himself. He can also have been influenced solely by Hor. Epist. 1.13.2 ff., a passage quoted by Thielser himself. If either of these holds, Thielser is drawing his conclusion from invalid premises. Generally speaking, dating on the basis of parallels is apt to lead to uncertain or ambiguous results and the present case seems to be no exception.
Certainly, Vitruvius had not—in spite of his assurances to the contrary—forgotten all he had learned at the school of rhetoric.

The passage quoted contains nothing that is not designed to emphasize Augustus’ greatness and the writer’s dependence and devotion. The author tells how he has written his work for Augustus’ use and how he has published it at just the time when Augustus could conceivably have need of it. The dedicatee’s interest in the work is of course a necessary prerequisite for a dedication. But while Isocrates, for instance, could expect King Philip to be interested in the unification of Greece, and Archimedes could count on Dositheus’ interest in the higher geometry, Vitruvius had to reckon on Augustus being frequently occupied with even more important things than architecture. When the dedication becomes an obligatory courtesy to a higher person, statements as to the interest of the recipient become a fiction. It is hardly more probable that Augustus read Vitruvius’ work than that Titus made any great use of the index to the *Naturalis Historia* that Pliny had compiled “on his account”, or that the French Dauphin used the innumerable works published *in usum Delphini*. In works of this kind there is no natural contact at all between the author or his work and the distinguished recipient. The dedication theme then loses its original meaning and the preface is filled with fictions, sometimes actual absurdities. Some late Latin examples of this will be given below (pp. 116 ff.).

Vergil is drawn by temperament often to more high-flown, or if we like more “poetic” levels of style than Horace employs in his hexameters. The choice of subject is thereafter. It is thus hardly surprising that Vergil was the first to call upon the Emperor *more poetarum* with an invocation.

The *Georgics* start with a brief dedication to Maecenas. There follows an invocation of the gods of agriculture, more or less following Varro. Octavian is then (vv. 24-42) invoked in the same manner as the gods. His apotheosis is presaged and the writer describes the sectors of power between which Octavian as a god will be able to choose. In conclusion the poet begs for assistance in his work. The entire preface ends with the words:

(Verg. *Georg.* 1.42) et uotis iam nunc adsuesce uocari.

7 See above p. 100, n. 7.
In this way Augustus is equated even in his lifetime with a god, and the poet in his preface addresses him in the manner and the place reserved for gods. So he could turn in the same preface to both Octavian and Maecenas without offending either. A dedication is addressed to a person, while a god can be reached only by invocation.

The introduction to the Georgics has been analysed in detail by Wissowa in particular, who approaches it mainly from the religious aspect. It has been most recently discussed, more briefly, by Büchner. No detailed account is therefore indicated here. It is interesting to note that Büchner, to some extent against Wissowa, stressed the preface’s independence of Hellenistic models. This would make Vergil the originator of at least this type of invocation to a ruler.

To presage the deification of the ruler was excellent form also for later poets. Lucan (1. 45-66) and Statius (Theb. 1. 22-31) not unexpectedly imitate Vergil’s line of thought very closely. Germanicus, who translated Aratus’ Phaenomena, evoked in his introduction his adoptive father Tiberius, instead of like Aratus turning to the Supreme Deity:

(Germ. 1 ff.) Ab Ioue principium magno deduxit Aratus.
Carminis at nobis, genitor, tu maximus auctor:
te ueneror, tibi sacra fero doctique laboris
primitias.

Manilius (1. 7-10) makes a briefer invocation. More interesting is that the invocation, which according to the testimony of Roman authors was a typically poetical theme, was used also by prose writers.

Valerius Maximus invokes Tiberius, not without a powerful blast of trumpets both before and after his name:

(Val. Max. pref.) Te igitur huic coepto, penes quem hominum deorumque consensus maris ac terrae regimen esse uluit, certissima salus patriae, Caesar, inuoco, cuius caelestis prouidentia uirtutes, de quibus dicturus sum, benignissime fouentur, uitia seuerissime uindicantur.

The writer considers himself to have found the inspiration to approach the Emperor in this way from two sources, as is clear from the following:

9 The concept of Augustus’ divinity is to be found also in Horace, above all in a couple of the Odes, although there it is not expressed in the form of an invocation.
11 Livius loc. cit.; Quint. 4. proem 4.
12 For a possible reminiscence in Livy of Vergil’s invocation see above p. 70 and Oppermann pp. 97 f.
Nam si prisci oratores ab Ioue optimo maximo bene orsi sunt, si excellentissimi uates a numine aliquo principia traxerunt, mea paruitas\textsuperscript{13} eo iustius ad fauorem tuum decucurrerit.

Unfortunately we know little about the usage of the "ancient orators". The influence of Vergil is all the more apparent.\textsuperscript{14} The poet's manner of stressing the Emperor's sympathy for the subject\textsuperscript{15} shows parallels with Valerius' portrayal of him as the preserver of the virtutes. But the principal similarity is of course the basic idea of invoking the Emperor as a god. The reasons why this suited Valerius and Vergil were widely different. The poet, who belonged to Octavian's circle, created an attitude of religious reverence before the great ruler, an attitude hitherto unknown in Rome. He is naturally beyond all suspicion of having flattered Octavian simply for his own advancement. What was presented was the poet's own political programme, in the form of a homage to the great man, homage that was naturally designed to influence opinion. The orator, on the other hand, who took up the same theme sixty years later was tramping a well-known path. The idea was for him not a vision but simply a suitable courtesy. The Emperor was by then undoubtedly accustomed to frequent allusions to his divine nature, which could suitably be made by anyone wishing to be in good standing with him. An invocation was for this reason perhaps more fitting for Valerius than a dedication, which presupposes some personal relationship between author and dedicatee. All the above-mentioned authors who dedicated their works to the Emperor—Horace, Vitruvius, Seneca the Younger, and Pliny the Elder—had reached such a position that they had real contact with the Emperor. Valerius Maximus, on the other hand, seems to have remained on a more modest social level. For such a man it would hardly be fitting to address Tiberius in a personal

\textsuperscript{13} We should note that Valerius uses a very strongly pejorative expression of himself, mea paruitas. This increases still further the distance between him and the Emperor. A similar expression is used in a similar situation by Statius, Silu. 5. pref.: pro mea mediocritate. We shall find cause to revert to the development of this type of expression below, p. 125. Linguistically these are examples of a type of the trope abstractum pro concreto. Apart from the expressions mentioned, this type covers reverence formulae such as tua pietas, tua clementia which began to appear somewhat earlier than the expressions of modesty. See Hofmann-Szantyr pp. 746 f. and, for a collection of late examples, O'Brien.

\textsuperscript{14} Cf. also the passage from Germanicus just quoted.

\textsuperscript{15} Georg. 1.40 f.
manner. Evoking him as a god was a different thing altogether. It must, after all, be open to any citizen to call upon the gods of the state.¹⁶

In the early days of the Empire there thus emerged two ways of addressing the Emperor in literary works: dedication and invocation. Both developed from already existing literary forms. A dedication to the Emperor does not differ in principle from other forms of dedication. Invocation emerged from the well-known poetic invocation of the gods, transformed for this new purpose. It was then available also to prose writers.

THE SPREAD OF EPISTOLARY PROSE PREFACES

It has earlier been shown that Greek writers from Archimedes onwards frequently employed prefices in the form of letters, with the same type of contents as ordinary dedicated prefaces. This kind survived in Latin literature. The earliest extant¹ example is Hirtius' introductory letter to Book 8 of *De Bello Gallico*.² We can mention also the introductions of Seneca the Elder (cf. above p. 49) and Scribonius Largus. So far as I can see, these prefuces have no striking features in common other than their epistolary form. This could obviously be used in quite different types of preface.

It must be noted also that there exists a sort of intermediate form between the epistolary preface and the ordinary letter, namely letters sent by an author with his work to a particular addressee, but apparently not intended to stand as a preface in the published work. A well-known example is to be found in Cicero, *Ad Fam. 9. 8*. This letter was sent to Varro together with the version of the *Academica* dedicated to him.

¹ Quintilian, too, uses (see above p. 59) an invocation of the Emperor in one of his prefuces, in spite of his relatively high position. This was perhaps because Domitian was an Emperor unusually concerned to hear assurances of his own divinity.

² By “epistolary preface” is meant here introductions with the formal characteristics of a letter, namely a salutatory phrase at the beginning and/or the word *uale* or corresponding at the end. (The majority of epistolary prefuces have both: in e.g. Hirtius' there is only the latter.) Peter, who has written a few pages on “*Der Brief als Einkleidung für Widmungen*” has not felt bound by such formal considerations. He has quite simply grouped together a number of references to introductions with dedications in Latin works. Seel has discussed the problems concerning Hirtius' authorship to which the preface gives rise. Bartolini's recent paper on the preface of Hirtius is about similar problems. The ideas presented, including the supposition that three important phrases are interpolations, seem very far from probable.
That the letter was not intended for publication with the book is clear from the fact that it has only partly to do with this. The rest discusses quite irrelevant matters. Later, in Pliny the Younger, we have a long succession of letters which he sent together with a work, with a request to read this through and correct it (emendare). These letters clearly reflect a common custom in Roman literary circles in the time of Pliny, an invitation to criticism before publication, often with a view to finding out whether it was advisable to publish or not.

Even if neither Cicero’s nor Pliny’s letters were designed for publication together with the literary works concerned, it is clear that the types of letter they represent can have influenced the structure of epistolary prefaces proper. We shall see that this was in fact the case.

During the Flavian era, epistolary prose prefaces start appearing in a genre where we would hardly expect them, namely in collections of poetry. There is reason to discuss these prefaces in some detail, to indicate if possible the manner and causes of their genesis. Moreover, one of these prefaces gives certain hints as to the general spread of epistolary prefaces at the time. I shall therefore analyse the epistolary prefaces of Statius and Martial and then go on to discuss such prefaces in general.

Statius publishes prose prefaces in letter form with all five books of the Siluae. All start with epistolary phrases of the type Statius Meliori suo salutem (Book 2) and the prefaces to Books 3 and 4 conclude also with a vale. The five prefaces are addressed to five of the poet’s patrons. In theory, the first poem of each book is also dedicated to the recipient of the letter. Books 3 and 4, however, contain respectively one and three poems in praise of the Emperor and these have been placed before the poem dedicated to the recipient. The first four prefaces contain a list of contents with brief commentaries and literary bows of varying depth to the persons to whom the different poems are dedicated.

---

3 Plin. Epist. 1.2; 1.8; 2.5; 3.10; 3.13; 4.14; 5.12; 7.12; 8.19; 9.29. Cf. also the recently quoted passage on Sulla.
4 There are also letters in which Pliny replies to corresponding requests from other authors, e.g. 3.15; 4.20; 7.20; 8.7; 9.35.
5 In the case of Pliny this is most often apparent from the content. We can arrive at the same conclusion from the fact that these letters are published in Pliny’s very carefully edited collections of letters. If they had already been published as prefaces it would have been very strange to publish them again. Nor is there any MSS tradition suggesting that 3.13, which was an accompanying letter to the Panegyricus, was ever transmitted together with this work.
6 On the letter preceding Book 5 see Vollmer p. 3.
The letters were written for publication. Statius makes no attempt to maintain the fiction of their privacy and their main function is to convey a dedication of the book to the dedicatee. This is very clear from the first sentence in Book 4:

(Stat. Silu. 4. pref.) Inueni librum, Marcellae carissime, quem pietati tuae dedicarem.

It is perhaps even more apparent from the beginning of the second book:

(Stat. Silu. 2. pref.) ipsa opusculorum quae tibi trado condicio sic posita est ut totus hic ad te liber meus etiam sine epistola spectet.

Statius thus uses the epistolary preface to *dedicare librum alicui* or to let *librum spectare ad aliquem*. And this is just the normal function of the epistolary preface.

These prefaces, however, contain some interesting turns of phrase that do not stem from the traditional type of epistolary preface. The preface to the second book concludes:

(Stat. Silu. 2. pref.) Haec qualiacumque sunt, Meliore carissime, si tibi non dissipuerint, a te publicum accipiant; si minus, ad me reuertantur.

This seems in complete contradiction to the passage from the same preface quoted just above. It is suddenly assumed that Melior is to receive the letter and then decide whether or not the book should be published. How could this be the case if the letter was only a disguised preface?

An explanation can be found with the help of a passage in the preface to Book 4. Listing the poems in the book, Statius arrives at that on the Via Domitiana:

(Stat. Silu. 4. pref.) tertio uiam Domitianam miratus sum ... cuius beneficio tu quoque maturius epistolam meam accipies, quam tibi in hoc libro a Neapoli scribo.

The author is thus sending the letter from his villa in Naples. But the letter is written in the book. It is already in its appointed place as a preface. We must thus take it that Statius sent his book with its epistolary preface to the recipient before publication, in the same way as Cicero and Pliny. In such letters it was common—at least in the time

7 The expression *in hoc libro* is interesting from another point of view. It appears to me to indicate that the letter was not written on the outside of the roll of papyrus as Birt (p. 142) hints.
of Pliny—to leave, as Statius does, the decision on publication to the recipient.\footnote{Pliny expressly mentions the recipient’s deciding in the matter in 1.8.18, 5.12.4 and 9.25.3.}

This similarity between Pliny’s letter and Statius’ prefaces gives a clear hint as to how the latter came about. It was obviously common practice to send manuscripts with a letter to friends or patrons, for their comments. It goes without saying that this would be done when dedicating a work to someone, as in the case of Cicero. And when Statius desires to dedicate an entire book of verse to one person—in spite of the individual poems having originally been dedicated to several different persons—he does it in just such an accompanying letter, designed for publication. In this way he associates to a living tradition, at the same time as he creates a new type of preface for a collection of poetry.

Statius seems also to have used the epistolary preface in another genre. In his introduction to Book 4 of Siluae he says:

\begin{quote}
(Stat. Silu. 4, pref.) Maximum Vibium et dignitatis et eloquentiae nomine a nobis diligi satis eram testatus epistola, quam ad illum de editione Thebaidos meae publicau; sed nunc quoque . . .
\end{quote}

This should in my opinion be interpreted as indicating that Statius, as a preface to his epic poem Thebais, had published a (now lost) letter of the same type as those introducing each book of the Silvae. It would seem difficult to arrive at any other interpretation. If the letter was not published with the Thebais, then it must have been published either separately or in a collection. We have no trace whatsoever of any collection of letters from Statius, and it seems highly improbable that an individual letter was published by itself. It is conceivable that this might have been done with a letter in verse form,\footnote{Thus Vollmer p. 14. The theory there presented that it was a question of a letter of thanks has no support in the texts. The passage quoted (Silu. 4.7.25 ff.: te fido monitore nostra / Thebais multa cruciata lima / temptat) suggests on the contrary that it was an epistolary preface with the themes “request” and “prayer for emendation”.} but in this case, why was it not incorporated in the Silvae?

It thus seems clear that Statius published a prose preface also before an epic. This, we would think, is the gravest possible breach of the laws of the genre. However, this type of preface—both for the author and the contemporary reader—may have preserved its epistolary character to such an extent that it was regarded not as an integral part of the work
but as something that could stand (or be omitted) before any type of work whatsoever.

Turning to Martial, we find the same sort of epistolary preface as in Statius, in Books 1, 2, 8, 9 and 12. The other books have short introductory poems of the same character as the rest of the poems in these books. This latter, natural way of starting books of verse is that used by earlier writers, e.g. Catullus, and Ovid in the Tristia. Such introductory poems in Martial are either addresses to the book itself, of the type found e.g. in Horace’s Epistles 1.20, or poems that in one way or another concern the Emperor. The introductory poem to Book 6 has a request for an appraisal of the book, in the same way as in Pliny’s letters.\(^\text{10}\)

The prefaces in letter form are—as in Statius—addressed to different persons, but their contents are more varied than in Statius. In Book 8, Domitian is praised in a direct address. The preface to Book 9 gives notice of a bust in honour of the author. That to Book 12 complains over the difficulties of writing in Bilbilis.

The most interesting are the prefaces to Books 1 and 2. The former is a letter to the reader, in which Martial presents a sort of brief literary manifesto. He explains that his jokes are not aimed at particular persons by name, and he defends his lasciuam ueritatem. His epigrams, he says, can be read by those who enjoy them, the others need not bother. This is illustrated by a few lines of verse that conclude the preface.

The epistolary preface to Book 2 is addressed to one Decianus. The greater part of it is devoted to a fictitious reply from the recipient. It begins:

(Mart. 2. pref.) ‘Quid nobis inquis ‘cum epistola? Parum enim tibi praestamus, si legimus epigrammata? Quid hic porro dicturus es quod non possis versibus dicere? Video quare tragoedia atque comoedia epistolam accipiant, quibus pro se loqui non licet: epigrammata curione non egent . . .’

And the reply goes on: “So refrain from doing anything so ridiculous and unfitting.” Martial replies: “I really do think you’re right. And if you only knew what a long letter I would have written. The readers will have you to thank for not being tired out by the very first page.”

This preface thus contains criticism of the epistolary preface as a phenomenon in collections of epigrams. In a mildly satirical manner, Martial—by the words he assigns to his addressee—derides the excessive use of epistolary prefices on the part of himself and others. No writer

\(^{10}\) See above p. 107.
need feel that this criticism was aimed at him personally, and Martial himself did not allow it to affect his later writing, continuing to use such prefaces when they suited him.

The satire is not of the kind to evoke laughter or self-examination on the part of the modern reader. It can, on the other hand, provide valuable information on the use of the epistolary preface.

We must first consider what Martial means here by an *epistola* with regard to drama. The context would suggest that it applies to epistolary letters of the same type as those used here by Martial. No such letters are preserved with the only roughly contemporary plays still extant, the tragedies of Seneca. We know, however, from a statement by Quintilian (*Inst. 8. 3. 31*) that Seneca and Pomponius wrote *praefationes* to their tragedies, and that these included polemics between the authors on a question of style. Taken together, these statements suggest that tragedians at this time actually employed epistolary prefaces in prose (or possibly in verse). Just as we found cause above to assume an epistolary preface to epic poetry in the Flavian era, so we must now postulate the same in the dramatic genre. This clearly indicates a trend.

Let us now return to the passage from Martial. The satire on this is directed partly against epistolary prefaces to works that do not require them and partly, in Martial’s reply, against their excessive length. We can assume that a number of works published in Martial’s time were guilty of the faults criticized. In other words, Martial tells us that epistolary prefaces at that time were spreading to genres in which they had previously been absent and that they were often tediously long. This is interesting, in that it gives us an indication of trends in the development of the preface in Latin literature as a whole at this time. From this period, as from others, we have extant only minute fractions of the total literary production and here for once we catch a glimpse of how the production of prefaces appeared to a contemporary reader.

It would seem in place here to give a brief survey of what has been preserved from the Flavian era. Martial and Statius we have already considered, apart from the uncompleted *Achilleis*, which has a traditional introduction in hexameters, containing an invocation of the Emperor. Valerius Flaccus also has a versified introduction addressed to the Emperor. Silius Italicus has no other introduction than an invocation of the Muse. In prose, Quintilian has ordinary prefaces to certain

---

11 See Bardon 1.13 f.
12 Cf. above p. 104.
13 See above pp. 50-59.
books in his work, and a letter to the publisher at the very beginning. Finally, Pliny the Elder has an epistolary preface of some ten pages addressed to Titus.\footnote{In the case of Frontinus' \textit{Strategemata} and Balbus' work on land surveying, both with non-epistolary prefaces, the dates of writing are uncertain.}

Of the few extant works, the two collections of verse and the two prose works thus have epistolary prefaces, while the epic works (apart from what we have said of the \textit{Thebais}) do not. If we note also that such prefaces are found in different genres, it becomes apparent that the actual occurrence of prefaces at least does not gainsay the supposition that epistolary prefaces were very common at this time. It also seems to me that on the grounds of the preface to Martial's second book in particular, we can assume with some justification that epistolary prefaces were much more common in the Flavian era than previously—when to judge from the evidence available they were rare—and that they were used also in poetic works of different kinds.

One asks what can have caused such a development. With a quite high degree of probability it can be assumed that the spread of the epistolary preface was facilitated by the custom of sending private accompanying letters with books (cf. above p. 107). The active reasons for authors choosing this type of preface must remain, on the other hand, a matter for speculation. It may have been largely that this type of preface was well suited to the increasingly common praises of the Emperor or some person close to him. Another conceivable reason is that it permitted, particularly in the case of poetical works, a desired clear distinction in style between introduction and work.\footnote{Cf. below p. 116.} Finally, we can surely take it that authors in time came to influence each other. Once a few authors had started to write epistolary prefaces, others followed and it became the fashion.
PART 2

LOCI COMMUNES IN LATER PREFACES

EXTANT TEXTS

In this part I shall be dealing with the clichés and turns of phrase to be found in later Latin prefaces. First, however, a short survey of the prefaces that have been preserved, together with some remarks on their relationship to each other.

From the second and third centuries there are some scientific and technical works with prefaces, such as Frontinus' work on aqueducts, Hyginus' on astronomy and Balbus' on land surveying. The introductions to these are not markedly different from those in earlier works of this kind. More interesting in this respect are the writers who have made abbreviated versions, compilations and encyclopaedic works of different kinds, the most important being Justin, Gellius and Solinus. These writers represent a genre that won lively appreciation during the centuries that followed and many lines of thought in their prefaces reoccur in later authors. Conversely, these compilers have themselves—as we might expect—written their introductions on the basis of earlier models. They are therefore of importance as intermediaries, handing down prefatorial themes from the classical to later eras.

The great stylist of the second century, Apuleius, wrote a unique preface to his Metamorphoses. The principal character of the work appears in the first person and promises the reader an entertaining narrative, giving also certain autobiographical details. This type of introduction is otherwise unknown in Latin and the possibility of a

1 The dating is somewhat uncertain in respect of these works.
2 Gellius has one principal model, Pliny the Elder, and has himself served as a model for Macrobius.
3 See below pp. 127 ff., 141 ff., 145 f. and 154 f.
4 This preface has been the subject of lively discussion among modern scholars. The starting point was an article by Rohde, maintaining that Apuleius in the preface allows both the main character and the author to speak, in some way fusing the two together. This original idea provoked a debate, for the course of which see BJ 171.147 ff. and 175.1 ff. We should also mention Calonghi, who drew the conclusions

8 Tore Janson

113
Greek model lies close to hand. Apuleius' other prefaces are of less interest for our present purpose.

A similar role to that of the compilers is played by the prefaces in Cyprian, the first Christian author of interest here. His introductions are reminiscent of those of the compilers in both structure and content, as is only natural in that several of Cyprian's works are quite simply compilations. On the other hand there is also a striking resemblance to the Greek Irenaeus of Lyons, whose preface to the *Adversus Haereses* is full of modesty formulae, adapted to Christian ideology. Cyprian, however, is also sufficiently resourceful to adapt the themes he borrows to his own situation. Through his prefaces there is thus handed down to later Christian writers material that has been taken from both Latin and Greek predecessors and reshaped for the use of Christian writers in Latin.

of Rohde's suggestion in a manner that bordered on caricature. He considers that the author and the main character speak alternately, and that the concluding sentences, containing some verbs in *pluralis modestiae*, were delivered in unison by them both. That the problem has hardly been discussed for the past fifty years can perhaps be taken as a tacit acceptance of the sober standpoint of Vallette and others, namely that Lucius alone is speaking also in the preface. Ehrenzeller (pp. 34 f. and 185) draws parallels between Apuleius' preface and introductions in early German novelists, in which information on the main character and the author is consciously mixed.

Greek parallels can be demonstrated for the beginning and end of the introduction. The *Metamorphoses* start with the words *At ego...* The adversative conjunction in the beginning is clearly intended to give the illusion that the speaker is answering someone who has just spoken (see Helm p. VI). The device reoccurs in Cyprian's *Ad Donatum*. Similar openings are to be found in Plutarch's *De Sera Numinis Vindicta* and *De Esu Carnium*, 1. On this see Wyttenbach 2.473 f. with further examples. The introduction to the *Metamorphoses* concludes: *Lector intende: laetaberis*. No other Latin author has openly announced a literary programme of pure entertainment. Lucian, on the other hand, does exactly this in the preface to his *Vera Historia*, where he presents a long argument in defence of enthralling light reading.

Of his predecessors, Tertullian avoided prefaces, while Minucius Felix wrote an imitation of Cicero (Labriolle p. 188).

It has been demonstrated that Cyprian must have read Irenaeus, see Koch pp. 139-151. It should be noted that Irenaeus, who was active in the western half of the Empire, was later imitated in his way of writing prefaces by Latin authors, but not—so far as I can see—by Greek. For a linguistic parallel between him and Latin authors see below p. 125.

As we have seen, both Apuleius and Cyprian were influenced by Greek writers. We can quote here a further case where such influence is probable. Censorinus (A.D 238) presents his philological studies as a birthday present to his patron Caerellius. This idea—still extant in modern "Festschriften"—was probably borrowed from the Greeks. The first prose work of a similar kind that I have been able to find is the *De Compositione Verborum* by Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Another early specimen is the *De Octogenariis*, wrongly attributed to Lucian. The custom of sending poems as birthday gifts is to be found, however, even in the classical Latin poets, e.g. Tibullus i.7. For further examples see *RE* Band 7.1143 (cf. 1136).
From the end of the third century and from the fourth century we have the speeches included in the collection called *Panegyrici Latini*. These speeches, which are all more or less in praise of the Emperor, have introductions that are strikingly reminiscent of those in contemporary and later writers of prose works. It seems clear that there was a direct mutual influence between prefaces to speeches of this type and prefaces to long prose works. In some cases a theme appears first in the introductions to these speeches, which suggests something that we might have suspected on purely general grounds, namely that the epi-deictic genre, so sparsely represented in the extant Latin literature, probably supplied material for the prose writers who dedicated their works. An attempt has been made below to give ample references to these panegyrics.

Latin literature during the fourth and fifth centuries was dominated by the works of Christian authors. It is around these that the remaining part of this study will centre. They comprise a very large group, the number of such works with a preface being around two hundred. The majority of writers concerned have obviously been inspired by their religion. Their works can be roughly divided by content into two groups. The first comprises theological works of different kinds, the other historical and biographical studies. In the former we can distinguish between a variety of sub-groups, including apologetics, protreptics, theological textbooks and theological pamphlets. The second main group consists of certain works in which general history is presented from the Christian outlook, of paraphrases of biblical history and of the lives of saints and martyrs.

The formal structure of these works is very varied. The situation as regards prefaces, however, is quite simple as most of the works belonging to these various types have similar prefaces, though naturally with some differences. The historical prefaces tend to take up themes from the ancient historical prefaces that do not suit other genres. The prefaces to the theological works are sometimes full of polemics. But the basic structure is generally the same for all the different genres. We are therefore justified in discussing these prefaces as a more or less homogeneous group. The fusion of genres that is one of the characteristics of literature from late antiquity is here far advanced. Even the relatively few works from this period that are of non-Christian content usually have prefaces resembling in many ways the Christian.

9 See below pp. 121 ff. and cf. pp. 130 ff.
Mention should also be made of the formal structure of these late Latin prefaces. The non-dedicatory type, which had earlier in antiquity been compulsory in historical works, became increasingly uncommon, as even historians dedicated their works from the fourth century onwards. The two main types of dedicated prefaces, the epistolary and the rhetorical, persist. Both are to be found in all genres. The epistolary preface—providing a particularly clear distinction between the introduction and the bulk of the text—was suitable in works where the stylistic difference between these two was great. A special case is the custom—surviving from Statius and Martial—of providing poetical works with prose prefaces in letter form, as e.g. in Paulinus of Pella and Sedulius. Some such works even have both prose and verse introductions; an example is Palladius' *De Insitione*. The converse case, verse introductions to works that are (mainly) in prose, is to be found in the *opera mixta* of Martianus Capella and Boethius.

Finally, a few words on the Greek parallels. As we have seen from the above survey, a number of prefaces from the second and third centuries were clearly influenced by Greek models, as is only to be expected in view of the cultural advance of the Greek-speaking half of the Empire during this period. This does not mean that we should assume any far-reaching Greek influence on Latin prefaces in general. So far as I can see, such influence is restricted to relatively few cases. Prefatory themes in Latin literature develop from classical times onwards without any marked influence from the east. It should be mentioned in this connexion that Dihle in an interesting article shows how the West led development in respect of self-derogatory phrases of humility in letters and elsewhere. The same seems to be true of the material in the prefaces, which is often closely related to the phrases studied by Dihle.

REQUESTS AND DEDICATIONS

As shown above, it was common even in classical times to say that some person or persons had requested that one should write. This theme won further popularity during late antiquity. The great majority of prefaces from the fourth and fifth centuries are built up in a similar manner to the prefaces that we analysed by the classical rhetorical authors. The

---

10 Examples are the *Historia Augusta* and Eutropius.
11 Many writers desire such a stylistic distinction. Cf. Norden p. 432.
12 Phocas (Gramm. 5.410 f.) has verse and prose prefaces to a prose work.
request was thus a central theme, to which other themes were linked in different ways.¹

The request is usually given as proceeding from the person to whom the work is dedicated. The actual dedication then comes as a logical consequence. The dedication is not treated here in a section of its own, and what little I have to say of the problems connected with it will appear below.

The relation between the author and the person to whom the book is dedicated is often of surprisingly little importance. The preface may have very much the same shape whether the work is dedicated to a superior, an equal or an inferior. The author's manner of expressing himself was naturally not identical—on the contrary there was a complex system of different forms of address to persons of different rank.² But the structure of the preface generally remained the same, and the dominating, self-deprecatory phrases persisted. The only marked deviation is that authors dedicating their works to their sons³ do not normally suggest that the latter have requested it, nor assume too self-deprecatory a tone. Examples are provided by Charisius and Marcellus.

The dedicatee is thus not always presented as having requested the work. Conversely, the request does not always come from the dedicatee. Some writers, like Quintilian, say that “many” have requested that they should write, further examples being Sulpicius Severus in his Chronica and—in the sixth century—Cassiodorus in his Variae. Cf. also Gregory of Tours in the introduction to his Historia Francorum.

Words for requesting and accepting

The author can describe the request that he says he has received, in a variety of ways. The choice of words varies in this respect in a highly characteristic manner. The classical authors generally used such normal words for exhortation and request as rogare, hortari (both Cic. De Orat. 1. 1. 4) and mecum agere ut (Cic. Lael. 1. 3). The choice of words is sometimes much the same also in writers of the Silver Age (e.g. Plin. Epist.

¹The theme has been noted and briefly discussed by Curtius. See Mittelalter-Studien XVIII p. 248, with references. Curtius has not, however, observed how common the theme was even in classical times and late antiquity. Nor has he discussed its connexion with other prefatorial themes.

²These forms of address were most richly developed in letters. They have been studied by Engelbrecht and O'Brien.

³This was a popular practice among writers of textbooks throughout antiquity. From earlier times we can mention Cato the Elder, Cicero and Seneca the Elder.
i. i. i: *hortatus es*). Quintilian, however, uses a much stronger word. He says:

(Quint. *Epist. ad Tryph.*) Efflagitasti cotidiano conuicio, ut libros... iam emittere inciperem.

The author clearly feels a need to emphasize with particular force how hard he has been pressed by the publisher, and resorts to the word *efflagitare*. Words of this type are several times employed also by Pliny (e.g. 1. 8; 2. 5; 4. 4). They are very common from the fourth century. Examples are Sulpicius Severus:

(*Chron. 1.1.1*) multis... efflagitantibus

and Augustine:

(*Bon. Viduit. 1.1*) quoniam et praesentem me rogando onerasti et, cum tibi hoc non potuissem negare, saepe meum promissum litteris flagitasti.

Even stronger is the verb *cogere*, which is used by Jerome:

(*PL 29.557B*) Nouum opus facere me cogis ex ueteri,

and Cassianus:

(*C. Nest. pref. 1*) noua subire cogis adhuc de praeteritis erubescentem.

If we take these quotations literally, people no longer requested an author to write but demanded a work or compelled him to write. Or else ordered him, as in the case of Sacerdos:

(*Gramm. 6.496 f.*) Vranius... compulsit ut... laborarem. Cuius praestantissimi uiri iussionibus libens arbitror libro secundo nos explicablem oboedisse. Nunc in hoc... libro... quoniam iubere dignati estis...

Such phrases were used also by later Christian writers, such as Augustine (*Op. Monach. 1. 1*), Jerome (*Epist. 1. 2*), and Sedulius (*CSEL 10. 171*).5

4 This verb is used once also by a very early author, Hirtius. But his argument is that he feels compelled by the persistence of his friend’s requests, not that the friend’s authority is in itself overwhelmingly great.

5 Here as on some other occasions in this study (pp. 124, 158) reference can be made to Wallach’s analysis (pp.48-59: this phenomenon pp. 48 f.) of the introduction to Alcuin’s *Disputatio de Rhetorica et de Virtutibus*. This introduction consists entirely of traditional material. Wallach is aware of this and speaks throughout of “common-places”, “topoi” etc. Even so his analysis can be slightly misleading, in that he seeks examples of stylistic parallels almost exclusively in other works by Alcuin, so that the reader can easily be led to imagine that several phenomena that are frequent in earlier literature are peculiar to Alcuin. His view that the presence of these common-places shows that the work belonged to a certain genre, *littera exhortatoria* seems to be based on a misconception. These *topoi* were all common in prefaces to all kinds of prose works long before the time of Alcuin.

118
A parallel development in the direction of stronger language is to be found in the case of the phrases used by the author to indicate his own reaction to the request. Cicero speaks quite simply of doing what had been asked of him:

(Orat. i.1) efficere quod rogares.

Tacitus in the same situation speaks of answering a question:

(Dial. i.2) Cui percontationi tuae respondere.

Pliny the Younger is to my knowledge the first to mention obedience in this context. Having mentioned that Septicius had urged him to publish the letters he says:

(Epist. i.1.2) superest ut nec te consilii nec me paeniteat obsequii.

A similar turn of phrase is to be found in Cyprian:

(Testim. i. pref.) Obtemperandum fuit, fili carissime, desiderio tuo spiritali.

From this it is a simple step to the iussionibus . . . oboedisse of Sacerdos, quoted above. Similar wordings are normal in fifth century writers, even when the dedicatee is an equal. Sedulius, for instance, writes:

(CSEL 10.171) Sanctis tamen iussionibus non resultans,

and Claudianus Mamertus:

(CSEL 11.18) Editionem libellorum mihi quos de animae statu condidi reticendi cautus et loquendi pensus arbiter imperasti.

The metaphor used by Victor Vitensis is also worth quoting:

(Vict. Vit. i. pref. 4) Ego namque iubentis imperio oboedientiae cervicem submittens.

It should be noted that there is no question of any objective differences between the passages quoted from different periods. In all cases the author indicates that someone has requested him to write, and that he has complied with this request. What changes is the attitude to the person making the request. Words like rogare, hortari, efficere and respondere are neutral in the sense that they imply no other relation than equality between author and dedicatee. The relationship is that between one who asks and one who replies. The phrases efflagitare and obtemperare desiderio indicate a stronger pressure on the author. Even these, however, say nothing of the relation between dedicatee and author.
The verbs *iubere* and *oboedire*, on the other hand, indicate that the person demanding was so influential that the author had no choice.

The change in wording here gives us an idea of how the entire vocabulary for expressing personal relationships changed. The neutral words and the words that express equality give way to words that express inferiority and submission or reverence and exaltation. It must be observed that this applies even in speech to social equals. The phenomenon is not unknown. It can be studied for instance in the works by Engelbrecht and O’Brien on forms of address in epistolary literature. Its background was the shift in ideas and attitudes caused by social change and the new religion. The social form of the late Empire with its strict division into classes, its rigid scale of rank and its hard pressure from the top undoubtedly favoured the genesis of submissive literary expressions of all the kinds encountered in this chapter. Christianity, with the ideal of *humilitas* that it gradually developed,⁶ caused if anything such inferiority phrases to be used even when the relationship was not one of inferior to superior: a Christian wished to show himself humble in all situations. The problems around the influence of these forces and some of their linguistic reflections have been handled in the brilliant essay by Dihle. The present chapter provides further material of interest in this context.

*The author’s dilemma*

When analysing the prefaces of the rhetoricians, we pointed out how the author was placed—or placed himself—in a dilemma between his desire to comply with the request of the dedicatee and his unwillingness to write. The import of the theme is to stress the humility of the writer in the face of his subject and his even greater reverence for the dedicatee. An interesting passage is to be found in one of the panegyrical speeches, made to the Emperor Julian by one Mamertinus. The orator says that, conscious of his own inadequacy, he has long refrained from publicly praising the Emperor. But he has at last been persuaded to change his mind by the very magnitude of the Emperor’s bounty:

(Paneg. 3.1.2) Sed siue errorem nostrum siue consilium congesta et coacertata in unum beneficia uicerunt atque in id redegerunt necessitatis ambiguum ut mihi aut indiserti aut ingrati esset fama subeunda, malui eloquentiam potius quam pietatem erga te et officium meum desiderari.

⁶ See Dihle pp. 185 ff.

120
This is the typical form of the dilemma. And the example is indeed taken from a genre in which the theme is patently very suitable. There is a striking similarity in substance between this passage and a passage in Cicero’s *Orator.* The difference, typically enough, is that Cicero motivates his unwillingness by the difficulty of the subject, while Mamertinus speaks instead of his own incompetence. The change thus consists in the introduction of a self-deprecatory theme rather than a neutral one.

The theme can be used also by Christian authors, the Emperor being exchanged for God. Jerome, in the introduction to a long letter, says that he had at first refused to undertake what the addressee had requested. But his argument has been rebutted:

(Hier. *Epist.* 1.1-2) Tu e contrario adserebas in dei rebus non possibilitatem inspici debere, sed animum, neque eum posse uerba deficere, qui credidisset in uerbo. Quid igitur faciam? Quod inplere non possum, negare non audeo.

For further illustration of this theme with a large number of examples from late Latin writers and the Middle Ages see Simon 1. 68-69 with notes.

*The impossible made possible*

As we have seen, the writer customarily escapes from his dilemma by saying that—in spite of everything—he would prefer to demonstrate his inadequacy than turn a deaf ear to the request. There exists, however, a further possibility—apart from his refraining from writing at all—namely that his ability should improve. Such a theme is to be found as early as in Aristides’ Εὶς Ρόμην, in which the speaker begs his audience, the Romans, to assist him, so that it may be said that he has met people who have transformed a man of little talent into a man of skill.

The Latin versions, however, are of a different type. In a panegyric to Constantius from 297, the speaker says:

(Paneg. 8.1.4-5) haereo prorsus et stupeo et praeter illum ex otio meo tarditatem tanta rerum mole deterreor ut hoc uno nitar hortatu quod ex quanticumque desidia quamuis maxime orationi imparem parem facit Caesar auditor.

The poor speaker is thus transformed into a good orator when Caesar is listening! This must be seen as a reflection of the sort of Emperor worship that crystallized under the late Empire. The Emperor is a pres-

---

7 Cf. above pp. 42 f.
8 *parem* was inserted by a 16th century editor and has been retained in modern editions.
ent god, from whom divine power emanates, and the man who speaks
of the Emperor in his presence can be inspired to what are otherwise
impossible feats.

The correctness of this interpretation is confirmed by a comparison
with a poetic introduction from a century or so later. Theodosius the
Great wrote a letter to Ausonius, requesting that he should dedicate a
volume of poetry to him; Ausonius starts his reply by referring to the
power of the gods. If Ceres orders a man to sow, or Neptune to sail,
then one can safely obey the command, even if the ground is barren or
the sea stormy. He goes on:

\[\textit{MGH AA} 5:2.1\] Nil dubites auctore bono. Mortalia quaerunt
consilium: certus iussa capesse dei.
Scribere me Augustus iubet et mea carmina poscit,
paene rogans: blando uis latet imperio.
Non habeo ingenium: Caesar sed iussit: habebo.
Cur me posse negem, posse quod ille putat?
Inualidas uires ipse excitat et iuuat idem,
qui iubet: obsequium sufficit esse meum.

The line of thought is practically the same as in the panegyric, although
more extended. The difference that it is here the command of an Em­
peror, not simply his being present in the audience, is unimportant.

Strikingly enough, this theme in panegyrics to the Emperor has close
parallels in Christian prefaces. Rufinus, in his preface to his translation
of the ecclesiastical history of Eusebius says that Chromatius has asked
him to perform this task for the comfort and edification of the brethren.
His first intention had been to refuse this task, of which he was incapa­
ble, but he came upon a parallel to his situation in the Gospels.\(^9\) For
when Christ had told his disciples to give to the multitude to eat, Philip
had not produced the provisions that the disciples had with them but
had simply stated that there was a boy there who had five loaves and
two small fishes, so that the divine power should appear the more
clearly, the greater the lack. Just as this boy had been charged by Philip
to give physical food to the multitude, says Rufinus, so has he—whose
intellectual resources are negligible—been charged by Chromatius to give
food for the mind. He has therefore agreed to undertake the task:

\[\text{CC 20.267}\] aggressus sum exequi, ut potui, quod praeceperas, certus, quod
excusabit inperitiae nostrae culpas praecipientis auctoritas.

\(^9\) Rufinus' version of the familiar story is a free account of John 6.5-14, with
numerous additional details.
The way Rufinus presents the case, Chromatius had been entrusted with a task by the Lord. He then delegated this to Rufinus, who was unable to complete it on his own. But the Grace of God coming to him via Chromatius makes him competent. Here too the dilemma is thus resolved by the author undergoing a change. It is simply that the force required emanates not from the Emperor but from God.

The first version of the theme self-evidently expresses the most extreme reverence for the Emperor. The new variation has in principle the same purpose, to express reverence and submission—though hardly for God, but rather for his representative in this world. The preface quoted contains a wealth of compliments to Chromatius. It is he who has been entrusted by God with the task concerned. He is himself competent to carry it out, but chooses to delegate it to a person who is incompetent. By his good standing with the Lord he can mediate for the other. The main theme of the preface is not the Grace of God in itself, but Chromatius' transmission of it.

The same idea reoccurs in shorter form in another of Rufinus' prefaces. This time he has been requested by a less exalted personage, one frater Eraclius:

(CC 20.275) Aggrediâr tamen, si forte orationibus tuis quae mihi tamquam homini impossibilia uidentur, adspirante Domino, possibilia fiant.

The situation is similar, but Eraclius—as is only fitting—is assigned a far less important role than Chromatius.

A half century later the same theme was used by Victorius Aquitanus in his prefatory letter to Pope Hilarius, who had asked him to write on the calculation of the dates of Easter. After a succession of compliments to the Pope and assurances of his own incapacity and obedience, the writer says that whatever he may succeed in producing will be the result of the Pope's prayers:

(MGH AA 9.678.6 ff.) Quod si dignum aliquid tua lectione confecero, id erit profecto cum diuini muneres tum etiam beniuolentiae tuae, cuius favore oblectans inertes quoque excitat ad profectum, nec dubitabitur huius fide perficiendum, cuius est adhortatione susceptum, cum mihi quoque fiducia sit peragi posse quod praecipis, quia id tam confiderent innuglis. Quis namque non intellegat tuis orationibus iam praesumptum, quod etiam per me credis inplendum?

10 The theme is also to be found in the Middle Ages. Simon (1.67) quotes an example from the 11th century, without otherwise discussing the phenomenon.
Responsibility of the dedicatee

One of the functions of the request theme is to free the writer from a certain amount of the responsibility for the work.\textsuperscript{11} When the request was strengthened over the years to become an order, the author could transfer both the honour and the responsibility onto the dedicatee. This was done by a number of fifth century writers, including Orosius, Faustus Reiensis and Victor Vitensis. A typical passage in Cassianus is worth quoting:

\begin{quote}
(C. Nest. i. pref. 4-5) tuum magis iudicium quam meum officium periclitatur. Me enim, siue par sim tuo imperio siue non sim, ipsa aliquatenus oboedientiae ratio atque humiliatis excusat, nisi quod plus hoc meriti est in obsequio meo, si minus est in possibilitate. Facile enim cuiuslibet iussioni ex abundantia satisfacimus: illius officium grande est et mirabile, qui etiam id in uoto habet quod in uiribus non habet. Tua ergo haec res, tuum negotium, tui pudoris opus est.
\end{quote}

This manner of minimizing one's own importance remained popular throughout the Middle Ages. See Simon 2. 113 and, for Alcuin, Wallach pp. 53 f.

INCOMPETENCE

In the writers of the classical period we repeatedly encountered expressions of doubt as to the author's own ability. It has been pointed out that such expressions are strongly connected with the rules of rhetoric that prescribed a humble approach in the preface. In late Latin, phrases and arguments of this kind become enormously common. The phenomenon has been pointed out by Curtius,\textsuperscript{1} who supplies selected examples from classical Latin up to the high Middle Ages. Curtius quite rightly rejects all earlier attempts to interpret phrases of this kind as expressions of a peculiarly Christian humility. Several other scholars have also discussed the phenomenon in varying detail.\textsuperscript{2} Below there will be discussed very briefly the more general statements of incompetence and then in some detail the theme of linguistic inadequacy.

\textsuperscript{11} See above pp. 29 f.
\textsuperscript{1} Mittelalter-Studien XVIII p. 247 and Eur. Lit. pp. 93-95, 410-415.
\textsuperscript{2} See Simon 1.108 ff. Previous literature is referred to there in notes 1 and 2. Simon's own presentation suffers here as elsewhere from a superabundance of references to the sources and a scarcity of analysis.
General
Numerous classical writers suggest urbanely that their talents are perhaps insufficien for the task they have undertaken. Apart from the passages discussed above in the sections entitled Rhetorical treatises and Other specialists we can quote such brief examples as Livy's pro uirili parte (1. pref. 3) and Quintilian's ut uires nostrae tulerunt (3. i. 1). Cicero speaks somewhat more precisely of his inadequate ingenium:
(Arch. 1.1) Si quid est in me ingenii, iudices, quod sentio quam sit exiguum.
Similarly, Pliny the Elder writes:
(Nat. pref. 12) (libelli) nec ingenii sunt capaces, quod alioqui in nobis perquam mediocre erat.

Expressions of the same kind are to be found in many late Latin authors. One example is Victorius Aquitanus:
(MGH AA 9.677.16) Est enim et opus hoc arduum et meae intellectiae facultas exigua.

The type of expression survived in the Middle Ages. See Simon 1. 110 with note 10.

One of the general phrases of self-deprecation is worth particular consideration, namely mea mediocratias. As Curtius points out (Eur. Lit. p. 94) it is found as a courteous expression for one's own person in the early Empire. The phrase spread and appealed particularly to Christian authors. It is to be found as early as in Tertullian (Bapt. 10. 1): quantum mediocratias nostrae licuit and later in a succession of Christian writers. See, apart from in Bruhn, TLL 8.569. 11 ff. Greek authors seem to have received this meaning of the word μετριότης as a loan from the Latin: it appears at any rate for the first time in Irenaeus of Lyons, who demonstrably had strong connexions with Latinity, a century and a half after the Latin phrase. It later became more widespread than the Latin phrase, which seems to have lost its popularity during the Middle Ages. According to the entry in Sophocles the Greek word still survives as a phrase used by a Greek patriarch when referring to himself.

Deficiency in style
The most embarrassing lack in an author's equipment is undoubtedly inadequacy of style. The late Latin authors who postulate their own
incompetence (i.e. nearly all) practically without exception lay the
greatest emphasis on—or speak only about—their linguistic and stylistic
shortcomings, and their statements provide a fruitful field for students
of standard themes.

As a background to the phenomenon I would refer first of all to the
discussion of similar phenomena above, mainly pp. 51 f. and 98 ff.

We recall also how the ancient rhetoricians recommended that speakers
should present themselves in their introductions as ignorant in the art
of oratory. There is little of this to be found, however, in the classical
speeches preserved, namely those of Cicero and the panegyric of Pliny.

Nor from late antiquity have we extant any great number of Latin
speeches; the most important are the panegyrics mentioned above. In
these, however, an apology for one's shortcomings as a speaker seems
to be obligatory. One of these orators calls himself maxime orationi im-
parem (Paneg. 8. 1. 5), another says that he is so unqualified for his task
ut . . . ueniam magis possim sperare quam gloriari (Paneg. 9. 3.1).

The sparsity of the Latin tradition is compensated to some extent by
the fact that numerous Greek speeches have been preserved from the
second era of sophistry during the second and third centuries. The
representatives of this school sometimes mention their own inadequacy as
orators. The Latin orators may have been influenced from this quarter,
but we are probably more justified in speaking of a joint Graeco-Roman
tradition of panegyric rhetoric.

A wealth of corresponding assurances of literary incompetence are
to be found in the prefaces of late Latin writers. It is hardly possible
to determine from one case to another whether such phrases are inspired
by contemporary panegyric oratory, by teaching in the schools of
rhetoric or by earlier prefaces. Generally, we must reckon with influence
from all three. The widespread use of such phrases can be taken partly as
evidence of how rhetorical rules and ways of thinking became increas­
ingly dominant in late Latin literature and partly as an indication of a
tendency in the relations of authors to the world around them. We shall
be returning to the latter tendency at the end of this part. Below is

6 Passages can be quoted from as early as Dio of Prusa, e.g. 12.16. One of Aristides' introductions has already been mentioned (p. 121). The theme does not, however, appear to be common in this author. The introduction to an anonymous 3rd century panegyric to the Emperor, preserved under the name of Aristides (Aristides ed. Keil no. 35; see Boulanger pp. 382-384) contains, on the other hand, an artful rejection of the most usual excuses. This is entirely in the spirit of the Roman panegyrist. A Christian example along the same lines is to be found in Gregorius Thaumaturgus in his speech in praise of Origen (PG 10.1051 ff.).
given a survey of the use by prose writers of the theme of “rhetorical shortcomings”. After demonstrating the different approaches of three relatively early writers, the three types of attitude to rhetoric on the part of later writers will be discussed.

Three approaches to rhetoric

Aulus Gellius says in his preface:

(Gell. i. pref. 10) cessimus in cura et elegantia scriptionis.

We have already seen how Quintilian, in his letter to Trypho, explained that he had not spent sufficient pains on the style. Gellius in addition rejects any claim to elegantia scriptionis. In fact, this author's work is of impeccable, almost pedantic, style. It is quite obvious that he has spent great pains on his language and achieved a certain elegance. We thus cannot take his self-deprecation very seriously, either here or earlier in the same paragraph when he follows Pliny7 in a more general denial of his own talent. Gellius is not presenting any objective information on his literary or general ability, simply giving conventional expression to an attitude to the reader and society.

A probably somewhat later compiler, Solinus, embodies another attitude to stylistic skill:

(Sol. pref. 2) (liber) Cui si animum propius intenderis, uelut fermentum cognitionis magis ei inesse quam bratteas eloquentiae deprehendes.

This writer does not portray his pretended lack of elegance as a fault. On the contrary, he seems from the way in which he contrasts this lack with the richness of the actual content to be affecting scorn or at least indifference to rhetorical presentation.

We found a similar attitude in some of the classical writers on scientific or professional subjects.8 Its background, the old concept of a conflict between form and content, is the same in the present case. The theme is put forward even in the handbooks on rhetoric, so that its use by an author indicates not that he really despises the art of rhetoric but that he knows its rules. Solinus, whom we have taken as our example, gives evidence in his preface of great literary polish, with e.g. rhythmic clause endings, studied word order and consciously unusual word meanings.

7 Cf. above p. 113 note 2.
8 See above pp. 98 ff.
The two phrases quoted from Gellius and Solinus embody two attitudes to rhetorical presentation. We have met both before. Gellius regrets his pretended rhetorical shortcomings, while Solinus will have us understand that he considers the stylistic presentation to be without importance when compared with the communication of knowledge. The two themes can both be traced to the rules of rhetoric itself. They appear parallel to each other and are both enormously frequent in late Latin prefaces.

In the introduction to Cyprian’s *Ad Donatum*, one of the most widely read religious works of late antiquity, we read:

(Cypr. *Ad Donat.* 2) Ceterum quale uel quantum est, quod in pectus tuum ueniat ex nobis, exilis ingenii angusta mediocritas tenues admodum fruges parit, nullis ad copiam fecundi caespidis culminibus ingrauescit, adgrederi tamen facultate, qua ualeo: nam et materia facit mecum. In iudiciis, [contione] pro rostris opulenta facundia uolubili ambitione iactetur: cum de Domino et de Deo uox est, uocis pura sinceritas non eloquentiae uiribus nititur ad fidei argumenta sed rebus. Denique accipe non diserta, sed fortia, nec ad audientiae popularis inlecebram culto sermone fucata, sed ad diuinam indulgentiam praedicandam rudi ueritate simplicia: accipe quod sentitur, antequam discitur, pes ad moras temporum longa agnitione colligitur, sed conpendio gratiae maturantis hauritur.

This is a remarkable combination of the two attitudes to rhetoric that we have just outlined. The writer first apologizes for his faults. It is clear from what follows that he is referring mainly to his stylistic presentation. He then points out that his subject demands not rhetoric but honesty and simplicity. The expression *uocis pura sinceritas non eloquentiae uiribus nititur ... sed rebus* implies, like the passage quoted from Solinus, that formal skill can hide factual errors. The writer thus first apologizes for his pretended formal shortcomings, then explains that they are all for the best. To understand this almost self-contradictory line of thought we must consider the background to Cyprian’s attitude.

We are dealing for the first time with a Christian author. His theme is the Christian religion. It is natural for the preachers of new and important doctrines to stress the importance of the matter rather than the form. This line of thought is to be found in Christianity as early as in St. Paul:

9 As is clear from the quotation, Cyprian is in full command of the rhetorical means of expression. The latter part, with its wealth of ingenious antitheses, is a truly virtuoso performance of its kind.
et sermo meus et praedicatio mea non in persuasibilibus humanae sapientiae uerbis, sed in ostensione spiritus et uirtutis, ut fides uestra non sit in sapientia hominum, sed in uirtute Dei.

Cyprian was without doubt influenced by Paul. Behind his reasoning, however, lies another, more special line of thought. This passage is one of the first of many in which Christian writers explain their attitude to classical rhetoric, an attitude that was connected with certain special problems, as has been clarified by Norden\(^\text{10}\) in particular. More recently these questions have been discussed by Hagendahl.\(^\text{11}\) Let me give here a very brief résumé of Norden’s conclusions.

The unartistic form of the Christian writings presented a great problem for educated Christians. It had to be explained, particularly to sceptical heathen, why the sources of the new religion were on such a low stylistic level. This was usually done by saying that artistic language was unnecessary or actually a drawback for those explaining holy things to the people. This argument was not restricted to the Scriptures and they rejected the use of artistic language both for preaching and for all Christian writing, including their own. Since the Latin fathers all had a rhetorical schooling and wrote in an artistic manner they came to condemn the style of writing that they themselves employed. Thus far Norden.

If we now revert to the passage quoted, we find that Cyprian’s line of thought expresses the Christian attitude with the help of the rhetorical conventions. He begins by devaluing his stylistic ability in the conventional rhetorical manner. This provides a springboard for the idea that the Word of God has no need of oratory. This is on the one hand exactly the argument by which the Christians were accustomed to explain the simplicity of scriptural language. On the other, it implied as we have shown a conventional sham renunciation of rhetoric.

We now have two different aspects of the passage quoted. It consists, first of all, of a combination of the two types of attitude to rhetoric previously demonstrated, both with a background in rhetorical tradition. Secondly, it contains a particularly Christian attitude, to which there are many parallels in the Christian tradition. This is exactly what we could expect of a man like Cyprian, who had spent half his life in a school of rhetoric. Even when expressing the specifically Christian

\(^{10}\) Pp. 512-534.

\(^{11}\) Kyrkan och den världsliga bildningen pp. 92-104; Piscatorie et non Aristotelice; Latin fathers and the classics, particularly Part II.
idea of the uselessness of artistic language, he employs an argument from
the rhetorical repertory with which he is so deeply familiar. His rejection
of rhetoric is a type example of a rhetorical mode of expression.

Three types of attitude to rhetoric have now been demonstrated in
three writers from the second an third centuries B.C.: Gellius’ apology
for his incompetence, Solinus’ concept of the importance of content
rather than form and Cyprian’s Christian reasoning from a rhetorical
starting point. All three are extremely common in the prefaces of the
following age, the first two in both profane and Christian writers. These
two will be discussed with examples mainly from non-Christian writers,
to show their existence outside the Christian tradition, in which they
have previously been demonstrated by Norden, Hagendahl and others.
Our survey of the third type will be in part an account of the results of
these scholars.

Apology for defective style

The general apology for defective style occurs repeatedly in the speeches
of the panegyrists. One of them says:

(Paneg. 12.1.1) Vnde mihi tantum confidentiae, sacratissime imperator, ut post
tot homines disertissimos, quos et in urbe sacra et hic rursus audisti, dicere
auderem?

Julian’s panegyrist Mamertinus says instead that his speech will bring
down on him indiserti ... fama.12 These are two type examples of the
theme in the genre in which it can reasonably be supposed to have its
origins. Similar examples are to be found in both profane and Christian
writers. An example from the latter is the beginning of Rufinus’ De
Benedictionibus Patriarcharum, in which the writer refers to himself as
minus idoneum ad responsionem and says that nusquam tamen concitus
adest nobis dicendi cursus (CC 20. 190).

It is common for the apology to be accompanied by some kind of
explanation for the writer’s alleged shortcomings. A quite common line
is that the writer is not writing in his native tongue. According to an
anecdote, an excuse of this kind was made as early as by Aulus Postu-
mnius Albinus, a Roman who wrote in Greek. Postumius is said to have
been derided for this by Cato, who thought it ridiculous to publish a
work and then not stand for what you had written. The story is given in

12 See quotation above p. 120.
Polybius 39.1, in Gellius 11.8 and in Macrobius’ preface (cf. below). In the second century a similar turn of phrase was used by Apuleius:

(Met. 1.1.4-5) Mox in urbe Latia aduena studiorum Quiritium indigenam sermonem aerumnabili labore nullo magistro praeente aggressus excolui. En ecce praefamur ueniam, siquid exotici ac forensis sermonis rudis locutor offendoro.

Apuleius puts these words in the mouth of the principal character and narrator of the story. In my opinion we should take this passage not as something that Apuleius desired to say of his own style, but as a detail inserted to give life and credibility to the character of Lucius, to show Lucius’ urbanity and courteous manner.

The same excuse is to be found in Macrobius:

(Macr. Sat. 1. pref. 11-13) nisi sicubi nos sub alio ortos caelo Latinae linguae uena non adiuuet. Quod... petitum impetratumque volumus ut aequi bonique consulent, si in nostro sermone natuia Romani oris elegantia desideretur. Sed ne ego incautus sum, qui uenustatem reprehensionis incurri a M. quondam Catone profectae in A. Albinum...

There then follows the anecdote mentioned above.

The passages in question may seem quite natural expressions of the uncertainty felt by a man writing in a foreign language. In actual fact it was certainly, at least in Macrobius’ case, a pure convention. That he says he is a foreigner does not by any means imply that he grew up in an area where Latin was not spoken. He came from some province, perhaps from Africa. As we know, the level of Latin culture in such areas as Africa and Gaul was at this time fully comparable with that of Rome and Italy. But it was obviously customary for a provincial to take this opportunity to be modest about his style. Apart from Macrobius, we find examples in several of the panegyrists. One of them who was speaking to Constantine in Trier in 313, and who came from the province, says:

(Paneg. 12.1.2) Neque enim ignoro quanto inferiora nostra sint ingenia Romanis, siquidem latine et diserte loqui illis ingenaratum est, nobis elaboratum, et, si quid forte commode dicimus, ex illo fonte et capite facundiae imitatio nostra deriuat.

(1.5) Experiar igitur, ut possum,... sine aemulandi fiducia cupidus imitandi.

A translation of the passage in Polybius, with some comments, is to be found in Gwynn pp. 44 f.

See above p. 113 n. 4.

Cf. however Sittl, Apuleius über seinen Stil, pp. 558 f.

RE Halbband 27.171.
The same line of thought is taken up by Pacatus in his panegyric to Theodosius before the senate in 389, a decade or so earlier than Macrobius:

(Paneg. 2.1.3-4) Huc accedit auditor senatus, cui cum difficile sit pro amore quo in te praeditus est de te satis fieri, tum difficilium pro ingenita atque hereditaria orandi facultate non esse fastidio rudem hunc et in cultum Transalpini sermonis horrorem, praesertim cum absurdae sinistraeque iactantiae possit uideri his ostentare facundiam quam de eorum fonte manantem in nostros usque usus deriuatio sera traduxit. Quibus equidem cogitatis adeo sollicitor ut non eos tantum hodie arbitrer interesse quos cerno, sed adsistere obuersarique dicturo Catones ipsos et Tullios et Hortensios omnesque illos oratores putem qui me in posteris suis audiant.

The latest editor, Galletier, gives the following note to the first sentence: “Crainte légitime d’un orateur provincial de parler devant les représentants des vieilles familles de Rome dont beaucoup étaient d’une culture raffinée.” This is a complete misconception. There undoubtedly existed uneducated provincials who would have experienced fear in making a speech before the Senate. But Pacatus has mastered the contemporary rhetorical skills, and is well aware of this. His smugness shines through the modest phrases: a man who unabashed invites the ghosts of Cicero and Cato to listen must be convinced of the quality of his own performance. The excuse of being a foreigner has been worn down to a modesty formula and at the same time a phrase of politeness to the Roman audience. One should not carry rhetoric to Rome, any more than owls to Athens.\(^\text{17}\)

Another closely related type of excuse for incompetence is a lack of training. This can be adduced by any young and/or inexperienced speaker or writer, an example being provided by Cicero in the preface to Pro Roscio Amerino. It is easy to imagine just how frequent such expressions must have been, above all in speeches. Even the more experienced, however, can express themselves in a similar manner, by referring to the fact that their ability has long remained unexercised. The reasons for this can vary, and the indication of them can often give in passing very interesting information on the writer and his time. The best known passage of this kind is the introduction to the Agricola, 3.2-3, where Tacitus speaks of his fifteen years of enforced silence under Domitian. The passage ends:

\(^{17}\) Cf. Sittl, loc. cit.
(Tac. Agr. 3.2-3) tot annis, quibus iuuenes ad senectutem, senes prope ad ipsos exactae aetatis terminos per silentium uenimus. Non tamen pigebit uel incondita ac rudi uoce memoriam prioris seruitutis ac testimonium praesentium bonorum composuisse.

The quite strong expression *incondita ac rudi uoce*, which is often quoted as an early example of a self-deprecatory judgement by an author of his style, must not be torn from its context. Tacitus' main intention is to stress the barrenness of these fifteen years. He speaks of "we survivors, who have outlived both others and ourselves" and, as can be seen from the quotation, it is "we old men" (i.e. "those of us who are old men") that forms the latest subject before the impersonal *pigebit*, so that it is almost as though all "we old men" were contemplating writing. Tacitus counts himself here as one of these men. In this context it is natural for him to speak of his *incondita ac rudis uox*, the voice that has become artless and uncultivated from fifteen years of silence. The expression must not be taken as a general assessment of his own style.

The later writers who use similar arguments are often more interested in coy references to their pretended stylistic inadequacy than in explaining the break in their rhetorical exercises. The majority of later examples of the theme are to be found in Christian writers, who slightly modify the line of thought. See below pp. 137 f.

**Content before form**

The idea of the importance of content rather than form, illustrated above with an example from Solinus, is taken up by several profane writers on scientific and professional subjects. Palladius writes in the introduction to his agricultural handbook:

(Pallad. 1.1.1) Neque enim formator agricolae debet artibus et eloquentia rhetores aemulari, quod a plerisque factum est: qui dum diserte loquuntur rusticis, adsecuti sunt, ut eorum doctrina nec a disertissimis possit intelligi.

This is a sensible and in itself unremarkable reflection, indicated by the nature of the subject and the class of reader aimed at. It is interesting, however, in that this late author is apparently the first of the Latin writers on agriculture who consciously tries to modify his style to suit his public.

18 E.g. Paneg. 8.1.1. A particular case is Paneg. 9, where the speaker Eumenes, a teacher of rhetoric, explains that he has had no practice whatsoever in actual law-suits.
Formal skill is rejected in favour of content also in the preface to one of the Historia Augusta biographies, the Vita Probi:

(Vopisc. Prob. 1.6) Neque ego nunc facultatem eloquentiamque polliceor sed res gestas, quas perire non patior.

Later on in the same preface we find:

(Vopisc. Prob. 1.7) mihi quidem id animi fuit, ut non Sallustios, Liuios, Tacitos, Trogos atque omnes disertissimos imitaret uiros in vita principum et temporibus disserendis, sed Marium Maximum, Suetonium Tranquillum, Fabium Marcellinum, Gargilianum Martiale, Iulium Capitolinum, Aelium Lampridium ceterosque, qui haec et talia non tam diserte quam uere memoriae tradiderunt.

Here the classical rhetorical theme reappears: stylistic shortcomings are coupled with reliability of fact, with a suggestion that perfection of form may conceal inaccuracy. An author who is particularly concerned to be believed can use this familiar theme by denying any connexion with rhetoric and at the same time preferably emphasizing the unrelia­bility of orators, bringing out by contrast his own natural straightforwardness. This is what Vopiscus does. This author, of course, felt a strong need to emphasize his love of truth in that his work is both tendentious and erroneous. He also endeavours in his preface to bolster his authority by reference to the care he has taken and to his assiduous use of primary sources.

An example of a similar line of thought in another genre—the learned compilation—is given by Macrobius:

(Sat. I. pref. 4) Nec mihi uitio uertas, si res, quas ex lectione uaria mutabor, ipsis saepe uerbis, quibus ab ipsis auctoris enarratae sunt, explicabo, quia praesens opus non eloquentiae ostentationem sed noscendorum congeriem pollucetur.

This sort of argument, which was obviously traditional among compilers, reoccurs also in a number of Christian writers. There is an example in Cassiodorus:

(Inst. Diu. pref. 1) (libros) minus fortasse disertos, quoniam in eis non affectata eloquentia sed relatio necessaria reperitur.

The Christian approach

The attitude of Christian writers to rhetoric remained much the same as we have encountered it in Cyprian. A wealth of prefaces from the fifth century onwards state that the art of oratory is superfluous for the pre-
sentation of the Christian faith and that the reader should attend to the content, not to the very imperfect style.\textsuperscript{19} It would be pointless to give all the references here. Let me quote instead two typical passages from Sulpicius Severus, passages that were moreover important for later prefaces, and discuss in connexion with these certain special developments of the theme.

The first passage is taken from the introduction to the enormously popular \textit{Vita Martini}:\textsuperscript{20}

\begin{quote}
(Sulp. Seu. Mart. pref. 3-5) bona uenia id a lectoribus postulabis, ut res potius quam uerba perpandant et aequo animo ferant, si aures eorum uitosus forsitan sermo perculerit, quia regnum Dei non in eloquentia, sed in fide constat. Menum etiam, salutem saeculo non ab oratoribus, cum utique, si utile fuisset, id quoque Dominus praestare potuisset, sed a piscatoribus praedicatam esse. Ego enim, cum primum animum ad scribendum appuli, quia nefas putarem tanti uiri latere uirtutes, apud me ipse decidi, ut soloeismis non erubescerem: quia nec magnam istarum umquam rerum scientiam contigissem, et si quid ex his studii olim fortasse libassem, totum id desuétude tanti temporis perdidissem.
\end{quote}

Let us take the different themes in the order in which they appear here.

1. \textit{bona uenia ... fide constat}: This sentence contains the same argument as the passage quoted from Cyprian. The language in which it is here embodied has parallels in many late prefaces, particularly to the lives of saints. An example is the \textit{Vita Caesarii}:

\begin{quote}
(Vita Caes. Arel. 1. prol. 2) Vnum tamen hoc in praesenti opusculi deuotione a lectoribus postulamus, ut si casu scolasticorum aures atque iudicia nos simplices contigerit relatores attingere, non arguant, quod stilus noster uidetur pompa uerborum et cautela artis grammaticae destitutus, quia nobis actus et uerba et merita tanti uiri cum ueritate narrantium lux sufficit eius operum et ornamenta uirtutum.
\end{quote}

Not so similar versions of the same idea are to be found in a great number of authors. Salvianus, for instance, after speaking of the rhetorical skill of other authors and their lack of concern for content, says of himself:

\begin{quote}
(Salu. Gub. pref. 3) Nos autem, qui rerum magis quam uerborum amatores utilia potius quam plausibilia sectamus neque id quaerimus, ut in nobis inania\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

This theme is not to be found in the relatively few works preserved from the time before the late 4th century. Arnobius (Nat. 1.1) and Lactantius (Opif. 1.1) have each only a reminiscence of Cyprian's \textit{ingenii ... mediocritas}.

\textsuperscript{20} Quoted also in Norden, pp. 530 f. Further passages of interest in this context are to be found in his collection of quotations pp. 529-532.
saeculorum ornamenta sed ut salubria rerum emolumenta laudentur, in scriptiunculis nostris non lenocinia esse uolumus sed remedia, quae scilicet non tam otiosorum auribus placeant quam aegrotorum mentibus prosint, magnum ex utraque re caelestibus donis fructum reportaturi.

Also Jerome uses the theme on several occasions, for instance in *Epist. 120*. Rufinus employs the idea in the preface to his *Apologia adversus Hieronymum*, Book i. His reasoning bears some resemblance to that of Socrates in the more famous apology. Both stress their own lack of rhetorical skill and their truthfulness, thus contrasting themselves with the alleged skill and dishonesty of their opponents. Cf. above p. 100. Naturally, there are also Christian writers who adopt only part of the line of thought discussed, contenting themselves with an apology for their own style or only maintaining the uselessness of oratory. It goes without saying that their apologies for stylistic shortcomings are to be taken no more seriously than those of non-Christian writers.

2. *a piscatoribus praedicatam*: For this type of expression the reader is referred to Hagendahl’s very interesting article *Piscatorie et non Aristotelice* (with references to earlier literature on this topic). Hagendahl shows how the inadequate education of the apostles came to be regarded as something positive, in agreement with the above-mentioned concept that education was unnecessary for the dissemination of the faith. As a popular expression of this general idea there developed the antithesis fishermen/orators, and hence the expression chosen by Hagendahl as the title for his article. Of the general tendency Hagendahl writes, in my opinion very perceptively (p. 191): “Man könnte fast sagen, dass je mehr ein Autor sich mit seiner stilistischen Unfähigkeit entschuldigt oder sich auf die Simplicitas rusticana et ecclesiastica [Hier. Tract. de ps. 78 (Anecd. Mareds. III: 2 p. 67, 14)] beruft, um so mehr lässt sich stilistisches Raffinement von ihm erwarten. Hier verweben sich zwei ganz verschiedene Tendenzen miteinander: die durch die christliche Tradition geforderte Rücksicht auf die schlichte Sprache der

21 I have discussed Jerome only very briefly as two minor studies throwing light on his numerous prefaces have already been published, by Stade and Favez. Stade has investigated to what extent Jerome’s prefaces follow both the laws of rhetoric and his predecessors. Favez constructs from the prefaces a portrait of Jerome as a person. It should be pointed out that several of Jerome’s letters have introductions of much the same type as the rest of his works, a circumstance that appears to have escaped these two scholars. This applies above all to letters 1, 60, 108, 117, 118, 119, 120, 130 and 140. Some even contain word-for-word parallels with his other prefaces. Cf. below p. 145 n. 11.

22 See particularly Norden p. 595 n. 1.
Urkunden und die konventionelle Forderung, dass der Verfasser, vor allem in Vorwort, sich beschieden über sich selbst äußern soll."

3. *apud me ipse decidi, ut soloecismis non erubescerem*: Sulpicius Severus here denies not only any higher rhetorical schooling but even his knowledge of the more elementary rules of speech. This seems to me to be an example of the reinforcement of a theme, something that we encounter repeatedly during this period. A succession of writers before Sulpicius had denied any rhetorical ability. He outbids them here by speaking of *soloecismi*, actual linguistic errors. I have been unable to find any real parallel to this in the writers of the 5th century: when Marius Mercator speaks of *minus oratio luculenta, aut uerborum ubicumque praesumptorum nouitas* (PL 48.755A) he is referring to the problems that arise in literal translation. Not until the recently quoted preface to the *Vita Caesarii* (c. 540) do we find the roughly equivalent expression *cautela artis grammaticae destitutus*. It is somewhat uncertain, however, how we should understand the term *grammatica ars*. The theme of grammatical shortcomings is further developed in an interesting manner by Gregory the Great and Gregory of Tours. This is discussed in an appendix below, pp. 162-168.

4. *quia nec magnam istarum umquam rerum scientiam contigissem, et si quid ex his studiis olim fortasse libassem, totum id desuetudine tanti temporis perdidissem*: We have already mentioned this theme in connexion with the profane writers. 23 In its Christian form I have found it first in Greek authors. The earliest passage, and that most important for Latin development, is in Irenaeus, *Aduersus Haereses* i. pref. 3, where he says that no stylistic elegance is to be expected of a man living among "Celts" in Lyons, and speaking for the most part their language. Gregorius Thaumaturgus says in his panegyric to Origen that he is incapable of praising his teacher in a worthy manner, chiefly because for seven years he has had no practice in rhetoric, having first studied Roman law and then been Origen’s pupil. Basil says in a letter to Libanius (*Epist.* 339, quoted by Norden p. 529) that he is devoting himself entirely to the Scriptures and their barbaric language, and that he has completely forgotten what he had perhaps once learned of the art of oratory. Norden rightly describes this last as "scherzhaft".

In 5th century Christian Rome we meet the theme on several occasions. Sulpicius, whom we quoted above, gives no precise reason for his *desuetudo*. Rufinus, on the other hand, having lived a large part of his

---

23 Above, pp. 132 f.
life in Palestine, could quote his resulting lack of practice in Latin in the
preface to his introduction of Eusebius' history:

(CC 20.267) A quo ego opere cum excusare me uellem utpote inferior et inpar
et qui in tam multis annis usum Latini sermonis amiserim.

Jerome uses the theme at least twice. In one passage he advances merely
his otium as the reason for his being out of training:

(Hier. Epist. 1.1) quia otium quasi quaedam ingenii robigo paruulam licet
facultatem pristini siccaset eloquii.

In the other, however, it is his studies in Hebrew that have stood in the
way of stylistic exercise (In Gal.: see Favez pp. 16 f.).

Let me recapitulate the passage in the Vita Martini. Sulpicius first
begs the reader to overlook his faulty presentation; here he is follow­ing
previous writers, both Christian and profane. He then emphasizes
how much more important is content than form. This too had been done
by many writers before him. Then—and this is something new—he ela­
borates on his admission of formal shortcomings by stating that he is
capable of soloecismi, actual linguistic errors. Several later authors did
the same. Finally, like many other writers, he points to his lack of
practice as one of the reasons for his faulty treatment of the language.

The second passage in Sulpicius is to be found in one of the dialogues.
Gallus, one of the characters, has been asked to speak. He replies:

(Sulp. Seu. Dial. 1.27.1-4)24 munus istud, quod inponitis, non recusem. Sed dum
cogito me hominem Gallum inter Aquitanos uerba facturum, uereor ne offendat
uestras nimium urbanas aures sermo rusticior. Audietis me tamen ut Gurdoni-
cum hominem, nihil cum fuco aut cothurno loquentem. Nam si mihi tribuisitis
Martini me esse discipulum, illud etiam concedite, ut mihi liceat exemplo illius
inanis sermonum faleras et uerborum ornamenta contemnere.

That this reply is in the nature of a conventional theme is made
clear by Severus himself a few lines below, where another character,
Postumianus, replies to the above:

(Dial. 1.27.5) cum sis scholasticus, hoc ipsum quasi scholasticus artificiose facis,
ut excuses imperitiam, quia exuberas eloquentia.25

24 After this chapter the earlier editions indicate a dividing line between two dia­
logues. Schanz-Hosius (4:2.475) and the editor Halm (CSEL 1, p. VII) consider that
no such line should exist, supporting their theory on early MSS. Their view seems to
me to be correct. Chapter 1.27 contains, however, as we shall see, typical prefatorial
topoi and is clearly intended to introduce a new section of the work. I have accord­
ingly treated it here as if it were a preface.

25 This and a couple of similar passages are quoted by Norden, p. 595 n. 1.
The author thus brands as conventional the theme that he himself uses in the preface to the *Vita Martini*. Perhaps he even consciously allows Gallus' reply to caricature exaggerated self-deprecation. If this is the case, then the caricature is very well done. Several of the expressions used by Gallus are extremely common in prefaces from this and later periods. They provide useful examples of the application of the theme. Let me take these expressions in order.

1. *dum cogito me hominem Gallum inter Aquitanos uerba facturum*: This is simply a variation on the theme that we have discussed already in the profane authors, the excuse of being a foreigner. The theme is no more probable here than when Pacatus apologized for his transalpine language in his speech to the Senate in Rome. It is interesting to note, however, that Sulpicius implies a distinction between northern Gaul and the wholly Romanized Aquitania. This hints at a certain linguistic difference otherwise difficult to demonstrate.

2. *sermo rusticior*: The use of the word *rusticus* to describe one's own style has been noted and interpreted by Sittl, *Rusticitas der theologischen Schriftsteller*. He refers to this passage and writes (p. 560): "Von derselben Zeit an werden die rusticitas und ihre Synonyma an zwei Stätten der Literatur heimisch. Vor allem dienen sie im Vorwort der falschen Bescheidenheit der Theologen, welche ihre weltliche Bildung verbergen wollen ... Man muss dabei in Erwägung ziehen, dass gerade diese Vorreden nach dem Brauche der jüngeren Sophistik in besonders künstlichem Stile gedrechselt sind." And he concludes (p. 561): "Augenscheinlich waren diese Versicherungen der rusticitas und simplicitas eine Art Höflichkeitsform der spätgallischen Schriftstellerei." Examples of the phenomenon are collected in Bruhn, p. 21. Cf. also Curtius, *Eur. Lit.* p. 414.

In this connexion there is the very similar expression *imperitus sermone*, taken from Paul (2 Cor. 11. 6: *imperitus sermone, sed non scientia*). As Curtius shows (*Eur. Lit.* p. 412), Paul uses the phrase in a context that excludes the possibility of modesty. These words are frequently used, however, by later writers in their prefaces to deplore their own style. A large number of similar phrases are also to be found, see

---

26 See above pp. 130 ff.
27 E.g. Cassian. *Inst. pref.* 5; *Vita Balthildis A, MGH SRM* 2.482.18. A knowledge of these current expressions can be a help in reconstructing texts. We find, for instance, in *Vita Radegundis* (MGH SRM 2.364.30 f.): *cuius vitae praesentis cursum, licet tam privato sermone, ferre temptamus in publico*. On the grounds of these parallels I would like to suggest *imperito* instead of *tam privato*, which I find incomprehensible.
Bruhn pp. 17-23 and Hagendahl, *La correspondance de Ruricius*, pp. 93-96. They reflect the low evaluation of one’s own literary ability that was thought fitting at that time. Such general phrases are enormously common and must be counted as more or less obligatory in prefaces from the fourth century onwards.

The passage from Severus also contains a couple of the expressions used to describe the rhetorical style that the author was allegedly unwilling to employ:

3. *nihil cum fuco aut cothurno loquentem:* The word *fucus* originally meant rock-lichen, or the red dye obtained from it. From this there soon developed the more general meaning of “embellishment”, almost always in a critical or pejorative sense. From Cicero onwards the word was often used to denote unduly elaborate stylistic adornment (e.g. *De Orat.* 2.45.188: *sententiae . . . sine pigmentis fucoque puerili*). The verb *fuco* is used in a corresponding sense (e.g. Cic. *Mur.* 12.26: *Isdem ineptis fucata sunt illa omnia*); the participle *fucatus* is usually used as an adjective. These words became very popular among Christian authors as labels for the rhetorical language to which they in theory were opposed. The first example I have been able to find is from Cyprian (*Ad Donat.* 2). Bruhn gives a collection of such passages, p. 37. See also *TLL* under *fucus* and *fucatus* (6: 1.1462.77 ff. and 1460.72 ff. respectively). Instances also in the prefaces of Nepotianus and the *Vita Caesarii*.

The word *cothurnus* originally meant a sort of footwear used by actors in tragedy. As early as during the classical period the word stood for “tragic style” (e.g. Prop. 2.34.41: *Aeschyleo componere uerba coturno*). From this it came to indicate “highflown style” in general (*Apol.* 37: *argumenti sollertiam et coturnum facundiae*). In this sense the word was often used by late authors in contexts similar to Severus. See Bruhn pp. 46 ff. and *TLL* 4.1088.7 ff. The expression *Gallicanus cothurnus* as indicating a typically Gallic eloquence is discussed by Norden, pp. 635 ff.

4. *sermonum faleras . . . contemnere:* Norden (p. 33 n. 3) shows how the authors of antiquity frequently compared the different levels of style with the different gaits of the horse. In connexion with this he tries to show that the meaning of the word *phalerae* (the corresponding adjective being *phaleratus*) shifted under the influence of such metaphors from “horse trappings” to the “trappings of speech”. Norden seems, however, to be constructing an unnecessarily complicated development of meaning in order to support his hypothesis that such metaphors were very common. *Phalerae* is by no means used exclusively for equine adornments,
but equally often of people. Nor can it be maintained that the former meaning has greater authority from the earlier date of the writers using it in this context. One reference in Cicero (Verr. 5.12.29) is not clear, while the other (Verr. 4.80.185) concerns a man. In Publilius Syrus (see Petron. 55) the word is used of a woman’s adornments. The references from the Augustan era and later concern both horses and people. In these circumstances it is natural to assume that the word quite simply passed from the general meaning of “adornment” to the more particular “adornment of speech”. A very similar example is the word bratteae, with its basic meaning “jewel, adornment”, used in Solinus’ preface in the sense “rhetorical adornment”. References for the words phalerae and phaleratus are collected in Bruhn, p. 44. See also Faustus Reiensis, CSEL 21.4, and MGH SRM 3.630.7.

ASSISTANCE

Help with corrections

We have already discussed how the author, in epistolary prefaces from the first century, can beg the dedicatee to scrutinize his work, sometimes also to decide whether or not it should be published.¹ The function of this theme is similar to that of the request, namely to transfer part of the responsibility. I shall consider here some variations on this theme from late antiquity.²

To request someone to read through one’s work and comment on it became a common practice among specialist writers of the second and third centuries. The earliest example is perhaps Balbus:

(Balb. Grom. p. 91) Itaque quo cultior in quorundam notitiam ueniat, omnia tibi nota perlaturus ad te primum liber iste festinet, apud te tirocinii rudimenta deponat.

Solinus writes very similarly:

(Sol. pref. 1) e re putauui examen opusculi istius tibi potissimum dare, cuius uel industria promptius suffragium uel benignitas ueniam spondebat faciliorem.

The word examen cannot here be given any very concrete meaning. It is presupposed that the recipient will either give the work his approval

¹ See above pp. 106 ff.
² Simon has studied the phenomenon during the Middle Ages (2.112-136) and gives a wealth of examples also from late antiquity.
(suffragium) or pardon (ueniam), i.e. the decision will not be other than positive.

Justin writes of his work in a similar way:

(Iust. pref. 5) Quod ad te non cognoscendi magis quam emendandi causa transmisi.

Seel (pp. 39-41) considers that this can be traced back to Trogus, for no apparent reason other than that the passage is in Justin’s preface. There is otherwise no inherent probability of this, since the parallels with Justin’s contemporaries are sufficient to show that it was a quite common line of thought and since—as mentioned above—there are considerable objections to assigning this passage to Trogus.

The theme seems then to be less common for some two or three hundred years, only to become very popular in the late 5th century. Sidonius writes:

(Epist. 1.1.3) Sed scilicet tibi parui tuaeque examinationi has litterulas non recensendas (hoc enim parum est) sed defaecandas, ut aiunt, limandasque com-misi.

Again we see what strong and unusual words the author resorts to in order to strengthen a trite theme. Similar passages are to be found for instance in Claudianus Mamertus:

(CSEL 11.20) tu modo faxis uti memineris non absque cura tui prodi opor-tere, quod publicari iubes,

and Cledonius:

(Gramm. 5.9) Me tuis praeceptis adgressum circumspice, luxuriosos tonde sermones, doctiloqua serie corrigentis extende curta, caudifica, ut ad tuum arbitrium cuncta uidantur tractata relecta digesta.

For later development see Simon 2. 124 ff.

There is a clear tendency in writers using the scrutiny theme to stress the benevolence of the scrutinizer, i.e. usually the dedicatee, and to speak in contrast of the presumed malevolence of other critics. This goes back to a commonplace in classical literature on the ill-will of contemporaries. See the collection of examples in Gudeman, p. 375, in his note on Dialogus 23. 11. The first example in prefaces is to be found in Balbus:

(Grom. pp. 91 f.) quod si . . . parum diligentem adhibitam curam esse credideris et in aliqua cessasse uidemur parte, non exiguum laboris mei consequar fructum, quod te monente malignorum lucri fecerim exstimationem.

Cf. above pp. 77 f.
He is followed by Justin:

(pref. 6) Sufficit enim mihi in tempore iudicium tuum, apud posteros, cum obtractationis inuidia decesserit, industriae testimonium habituro.

Here too it is unnecessary to assume that Justin was modelling himself on Trogus. We can also refer to a contemporary Greek, the zoologist Aelianus (De Anim. 17 epil.). For later references see Simon 2.129-132; cf. also i. 87-91.

There is also the more special case in which the writer explains that any reader is welcome to make changes and additions to his work, if he can improve it in any way. This theme is used by compilers and is naturally designed to stress the writer's concern for accuracy. I have found one example from the first century AD:

(Frontin. Strat. pref.) Nam cum hoc opus, sicut cetera, usus potius aliorum quam meae commendationis causa adgressus sim, adiuuari me ab his qui aliquid illi adstruent, non argui credam,

and one from the sixth century:

(Eugipp. CSEL 9:1.4) Si quis sane transferens hoc opus his quae congesta sunt alia addere forte uoluerit, congruis adiciat locis.

This theme was very frequent in the Middle Ages. Examples include Defensor (c. 700, CC 117, Prologus 1 line 24 ff.), Johannes Monachus (c. 800, Samml. mittellat. Texte 7.1), Rabanus Maurus (9th century, PL 107.145 D), Anastasius Bibliothecarius (9th century, ed. Westerbergh, Stockholm, 1963, p. 20; also in MGH Epistulae 7.442.17 ff.), Petrus Alfonsi (12th century, Samml. mittellat. Texte i.2) and Bernard of Cluny (12th century, ed. Halvarson, Stockholm, 1963, pp. 7 and 49).5

Prohibition against changes

There exists also the converse of the theme just mentioned, namely a request to the reader not to change anything in the text. This theme, like the preceding, naturally arises from the circumstance that there were normally only a few copies of the work in existence. If the work consisted, for instance, of a collection of quotations then it was no very great step to requesting the reader to supplement it. If, on the other

4 Cf. above.
5 The theme has been exemplified from the Middle Ages because, strangely enough, Simon appears not to have noticed it. She considers only similar pleas to the dedicatee, 2.125-129.
hand, the writer had produced a work of more independent character then he might well be concerned that it should not be distorted. He could urge readers and above all copyists to respect the text. The first example of this that I know of is in Irenaeus, who gave what is in itself a somewhat trivial thought a certain tone of ceremonious conjuration that was retained by later authors. He wrote, according to Rufinus/ Eusebius:

(Rufin. Hist. 5.20.2) Adiuro te, inquit, qui transcripseris librum hunc, per dominum nostrum Iesum Christum et aduentum eius in gloria, cum ueniet iudicare uiuos et mortuos, ut conferas haec quae scribis et emendes diligenter ad exemplaria.  

Levison has shown that this passage patently served as a model for Gregory of Tours in the Historia Francorum 10. 31 and, probably indirectly, for a similar passage in a late life of a saint. This has not been noticed by Auerbach, who has commented on the passage in Gregory (pp. 79 f.). His reasoning, which is based on the assumption that Gregory is expressing an original idea, is therefore most debatable at this point. It can be mentioned also, that Irenaeus’ translator, Rufinus, imitates Irenaeus’ theme and produces an even more pompous conjuration in one of his own prefaces (CC 20. 247).

Assistance from God

The writer who does not request help from the dedicatee or the general reader can instead turn directly to a higher power. From Homer onwards it was common among poets to invoke one or several deities in the introduction to a work. We have alreday had cause to discuss certain classical prefaces of this type, in which the place of the god is taken by the Emperor. Christian writers naturally invoke their God in the same way. Jerome uses this theme repeatedly, on three occasions taking a biblical quotation by way of illustration: Aperi os tuum, et implebo illud. (In Dan., PL 25. 492 A; Exord. de Ps. VIII, CC 78. 28; Epist.

6 This passage, which is said to be from a now completely lost work of Irenaeus, is quoted also by Jerome, Vir. Ill. 35, who translates it slightly differently.

7 See MGH SRM 1:1.536 and 4.781, respectively.

8 See above pp. 103-106.

9 More as a curiosity than anything else it can be mentioned that works were also actually dedicated to the Lord: e.g. Paulinus of Pella.

10 In Vulg. Ps. 80.11 we find, with one word changed, dilata os tuum, et implebo illud.
Both the idea and the actual quotation become common property in the later Gallic lives of saints.

The theme is frequent also in other Christian writers, often put very briefly. Naturally there appear also longer prayers to the Lord at the beginning of a work, as with Julian of Toledo (late 7th century; PL 96. 460 and 537).

Besides praying oneself one can urge the dedicatee or the reader to assist by prayer. This is done, for instance, by Cassianus:

(Conl. pref. 4) Vestrum igitur est conatus nostros piis orationibus adiuuare.

Ennodius says:

(Ennod. Opusc. 4. pref. 4) Tu autem, venerabilis abba Leon ti, qui id mihi operis iniunxisti, adiuua oratium titubament et siccitatem stili sanctarum precum imbre locupleta.

Similar turns of phrase are to be found in a large number of 5th and 6th century writers. Cf. the passage from Rufinus cited above pp. 122 f.

OTHER FORMS OF MODESTY

One of the most important functions of the preface, as we have said, is to emphasize the author's modesty. The foremost themes used by late Latin writers to mark this virtue are contained in the three groups of themes that we have discussed so far. Let us now consider some that cannot suitably be fitted into any of these categories.

\textit{Diminutives}

It has been mentioned above that writers often use pejorative expressions to indicate their own person. A corresponding phenomenon is when

\textsuperscript{11} Jerome repeats himself in this way very frequently in his prefaces, as we might expect from his general manner of writing. Some examples: The expression from Epist. 1 mentioned above p. 121 recurs word for word in Epist. 130.1.2; below p. 151 are cited partly identical passages from the introductions of one Bible commentary and one letter; Hagendahl, in \textit{Latin fathers and the classics}, p. 296, also quotes almost identical expressions about Cicero from two prefaces.

\textsuperscript{12} With the word \textit{aperi}, not with \textit{dilata}.

\textsuperscript{13} See Simon 1.107, n. 13.

\textsuperscript{14} See Simon 1.106 f.

\textsuperscript{1} See above p. 125. We may also mention here that as an expression of Christian humility there have also been adduced certain late Latin names, whose meanings were less than flattering for their bearers, such as Stercorius, Calumniosus, Proiectus etc. The writer who has discussed these most recently, Kajanto (\textit{Names of Humility}), maintains however—as I think rightly—that they do not express humility at all, but are simply nicknames that have become ordinary names, the late Latin equivalents of earlier formations like Brutus, Crassus etc.
the work in question is referred to by a diminutive, marking the writer’s modesty with regard to his brainchild. Particularly common are -uncula formations from abstract substantives ending in -io. This type of word is favoured by Cicero but is encountered only to a very limited extent in later authors; see Hakamies, p. 37. The predilection for it shown by later authors just in prefaces is a typical example of the desire to find unusual and striking ways of expressing the traditional lines of thought. We can compare it with both the development towards stronger linguistic expressions as discussed above pp. 117-120 and with the exuberant use of metaphors etc., that will be repeatedly demonstrated in the present section.

The use of diminutives becomes common in prefaces by the compilers and editors of the second and third centuries, such as Gellius (pref. 14: lucubratiunculas, “small nocturnal studies”; pref. 23: delectatiunculas), Solinus (pref. 1: opusculi), Censorinus (1.6: quaesttiunculas; cf. 1.11 exigua ... libamina) and Justin (pref. 4: corpusculum). All these words except opusculum are unusual. The custom was followed by several authors in the centuries that followed. Cassianus for instance speaks of ingenioli nostri oblatiuncula (C. Nest. pref. 2), Salvianus of his scriptiunculae (Gub. pref. 3) and Paulinus of Pella of his meditatiuncula (Euch. pref. 4); examples are also to be found from the Middle Ages: Paulus Diaconus gives us exiguitatis meae munusculum (Epit. Festi pref.).

Ship metaphors

Many authors express their anxiety and uncertainty in the face of their task by an allusion to sailing. Quintilian, for instance, in the preface to Book 12 uses the metaphor of a sailor making his way from the familiar waters off the coast out to the open sea. To begin with his voyage is easy and there are many others around him, but gradually he finds himself more and more alone until finally he is out on the deserted ocean: (Quint. Inst. 12. proem 4) Nunc ‘caelum undique et undique pontus’.2

2 Lucubratiuncula according to the dictionaries only here and in Jerome in this sense: delectatiuncula nowhere else, according to TLL. The other words appear rarely.

3 In Claudianus Mamertus, CSEL 11.30, on the other hand, the same word is used in a truly pejorative sense.

4 Verg. Aen. 3.193.
To compare some literary enterprise with a voyage is naturally no new idea. The theme has an unmistakable poetical colour, as was pointed out by Pliny the Younger:

(Plin. Epist. 8.4.5) immite rudentes, pande uela ac si quando alias, toto ingenio uhere. Cur enim non ego quoque poetice cum poeta?

The theme has been discussed by Curtius (Eur. Lit. pp. 138-141), who adduces numerous examples from the classical Latin authors and up to Dante and Spenser. To these can be added the numerous passages from Ovid collected by Bömer in his commentary to the Fasti i. 3.

The theme is used again and again in the prefaces of late antiquity. A model seems to have been set by Jerome:


While Quintilian sees himself sailing in calm waters, Jerome feels incapable even of putting out from land. A typical reinforcement of a worn topos.

Writers who have already published a work tend to declare that they would have preferred not to leave the harbour that they had once reached. Sedulius, for instance, says:

(CSEL 10.171) procellosis adhuc imbribus concussae ratis uela madentia tumultis pelagi rursus fatigationi commisi.

Similar passages are to be found in Sidonius Apollinaris, Epist. i. 3-4 and Cassianus, Conl. i. pref. 3.

**Nocturnal studies**

The etiquette of modesty included also emphasis of one’s own diligence, preferably in contrast to one’s natural gifts, which had always to be portrayed as inadequate. A common way of emphasizing diligence was, as we have already seen (pp. 97 f.), to mention the nights of study. The most famous example would seem to be in Gellius, who called his work *Noctes Atticae* from the busy nights spent in its writing. He tells us, by the way, that others before him had named their works in a similar way.5

5 Gell. pref. 7,Δύκνομε, with commentary by Faider.
This nocturnal diligence was ultimately elevated to the rank of an allegorical being, Agrypnia (cf. above p. 97) in the strange mythical world of Martianus Capella.\textsuperscript{6}

\textit{The dedicatee the only reader}

Already in connexion with Archimedes (p. 22) we had cause to point out that the dedicatee may function as a representative for the reading public as a whole, in that the writer addresses to him remarks intended for readers in general. This, as should by now be apparent, was very common in the prefaces of the ancient writers. The countless excuses for stylistic shortcomings, for instance, are addressed more often to the dedicatee than directly to the general reader. Late Latin authors sometimes carry this mock modesty so far as to wish that the dedicatee will be their only reader. Sulpicius Severus writes in his preface to the \textit{Vita Martini}:

\begin{quote}
(pref. 1-2) negare non potui. Quid enim esset, quod non amori tuo uel cum detrimento mei pudoris inpenderem? Verumtamen ea tibi fiducia libellum edidi, qua nulli a te pro tendendum reor, quia id spo pondisti. Sed uereor, ne tu ei ianua sis futurus, et emissus semel reuocari non quae t.
\end{quote}

The theme that Severus employs here, that the work is to be read only by the dedicatee, is obviously intended to demonstrate the author's dread of publicity, a product of his general modesty. That the theme is here a convention with no basis in fact is clear even from the passage quoted, in which the author finds himself obliged at once to assume that the dedicatee will break his promise not to forward the work to others. It becomes even more obvious later on in the preface, which is largely aimed at the general reader.\textsuperscript{7}

Similar lines of thought are to be found in several roughly contemporary writers. Jerome says:

\begin{quote}
(Vulg. Esdr. pref.) Itaque obsecro uos, mi Domnion et Rogatiane carissime, ut priuata lectione contenti, librum non efferatis in publicum nec fastidiosis ingerratis cibos.
\end{quote}

Jerome too shortly afterwards shows that he is not to be taken seriously: (\textit{ibid.}) Si qui autem fratrum sunt quibus nostra non displicent, his tribuatis exemplar.


\textsuperscript{7} There is a similar tendency behind the phrase in the same preface on leaving out the author's name (\textit{Mart.} pref. 6). On this see Curtius, \textit{Eur. Lit.} pp. 503-505, Simon 1.117-119.
A similar passage is to be found in Nepotianus. Paulinus of Pella goes still further, saying that he is writing for God and himself alone and exhorting any reader so far as possible to forget what he will read:

(Paul. Pell. pref. 5) si cui forsitan magis curioso tantum otii ab re sua fuerit, ut laboriosum uita meae ordinem agnoscerere, exoratum eum cupio, ut, siue aliquid seu forsitan nihil in gestis uel in uersibus meis, quod possit probare, reppererit, ea tamen ipsa, quae elegerit, oblivioni potius inculcanda deleet, quam memoriae diuidicanda commendet.

For later variations on the theme see Simon 1.91 and 2.129-131.

THE SUBJECT

Prefaces naturally very often contain preliminary arguments or reviews of the subject matter of the work. These lie outside the framework of this study. We shall now consider, however, certain more general comments on the handling of the subject, which occur in several authors, and certain metaphors and similes used in connexion with these.

Homer and the fame of Achilles

An ancient and long-lived theme in the prefaces of historical writers is that the important events of the period covered are worth preserving for posterity.1 To this thought there is sometimes associated the reflection that the evaluation of what is portrayed depends on how and by whom this is done. The first extant example of this in Latin is from Sallust:

(Cat. 8.4) Ita eorum qui fecere uirtus tanta habetur, quantum eam uerbis potuere extollere praeclera ingenia.

Later on, the theme occurs very frequently.2 One of the writers in the

1 Lieberich 1.8 et alias; Curtius Eur. Lit. pp.174 f., Beiträge pp.7-11; Simon 1.78-81.
2 A typical example is to be found in the Vita Cypriani by Pontius (pref. 3): nec posse sic prosequi facta tam grandia, ut quanta sunt tanta videantur. This preface is not treated in any detail here, although it may contain very early examples of several of the phenomena discussed. For it seems highly doubtful whether it was written as early as would appear, namely shortly after the death of Cyprian in 258. The latest editor, Pellegrino, admittedly argues for its authenticity (see particularly pp.72 f.) but several earlier scholars have maintained that it is a forgery.
Historia Augusta takes it up and illustrates it with an apt anecdote:


Schmeidler has demonstrated a close parallel between this passage and the introduction to Jerome’s Vita Hilarionis. I quote the passage in question:

(Hier. Vita Hilar. 1) uirtus (ut ait Crispus) tanta habetur, quantum eam uerbis potuere extollere praecella ingenia. Alexander Magnus Macedo, quem uel arietem, uel pardum, uel hircum caprarum Daniel uocat, cum ad Achillis tumulum peruenisset: Felicem te, ait, iuuenis, qui magno frueris praecone meritorum! Homerum uidelicet signifcans.

Schmeidler discusses which of the two authors is dependent on the other, after quickly discarding the possibility of a common source, on the grounds that no such has been found. His reasoning is of little value. What is apparent from the two passages is not necessarily any direct connexion between the two authors but that the theme, with quotation and anecdote, was common property at the time. This has also been pointed out by Hohl (p. 163). There is further evidence of this. The anecdote is to be found, apart from in the passage in Cicero (Arch. 10. 24) quoted by Schmeidler, in Symmachus (Epist. 9. 72). Even more important is a fragment from an earlier historical introduction, that to Fronto’s Principia Historiae. This runs:

(Fronto ed. v.d. Hout p. 191) Tantas res a te gestas, quantas et Achilles gessisse cuperet et Homerus scribsisse . . . ab orationibus . . . his . . . (rur) sus uereor ne qua nouitate aut insolentia . . .

This becomes particularly interesting if we compare it with the end of a letter in which Verus begs Fronto to write this history:

(v.d. Hout p. 125) In summa meae res gestae tantae sunt, quantae sunt scilicet, quoiquoi modo sunt: tantae autem uiuebuntur, quantas tu eas uiueri uoles.

None of these passages is likely to have served as an actual model for Vopiscus or Jerome. It is clear, on the other hand, that the idea is traditional and that it appeared in a historical introduction long before the 4th century. It can very easily have been handed down, via works no longer extant, to Vopiscus and Jerome, without there being any direct connexion between the latter two.
Presentation of raw material

We have seen how the writers of late antiquity in different ways stress the weight and importance of their subjects. At the same time they invariably deprecate their own literary ability. The usual reply to the question why they have written even so is, as we have seen, that they have been asked or ordered to do so. Another possible reply is that the author has not written an independent work but been content to collect suitable material for the service of the reader. The latter theme is particularly apt for compilers and translators but is used also by others. Irenaeus of Lyons writes (Adu. Haer. 1. pref. 3) that the dedicatee should charitably accept the simple things he has written, but transform them through his superior ability. Possibly influenced by this, Cyprian writes:

(Fort. pref. 3) ut non tam tractatum meum uidear tibi misisse quam materiam tractantibus praebuisse.

The same phrase reappears in another preface by Cyprian:

(Testim. pref.) non tam tractasse quam tractantibus materiam praebuisse uideamur.

It is taken up once more by Rufinus in the preface to one of his translations:

(Rufin. CC 20.246 f.) ut proficere ad scientiam rerum uolentibus materiam praeberemus.

These Latin examples are taken from works very far from independent. But the theme can be of use even for authors of greater originality. Jerome writes in the introduction to a Bible commentary that he has made his exegeses as brief as possible. He goes on:

(In ler. prol. CC 74.1) Sicque conabor notariorum manu scribere, ut nihil desit in sensibus, cum multum desit in uerbis. Stamina tibi atque subtegmina et licia praeparabo, tu pulcherrimam uestem ipse conficito, ut non solum nos audire, sed et alios docerepossis.

The same idea and the same metaphor appear in the introduction to letter 119, in which Jerome, by his own account under pressure of time, answers questions that have been put to him.

8 It can be mentioned that the custom of compiling facts for the use of later authors was not unknown in classical times. According to the testimony of both Cicero and Hirtius (see Leeman, Le genre et le style historique à Rome, pp. 192 f.) the De Bello Gallico was intended as such a compilation. In a much discussed passage (Att. 2.1.2), Cicero says that he himself had been asked by Greeks to supply similar material (Leeman op. cit. p. 184).
This line of thought seems particularly suited to expression in simile. Two further 5th century writers have drawn new likenesses, Claudianus Mamertus:

(CSEL 11.18 f.) Scripsi igitur pauc haec ueluti quaedam rationum semina, quae studiosus quisque si non otiose capessat, ut ego arbitror, multa exinde deriuare poterit, quae etsi angustis emanantia uenulis in magnos tamen amnes longiore proecursu exuberabunt,

and Victor Vitensis:

(prol. 4) quasi rusticanus operarius defatigatis ulnis aurum colligam de antris occultis, speciem uero adhuc sordinem atque confusam non cunctabor artifici iudicio ignis examinandam contradere, qui monetarios possit solidos picturare.

See also Simon 1. 116 f.

**Bees and flowers**

During our discussion of the supposed preface in Trogus it was pointed out that late Latin compilers of different kinds often liken their work in the preface to picking flowers and binding garlands (above pp. 80-83). In such contexts we meet another metaphor, which enjoyed a long history in antiquity. In the *Ad Demonicum* (cf. above p. 18 n. 14), the writer says in conclusion (§ 52) that those who aspire to culture should collect learning from all quarters, from both wise men and poets, just as the bees fly to all flowers and take the best from each. The same picture is to be found in a similar context in Lucretius:

(3.11 f.) floriferis ut apes in saltibus omnia libant, omnia nos itidem depascimur aurea dicta.

Also Horace uses this metaphor in a similar way in a well-known passage (*Carm. 4. 2. 27 ff.*).  

Most interesting for our present purpose, however, is the eighty-fourth letter of Seneca, which deals with the usefulness of extensive reading. Seneca develops the idea that in one's own writing one should fuse together and transform the valuable material gathered from others in such a way that it justifiably appears as one's own property. He resorts to a simile:

Metaphors with bees in other contexts can be found in large numbers in the ancient writers. The interested reader is referred to the notes of modern commentators on the passages quoted here.
After an excursus into the realms of natural science, provoked by the last sentence of the quotation, Seneca returns to the idea of a fusion of literary reminiscences.

This entire line of thought (except the excursus), as well as the language in which it was clothed, was clearly attractive to Macrobius, who incorporated the greater part of Seneca’s letter in his preface.\textsuperscript{5} I quote the beginning:

(Sat. i. pref. 5) Apes enim quodam modo debemus imitari, quae uagantur et flores carpunt, deinde, quidquid attulere, disponunt ac per fauos diuidunt et sucum uarium in unum saporem mixtura quadam et proprietate spiritus sui mutant.

The allusion to bees and their gathering of honey reappears in mediaeval prefaces. We find in the introduction to the \textit{Vita Balthildis} A (c. 700):

\textit{(MGH SRM 2.482.20 ff.)} uelut apes prudentes dulce requirunt ex floribus nectar, id est ex uerbis simplicibus ueritatis augmentum.

An even later writer expresses the simile in a highly remarkable manner. Freculphus in 819 writes a letter to his friend Rabanus Maurus, begging him to write Bible commentaries:

\textit{(PL 107.439D)} uelut ex pratis uernantibus amoenisque flores mellifluos carpendo, apum more in alueareum congestos, nobis fauum cum melle odorifero porrigere non negligatis.

The writer has obviously tried to combine the images of picking flowers and gathering honey. With the surprising result that the bees now pick flowers and store them in the hive.

\textsuperscript{5} Macrobr. \textit{Sat.} 1. pref. 5 to pref. 10: \textit{in unum conspirata} is taken over with minor changes from Sen. \textit{Epist.} 84.3-10. After which Macrobius passes immediately to copying Gellius’ preface.
BREVITY

We have already (p. 96) discussed some cases of a general praising of brevity in the classical era. All that is essential concerning the spread of this theme in late antiquity and the Middle Ages has already been said by Curtius (Eur. Lit. pp. 479-485) and Simon (2. 82-88). I would like here merely to supplement their studies at a couple of points.

There is a category of author, not considered by Curtius, with special reason to praise brevity, namely the different kinds of compilers. In that their works are digests they must point to the usefulness of short works to motivate their own occupation. This was done as early as by Valerius Maximus:

(Val. Max. pref.) ut documenta sumere uolentibus longae inquisitionis labor absit.

Not all writers in this category, however, are content with such a modest aim. Gellius (pref. 12) and Justin (pref. 4) lay claim to having selected with great care just what is most valuable and most interesting in the works excerpted. In this way it is hinted that the digest is in fact more valuable than the original. Solinus is particularly proud of having hit on exactly the right length:

(Sol. pref. 2) Liber est ad conpendium praeparatus, quantumque ratio passa est ita moderate repressus, ut nec prodiga sit in eo copia nec damnosa concinnitas.

Solinus is one of the first in a long succession of writers in late antiquity and the Middle Ages who postulate brevity as a virtue in itself. It seems probable that the spread of this theme was influenced by the great numbers of compendiums produced.

Simon (loc. cit., particularly 2. 87 f.) discusses how mediaeval writers present themselves as trying to avoid prolixitas so as not to cause fastidium. It should be pointed out that both terms are to be found in the same line of thought as early as in one of Lactantius' prefaces, where he is propounding the excellence of one of his earlier works:

(Lact. Epit. pref. 1) Quamquam Diuinarum Institutionum libri . . . ita legentium mentes instruant, ita informent, ut nec prolixitas pariat fastidium nec oneret ubertas.

1 Cf. above p. 96, and see Curtius, Simon and—for Jerome—Stade pp. 68 f.
2 Some typical prefaces to digests are to be found in Nepotianus, Phocas and Macrobius (Exc., Gramm. 5.631).
He, in his turn, has clearly taken the phrase from Arnobius, 4. 17.

And, finally, a few words on a special type of assurance of brevity. Even in classical times, many authors ended their prefaces with phrases about hastening to the subject. We can take an example from Cicero: 

\[ \text{(Top. 1.5) Sed iam tempus est ad id quod instituimus accedere.} \]

Similar prefatorial conclusions can of course be found later as well. Some authors, however, expand the phrase into a general statement that the preface should not be too long. The originator of this theme seems to be Pliny the Younger, who writes in one of his letters:

\[ \text{(Plin. Epist. 4.5.3-4) librum, cuius amplitudo non sinit me longiore epistula praeloqui. Oportet enim nos in hac certe in qua possumus breues esse, quo sit excusatius quod librum ipsum, non tamen ultra causae amplitudinem, extendimur.} \]

The idea attracted several later authors. An example is Spartianus:

\[ \text{(Ael. 1.3) Et quoniam nimis paucia dicenda sunt, nec debet prologus inormior esse quam fabula, de ipso iam loquar.} \]

Several biographies in the Historia Augusta have similar passages, namely Jul. Cap. Gord.; Vop. Aurel., Prob. Palladius also uses the same turn of phrase:

\[ \text{(Pallad. 1.1.1) Sed nos recidamus praefationis moram, ne, quos reprehendimus, imitemur.} \]

ALLUSIONS TO EARLIER WRITERS

A writer often has cause to refer to his literary predecessors. This can be done to advantage in the preface, whether it is simply a brief mention of previous authors, a comparison with them or polemics against them. There will be discussed here very briefly the way in which late Latin authors handle such references.

We have already (p. 72) mentioned Lundström’s hypothesis that it was a common practice in antiquity to loan one’s introductory words from a familiar model, in order to express reverence or appreciation of

\[ \text{3 Examples are to be found in Pontius, Macrobius (Sat.) and Augustine (Trin.).} \]

\[ \text{4 This agrees with rhetorical theory; see Lausberg § 282 f.} \]

\[ \text{5 Cf. above p. 107.} \]
a predecessor. Late Latin Christian writers actually loan the first words very frequently. Lundström and Wijkström¹ have demonstrated that the introductory words to Cicero’s *De Oratore* reoccur in e.g. the *Ad Nouratianum* ascribed to Cyprian, in Minucius Felix and in Lactantius (*Inst. 4. 1. 1*), and that the first words of Sallust’s *Catilina* are reflected e.g. in Orosius (*Hist. 6. 1. 1*) and Salvianus (*Gub. pref. 1*). To this we can add that Eucherius starts his *Instructiones* with the first words from Tacitus’ *Dialogus*, although with the preposition *ex* discarded in favour of *a*: *Saepe a me requiris* … Also, Rufinus in the introduction to his translation of Origen’s homilies on *Numbers* alludes more openly to the beginning of Cyprian’s *Ad Donatum*:

(Rufin. CC 20.285) Vt uerbis tibi, frater, beati martyris loquar, bene admones, Donate carissime. Nam et promisisses me memini …

While it is thus indisputable that late Latin writers frequently loan their introductory words from some previous work, Lundström’s view that the quotations were intended to be recognized and that they indicate reverence for the previous writer concerned is debatable. There is a simpler explanation, namely that writers lacking in assurance tend to resort to a ready-made formula for the difficult process of beginning a work. Lundström’s view may well be justified when the quotation is used by a well-read author of literary ambitions, writing for an educated public. The alternative explanation would seem preferable in the case of writers of lower calibre. Thus I find Lundström’s hypothesis plausible in the case of Minucius Felix and Salvianus, for instance, but I have some difficulty in accepting it when it comes to the passage from Eucherius of Lyons. No decision can be made without an analysis of the particular passages, in combination with a study of the level of learning shown by the writer and his public.

The application of Lundström’s theory is thus open to debate even in the case of classical² and late Latin writers. If we apply it to the mediaeval literature the results can be somewhat surprising. Uddholm (p. 222) has shown that the beginning of the introduction to the *Formulae Marculfi* (c. 700) bears a resemblance to the beginnings of the introductions of Victorius Aquitanus (c. 460), Maximus of Saragossa (beginning of the 7th century) and Orosius. Let me quote the passages concerned.

¹ See Wijkström pp. 160-163.
² See above p. 72.

156
Following Lundströms' theory, Uddholm maintains that Marculf, Maximus and Victorius alike were consciously alluding to Orosius' *Historia adversus Paganos*, “un livre des plus connus au moyen âge” (Uddholm, loc. cit.). Uddholm later (p. 232) refers to this as evidence that Marculf had read Orosius.

There is no reason whatsoever to assume that Marculf was making a conscious allusion to Orosius, with a view to the quotation being recognized. Such literary refinement in a so thoroughly uneducated writer in an almost illiterate age would be more than astonishing. Nor does the resemblance between these passages show that Marculf had read Orosius. It shows merely that Orosius’ introduction, directly or indirectly, provided later writers with a suitable opening cliché. Its use is by no means restricted to the passages quoted by Uddholm. Simon (1. 68, n. 78) refers to a further seven passages that are reminiscent of Orosius’ words *utinam tam efficaciter quam libenter*. Though five of these are later than Marculf, the evidence is entirely sufficient to prove that the expression was a much used commonplace. Marculf should thus have had every chance of snapping up this phrase in practically any preface he may have read.

It is not particularly common in late Latin prefaces for the author to compare himself with his predecessors. When it does happen, as in Sidonius Apollinaris, the author naturally, in accordance with the accepted rules of behaviour, stresses how inferior he feels:

(Epist. 1.1.2) Quibus omnibus ego immane dictu est quantum semper iudicio meo cesserim.

One possibility, however, of presenting superiority over one’s predecessors was to emphasize that they wrote only to demonstrate their rhetorical skill, while one’s own writing is dictated purely by utility. This is the approach of Salvianus in the preface to *De Gubernatione Dei* and of Ennodius in the beginning of his *Libellus pro Synodo* (= Opusc. 2).
An author who had been criticized, often replied in the preface to some later work. In Latin, such a practice is familiar from Terence onwards, cf. above p. 97. Christian authors writing polemical pamphlets (which was so common that we can speak of a polemical genre) usually assured the reader that they had done their utmost to be patient and to suffer the charges made against them with Christian forebearance, but that they had finally been forced to speak. Examples are Cyprian (Demetr.), Rufinus (Apol. adu. Hier.) and Ennodius (Libellus pro Synodo). A special case, on the other hand, is Jerome, whose unveiled rancour breaks all the accepted standards. For later development see Simon 1. 91 ff. Cf. also Wallach pp. 57 f.

CONCLUSION

The great majority of late Latin prose writers commence their works with a personal introduction. The skeleton of these prefaces is usually the same as that already demonstrated in rhetorical prefaces, with a request, a dedication and an expression of unwillingness as the basic themes. In addition to these we sometimes find themes taken from other types of preface, such as invocation or some form of laudatio historiae. The variations within this framework were of necessity fairly limited. The preface as developed already by the rhetoricians gradually becomes a stereotype, the pattern of which is faithfully followed by all writers. It is difficult to exchange or alter the elements of the pattern, in that these are logically interdependent. The only variation utilized to any extent was to expand or strengthen the themes given.

The expansion of a theme consists of the addition of an image or a metaphor. As we have seen, late Latin writers have a predilection for this (not only in prefaces). As an example of how such expressions often spread quickly and became common property in prefaces, we can men-

---

3 Some writers seek to protect themselves against attack from the beginning, by pleading for assistance from the dedicatee. See Simon 2.130 ff. Cf. also the passage in Balbus quoted above p. 142.

4 See Favez, pp. 28-39.

5 It should be pointed out that the pamphlet De Tonitruis, which has a preface that is to a great extent copied from some of Jerome's introductions (see especially PL 28.177 ff. and 604), and which is quoted by both Wallach (p. s8, n. 12) and Simon (2.131, n. 164), is assuredly not by Bede, under whose name it stands. Plummer (p. clviii) calls it "a most contemptible work, and clearly spurious".
tion the ship metaphors,¹ the anecdote of Alexander at the grave of Achilles,² and the metaphor of the garland of flowers.³ The material for these variations on the given themes would seem to be taken mainly from two quarters, the stock of similes and metaphors provided by the rhetoricians, and the commonplaces of poetry.

The reinforcement of a theme can be effected in various ways. It can consist of an alteration of a single word, like the substitution of iubere for rogare, oboedire for respondere⁴ and so on. Or it can comprise a heightening of some tendency in earlier prefaces, as when the entire responsibility for the work is transferred to the dedicatee.⁵ An important form of this is the patent overbid, as when writers begin to deny their grammatical rather than their rhetorical qualifications.⁶

The object of all these forms of reinforcement is the same. They modify in a certain direction the picture of the writer and his social status provided by the preface. Reading the prefaces, we get on the whole a very unified picture of how the late Latin writers wished to appear. The individual differences are so small that we can sketch out an ideal self-portrait that comes pretty close to the way in which the majority of authors present themselves.⁷

The quality receiving by far the greatest emphasis is the writer's modesty. There is stressed in every conceivable way what little faith the author has in his own capacity and particularly in his capacity to write. Themes of this nature are reinforced perhaps more than any other.

Closely related to this is the tendency to renounce responsibility, as manifested in the request for revision and correction⁸ and the transfer of responsibility to the dedicatee. In addition to this we sometimes find that the author renounces all claim to originality or personal title to authorship.⁹

The authors also present themselves in some way or other as dependent on authority. Naturally, they endeavour to act in accordance with the will of God.¹⁰ More striking is that they show an equally strong

---

¹ Pp. 146 f.
² Pp. 149 f.
³ Pp. 80-83.
⁴ Pp. 117-120.
⁵ P. 124.
⁶ P. 137 and Appendix.
⁷ The views put forward below are in part similar to those of Simon, 2.145 ff.
⁸ Pp. 141-143.
⁹ P. 148.
¹⁰ Pp. 144 f.
desire to comply with the wishes of the dedicatee.\textsuperscript{11} It is seldom that an author admits to doing anything on his own initiative. His course of action is completely dictated by the desires of others.

The only general type of positive statement in respect of the author's own person, is assurances of diligence.\textsuperscript{12} This virtue was clearly considered so inoffensive that it could safely be pretended to.

The general impression given by this portrait is thus fairly uniform. By their own accounts, the great majority of late Latin authors were modest men, aware of their lack of mental endowment or stylistic schooling. They set to work under the pressure of someone's authority, their only asset being a certain capacity for hard work. They published their writings, in spite of their low opinion as to their quality, but left it to someone else to take the responsibility.

The basic lines for such a self-portrait existed, as we have seen, even in the prefaces of the classical era. The late Latin authors drew on the themes in classical prefaces that presented the richest possibility of painting such a picture, and exploited them to the full. We can ask why they portrayed themselves so uniformly in this manner.

A reasonable answer, as we have seen, is that they portrayed themselves in a conventional manner, on a pattern that was handed down from writer to writer. It can be in place to indicate some of the conceivable reasons why this set of conventions became so extremely widespread.

Some aspects of the self-portrait can easily be understood if we consider what kinds of work they wrote. Very few late Latin prose writers, in fact, wrote anything independently creative. Those who did, such as Augustine and Boethius, often began their works in a manner that does not fit into the common pattern. The great bulk of writing was the product of abbreviation and compilation, or otherwise of imitation. The writers of such works were truly in need of diligence, above all other virtues. An original literary personality is far from being a recommendation for such tasks. Writers accordingly endeavoured to stress in every way the importance of facts, and avoided projecting their own personalities.

Another part of the explanation can be obtained from a study of Roman society during the late Empire. It is obvious that the pyramidal structure of society that developed during the late Empire strongly

\textsuperscript{11} Pp. 120 ff.
\textsuperscript{12} P. 147.
promoted vertical relationships. People were in most situations reminded of their status of superior or inferior, and associations on an equal footing were not encouraged. The victorious Christian church, which from Constantine onwards was closely linked to the temporal power, itself developed a firm hierarchy. Thus the influence of the Church served, if anything, to augment the tendency to subservience. Linguistic expressions of such vertical social relationships have so far been studied mainly in letters, above all in the forms of address used. I trust that I have shown above in different contexts how prefatory themes at this time developed so as to express submission to a dedicatee instead of equality with him. Prefaces with the request theme are clearly most suitable vehicles for the manifestation of such relationships.

Finally, we must reckon also on a conventional manner of introduction, once it has become general, having a sort of natural impetus. The type of preface that we found in Latin rhetorical handbooks, can easily be adapted to suit the situation of practically any writer. It had particular advantages, as we have seen, for the late Latin authors. When such an excellent type of introduction was available there was no reason for the majority of authors to attempt anything new. They followed the accepted custom and wrote a preface of the same type as their predecessors and contemporaries, thus solving in a convenient manner the difficult problem of finding a good beginning.

13 See Engelbrecht, Bruhn, Dinneen, O’Brien and best of all Dihle.
At the end of the sixth century, two important writers, Gregory the Great and Gregory of Tours, used the previously discussed theme of grammatical shortcomings. Both passages have given rise to considerable discussion. A great deal, however, still remains to be said, particularly in the case of Gregory the Great. Let me first quote the passage from his writings:

\[(\text{Greg. M. Epist. 5.53.a5})\] 

Quaeso autem, ut huius operis dicta percurrens in his uerborum folia non requiras, quia per sacra eloquia ab eorum tractatoribus infructuosae loquacitatis leuitas studiose compescitur, dum in templo Dei nemus plantari prohibetur.\(^1\) Et cuncti procul dubio scimus, quia, quotiens in foliis male laetae segetis culmi proficiunt, minori plenitudine spicarum grana turgescunt. Vnde et ipsam loquendi artem, quam magisteria disciplinae exterioris insinuant, seruare despexi. Nam sicut huius quoque epistolae tenor enuntiat, non metacismi collisionem fugio, non barbarismi confusionem deuito, situs motusque et praepositionum casus seruare contemno, quia indignum uehementer existimo, ut uerba caelestis oraculi restringam sub regulis Donati. Neque enim haec ab ullis interpretibus in scripturae sacrae auctoritate seruata sunt. Ex qua nimirum quia nostra expositio oritur, dignum profecto est, ut quasi edita suboles speciem suae matris imitetur.

The writer states first that he has not used \textit{folia uerborum}\(^2\) and motivates this, as so many writers before him, by the greater importance of content as compared with form. He supports this view with a biblical quotation and a parallel (which I have not found elsewhere). He then goes a step further and says that he has not even bothered to keep to \textit{ipsam loquendi artem}, by which he obviously means the grammatical rules of the language. He makes his point more precisely by indicating certain grammatical errors that he has not bothered to avoid. We shall be returning to this passage shortly. He motivates this in the famous phrase about not binding the Word of the Lord by the rules of Donatus. For, he goes on (and this is less well-known), no translator of the Bible has kept to these rules. Consequently, my work, which starts from the Holy Scripture, should imitate its form.

\(^1\) Deut. 16.21.

\(^2\) This means roughly “rhetorical language”; cf. \textit{TLL} 6:1.1013.79 ff.

162
We see how this passage contains the same line of thought as that we encountered, for instance, in Cyprian and Severus. It is to be noted that Gregory, too, earlier on in his preface, has apologized for his stylistic shortcomings (on the grounds of his illness) and thus carries Cyprian’s argument through to the end.

What has made this passage so well-known and so widely discussed is not its general line of thought, which is copied from earlier writers, but the remarkable statements Gregory makes about the rules of grammar. A recently published article by de Lubac contains a detailed account of how the passage has been interpreted—and often also misinterpreted—by modern scholars and mediaeval writers. To trace the tradition would lie outside the framework of the present study. It seems, on the other hand, worthwhile trying to contribute in some measure to the interpretation of this passage. Many of the scholars commenting on it do not seem to have troubled to consider exactly what it is that Gregory is saying, but have contented themselves with a superficial glance. This is hardly sufficient to understand all the problems of this very complex passage. I will discuss below in due order the expressions *metacismi collisionem*, *barbarismi confusionem* and *situs motusque et praepositionum casus*.

1. *metacismi collisionem*: The latest editor of the text, Gillet, gives the following commentary to the translation “le heurt du métacisme” (p. 122): “‘Métacisme’ est une création calquée sur le mot latin du texte: *metacismus*. Martianus Capella, dans son *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, 5,167, éd. Dick, Leipzig, 1925, en donne la définition suivante: ‘Mytacismus est, cum verborum conjunctio M litteræ assiduitate colliditur, ut, si dicas: ‘Mammam ipsam amo quasi meam animam’. J’avoue n’avoir jamais été frappé d’un défaut de ce genre à la lecture de saint Grégoire. — La traduction de tout ce passage est d’ailleurs fort délicate.” Hartmann, who has published the letter in *MGH* and whose text Gillet copies, refers, on the other hand, to Servius’ commentary to Donatus.

Both writers thus consider that *metacismus* stands here for *mytacismus* (or *myotacismus*), a familiar grammatical term. This is undoubtedly correct. To suggest, as in earlier editions, that it is a derivation from *μετάξειμαι* or to alter the reading to *iotacismus* is assuredly misguided.

---

3 See pp. 128 ff. and 135 ff.
4 Gramm. 4.4.45.
5 Hartmann, however, with some hesitation. In his note to the passage he writes: “*I. e. myotacismi, ut videtur*”.
6 Evidence for this is the wording in Donatus, see below.
The meaning of the term, however, is not given identically in all Latin texts. Gillet quotes Martianus Capella, who says that the term means an agglomeration of m's. Servius' commentary to Donatus says, on the other hand:

\[(Gramm. 4.445)\] Myotacismus fit, quotiens post partem orationis in m littera desinentem sequitur alia pars orationis quae inchoat a uocali, ut ‘hominem amicum’. Hoc uitium uitare possumus aut per suspensionem pronuntiandi aut exclusione ipsius m litterae.

According to Servius the term thus means an ugliness in pronunciation arising when a word ending in a vowel plus m precedes a word beginning with a vowel.

A closer study of the use of the word in the grammatical writers shows that Servius' sense is beyond doubt the accepted one. Mytacismus\(^7\) is repeatedly to be found together with labdacismus and iotacismus, which indicate false pronunciations of respectively l and i in certain positions. These terms are explained most lucidly and exhaustively by Donatus' commentator Pompeius (Gramm. 5.287), who in the case of mytacismus expressly supports his version on the much earlier grammatician Melissus.\(^8\) Similar explanations are to be found in Sacerdos (Gramm. 6.454), Diomedes (Gramm. 1.453) and Consentius (Gramm. 5.394). No one other than Martianus Capella considers that the term refers to an m-assonance. This writer, unlike all other grammaticians, maintains also that iotacismus and labdacismus mean assonance with respectively i and l. A fourth term homoeprophoron is given as meaning assonance with other sounds. The explanation can hardly be other than that Martianus misunderstood the three first terms, having possibly been misled by some very concise grammarian such as Donatus.\(^9\) His misinterpretation has since been followed on several occasions, e.g. by the modern handbooks in ancient rhetoric.\(^10\)

\(^7\) In Gramm. the spelling is generally myotacismus, but TLL (under metacismus) and Liddell-Scott-Jones prefer mytacismus. The spelling in the MSS differs between miot-, met-, moet-, moeot-, myt-, and moyt- (acc. to Liddell-Scott-Jones also mot-). The word ought to be a calque on iotacismus, and the erroneous division of the word may have been made in different ways by different grammarians.

\(^8\) Probably Aelius Melissus, mentioned by Gellius (18.6). See Grammaticae Romanae Fragmenta pp. 538-540.

\(^9\) Cf. below.

\(^10\) See Volkmann p. 514 and Lausberg § 975. The latter, however, mentions Martianus' inconsistency of terminology, although he has not realized that it is grounded on a misconception.
There remains the question of what Gregory meant by *metacismi collisionem*. “A collision consisting of a mytacism” seems the reasonable interpretation. It is supported also by the parallel with *barbarismi confusionem*. The more exact meaning of this phrase for Gregory is not easy to determine. The expression could be simply a complicated synonym for the concept of “mytacism” in its correct sense. A mytacism can perhaps be described as a sort of *collisio*. There is reason, however, to suspect that Gregory misunderstood the term in the same way as Martianus. In the grammarian whom Gregory himself mentions, namely Donatus, we find:

\[(Gramm. 4.392 f.) Sunt etiam malae compositiones, id est cacosyntheta, quas non nulli barbarismos putant, in quibus sunt myotacismi labdacismi iotacismi hiatus conlisiones\] et omnia, quae plus aequo minusue sonantia ab eruditis auribus respuuntur.

A reader not previously familiar with the terms *myotacismus* etc. can very easily draw the conclusion that the errors in composition that the terms are said to indicate consist simply in the agglomeration of the letters in question, and are thus special cases of the general term *conlisio*. I prefer to maintain that this is actually what happened and that both Martianus Capella and Gregory the Great misinterpreted the term *mytacismus* as a result of this passage in Donatus.

In fact, the passage in Donatus *is* very difficult to interpret. His text strongly suggests that the three terms really refer to the assonance of different sounds. Otherwise it is very difficult to ascribe them to the category *cacosyntheta*. *Mytacismus* could possibly be described as such, but *iotacismus* and *labdacismus* both refer to the false pronunciation of a sound within a word, and thus have nothing to do with the question of “composition”. But if Donatus means that the terms refer to assonance, he must simply have misinterpreted his source. Almost the entire passage is taken from Diomedes, where the matter is expressed perfectly clearly:

\[(Gramm. 1.453) Sunt praeterea pronuntiationis quaedam uitia, quae non nulli barbarismos putant, iotacismi labdacismi myotacismi hiatus conlisiones et omnia quae plus aequo minusue sonantia ab eruditis auribus respuuntur.\]

This seems to settle the matter. Because of the way in which Donatus changes his model so that a reader not already familiar with the terms

\[11\] *Conlisio* is explained in the commentaries of Servius and Pompeius as assonance between words, i.e. identically with the term *homoeprophoron* used by Martianus.
was practically bound to misunderstand him, the term *mytacismus* was subsequently misinterpreted by both Martianus Capella and Gregory. Gillet thus hit the target by accident when he compared the two authors.

2. *barbarismi confusionem:* The phrase should mean “the confusion that consists of a barbarism”. *Barbarismus* was one of the linguistic errors that grammaticians regularly dealt with. Donatus defines it:

(Gramm. 4.392) Barbarismus est una pars orationis uitiosa in communi sermone.

The term thus covers errors within the word. The complementary term *soloecismus*, errors in the grammatical conjoining of words, was used as we have seen by Sulpicius Severus, when he was indicating his stylistic level.

3. *situs motusque et praepositionum casus servare:* Hartmann prints *modosque*. From his commentary to the passage in Neues Archiv (15.543 f.) it emerges that he considers the word to refer to the moods of the verb. In support of this reading he adduces the only MS collated by himself and the edition of the Maurini. The latter, however, gives *motusque*. For *situs*, Hartmann in his commentary in Neues Archiv gives *hiatus*, this conjecture being assigned in his edition of the text to the notes.

The reading in the majority of MSS, however, is *situs motusque* and this is most certainly correct. Cassiodorus writes in his *Institutiones*:

(Inst. 1.15.9) In uerbis quae accusatiuis et ablatiuis praepositionibus seruiunt, situm motumque diligenter obserua, quoniam librarii grammaticae artis exper­tes ibi maxime probantur errare: nam si M litteram inconuenienter addas aut demas, dictio tota confusa est.

Which I would translate: “With regard to the words governed by prepositions with the accusative or ablative, note carefully rest and motion etc.” The correctness of this interpretation is demonstrated by the use of the terms *situs* and *motus* in the same sense by a couple of late grammarians. The most important passage is in the *Augustini Regulae*:

I am inclined to think that Donatus did not misinterpret the terms, which are explained very clearly by Diomedes, but thought, when he was changing the text, only of *hiatus* and *confisiones*, which can very well be called *cacosyntheta*, not of the first three terms. His reasons for altering the text seem rather complicated. Their clarification would require a quite lengthy analysis of Donatus' method of working and perhaps of his views on the functions of language. I hope to have occasion to return to the problem.

The parallel has been given earlier, latest by Riché pp. 195 f.

It is extremely uncertain whether these rules stem from Augustine. It is impossible to date them with any exactitude.
Remanet tertia species praepositionum, quae dicuntur utriusque, quae et accusatiuum tenent casum et ablatiium. Sed plerosque ratio harum praepositionum praeterit, et qua distinctione intellegantur non aperte expositum est. Differentia haec est in motu et in situ.\textsuperscript{15}

Gregory's expression thus means: "I neglect to observe the rests and motions and the cases of the prepositions." It is not improbable that Gregory took his phrase just from Cassiodorus. The words quoted are part of a passage that is very interesting in this connexion. In Chapter 15 Cassiodorus discusses the principles for textual criticism of the Bible. He states first with great emphasis and at great length that one must not correct the language of the Bible in accordance with the rules of the grammarians and rhetoricians on case governing etc. (He mentions also meotacismos as a type of error that should not be corrected.) There follows a section on the errors that should be corrected, and this is headed by the passage quoted on cases after prepositions.

Gregory, at the end of the passage quoted, says that the rules of grammar have not been observed by any of the interpreters of the Bible. This statement finds support in what we have just quoted from the great contemporary authority in this field, Cassiodorus. In his examples of the rules that neither he nor the translators of the Scriptures observe he includes, however, one of the things that Cassiodorus considers should be corrected in the text of the Bible, the cases following prepositions. We can thus conceive that Gregory had read Cassiodorus (or some similar passage in an author no longer extant) but remembered wrongly or quoted by mistake an error from the wrong category.

Gregory the Great's namesake and contemporary Gregory of Tours has made a statement bearing considerable resemblance to that just discussed. This too has given rise to considerable discussion:

\textit{(Glor. Conf. pref.)} Sed timeo, ne, cum scribere coepero, quia sum sine litteris rethoricis et arte grammatica, dicaturque mihi a litteratis: 'O rustice et idiota . . . qui nullum argumentum utile in litteris habes, qui nomina discernere nescis; saepius pro masculinis feminea, pro femineis neutra et pro neutra masculina commutas: qui ipsas quoque praepositiones, quas nobilium dictorum obseruari sanxit auctoritas, loco debito plerumque non locas. Nam ablatiuis accusatiua et rursum accusatiuis ablatiua praeponis. . . .'

\textsuperscript{15} There is a similar passage in Gramm. 5.546. Pompeius also uses the word \textit{mutatio} (Gramm. 5.276).
Like Gregory the Great, the writer specifies the grammatical errors of which he considers himself guilty. This is not the place to discuss the truth or otherwise of his statement. I would merely point out that the actual practice of depreciating one’s own ability in this detailed manner was obviously conventional from the time of Severus onwards. Auerbach’s reasoning is therefore in error when he says of this passage (pp. 78 f.): “Das ist eine sehr klare und detaillierte Selbstkritik; sie zeigt, schon durch ihre Genauigkeit, dass es sich nicht nur um den herkömmlichen Topos handelt.” Just such accuracy was obviously the fashion.

It is remarkable that also Gregory of Tours takes up the question of case after prepositions as a typical error. The reason is surely above all that the classical system of cases following prepositions was at this time in process of breaking up. On the other hand, there are other phenomena in Gregory’s language that could equally well have been mentioned in this context. One of the reasons why he chose prepositions should have been that there was auctoritas nobilium dictatorum just at this point. The dictator to whom Gregory is referring must have been either Cassiodorus or some writer who put forward similar rules. The passage from Cassiodorus quoted just now contains exactly the regulation to which Gregory is referring. The use of the verb observe in both Cassiodorus and Gregory is a clear indication that the two passages are related.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

AA = Auctores Antiquissimi (in the MGH).
Altheim, F., Poseidonios und Sallust, Studi in onore di P. di Francisci 1.101-114, Milano (1956).
Ammon, G., Bericht über die Literatur zu Quintiliani Institutio oratoria, BJ 212.27-72 (1927).
Amundsen, L., Notes to the preface of Livy, Symbolae Osloenses 25.31-35 (1947).
Appel, B., Das Bildungs- und Erziehungsideal Quintiliani, Donauwörth (1914).
Austin = Quintiliani Institutionis Oratoriae liber XII ed. R. G. Austin, Oxford (1948).
Avenarius, G., Lukians Schrift zur Geschichtsschreibung, Frankfurt am Main (1956).
Avenarius, W., Die griechischen Vorbilder des Sallust, Symbolae Osloenses 33.48-86 (1957).
Birt, T., Das antike Buchwesen, Berlin (1882).
Boissier, G., Ciceron et ses amis, Paris (1865).
Boulanger, A., Aelius Aristide, Paris (1923).
Bruhn, H., *Specimen vocabularii rhetorici ad inferioris aetatis latinitatem pertinentis*, Marburg (1911).

CC = *Corpus Christianorum*, Turnhout.
CSEL = *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, Wien.


Engel, G., *De antiquorum epicorum didacticorum historicorum prooemii*, Mar- burg (1910).


Graefenhain, R., *De more libros dedicandi*, Marburg (1892).


*Grom. = Gromatici veteres* ed. C. Lachmann (vol. 1 of *Die Schriften der römischen Feldmesser*), Berlin (1848).


Helm = *Apuleii ... Florida* ed. R. Helm, Leipzig (1910).


Kayser, W., *Das sprachliche Kunstwerk*, Bern (1948).


172

Klingner, F., Über die Einleitung der Historien Sallusts, Hermes 63.165-192 (1928).

Klingner, F., Cato Censorius und die Krisis des römischen Volkes, Die Antike 10.239-263 (1934).


Kranz, W., Das Verhältnis des Schöpfers zu seinem Werk in der altellischen Literatur, Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum 53.65-86 (1924).


Kroll, W., Rhetorik, RE Suppl. 7.1039-1138 (1940).


Laistner, M. L. W., The greater Roman historians, Berkely/Los Angeles (1947).


Lossman, F., *Cicero und Caesar im Jahre 54. Studien zur Theorie und Praxis
Lundström, V., *Litteraturhistoriska bidrag till de antika landtbruksförfattarne*,

Marx = *Incerti auctoris ... ad C. Herennium libri IV* ed. F. Marx, Leipzig
(1894).
Méridier, L., *Le prologue dans la tragédie d'Euripide*, Bordeaux (1911).
MGH = *Monumenta Germaniae Historica.*
AA = *Auctores Antiquissimi.*
SRM = *Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum.*


Nestle, W., *Die Struktur des Eingangs in der attischen Tragödie*, Stuttgart
(1930).

Oppermann, H., *Die Einleitung zum Geschichtswerk des Livius*, Der altsprach-
liche Unterricht 7:87-98 (1955).

140-162 (1938).
Peter, H., *Der Brief in der römischen Litteratur*, Leipzig (1901).
Peterson = *Cornelii Taciti Dialogus de Oratoribus* ed. W. Peterson, Oxford (1893).


Ruppert, J., *Quaestiones ad historiam dedicationis liberorum pertinentes*, Leipzig (1911).


Sammlung mittellateinischer Texte ed. A. Hilka, Heidelberg.


Sittl, K., Apuleius über seinen Stil, Archiv für lateinische Lexikographie 6.558-559 (1889).
Sittl, K., Rusticitas der theologischen Schriftsteller, Archiv für lateinische Lexikographie 6.560-561 (1889).
Sophocles, E. A., Greek lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine periods, New York (1887).
SRM = Scriptores Rerum Merovingiarum (in the MGH).
Stade, W., Hieronymus in prooemiis quid tractaverit et quos auctores quasque leges rhetoricas secatus sit, Rostock (1925).
Sykutris, Epistolographie, RE Suppl. 5.185-220 (1931).

TLL = Thesaurus Linguae Latinae, Leipzig.
Treu, M., Das Proömium der besidischen Frauenkataloge, Rheinisches Museum 100.169-186 (1957).

Uddholm, A., Formulae Marculfi, Uppsala (1953).
Ullman, B. L., Sine ira et studio, Classical Journal 38.420-421 (1942/43).

INDEX OF LATIN AND GREEK AUTHORS

(Names in their Latin form only.)

Aelianus 143
Agathias 80
Alcuin 118 n. 5, 124
Anastasius Bibliothecarius 143
Anonymi:
   Ad Demonicum 18 n. 14, 152
   Ad Nowatianum 156
   Ciris 98
   De Historia 65 n. 1
   De Octogenariis 114 n. 8
   De Tonitruius 158 n. 5
   Rhetorica ad Herennium 24 f., 27-38, 41, 43, 45-49, 62, 74, 84 n. 2, 97
   Vita Balthildis 139 n. 27, 153
   Vita Caesarii Arelatensis 135, 137, 140
   Vita Radegundis 139 n. 27
   See also Panegyrici Latini and Scriptores Hist. Aug.
Antonius 38, 40, 47
Apollonius Molon 48
Apollonius Pergaeus 23
Apuleius 113 f., 131, 140
Aratus 104
Archimedes 15, 19-23, 32, 103, 106, 148
Aristarchus 19
Aristides 121, 126 n. 6
Aristoteles 19
Aristoxenus 19
Arnobius 135 n. 19, 155
Augustinus 118, 155 n. 3, 160, 166 n. 14
Ausonius 10, 74, 122
Autolycus 19
Balbus 112 f., 141 f., 158 n. 3
Basilius 137
Beda 158 n. 5
Bernardus Cluniacensis 143
Biton 23 n. 27
Boethius 116, 160

Caesar 43, 151 n. 3
Callimachus 28, 46 n. 29, 97

Caluus 29, 41
Calpurnius Piso 29
Capitolinus see Scriptores Hist. Aug.
Carbo 29
Cassianus 118, 124, 139 n. 27, 145, 147
Cassiodorus 77-79, 81-83, 117, 134, 166-168
Cato 28-30, 47, 72, 84-88, 91 f., 117 n. 3, 130-132
Catullus 110
Censorinus 114 n. 8, 146
Charisius 117
Cicero 12, 24-27, 32-49, 53-55, 61 f., 64, 70 f., 73, 88 n. 16, 92 n. 23, 94 n. 27, 97, 106-109, 114 n. 6, 117-119, 121, 125 f., 132, 140 f., 145 f., 150 f., 155 f.
Claudianus Mamertus 119, 142, 146 n. 3, 152
Cledonius 142
Columella 74, 84, 92-94
Consentius 164
Cyprianus 114, 119, 128-130, 134 f., 140, 149 n. 2, 151, 156, 158, 163
Defensor 143
Dio Chrysostomus 126 n. 6
Demosthenes 17
Diodorus Siculus 16 n. 3, 28, 125 n. 3
Diomedes 164 f.
Dionysius Chalcus 18 n. 14
Dionysius Halicarnassensis 114 n. 8
Donatus 162-166
Ennius 9 n. 2, 72
Ennodius 145, 157 f.
Ephorus 16 n. 3
Eucherius 136
Euclides 19
Eugippus 83, 143
Eumenes see Panegyrici Latini
Eusebius 122, 138, 144
Eutropius 116 n. 10
Scribonius Largus 12, 95, 97 f., 106
Scriptores Historiae Augustae 116 n. 10,
134, 159, 155
Sedulius 116, 118 f., 147
Seneca senior 49 f., 106, 117 n. 3
Seneca iunior 67 n. 8, 92 n. 23, 102,
105, 111, 152 f.
Seruius 163-165
Sidonius 142, 147, 157
Silius Italicus 111
Sisebutus 141
Solinus 113, 127 f., 130, 133, 141, 146,
154
Spartianus see Scriptores Hist. Aug.
Statius 9 f., 75 f., 95, 98, 104 f.,
107-111, 116
Suetonius 30, 34 n. 19, 47, 101 n. 2
Sulla 106 n. 1, 107 n. 3
Sulpicius Severus 117 f., 135-141, 148,
163, 166, 168
Symmachus 150
Tacitus 60-65, 67-69, 71 f., 75 f., 119,
132 f., 142, 156
Terentius 28, 158
Tertullianus 114 n. 6, 125
Theophrastus 19
Theophylactus Simocatta 68
Thucydides 16
Tibullus 114 n. 8
Titinius Capito 60 n. 36
Valerius Flaccus 111
Valerius Maximus 104 f., 154
Varro 34 n. 19, 61, 84, 88-92, 94 f., 97,
103, 106
Velleius Paterculus 67 n. 10
Vergilius 70, 75 f., 89, 101, 103-105,
146 n. 4, 153
Verus 150
Victor Vitensis 119, 124, 152
Victorius Aquitanus 123, 125, 156 f.
Vitruvius 95 f., 99 f., 102 f., 105
Vopiscus see Scriptores Hist. Aug.
Vulgata:
Deuteronomium 162 n. 1
Iohannes 122 n. 9
Paulus 128 f., 139
Psalmi 144 n. 10
Xenophon 19


*Price Kr. 25:—*