



## **The reception of Paulinus of Nole and Prudentius in late Latin and medieval literature**

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Prudentius and Paulinus of Nole are two cousin poets, on the same time quite distinct in the nature of their respective bodies of work (which are not structured according to the same principles and do not always involve the same poetic forms or the same relationship to reality), and very close, chronologically, sometimes also from the point of view of the influences they received, and above all in view of a shared conception of poetry as spiritual edification.

In the ninth chapter of the *Naissance de la poésie dans l'Occident chrétien*, J. Fontaine presented a mirror image of the poetic projects of Paulin and Prudence, highlighting, in both cases, the uniqueness of the poetic reflection carried out on the composition and overall meaning of the work (as it was being developed in Paulin's case, retrospectively in Prudence's). In any case, the two bodies of work include several poetic manifestos proposing a reflection on poetry itself (in particular the Preface and Epilogue of Prudence and carmina 27 and 28, as well as letter 32 in Paulin's).

But J. Fontaine had equivalently stressed a common integration of the poetic project with the ascetic one, as well as a comparable conception of the work as a *deuotio* entirely dedicated to God. He had come to argue that these two contemporaries had synthesized the earlier orientations of Christian Latin poetry and had achieved a double autonomy from biblical and worldly poetry and from strictly liturgical poetry. The fact is that the works of Prudentius and Paulinus of Nole have given rise to many recent high-quality works (new critical editions, detailed studies, colloquia, theses defended or in progress, etc.), but their very rich reception in late medieval poetry has not been analysed head-on or globally as such, apart from a few excellent but very limited occasional studies. It is this lack that, within the framework of GIRPAM's Axis 3 ("Poetic Reflections, Reception of Poetry in Late

Antiquity and the Middle Ages"), the present international colloquium proposes to partially fill, taking into account both the bridges linking the two bodies of work and the specificities of each of them.

Thus, in the whole of Christian Latin poetry from the 5th to the 13th century, all literary genres taken together, the fate of one of the two poets or of both of them simultaneously will be studied on a precise aspect, following in particular (among other non-exhaustive possibilities) the following directions-

- **The reception of the poetic project:** in what way can Prudence and Paulin be considered by their imitators as auctores? To what extent? In what way did they allow the emergence of a new form of sacred poetry? How did their poetic reflection, in the various concrete forms it took, nourish subsequent poetic production?

- **The reception of a specific work from Paulin's and Prudence's corpus or of a genre they illustrated:** The great variety of genres and literary forms used opens up many avenues of study, particularly on the fortune of the modes of writing (description, ekphrasis, narration, allegory, symbol...) and the genres or literary and spiritual forms they illustrated (prayer, parenesis, consolation, poetic play, praise, celebration of martyrs, epithalam, propempticon...). For example, to what extent did the Peristephanon play a decisive role in the later history of Christian lyricism, the Psychomachia and the Counter Symmachus in the extension of the field of Christian epic? How did Paulin's very particular conception of the epithalam renew the genre? What did his reader retain of a renewed conception of circumstantial poetry, at once heir to the improvisations of his former master Ausonius and compatible with the celebration of Felix? In addition to these issues of genre and form, there are metrical questions - and the issue of polymetry - that deserve precise analysis.

- **The circulation and reception of the poetry of Paulinus of Nole and Prudentius in the context of the "school",** understood in the broadest sense of an institutionalized structure for the dissemination of culture, from the 7th century onwards, especially in the Latin West. We will also be able to compare the circulation of these two poets with that of the classical texts and, more generally, attempt to establish, on the basis of specific cases, the place of these two exemplary authors of Latin Christian poetry in the construction of culture (notably grammatical, literary and theological, but not exclusively).

- **The impact of the poetry of Pauline of Nole and Prudentius on later theological thought:** the concrete use of Christian poetry in medieval theological treatises is no less important than that of patristic prose models. It has a double function, on the one hand aesthetic and ornamental, in order to raise the stylistic register of the more sober treatises written in prose, and on the other hand auctorial, especially in the case of poets manifesting a certain orthodoxy and already recognised by the Fathers of the Church. The investigation could also focus on the religious value of the poetry of Pauline and Prudentius as recognised by posterity: what is their doctrinal heritage (relationship between asceticism and poetry, questions of models of holiness, models of teaching, learned poetry, exempla, miracles, etc.)? In what forms did their works give a new Christological value to poetry? What is the status of the Scriptures they helped to convey? In what way did they renew for their readers the question of the relationship between poetry and lifestyle (the challenge of adapting poetry to the Christian way of life, the relationship with the aristocracy, simplicity, asceticism, etc.)? We could also analyse diachronically the fortune of a poetic or religious motif treated with particular acuity by Prudence or by Paulin, or even

by both of them, which would allow us to nuance the concrete conditions of the reception of one or the other, taking into account the precise context of their reading.