

SIDONIUS

POEMS AND LETTERS

WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION,
INTRODUCTION, AND NOTES BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES

I

POEMS

LETTERS, BOOKS I-II



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VII. PANEGYRIC ON AVITUS

in the firmament. Pindus, Othrys, and Pholoe fell from the grasp of the giants; down at last fell ponderous Ossa from Rhoetus' hand; Aegeon was laid low, and Briareus and Ephialtes and Mimas, who were wont to lick the northern Wain with their feet.¹ Enceladus fell by thy father's hand, Typhoeus by thy brother's, and now the one supports an Euboean² mountain, the other a Sicilian."

Then Orpheus changed his theme, making his mother the whole burden of his song, and teaching the strings to hymn Calliope. The Muses rose in homage at this praise of their sister, and the goddess was gladdened even more by a son's devotion than by his song. But if it is well pleasing to sing a *mother's* praises, and if I lack the power to match the ancient lyre, yet in Avitus, to whom I have vowed my song, we have here the *father* of his people, and though my muse be weaker, my theme is greater.

VII

PANEGYRIC³

O Sun-god, now at last in the circle of thy wanderings thou canst see one that thou art able to brook as thine equal; so give thy rays to heaven, for he is sufficient to lighten the earth. Nor need the

² A far-fetched epithet. Typhoeus was buried under the island of Inarime (Verg. *Aen.* IX. 716, Lucan V. 101), the modern Ischia, near "Euboean" Cumae (Verg. *Aen.* VI. 2). According to another version he, like Enceladus, was buried under Etna.

³ Jan. 1, A.D. 456. See *Introd.*, p. xxxvii.

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iactet, Marmaricus quem vertice conterit Atlans :
 sidera sunt isti. quae sicut mersa nitescunt, 5
 adversis sic Roma micat, cui fixus ab ortu
 ordo fuit crevisse malis. modo principe surgit
 consule ; nempe, patres, collatos cernere fasces
 vos iuvat et sociam sceptris mandasse curulem :
 credite, plus dabitur : currus. iam nocte bifrontes, 10
 anceps Iane, comas duplicique accingere lauro.
 principis anterior, iam consulis iste coruscat
 annus, et emerita trabeis diademata crescunt.
 incassum iam, Musa, paves quod propulit Auster
 vela ratis nostrae ; pelago quia currere famae 15
 coepimus, en sidus, quod nos per caerula servet.

Forte pater superum prospexit ab aethere terras :
 ecce viget quodcumque videt ; mundum reparasse
 aspexisse fuit ; solus fovet omnia nutus.
 iamque ut convenient superi, Tegeaticus ales 20
 nunc plantis, nunc fronte volat. vix contigit arva
 et toto descendit avo : mare terra vel aer
 indigenas misere deos. germane Tonantis,

7. surgit *M* : surget. *Vid. Class. Quart. loc. cit. p. 19.*
 20. ales *Bitschofsky* : archas.
 21-23. *dist. ego ; vid. Class. Quart. ib. ; cf. 7. 360 sq.*

¹ *Marmaricus* is used by poets for "African" ; cf. 11. 103, 23. 56. Marmarica lay between Egypt and the Greater Syrtes, and was therefore far from the Atlas range. In 5. 337, *Marmarides* is used in its strict sense, and in *v.* 448 below the Marmaricans are distinguished from the Massylians, another north-African people.

² See 5. 63 n.

³ "double," because it encircles two brows.

⁴ For the meaning of *trabea* see n. on XV. 150 sq.

⁵ Mercury. *Tegeaticus* means no more than "Arcadian" : see n. on l. 7. The "feet" and the "brow" allude to the wings attached to his sandals and to his forehead. According

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Zodiac, that is grazed by the head of Marmaric¹ Atlas, make boast of its constellations; for this man also hath his stars, and as stars sink only to shine forth once more, so doth Rome's light flash forth out of her calamities; since from her very beginning it hath been her fixed destiny to grow greater by misfortunes.² Now she begins to rise once more with an emperor for consul. Surely, O Senators, it delights you to see the fasces of two dignities combined and to think that ye have assigned a curule chair to bear the sceptre company! Believe me, ye shall yet give more—a triumphal chariot! Now bind, O two-headed Janus, the locks of thy twin brows, encircling them with a double³ wreath of laurel. Last year was illustrious as the emperor's, this year is glorious as the consul's; and the diadem that has served us so well is enhanced by the state robes of a magistrate.⁴ Now, O Muse, idle is the fear thou dost feel because the breeze hath driven out to sea the sails of my bark; as I have begun to speed over the ocean of fame—behold the star that is to protect me throughout the blue expanse!

It chanced that the father of the gods looked forth from heaven upon the earth. Lo! whatever he beholds is quickened; to view the world is to renew it; his mere nod revives all things. Thereupon, to bid the gods assemble, the winged god of Tegea⁵ speeds his flight now with his feet, now with his brow. Scarce has he descended the whole length of his grandfather⁶ and touched the fields when sea, earth, and air send their native divinities. First to another idea the second pair of wings was attached to his hat (*petasus*).

¹ Atlas: cf. Verg. *Aen.* IV. 258. For the fusion of the god with his domain cf. 2. 333 and 426-8, 22. 41-46.

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prime venis, viridi qui Dorida findere curru
 suetus in attonita spargis cito terga serenum; 25
 umentes Nymphas Phorcus comitatur ibique
 glaucus, Glauce, venis, vatium et certissime Proteu,
 certus eras. longo veniunt post ordine divi:
 pampineus Liber, Mars trux, Tiryntius hirtus,
 nuda Venus, fecunda Ceres, pharetrata Diana, 30
 Iuno gravis, prudens Pallas, turrita Cybebe,
 Saturnus profugus, vaga Cynthia, Phoebus ephebus,
 Pan pavidus, Fauni rigidi, Satyri petulantes.
 convenere etiam caelum virtute tenentes,
 Castor equo, Pollux caestu, Perseius harpe, 35
 fulmine Vulcanus, Tiphys rate, gente Quirinus.
 quis canat hic aulam caeli, rutilantia cuius
 ipsa pavimentum sunt sidera?

Iam pater aureo

tranquillus sese solio locat, inde priores
 consedere dei (fluviis quoque contigit illo, 40
 sed senibus, residere loco, tibi, maxime fluctu
 Eridane et flavis in pocula fracte Sygambris,
 Rhene tumens, Scythiaeque vagis equitate catervis
 Hister et ignotum plus notus, Nile, per ortum):
 cum procul erecta caeli de parte trahebat 45

35. Perseius *def. Brakman*: tum Perseus *Mohr*, Danaeus *Wilamowitz*.

¹ Colour-names in ancient literature are notoriously vague; a good example of this is found in 10. 5 sq., where first *viridis* and then *caeruleus* is applied both to Nereus and to his dress. In 15. 132 the dress of Glaucus is called *viridis*. The adjective *glaucus*, unlike *caeruleus*, is never applied to the deep blue of the sky, but there is regularly an element of blue in its connotation. It is applied to the sea and other expanses of water, to water-deities, to plants (especially, like Greek *γλαυκός*, to the grey-green of the olive), to the

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comes the Thunderer's own brother, who, accustomed as he is to cleave the sea with his green chariot, now quickly spreads calm over the amazed surface. Phorcus comes with the dripping nymphs, Glaucus too, green as his name¹; Proteus also, surest of seers, was there in sure presence.² After them comes a long array of divine beings; Liber, lord of the vine, fierce Mars, the shaggy hero of Tiryns, naked Venus, fruitful Ceres, Diana with her quiver, staid Juno, wise Pallas, tower-crowned Cybele, Saturn the exile, fair young Phoebus, pavid Pan, the uncouth Fauns, the wanton Satyrs. There also assembled those that inhabit heaven by virtue of their prowess—Castor by the steed, Pollux by the boxing-glove, Perseus by the scimitar, Vulcan by the thunderbolt, Tiphys by the ship, Quirinus by his people. Who could sing here below of heaven's great hall, whose floor the flaming stars themselves compose?

Now the great Father serenely sat him down on his golden throne; then the chiefest gods took their seats (and even to the rivers, such of them as are aged, the right to be seated in that place has been given,—Eridanus, mightiest in his torrent, the swelling Rhine, that the yellow-haired Sygambrian breaks to fill his cups, Danube, crossed on horseback by Scythia's nomad hordes, and Nile, known all the better for his unknown source). Lo! afar, from a lofty tract of sky, came Rome, dragging her slow

human eye (5. 240), and to many other things (including animals). No uniform translation is possible; such words as "blue," "green," "blue-green" (the meaning here), "blue-grey," "grey-green" will serve at various times. A full list of citations is now available in the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*.

¹ *i.e.* not in one of his numerous disguises (Semple, p. 88).

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pigros Roma gradus, curvato cernua collo
 ora ferens ; pendent crines de vertice, tecti
 pulvere, non galea, clipeusque impingitur aegris
 gressibus, et pondus, non terror, fertur in hasta.
 utque pii genibus primum est adfusa Tonantis, 50
 " testor, sancte parens," inquit, " te numen et illud,
 quidquid Roma fui : summo satis obruta fato
 invideo abiectis ; pondus non sustinet ampli
 culminis arta domus nec fulmen vallibus instat.
 quid, rogo, bis seno mihi vulture Tuscus haruspex 55
 portendit ? iaciens primae cur moenia genti
 ominibus iam celsa fui, dum collis Etrusci
 fundamenta iugis aperis mihi, Romule pauper ?
 plus gladio secura fui cum turbine iuncto
 me Rutulus, Veiens pariterque Auruncus et Ae-
 quus, 60
 Hernicus et Volscus premerent. sat magna videbar
 et tibi dum rumpit vitiatum femina ferro
 corpus et ad castum remeas, pudor erute, vulnus.
 iam cum vallatam socio me clausit Etrusco
 Tarquinius : pro Muci ignes ! pro Coclitis undae ! 65
 pro dolor ! hic quonam est qui sub mea iura redegit
 Samnitern, Gurges, Volsci qui terga cecidit,
 Marcius, et Senones fundens dictator et exul ?
 Fabricii vitam vellem, mortes Deciorum,
 vel sic vincentem vel sic victos : mea redde 70

¹ For similar utterances on the perils of greatness and the blessed security of a low estate see commentators on *Hor. C.* II. 10. 9-12, Vollmer on *Stat. Silv.* II. 7. 90.

² Cf. 357 sq. The twelve vultures which appeared to Romulus were interpreted as portending a duration of twelve centuries for Rome. According to the usual dating of the foundation of the city this period ended in A.D. 447. In the middle of the fifth century many people recalled the old augury with superstitious dread. See Gibbon, c. 35, last par.

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steps along, with neck bent and head bowed; her hair hung limply down, covered not with a helmet but with dust; at each feeble step her shield knocked against her, and in her spear there was no terror, but only heaviness. Flinging herself at the feet of gracious Jove she cried: "O holy Father, I call thee to witness—thee and that divinity of other days, all that I, Rome, have been: wholly overwhelmed by my exalted fortune, I envy the very outcast; a narrow house has not a spacious roof to support, and the lowly vales are not harassed by the lightning.¹ What, pray, did the Tuscan seer foretell for me from the twelve vultures?² Why is it that when but beginning to build walls for my infant people I was already raised on high by omens of greatness, when Romulus in his poverty dug foundations for me on the ridge of the Tuscan hill? Through my sword I knew greater safety than now, when in a massed hurricane Rutulian, Veientine, Aequian, Hernican, and Volscian bore down upon me. Mighty enough I seemed even to thee when the woman stabbed with the knife her sullied body, and her ravished honour returned with that chaste wound.³ Tarquin with his Etruscan ally shut me within my new-built rampart. Alas for the fire that Mucius, the water that Horatius braved! Woe is me! Where is there here a Gurges⁴—the man who brought the Samnite under my sway? Where the Marcus who cut down the flying Volscian, or he who routed the Senones, a dictator and an exile?⁵ Would that I had Fabricius as he lived, the Decii as they died, victory such as his or defeat like theirs:

¹ Lucretia.

⁴ Q. Fabius Maximus Gurges.

⁵ Camillus: cf. 2. 526 sq.

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principia. heu! quo nunc pompae ditesque triumph
 et pauper consul? Libycum mea terruit axem
 cuspis et infido posui iuga tertia Poeno.

Indorum Ganges, Colchorum Phasis, Araxes
 Armeniae, Ger Aethiopum Tanaisque Getarum 75

Thybrinum tremuere meum. me Teutone iuncto
 quondam fracte subis Cimber, gladiisque gravatas
 ante manus solas iussi portare catenas.

vae mihi! qualis eram, cum per mea iussa iuberent
 Sulla, Asiatogenes, Curius, Paulus, Pompeius 80

Tigrani, Antiocho, Pyrrho, Persae, Mithridati
 pacem ac regna, fugam, vectigal, vincla, venenum.

Sauromatem taceo ac Moschum solitosque cruentum
 lac potare Getas ac pocula tingere venis

vel, cum diffugiunt, fugiendos tum mage Persas. 85
 nec terras dixisse sat est: fulgentibus armis

tot maria intravi duce te longequae remotas
 sole sub occiduo gentes. victricia Caesar

signa Caledonios transvexit ad usque Britannos;
 fuderit et quamquam Scotum et cum Saxone Pictum,
 hostes quaesivit, quem iam natura vetabat 91

quaerere plus homines. vidit te frangere Leucas,
 trux Auguste, Pharon, dum classicus Actia miles

stagna quatit profugisque bibax Antonius armis
 incestam vacuat patrio Ptolomaida regno. 95

80. *fort.* Asiatogenes *Luetjohann*: Asiagenes.

81. Perseo *Luetjohann*: perso (perse *M*) *codd.*

82. ac *add. ego*: an et? patria regna *Mohr*.

¹ The correspondences are: Sulla, Mithridates, poison (a flagrant inaccuracy); Asiaticus, Antiochus, tribute; Curius,

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give me back my beginnings! Alas! Where now are those pageants, those triumphs rich of a consul poor? My spears affrighted Libya's clime, and I laid the yoke even a third time upon the faithless Carthaginian. Ganges of the Indian, Phasis of the Colchian, Araxes of Armenia, Ger of the Ethiopians, Tanais of the Getae, all trembled before my Tiber. I bethink me too of the Cimbrian and the leagued Teuton shattered of old, when I ordered hands till then loaded with the sword to carry naught but chains. Alas for what I was when at my bidding Sulla, Asiaticus, Curius, Paulus, Pompeius demanded of Tigranes, Antiochus, Pyrrhus, Perseus, and Mithridates peace and realms, banishment, tribute, chains, and poison!¹ I say naught of the Sauromatians or of the Moschans or of the Getae, whose wont it is to drink bloody milk and stain their cups with severed veins; or of the Persians,² most to be shunned when they shun the foe. Nor is it enough to speak of the land alone, for with thee to guide me I have entered many a sea and nations far away under the setting sun. Caesar took his victorious legions over even to the Caledonian Britons, and although he routed the Scot, the Pict and the Saxon, he still looked for foes where nature forbade him to look any more for men. Leucas saw the fierce Augustus shatter Egypt, when the warriors of the fleet shook the waters of Actium and the tippler Antonius by the rout of his arms ousted the unclean daughter of the house of Ptolemy from her ancestral kingdom. And

Pyrrhus, flight; Paulus, Perseus, chains; Pompeius, Tigranes, peace and realms (the latter referring perhaps to the two provinces of Sophene and Gordyene).

² i.e. The Parthians.

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cumque prius stricto quererer de cardine mundi,
 nec limes nunc ipsa mihi. plus, summe deorum,
 sum iusto tibi visa potens quod Parthicus ultro
 restituit mea signa Sapor positoque tiara
 funera Crassorum flevit dum purgat. et hinc iam 100
 (pro dolor!) excusso populi iure atque senatus
 quod timui incurri; sum tota in principe, tota
 principis, et fio lacerum de Caesare regnum,
 quae quondam regina fui; Capreasque Tiberi
 et caligas Gaii Claudii censura secuta est 105
 et vir morte Nero; tristi Pisone verendum
 Galbam sternis, Otho, speculo qui pulcher haberi
 dum captas, ego turpis eram; mihi foeda Vitelli
 intulit ingluvies ventrem, qui tempore parvo
 regnans sero perit; lassam post inclitus armis 110
 Vespasianus habet, Titus hinc, post hunc quoque
 frater;
 post quem tranquillus vix me mihi reddere Nerva
 coepit, adoptivo factus de Caesare maior;
 Vlpianus inde venit, quo formidata Sygambri
 Agrippina fuit, fortis, pius, integer, acer. 115
 talem capta precor. Traianum nescio si quis
 aequiperet, ni fors iterum tu, Gallia, mittas

¹ *i.e.* "the precincts of my own city are not intact" (Semple, p. 89).

² Phraates IV: see n. on 2. 457.

³ *i.e.* successive Caesars are reducing Rome's dominion more and more.

⁴ A reference to the nickname *Caligula* (= little military boot) given to Gaius in his boyhood by the soldiers, because he went about the barracks dressed like a soldier. For the allusions to Claudius and Otho in this passage see nn. on 5. 322 sq.

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I, who complained aforetime that the world's limits were too narrow, am now not even a boundary to myself.¹ O chiefest of the gods, I seemed to thee more powerful than is meet, inasmuch as the Parthian Sapor² freely restored my standards and, laying aside his royal tiara, wept for the deaths of the Crassi as he made atonement therefor. And hence now, woe is me! I have fallen upon the fate I feared, after wresting their rights from senate and people; I am merged in the Emperor, wholly the Emperor's property, and through Caesar I who was once a queen am becoming a mangled realm.³ Tiberius with his Capri and Gaius with his soldier's boots⁴ were followed by Claudius with his censorship and Nero, who in death played the man; Galba, to whom the stern Piso gave a claim to reverence, was laid low by Otho, who, while he sought by his mirror to seem beautiful, made me ugly. Then Vitellius, with his loathsome gluttony, thrust his paunch upon me, and though he reigned but a short time he perished all too late. Thus sore wearied was I when Vespasian, famed man of war, possessed me, and after him Titus, after Titus his brother; and after him the tranquil Nerva scarce began to make me myself again,—Nerva, who made himself greater by the Caesar he adopted. Then came Trajan, by whose doing Agrippina⁵ became a terror to the Sygambrians, an emperor gallant, faithful, righteous and vigorous. In my captivity I pray for such another. I know not if anyone can match Trajan—unless perchance Gaul should once more⁶ send forth a man

⁵ Colonia Agrippina (Cologne).

⁶ Trajan was a native of Spain, which was now included in the "Prefecture of the Gauls."

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qui vincat." lacrimae vocem clausere precantis,
 et quidquid superest luctus rogat. undique caeli
 assurgunt proceres, Mars, Cypris, Romulus et qui 120
 auctores tibi, Roma, dei; iam mitior ipsa
 flectitur atque iras veteres Saturnia donat.

Iuppiter ista refert: "Fatum, quo cuncta reguntur
 quoque ego, non licuit frangi. sat celsa laborant 125
 semper, et elatas nostro de munere vires
 invidit Fortuna sibi; sed concipe magnos,
 quamquam fracta, animos. si te Porsenna soluto
 plus timuit de ponte fremens, si moenia capta
 mox Brenni videre fugam, si denique dirum
 Hannibalem iuncto terrae caelique tumultu 130
 reppulimus (cum castra tuis iam proxima muris
 starent, Collina fulmen pro turre cucurrit,
 atque illic iterum timuit natura paventem
 post Phlegram pugnare Iovem): torpentia tolle
 lumina, detersam mentem caligo relinquat. 135
 te mirum est vinci; incipies cum vincere, mirum
 non erit. utque tibi pateat quo surgere tandem
 fessa modo possis, paucis, cognosce, docebo.

"Est mihi, quae Latio se sanguine tollit alumnam,
 tellus clara viris, cui non dedit optima quondam 140
 rerum opifex natura parem; fecundus ab urbe

126. fortuna *M*: natura.

128. fremens *M*: tremens.

¹ The Roman army was encamped between the Colline and Esquiline Gates when Hannibal approached Rome (Liv. XXVI. 10. 1); the battlemented Colline Gate is called *Collina turris* also by Juvenal (VI. 291) and Claudian (*Gild.* 86). Livy mentions the blinding storms of rain and hail, which occurred on two consecutive days (*ib.* 11. 2 sq.), but makes no mention of lightning; Sidonius probably borrowed this (and not only this) from the grandiose description by Silius (XII. 605-728; cf. XIII. 15-20). Cf. Juv. VII. 163.

² See n. on 6. 15.

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who should even surpass him." Tears choked the suppliant's voice, and her grief served for what remained of her petition. On all sides the chiefs of heaven rise in her honour, Mars, Venus, Romulus and the gods that made Rome great; even Saturn's daughter is moved to greater gentleness and forgoes her ancient wrath.

Then answered Jupiter: "Fate, whereby all things—yea, I myself—are governed, might not be violated. Whatever has reached its highest bourne must needs be afflicted, and Fortune hath grudged to aid a power that hath been exalted by *my* bounty. But broken though thou art, be of right good cheer. If Porsenna feared thee more than ever when he raged indignant at the severing of the bridge, if the walls that Brennus captured soon saw his flight, if, last of all, we drove back Hannibal with a wild outburst from earth and sky alike (his camp already stood nigh to thy walls when in front of the Colline tower a thunderbolt rushed down,¹ and Nature feared that there once again, as in Phlegra's² combat, Jove was fighting in terror), raise thy drooping eyes, let the dark mist be wiped away and vanish from thy soul. 'Tis a marvel that thou shouldst be conquered, but when thou beginnest to conquer, 'twill be no marvel. And now, that it may be plain to thee how thou mayest rise again, worn out as thou art, hearken and I will declare it in few words.

"I have a land which carries its head high as sprung from Latin blood,³ a land famed for its men, a land to which Nature, the blessed creator of all things, vouchsafed no peer in days gone by.

³ This claim of the Arverni is mentioned in Lucan I. 427 sq., a passage recalled by Sidonius in *Epist.* VII. 7. 2.

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pollet ager, primo qui vix proscissus aratro
 semina tarda sitit vel luxuriante iuenco
 arcana exponit piceam pinguedine glaebam.
 assurrexit huic, coxit quod torridus Auster, 145
 Niliacum Libycumque solum, collataque semper
 arida Mygdoniae damnarunt Gargara falces;
 Apulus et Calaber cessit. spes unica rerum,
 hanc, Arverne, colens nulli pede cedis in armis,
 quosvis vincis equo. testis mihi Caesaris esto 150
 hic nimium Fortuna pavens, cum colle repulsus
 Gergoviae castris miles vix restitit ipsis.
 hos ego tam fortes volui, sed cedere Avitum
 dum tibi, Roma, paro, rutilat cui maxima dudum
 stemmata complexum germen, palmata cucurrit 155
 per proavos, gentisque suae te teste, Philagri,
 patricius respundet apex. sed portio quanta est
 haec laudum, laudare patres, quos quippe curules
 et praefecturas constat debere nepoti?
 sint alii per quos se postuma iactet origo, 160
 et priscum titulis numeret genus alter: Avite,

¹ *Proscindere* is the technical term for the first ploughing. Here no further ploughing is required, so the oxen have a lazy time. [This explanation of *luxuriante* is given by Dr. Semple, p. 91.]

² The Patrician Philagrius to whom Avitus was related is no doubt the man mentioned in *Epist.* II. 3. 1 as a remote ancestor of our poet's old schoolfellow, Magnus Felix (see n. on *Carm.* 9. 1). He cannot be the Philagrius to whom *Epist.* VII. 14 is addressed, but he may be the one mentioned in *Carm.* 24. 93. Modern authorities treat the two (or three) men as one.

³ *i.e.* their distinctions came to them because it was ordained that a descendant should be Emperor; it was his destined

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From the city extend rich and fruitful fields; scarce are they cloven with the early ploughing¹ when they thirst for the tardy seeds, and while the ox enjoys luxurious ease they display clods made black by some fatness mysteriously at work. To this soil the tilth of Nile and Libya, baked by the scorching south wind, hath yielded pride of place, and Gargarus, compared with such land, hath always been condemned by Phrygian sickles as withered; the Apulian and the Calabrian have likewise owned defeat. O Arvernian, who dwellest therein, sole hope for the world, thou yieldest to none when thou fightest on foot, and on thy steed thou art a match for any man! Let Fortune, Caesar's attendant goddess, be my witness, who was sore dismayed in this land when his warriors were forced back from Gergovia's hill and scarce halted their flight at their very camp. I ordained that these men should be thus gallant, but all the time I was making ready, O Rome, to present to thee Avitus, whose natal tree, rich in noble branches, hath long shone illustrious, whose forefathers have time after time been adorned with the palm-decked robe, and whose race, as Philagrius bears witness, is irradiated by a Patrician's dignity.² But how small a part of his meed of praise is such praise of his forefathers, who manifestly owe their curule rank and prefectures to their descendant!³ There may be others of whom the later scions of their race will make boast; another may recount the ancient honours of his line; but thou alone, Avitus, dost greatness that was the real cause of their dignities. Thus it is he who ennoble his ancestors, not his ancestors who ennoble him (v. 162).

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nobilitas tu solus avos. libet edere tanti
gesta viri et primam paucis percurrere vitam.

“ Solverat in partum generosa puerpera casti
ventris onus ; manifesta dedi mox signa futuri 165

principis ac totam fausto trepidi patris aulam
implevi augurio. licet idem grandia nati
culparet fata et pueri iam regna videret,
sed sibi commissum tanto sub pignore cernens
mundi depositum, ne quid tibi, Roma, periret, 170

iuivit fortunam studio. lactantia primum
membra dedit nivibus, glaciemque inrumpere plantis
iussit et attritas parvum ridere pruinas.

surgentes animi Musis formantur et illo
quo Cicerone tonas ; didicit quoque facta tuorum 175

ante ducum ; didicit pugnas libroque relegit
quae gereret campo. primus vix coeperat esse
ex infante puer, rabidam cum forte cruentis
rictibus atque escas ieiuna fauce parantem

plus catulis stravit (fuerant nam fragmina prop-
ter) 180

arrepta de caute lupam, fractusque molari
dissiluit vertex et saxum vulnere sedit.

sic meus Alcides, Nemeae dum saltibus errat,
occurrit monstro vacuus, non robora portans,
non pharetras ; stetit ira fremens atque hoste pro-
pinquo 185

consuluit solos virtus decepta lacertos.

“ Parva quidem, dicenda tamen : quis promptior isto

167. *sq. dist. ego ; vid. Class. Quart. loc. cit. pp. 19 sq.*

185. fremens *Buecheler et Wilamowitz: tremens codd. plerique.*

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ennoble thy forefathers. Fain am I to relate the deeds of this great man and in few words to run through his earliest years.

“ His noble mother had been released from her chaste travail; anon I gave plain tokens of the emperor that was to be, and filled with happy augury the whole palace of the anxious father. He, 'tis true, murmured at his son's high destiny, already seeing his boy a sovereign; nevertheless, discerning in this great pledge the whole world's trust committed to his keeping, he seconded fortune's bounty by his own diligence, lest thou, O Rome, shouldst suffer loss. First he surrendered the suckling's limbs to the snows; he compelled him while a little child to break the ice with his feet and to laugh at the frost as he trod it down. His growing mind was moulded by the Muses and by the Cicero that bestows on thee tones of thunder; he learned also the deeds of thy leaders of former days; he learned of battles and read in the written page what he should perform in the field. Scarce had he changed infancy for boyhood when, seeing a she-wolf ravening with bloody jaws agape as with hungry mouth she sought food, chiefly for her cubs, he snatched a stone (for there were pieces of rock hard by) and laid her low. Shattered by the boulder her head split open, and the stone sank down in the wound. Even so my Hercules, as he roamed the glens of Nemea, faced the monster empty-handed, carrying neither club nor quiver; in raging wrath he took his stand, and with the enemy nigh that brave spirit, taken unawares, looked for aid to naught but his own strong arms.

“ Small things, yet worthy to be told are these:—
Who was quicker than he to lower to the scent the

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tensa catenati summittere colla Molossi
 et lustris recubare feras interprete nare
 discere non visas et in aere quaerere plantas? 190
 iam si forte suem latratibus improbus Vmber
 terruit, albentes nigro sub gutture lunas
 frangere ludus erat colluctantique lacerto
 vasta per adversas venabula cogere praedas.
 quam pulchrum, cum forte domum post lustra re-
 vertens 195
 horrore splenderet apri virtusque repugnans
 proderet invitum per fortia facta pudorem!
 sic Pandioniis castae Tritonidos arvis
 Hippolytus roseo sudum radiabat ab ore,
 sed simul a gemino flagrans cum Cressa furore 200
 transiit adfectu matres et fraude novercas.
 "Quid volucrum studium, dat quas natura rapaces
 in vulgus prope cognatum? quis doctior isto
 instituit varias per nubila iungere lites?
 alite vincit aves, celerique per aethera plausu 205
 hoc nulli melius pugnator militat unguis.
 "Nec minus haec inter civilia iura secutus
 eligitur primus, iuvenis, solus, mala fractae
 alliget ut patriae poscatque informe recidi
 vectigal. procerum tum forte potentior illic, 210
 post etiam princeps, Constantius omnia praestat,

¹ Hounds.

² "Pandionian" means "Attic," from Pandion, king of Athens, father of Procne and Philomela. "Tritonis" means Pallas Athena; cf. 15. 179. ³ Falconry.

⁴ Sidonius makes it clear that Constantius was not yet Emperor. He does not actually say that Constantius was in Gaul at the time, and some have supposed that the embassy went to Ravenna, where Constantius was persuaded to use his influence with Honorius. But the description of Constantius as *potentior illic* seems to imply that he was commanding in

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taut necks of the leashed Molossians,¹ to learn by the guidance of their nostrils that wild beasts he could not see were lurking in the den, and to seek for tracks in the air? Again, if haply the irrepressible Umbrian hound frightened a boar by his barking, it was sport to this lad to smash the white crescents under the monster's black throat and with straining arm to drive a huge spear through the confronting quarry. What a beautiful sight when, returning home from the chase, he would appear all the more resplendent for the boar's bristling hideousness, and his gallantry in its own despite baulked his shrinking modesty by this evidence of brave deeds! Thus in the Pandionian fields of chaste Tritonis² was Hippolytus wont to diffuse a sunny radiance from his glowing countenance—though it was then that the Cretan woman, fired by a double frenzy, overpassed a mother's love and a stepmother's guile.

“What of his devotion to the birds that nature creates to prey upon the common throng of creatures almost their kin?³ Who more skilfully trains them to clash in divers contests amid the clouds? With a bird he vanquishes birds; with a swift whirring through the upper air the warrior claw fights for none more gallantly than for him.

“And amid these sports he followed the law none the less, and, young though he was, he was chosen first and alone to bind up the wounds of his shattered homeland and to make claim for the abolishment of a hideous tax. It chanced that Constantius⁴ was chief lord in those parts—he who anon was emperor;

Gaul. It is indeed quite probable that *patriae* (209) refers to Auvergne. We learn from Greg. Tur. II. 9 that the “generals of Honorius” acted with great severity towards the supporters

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indole defixus tanta et miratus in annis
parvis grande bonum vel in ore precantis ephēbi
verba senis.

“ Ducis hinc pugnas et foedera regum
pandere, Roma, libet. variis incussa procellis 215
bellorum regi Getico tua Gallia pacis
pignora iussa dare est, inter quae nobilis obses
tu, Theodore, venis; quem pro pietate propinqui
expetis in media pelliti principis aula
tutus, Avite, fide. probat hoc iam Theudoris
altum 220

exemplum officii. res mira et digna relatu,
quod fueris blandus regi placuisse feroci.
hinc te paulatim praelibat sensibus imis
atque nimis vult esse suum; sed spernis amicū
plus quam Romanum gerere. stupet ille repul-
sam 225

et plus inde places. rigidum sic, Pyrrhe, videbas
Fabricium, ingestas animo cum divite fugit
pauper opes, regem temnens, dum supplice censu
pignus amicitiae vili mendicat ab auro.

224. nimis *Mohr* : animis.

of Jovinus in the land of the Arvernians, but Sidonius can scarcely be alluding to such an early date (Jovinus fell in A.D. 413). Constantius was so often and so long in Gaul that we cannot fix the reference with any certainty. If the *vectigal* was a tax levied by the government, only the Emperor could remit it, and we must then suppose that Avitus persuaded Constantius to use his influence with Honorius to that end. It may, however, refer to the requisitions for the pay and provisioning of the army (*annona militaris*).

¹ The Theodorus here mentioned is not otherwise known. It is scarcely likely that he is the man mentioned in *Epist.* III. 10. 1. The Gothic king is Theodoric I (419–451). It is thought that the hostages referred to here were given to him on the occasion of his treaty with the Romans which gave him

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and he granted all that was asked, marvelling at such great talent and astonished at such full-grown virtue in those boyish years, at such elderly speech on the lips of the suppliant youth.

“ And now, O Rome, I would fain relate the battles wherein he commanded and the compacts he made with kings. Thy land of Gaul, buffeted by divers tempests of war, was bidden to give to the Gothic king sureties of peace, and among them, a noble hostage, went Theodorus.¹ Avitus, in loving duty to his kin, sought him out in the midst of the skin-clad monarch’s court, and his loyalty won him safety. Theodoric soon looked with favour on this sublime devotion. Marvellous indeed is it and worthy to be recorded that by thy gentle winsomeness, Avitus, thou didst find grace with a fierce king. Little by little he began to know thee in his inmost soul, and he desired exceedingly to have thee as one of his own; but thou didst scorn to act the friend rather than the Roman. The king marvelled at this rebuff, but esteemed thee all the more for it. Even thus did Pyrrhus see Fabricius immovable, when that poor man with rich soul shunned the riches thrust upon him, despising the king in that he made his wealth play the suppliant and begged with paltry gold for a bond of friendship.

sovereignty over Aquitanica Secunda and Novempopulana (Intro., p. xvii). This is possible if we accept one of the two dates usually given for that agreement (426 and 430), but not if, with Stein (p. 482), we place it in 439. The giving of hostages does not necessarily imply that the Gothic kingdom was now independent; see Stein, *loc. cit.*, n. 3. See also n. on 495 sqq. Some eminent historians (*e.g.* Mommsen) have erred seriously through ignorance of the meaning of *expetis* (v. 219). In Sidonius and other late Latin writers this verb often means “ seek out,” “ visit.”

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"Aetium interea, Scythico quia saepe duello est 230
 edoctus, sequeris; qui, quamquam celsus in armis,
 nil sine te gessit, cum plurima tute sine illo.
 nam post Iuthungos et Norica bella subacto
 victor Vindelico Belgam, Burgundio quem trux
 presserat, absolvit iunctus tibi. vincitur illic 235
 cursu Herulus, Chonus iaculis Francusque natatu,
 Sauromata clipeo, Salius pede, falce Gelonus,
 vulnere vel si quis plangit cui flesse feriri est
 ac ferro perarasse genas vultuque minaci
 rubra cicatricum vestigia defodisse. 240

"Inlustri iam tum donatur celsus honore.
 squameus et rutilis etiamnunc livida cristis

232. tute *L. Mueller* : tu.

238. feriri *C^aF* : perire.

¹ It is important to note that *interea* is often used in poetry to introduce a new action subsequent to, not contemporaneous with, the events just described. For this use in Virgil see D. W. Reinmuth in *Amer. Journ. Phil.* LIV. (1933), pp. 323-339, especially 328-330. "Meanwhile" is often a misleading translation.

² The Huns were for years the mainstay of Aëtius' army, and "Scythian warfare" in all probability means war waged by means of Hunnish forces. It is scarcely likely that the meaning is "hostilities with the Goths" (n. on 5. 219), which had apparently gone on with little intermission from about A.D. 425 to 430, and in which Aëtius had played an important part. The details are obscure, though it is certain that Theodoric made at least one unsuccessful attempt to take Arles.

³ The Iuthungi were subdued by Aëtius in A.D. 430; the contest with the Noricans and the Vindelicians no doubt took place in the course of the same expedition. All modern authorities infer from this passage that Avitus took part in the campaign against the Iuthungi and their neighbours, but Sidonius does not say so.

⁴ The Burgundians rose in A.D. 435 and were crushed in

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“Anon¹ thou didst follow Aëtius, because he had learnt many a lesson from the Scythian warfare²; and he, glorious in arms though he was, did no deed without thee, though thou didst many without him. For when he had finished with the Iuthungi³ and the war in Noricum, and had subdued the Vindelicians, thereafter in partnership with thee did he deliver the Belgians, whom the fierce Burgundian had harassed.⁴ There the Herulian found in thee his match in fleetness, the Hun in javelin-throwing, the Frank in swimming, the Sauromatian in use of shield, the Salian in marching, the Gelonian in wielding the scimitar; and in bearing of wounds thou didst surpass any mourning barbarian⁵ to whom wailing means self-wounding and tearing the cheeks with steel and gouging the red traces of scars on his threatening face.

“Even thus early this hero was glorified by bestowal of the title of Illustrious.⁶ Wearing his scale-armour, his face still bearing the mark of the

the following year. It is obvious from this passage that Roman forces were used in the campaign; Bury (I. 249) must be wrong in thinking that the Huns were put in independent charge of it.

⁵ The construction is *vel (= et) vulnere* (“in the matter of a wound”) *vincitur* (“is surpassed”) *si quis (= quisquis) plangit*.

⁶ The *viri illustres* were the highest class of the senatorial order. As Avitus had not yet held any of the high offices of state which gave a right to the title, it must have been bestowed as an honorary distinction. It is somewhat surprising to find a Gallo-Roman reaching that dignity at such an early stage in his career. It is obvious that in this period he held a high military rank, and the Prefectship which soon followed shows that he was already a marked man. But as the Praetorian Prefect became *illustris* as a matter of course, one is tempted to suspect that Sidonius has antedated the conferment of the title on Avitus.

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ora gerens vix arma domum sordentia castris
 rettulerat: nova bella iterum pugnamque sub ipsis
 iam patriae muris periurus commovet hostis. 245
 Litorius Scythicos equites tum forte subacto
 celsus Aremorico Geticum rapiebat in agmen
 per terras, Arverne, tuas; qui proxima quaeque
 discursu, flammis, ferro, feritate, rapinis
 debebant, pacis fallentes nomen inane. 250
 huius tum famulum quidam truculentior horum,
 mox feriente, feris; ruit ille et tristia fata
 commendat domino absentem partemque futuram
 vindictae moriens Stygium spe portat ad amnem.
 et iam fama viro turres portasque tuenti 255
 intuitu pavidae plebis perfert scelus actum.
 excutitur, restat, pallet, rubet, alget et ardet,
 ac sibimet multas vultum variata per unum
 ira facit facies, vel, qui mos saepe dolenti, 259
 plus amat extinctum; tandem prorumpit et arma,
 arma fremit, pinguisque etiamnum sanguine fertur
 lorica, obtusus per barbara vulnera contus
 atque sub assiduis dentatus caedibus ensis.
 includit suras ocreis capitique micantem
 imponit galeam, fulvus cui crescit in altum 265
 conus et iratam iaculatur vertice lucem.
 et iam scandit equum vulsisque a cardine portis
 emicat; adsistunt socio Virtusque Dolorque
 et Pudor: armatas pilo petit impiger alas

245. periurus *Wilamowitz*: periturus.

¹ *Celsus* may mean "made glorious."

² For the conquest of the Aremoricians by Litorius and his subsequent march against the Goths, who were besieging Narbonne, see *Introd.*, p. xvi. The present passage refers to a lawless body of Hunnish auxiliaries, no doubt detached from the main body of Litorius's forces.

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burnished helmet, scarce had he brought home his stained arms from the field when there came fresh wars and a battle this time under the very walls of his own city, stirred up by a faithless foe. Litorius, elated¹ by the conquest of the Aremorians,² was hurrying his Scythian horsemen against the Gothic host through the land of the Arvernian, and they with raid and fire and sword and barbarity and pillage were destroying all things near them, betraying and making void the name of peace. A servant of Avitus was wounded by one of these, more savage than his fellows, soon to be wounded in turn; the victim fell, and falling commended his woeful fate to the vengeance of his absent master, and as he died he carried with him to the Stygian stream a hopeful foretaste of the revenge that was to come. Now Rumour brought knowledge of the dastard deed to our leader as he kept his ward of towers and gates, regardful of the scared populace. He starts, halts, grows pale, grows red, grows cold and hot; his anger in its changing phases takes many forms in that one countenance, and, as is oft the mourner's way, he loves the lost one more than ever. At length he dashes forward, shouting again and again for his arms, and they bring him his corselet, still clotted with gore, his lance blunted by wounds dealt upon the barbarians, and his sword notched by unceasing slaughter. He cases his legs in greaves and puts upon his head a gleaming helmet, whereon a golden crest-base rises aloft, darting an angry flash from on high. Next he mounts his charger, and tearing the gates from their hinges rushes forth; Valour and Grief and Honour range themselves with their ally; eagerly he charges with his

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pugnando pugnam quaerens, pavidumque per ag-
 men 270
 multorum interitu compensat quod latet unus.
 sic Phrygium Emathia victorem cuspide poscens
 Aeacides caeso luctum frenavit amico,
 per mortes tot, Troia, tuas (nam vilia per se
 agmina) contentus ruere strictumque per amplos 275
 exserere gladium populos; natat obruta tellus
 sanguine, dumque hebetat turba grave caedua telum
 absens in cuncto sibi vulnere iam cadit Hector.
 proditus ut tandem tanti qui causa tumultus,
 inquit Avitus: 'Age, Scythica nutrite sub Arcto,
 qui furis et caeso tantum qui fidis inermi, 281
 congregere armato. multum tibi praestitit ira
 iam mea: concessi pugnam iubeoque resistas;
 certantem mactasse iuvat.' sic fatur et aequor
 prosilit in medium, nec non ferus advenit hostis. 285
 ut primum pectus vel comminus ora tulere,
 hic ira tremit, ille metu. iam cetera turba
 diversis trepidat votis variosque per ictus
 pendet ab eventu. sed postquam prima, secunda
 tertiaque acta rota est, venit ecce et celsa cruen-
 tum 290
 perforat hasta virum, post et confinia dorsi
 cedit transfosso ruptus bis pectore thorax,
 et dum per duplicem sanguis singultat hiatum
 dividua ancipitem carpserunt vulnera vitam.

273-5. *dist. ego.*

274. *nam ego dubitanter: iam.*

¹ *i.e.* fighting his way through the ranks in order to meet the hiding murderer.

² Achilles after the slaying of Patroclus by Hector.

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pike the armed ranks, seeking a fight by fighting,¹ and amid the fear-stricken throng he makes the death of many pay for the absence of the one that lurks concealed. Even so did the scion of Aeacus,² ranging with his spear in search of the Phrygian victor, hold back his mourning when his friend was slain, content to rush in a tide of death-dealing among Troy's host (for in themselves he counted those hordes as naught), and to wield the drawn sword through multitudinous throngs; the ground was submerged and swam in blood, and as the falling ranks blunted his heavy weapon he saw already in every wound he dealt the absent Hector fall. When at last he who was the cause of that great havoc stood revealed, then said Avitus: 'Ho! thou fellow reared 'neath the Scythian Bear, who ragest like a madman and hast such boldness from slaying the unarmed, come, meet one who is armed! Already my wrath has allowed thee a great boon; I have granted thee a fight, and I bid thee stand thy ground; I choose to slaughter a resisting foe.' Thus he spake, and bounded forth into the midst of the plain; and the barbarous foe likewise came. When first they approached, breast to breast and face to face, the one shook with anger, the other with fear. Now the general throng stands in sore suspense, with prayers on this side or on that, and as blow follows blow they hang on the issue. But when the first bout, the second, the third have been fought, lo! the upraised spear comes and pierces the man of blood; his breast was transfixed and his corselet twice split, giving way even where it covered the back; and as the blood came throbbing through the two gaps the separate wounds took away the life that each of them might claim.

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" Haec post gesta viri (temet, Styx livida, testor)
 intemerata mihi praefectus iura regebat; 296
 et caput hoc sibimet solitis defessa ruinis
 Gallia suscipiens Getica pallebat ab ira.
 nil prece, nil pretio, nil milite fractus agebat
 Aetius; capto terrarum damna patebant 300
 Litorio; in Rhodanum proprios producere fines
 Theudoridae fixum, nec erat pugnare necesse,
 sed migrare Getis. rabidam trux asperat iram
 victor; quod sensit Scythicum pro moenibus hostem,
 imputat; et nil est gravius, si forsitan umquam 305
 vincere contingat, trepido. postquam undique nul-
 lum
 praesidium ducibusque tuis nil, Roma, relictum est,
 foedus, Avite, novas; saevum tua pagina regem
 lecta domat; iussisse sat est te, quod rogat orbis.
 credent hoc umquam gentes populique futuri? 310
 littera Romani cassat quod, barbare, vincis.
 iura igitur rexit; namque hoc quoque par fuit, ut tum
 assertor fieret legum qui nunc erit auctor,
 ne dandus populis princeps, caput, induperator,
 Caesar et Augustus solum fera proelia nosset. 315
 " Iam praefecturae perfunctus culmine tandem
 se dederat ruri (numquam tamen otia, numquam
 desidia imbellis, studiumque et cura quieto
 armorum semper): subito cum rupta tumultu

¹ The prefecture of Avitus began in A.D. 439, the year in which Litorius was defeated near Toulouse (Introd., pp. xvi f., and it seems to have lasted for some years. Litorius, though finally defeated, inflicted heavy losses on the Goths, and it was perhaps this fact, as much as the diplomacy of Avitus, that persuaded the king to come to terms with the Romans.

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“ After these valiant deeds (I call even thee, dark Styx, to witness) he was my prefect,¹ administering the laws without corruption. Gaul when she received him as her head was worn out with the familiar devastation and pale with affright at the Gothic wrath. Aëtius was broken; naught could he do by prayer or bribe or with his soldiers; and when Litorius was captured the destitution of the land stood revealed. Theodoric was resolved to advance his own boundaries to the Rhone, and the Goths needed not to fight, but only to migrate. The fierce victor whetted his raging wrath; he counted it a sin against him that he had known the presence of the Scythian foe² before his walls, and naught is more grievous than a frightened man if he ever chance to be victorious. When there was no support anywhere and no resource, O Rome, was left to thy leaders, Avitus renewed the treaty; the reading of his scroll subdued the king; Avitus had but to order that which the world begged for. Will future races and peoples ever believe this?—a Roman’s letter annulled a barbarian’s conquests. So he administered the laws; for this also was fitting, that at that time he should become the champion of the laws who will now be their maker, lest he who was to be given to the peoples as prince, head, emperor, Caesar, and Augustus should have no knowledge save of savage battles.

“ Now he had discharged the prefect’s majestic office, and he had devoted himself to country life (though never with him was there idleness or unwarlike sloth, but even in those peaceful days arms were ever his study and his care)—when suddenly the bar-

² The Huns under Litorius.

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barbaries totas in te transfuderat Arctos, 320
 Gallia. pugnacem Rugum comitante Gelono
 Gepida trux sequitur; Scirum Burgundio cogit;
 Chonus, Bellonotus, Neurus, Bastarna, Toringus,
 Bructerus, ulvosa vel quem Nicer alluit unda
 prorumpit Francus; cecidit cito secta bipenni 325
 Hercynia in lintres et Rhenum texuit alno;
 et iam terrificis diffuderat Attila turmis
 in campos se, Belga, tuos. vix liquerat Alpes
 Aetius, tenue et rarum sine milite ducens
 robur in auxiliis, Geticum male credulus agmen 330
 incassum propriis praesumens adfore castris.
 nuntius at postquam ductorem perculit, Hunos
 iam prope contemptum propriis in sedibus hostem
 exspectare Getas, versat vagus omnia secum
 consilia et mentem curarum fluctibus urget. 335
 tandem nutanti sedit sententia celsum
 exorare virum, collectisque omnibus una
 principibus coram supplex sic talibus infit:
 'orbis, Avite, salus, cui non nova gloria nunc est
 quod rogat Aetius, voluisti, et non nocet hostis; 340
 vis: prodest. inclusa tenes tot milia nutu,
 et populis Geticis sola est tua gratia limes;
 infensi semper nobis pacem tibi praestant.
 victrices, i, prome aquilas; fac, optime, Chunos,

336. nutanti *M*: cunctanti.

¹ The incursion of Attila and his hordes gathered from many nations, A.D. 451. The support of the Visigoths was vital to the Romans. Avitus certainly made a good ambassador, but the probability is that Theodoric acted largely from self-interest, already detecting Attila's intention to push his conquests beyond the Loire.

² The Bellonoti (Balloniti, or perhaps Ballonoti, in Val. Flacc. VI. 161) were a Sarmatian people. For the other peoples here mentioned, see Hodgkin II. 106 ff.

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barian world, rent by a mighty upheaval, poured the whole north into Gaul.¹ After the warlike Rugian comes the fierce Gepid, with the Gelonian close by; the Burgundian urges on the Scirian; forward rush the Hun, the Bellonotian,² the Neurian, the Bastarnian, the Thuringian, the Bructeran, and the Frank, he whose land is washed by the sedgy waters of Nicer.³ Straightway falls the Hercynian forest, hewn to make boats, and overlays the Rhine with a network of its timber; and now Attila with his fearsome squadrons has spread himself in raids upon the plains of the Belgian. Aëtius had scarce left the Alps, leading a thin, meagre force of auxiliaries without legionaries, vainly with ill-starred confidence expecting that the Gothic host would join his camp. But tidings came that struck the leader with dismay; in their own land were the Goths awaiting the Huns, a foe they now almost despised. Perplexed, he turned over every plan, and his mind was beset with surging cares. At length in his wavering heart was formed the fixed resolve to make appeal to a man of high estate; and before an assemblage of all the nobles he thus began to plead: 'Avitus, saviour of the world, to whom it is no new glory to be besought by Aëtius, thou didst wish it, and the enemy no longer does harm;⁴ thou wishest it, and he does good. All those thousands thou dost keep within bounds by thy nod; thine influence alone is a barrier-wall to the Gothic peoples; ever hostile to us, they grant peace to thee. Go, display the victorious eagles;⁵ bring it to pass, O noble hero, that the Huns,

³ The Neckar.

⁴ See *vv.* 306-311.

⁵ *i.e.* in order that the Gothic soldiers may rally to them.

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quorum forte prior fuga nos concusserat olim, 345
 bis victos prodesse mihi.' sic fatur, et ille
 pollicitus votum fecit spem. protinus inde
 avolat et famulas in proelia concitat iras.
 ibant pellitae post classica Romula turmae,
 ad nomen currente Geta; timet aere vocari 350
 dirutus, opprobrium, non damnum barbarus horrens.
 hos ad bella trahit iam tum spes orbis Avitus,
 vel iam privatus vel adhuc. sic cinnama busto
 collis Erythraei portans Phoebieus ales
 concitat omne avium vulgus; famulantia currunt 355
 agmina, et angustus pennas non explicat aer.
 "Iam prope fata tui bis senas vulturis alas
 complebant (scis namque tuos, scis, Roma, labores):
 Aetium Placidus mactavit semivir amens;
 vixque tuo impositum capiti diadema, Petroni: 360
 ilico barbaries, nec non sibi capta videri
 Roma Getis tellusque suo cessura furori;
 raptores ceu forte lupi, quis nare sagaci
 monstrat odor pinguem clausis ab ovilibus auram,
 irritant acuuntque famem portantque rapinae 365

¹ *i.e.* by serving in the Roman ranks: cf. *prodest*, v. 341. The meaning is that the Huns serving under Litorius had by their flight before the Goths caused a Roman disaster (A.D. 339): now a second defeat of the Huns will put them once more at the service of Rome.

² *Aere dirutus* (Cic. *Verr.* II. 5. 33, etc.) was applied to a soldier whose pay was stopped as a punishment.

³ A play on the two meanings of *privatus*: Avitus was now *privatus* ("out of office"; his Prefectship was over) or still *privatus* (*i.e.* a subject: he was soon to become Emperor). For the latter meaning of *privatus* cf. v. 593 below.

⁴ See nn. on 2. 417 and (for *Eryth.*) 2. 447.

⁵ See v. 55 n.

⁶ See 5. 305 sqq. n. Placidus was one of the names of

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whose flight aforetime shook us, shall by a second defeat be made to do me service.'¹ Thus he spake, and Avitus consenting changed his prayer into hope. Straightway he flies thence and rouses up the Gothic fury that was his willing slave. Rushing to enroll their names, the skin-clad warriors began to march behind the Roman trumpets; those barbarians feared the name of 'pay-docked soldiers,'² dreading the disgrace, not the loss. These men Avitus swept off to war, Avitus even thus early the world's hope, though now (or still) a plain citizen.³ Even so the bird of Phoebus, when bearing the cinnamon to his pyre on the Erythraean hill,⁴ rouses all the common multitude of birds; the obedient throng hies to him, and the air is too narrow to give their wings free play.

"Now destiny was well-nigh bringing to fulfilment the sign of the twelve flying vultures⁵ (Thou knowest, O Rome, thou knowest all thy troubles). Placidus,⁶ the mad eunuch, slaughtered Aëtius. Scarce was the diadem set on the head of Petronius when all at once came a barbarian flood, and the Goths had visions of Rome captured by them and of the whole earth ready to surrender to their frenzy; as ravening wolves, whose keen scent has caught a whiff of fatlings wafted from a fenced sheepcote, goad and sharpen their hunger, and carry in their

Valentinian III. That feeble emperor is perhaps intentionally described in terms strictly applicable to the chamberlain Heraclius, who helped him in the assassination of Aëtius. It was Petronius Maximus who appointed Avitus to the military command of Gaul, dignifying that office, apparently for the first time, with the title *magister peditum equitumque* (or *mag. utriusque militiae*; see v. 377 and n. on 5. 553). Another view is that Avitus was made *mag. mil. praesentalis*.

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- in vultu speciem, patulo ieiunia rictu
fallentes ; iam iamque tener spe frangitur agnus
atque absens avido crepitat iam praeda palato.
quin et Aremoricus piratam Saxona tractus
sperabat, cui pelle salum sulcare Britannum 370
ludus et assuto glaucum mare findere lembo.
Francus Germanum primum Belgamque secundum
sternebat, Rhenumque, ferox Alamanne, bibebas
Romani ripis et utroque superbus in agro
vel civis vel victor eras. sed perdita cernens 375
terrarum spatia princeps iam Maximus, unum
quod fuit in rebus, peditumque equitumque magis-
trum
te sibi, Avite, legit. collati rumor honoris
invenit agricolam, flexi dum forte ligonis
exercet dentes vel pando pronus aratro 380
vertit inexcoctam per pinguia iugera glaebam.
sic quondam ad patriae res fractas pauper arator,
Cincinnate, venis veterem cum te induit uxor
ante boves trabeam dictatoremque salignae
exceperere fores atque ad sua tecta ferentem 385
quod non persevit, turpique e fasce gravata
vile triumphalis portavit purpura semen.
“ Vt primum ingesti pondus suscepit honoris,
legas qui veniam poscant, Alamanne, furori,
Saxonis incursus cessat, Chattumque palustri 390
alligat Albis aqua ; vixque hoc ter menstrua totum

¹ *i.e.* the inhabitants of Germania Prima (capital Moguntiacum, Mainz) and Belgica Secunda (capital Durocortorum Remorum, Rheims).

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eyes a vision of their spoil, beguiling their famishment with jaws opened wide; every moment their expectant hope sees a young lamb mangled, and the prey beyond their reach is already crunched in their greedy mouths. The Aremorian region too expected the Saxon pirate, who deems it but sport to furrow the British waters with hides, cleaving the blue sea in a stitched boat. The Frank began to lay low the First German and the Second Belgian¹; the bold Alaman was drinking the Rhine from the Roman bank and proudly lording it on both sides, a citizen² or a conqueror. But Maximus, now emperor, seeing such loss of widespread lands, took the sole availing course in such distress and chose for himself Avitus as Master of Horse and Foot. The tidings of the rank bestowed found him farming, plying the bent mattock's tooth or stooping over the curved plough as he turned up the unsunned clods in his fertile acres. Thus aforetime Cincinnatus came, a poor ploughman, to heal his country's broken fortunes, when his wife put the old robe upon him, standing before the oxen, and his doors of willow-wood now opened for a dictator, who bore back to his dwelling what he had not sowed, and thus the triumphal purple, weighted with a mean load, carried common seed.

"No sooner had he taken up the burden of the office thrust upon him than the Alaman sent envoys to crave pardon for their frenzy, the Saxon's raiding abated and the marshy water of Albis confined the Chattian; and scarce had the moon viewed all this

² *i.e.* an Alamannian tribesman, a member of the Alamannian community on the right bank of the Rhine; on the other bank he is an alien invader. *Civis* does not here mean "Roman citizen."

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luna videt, iamque ad populos ac rura feroci
 tenta Getae pertendit iter, qua pulsus ab aestu
 Oceanus refluum spargit per culta Garunnam;
 in flumen currente mari transcendit amarus 395
 blanda fluenta latex, fluviique impacta per alveum
 salsa peregrinum sibi navigat unda profundum.
 hic iam disposito laxantes frena duello
 Vesorum proceres raptim suspendit ab ira
 rumor, succinctum referens diplomate Avitum 400
 iam Geticas intrare domos positaque parumper
 mole magisterii legati iura subisse.

"Obstupere duces pariter Scythicusque senatus
 et timuere, suam pacem ne forte negaret.
 sic rutilus Phaetonta levem cum carperet axis 405
 iam pallente die flagrantique excita mundo
 pax elementorum fureret vel sicca propinquus
 saeviret per stagna vapor limusque sitiret
 pulvereo ponti fundo, tunc unica Phoebi
 insuetum clemens exstinxit flamma calorem. 410

"Hic aliquis tum forte Getes, dum falce recocta
 ictibus informat saxoque cacuminat ensem,
 iam promptus caluisse tubis, iam iamque frequenti
 caede sepulturus terram non hoste sepulto,
 claruit ut primum nomen venientis Aviti, 415
 exclamat: 'periit bellum, date rursus aratra.

400. succinctum *ego*: succincto.

¹ Sidonius likes to dwell on the tidal bores of the Garonne: cf. 22. 18 sq.; *ib.* 105 sqq.; *Epist.* VIII. 12. 5.

² *Scyth.*, i.e. Gothic (5. 219 n.).

³ The lightness of Phaethon helped to throw the chariot-horses into confusion: Ovid, *Met.* II. 161 sq.

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throughout three monthly courses, when he set himself on the march to the peoples and lands possessed by the bold Goth, where the ocean driven onwards by the tide spreads the retreating Garonne over the fields—for as the sea invades the river the salt water climbs over the sweet flow, and the briny flood, driven along the river-bed, rides on deeps that are strange to it.¹ Here the chiefs of the Visigoths were letting loose the war they had planned, when suddenly their fury was checked by tidings that Avitus, armed with an imperial writ, was already entering the home of the Goths and, having laid aside for a little the pomp of the Master's office, had taken upon himself the authority of an ambassador.

“The Scythian² leaders and senate alike were thunderstruck, and feared lest he should deny their peaceful intent. Even thus, when the flaming chariot was pulling the light³ Phaethon this way and that and the daylight was already dim, when the harmony of the elements was stirred to fury by a blazing world, when the hot breath came close and ranged madly over the drying pools, and the parched mud thirsted on the dusty bottom of the sea, then Phoebus' gentle fire alone quenched that unwonted heat.

“Hereupon, as it chanced, one of the Goths, who had re-forged his pruning-hook and was shaping a sword with blows on the anvil and sharpening it with a stone, a man already prepared to rouse himself to fury at the sound of the trumpet and looking at any moment with manifold slaughter to bury the ground under unburied foes, cried out, as soon as the name of the approaching Avitus was clearly proclaimed: ‘War is no more! Give me the plough

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otia si replico priscae bene nota quietis,
 non semel iste mihi ferrum tulit. o pudor! o di!
 tantum posse fidem! quid foedera lenta minaris,
 in damnum mihi fide meum? compendia pacis 420
 et praestare iubes nos et debere. quis umquam
 crederet? en Getici reges, parere volentes,
 inferius regnasse putant! nec dicere saltim
 desidiae obtentu possum te proelia nolle:
 pacem fortis amas. iam partes sternit Avitus; 425
 insuper et Geticas praemissus continet iras
 Messianus; adhuc mandasti, et ponimus arma.
 quid restat quod posse velis? quod non sumus hostes
 parva reor; prisco tu si mihi notus in actu es,
 auxiliaris ero: vel sic pugnare licebit.' 430

“ Haec secum rigido Vesus dum corde volutat,
 ventum in conspectum fuerat. rex atque magister
 propter constiterant; hic vultu erectus, at ille
 laetitia erubuit veniamque rubore poposcit.
 post hinc germano regis, hinc rege retento 435
 Palladium implicitis manibus subiere Tolosam.
 haud secus insertis ad pulvinaria palmis
 Romulus et Tatius foedus iecere, parentum
 cum ferro et rabidis cognato in Marte maritis
 Hersilia inseruit Pallantis colle Sabinas. 440

¹ Messianus was one of Avitus's trusted officers, who afterwards went with him to Rome and received the title of patrician. He accompanied his master in his flight and was killed at Placentia, A.D. 456.

² The king is Theodoric II, the brother Friedrich (Fridericus). These two had in A.D. 453 murdered their brother Thorismund, who had succeeded Theodoric I. There is an interesting description of Theodoric II in *Epist.* I. 2.

³ *Palladium*. An epithet already applied by Martial and Ausonius to Toulouse as a home of the liberal arts.

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again! If I recall the familiar old days of idle peace, he hath time and again taken the sword from me. O shame! O ye gods above! To think that faithful friendship should have such power! Why dost thou threaten me with tedious treaties, dealing loyally with me to my loss? Thou dost bid us both give to thee and owe to thee the advantages of peace. Who could have believed it? Lo! the Gothic kings are fain to yield obedience, and deem their royal power of less account than that. Nor can I even say that thou dost shun battle to screen a craven spirit; brave art thou, albeit thou lovest peace. Avitus is already ending the strife of parties, and Messianus¹ too, sent on before, is curbing the Gothic wrath. Thou hast as yet but sent thine orders, Avitus, and we are laying down our arms. What further power canst thou desire? I count it a small thing that we are not thine enemies; nay, if I have gained a right knowledge of thee in action aforetime, thine auxiliary will I be; thus at least I shall have leave to fight.'

"While the Visigoth revolved these thoughts in his stern heart they had come into view. The king and the Master took their stand near together, the Master with confident look, while the other blushed with joy and by his blush sued for clemency. Then Avitus kept on one side of him the king,² on the other side the king's brother, and with joined hands they entered Tolosa, city of Pallas.³ Even thus with hand clasped in hand beside the couches of the gods did Romulus and Tatius establish their treaty, when Hersilia on the hill of Pallas thrust the Sabine women between their father's weapons and the husbands who were furiously battling against their kindred.

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" Interea incautam furtivis Vandalus armis
 te capit, infidoque tibi Burgundio ductu
 extorquet trepidas mactandi principis iras.
 heu facinus! in bella iterum quartosque labores
 perfida Elissee crudescunt classica Byrsae. 445
 nutristis quod, fata, malum? conscenderat arces
 Euandri Massyla phalanx montesque Quirini
 Marmarici pressere pedes rursusque revexit
 quae captiva dedit quondam stipendia Barce.
 exsilium patrum, plebis mala, principe caeso 450
 captivum imperium ad Geticas rumor tulit aures.
 luce nova veterum coetus de more Getarum
 contrahitur; stat prisca annis viridisque senectus
 consiliis; squalent vestes ac sordida macro
 lintea pinguescunt tergo, nec tangere possunt 455
 altatae suram pelles, ac poplite nudo
 peronem pauper nodus suspendit equinum.
 " Postquam in consilium seniorum venit honora
 pauperies pacisque simul rex verba poposcit,
 dux ait: ' optassem patriis securus in arvis 460
 emeritam, fateor, semper fovisse quietem,
 ex quo militiae post munia trina superbum

¹ It must not be forgotten that Jupiter is still addressing Rome.

² Accounts of the murder of Petronius Maximus differ a great deal, and we have no means of knowing what Sidonius means by *Burgundio*.

³ 2. 351 n.

⁴ Avitus had gone to Toulouse to negotiate on behalf of Petronius Maximus. These negotiations were apparently not completed when news of the Emperor's death on May 31 arrived. Theodoric formed the plan of making Avitus Emperor and summoned his council. Avitus is represented as appearing before the council in ignorance of the scheme on

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“ Meanwhile, when thou ¹ wert off thy guard, the Vandal with stealthy arms captured thee, and the Burgundian with his traitorous leadership extorted from thee the panic-fury that led to an emperor’s slaughter.² Alas for the deed! Once more for war and for a fourth season of trouble the faithless war-trumpets of Dido’s Byrsa ³ blare forth. O Destiny, what ill hast thou been fostering? A Massylian band had climbed Evander’s height, Marmarican feet trampled Quirinus’ hills, and Barce carried back the tribute that once she paid in her days of captivity. Rumour brought to Gothic ears the exile of the senate, the ills of the common folk, the Emperor’s murder and the captivity of the Empire. At dawn of day a meeting of Gothic elders was assembled in the wonted fashion ⁴; there stand they, old in years but hale in counsel; their dress is unkempt, tarnished and greasy are the linen garments on their lean backs; their coats of skin are drawn up high and cannot reach the calf; their knees are bare and their boots of horse-hide are held up by a common knot.

“ When this company of elders, venerable for all their poverty, entered the council, and the king called for the proposals of peace, the general said: ‘ I confess that I would fain have cherished evermore in tranquillity among my paternal acres the rest that my toil has earned, now that after holding three commands ⁵ I have reached a fourth glory and held the foot and merely making a strong plea for peace between the two nations.

⁵ By *militiae munia* Sidonius certainly means military commands, not posts in the civil service. We learn from *v.* 315 that Avitus had held no civil office before he became *praefectus praetorio*.

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praefecturae apicem quarto iam culmine rexi.
 sed dum me nostri princeps modo Maximus orbis
 ignarum, absentem procerum per mille repulsas 465
 ad lituos post iura vocat voluitque sonoris
 praeconem mutare tubis, promptissimus istud
 arripui officium, vos quo legatus adirem.
 foedera prisca precor, quae nunc meus ille teneret,
 iussissem si forte, senex cui semper Avitum 470
 sectari crevisse fuit. tractare solebam
 res Geticas olim; scis te nescisse frequenter
 quae suasi nisi facta. tamen fortuna priorem
 abripuit genium; periit quodcumque merebar
 cum genitore tuo. Narbonem tabe solutum 475
 ambierat (tu parvus eras); trepidantia cingens
 milia in infames iam iamque coegerat escas;
 iam tristis propriae credebat defore praedae,
 si clausus fortasse perit, cum nostra probavit
 consilia et refugo laxavit moenia bello. 480
 teque ipsum (sunt ecce senes) hoc pectore fultum
 hae flentem tenere manus, si forsitan altrix
 te mihi, cum nolles, lactandum tolleret. ecce
 advenio et prisca repeto modo pignus amoris.
 si tibi nulla fides, nulla est reverentia patris, 485
 i durus pacemque nega.'

“ Prorumpit ab omni

¹ Theodoric I.

² See *Intro.*, p. xvi. The result of the siege of Narbonne is described in 23. 59 sqq. The relief of the town is elsewhere attributed to Litorius. We may assume that the arrival of Litorius (and possibly a severe engagement with his troops) inclined Theodoric to make a temporary peace, negotiated by Avitus. The Goths withdrew, but soon renewed hostilities, which ended with the bloody battle of Toulouse. It is most probable that Avitus joined the army of Litorius on its way to Narbonne and held a high command in it.

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supreme honour of the Prefecture. But as Maximus, late sovereign of our western world, after a thousand refusals from our chieftest men, summoned me, all unsuspecting and far away, to serve amid the clarions of war after controlling the laws, and ordained that I should now hear the blaring trumpets instead of the court-usher's voice, then did I right readily embrace the duty, that I might go as ambassador to you. I crave of you the old treaty, which even now that aged man, my one-time friend,¹ for whom to follow Avitus was always to grow greater, would be maintaining if only I had bidden him. In former days I was wont to guide the doings of the Goths; thou knowest that my counsel was often acted on before thou wert aware of it. But fate hath taken away from me my guardian-spirit of former days, and all my services have faded from sight along with thy father. He had surrounded Narbo,² and it was enfeebled with wasting famine (thou wert then a child): hemming in those panic-stricken thousands he had all but driven them to eat of loathsome things, and already he had begun gloomily to think that some of his due spoil would be lost if haply the besieged perished within, when he gave ear to my advice, and withdrawing his arms relieved the walls from war. And thee thyself (See! there are old men to witness it), these hands of mine have held weeping close to this breast, when perchance thy nurse was taking thee away from me to give thee suck and thou wert loth to go. Behold! I come and seek now a fresh pledge of our old love. If thou hast no loyalty, no reverence for thy father, then go thy harsh way and refuse peace.'

"From all the council arose murmurs and shout-

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murmur concilio fremitusque, et proelia damnans
 seditiosa ciet concordem turba tumultum.
 tum rex effatur: 'dudum, dux inclite, culpo
 poscere te pacem nostram, cum cogere possis 490
 servitium, trahere ac populos in bella sequaces.
 ne, quaeso, invidiam patrio mihi nomine inuras:
 quid mereor, si nulla iubes? suadere sub illo
 quod poteras, modo velle sat est, solumque moratur,
 quod cupias, nescisse Getas. mihi Romula dudum
 per te iura placent, parvumque ediscere iussit 496
 ad tua verba pater docili quo prisca Maronis
 carmine molliret Scythicos mihi pagina mores;
 iam pacem tum velle doces. sed percipe quae sit
 condicio obsequii: forsan rata pacta probabis. 500
 testor, Roma, tuum nobis venerabile nomen
 et socium de Marte genus (vel quidquid ab aevo,
 nil te mundus habet melius, nil ipsa senatu),
 me pacem servare tibi vel velle abolere
 quae noster peccavit avus, quem fuscet id unum, 505
 quod te, Roma, capit; sed di si vota secundant,
 excidii veteris crimen purgare valebit
 ultio praesentis, si tu, dux inclite, solum

¹ The following lines refer to the episode described in *vv.* 215-226. That passage seems to imply that the visit to Theodorus was the first occasion on which Avitus met Theodoric I. The most probable date for the visit is A.D. 430 or a little later. *Vv.* 233-235 do not necessarily rule out A.D. 430 (see n.). Between that year and 435, when Avitus took part in the war against the Burgundians, the Goths seem to have been comparatively quiet, and Avitus may have remained at the Gothic court for a considerable time, acting as tutor to the young prince. There is no need to assume any further sojourn among the Goths, apart from the official missions described in this poem. As for *vv.* 481-483, they are probably an empty rhetorical flourish.

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ing; the insurgent crowd, condemning war, raised a friendly uproar. Then out spake the king: 'O leader renowned, I have long been blaming thee for begging peace from us when thou hast power to enforce bondage and draw willing peoples to war in thy train. I beseech thee, brand me not with obloquy by bringing up my father's name. What blame can be mine if thou give me no orders? What thou mightest have advised in his day thou needst now but desire; the only hindrance is that the Goths have not learnt what thou wouldst have.¹ Thanks to thee the laws of Rome have long been pleasing to me; when I was a child my father bade me learn lines by heart at thine instruction, that those strains of Virgil's ancient page, taught to thy willing pupil, might soften my Scythian ways; even then thou didst teach me to desire peace. But hear now the terms of my obedience, and perhaps thou wilt be pleased to sanction a compact. I swear, O Rome, by thy name, revered by me, and by our common descent from Mars² (for among all things that have been since the beginning of time the world hath naught greater than thee and thou hast naught greater than the senate): I desire to keep the peace with thee and to wipe out the transgressions of my grandsire,³ whose one blot is that he captured thee; but if the gods bless my prayer, the guilt of that ancient destruction can be atoned for by avenging that of to-day⁴—if only thou, renowned leader,

¹ Jord. *Get.* 5 states that Mars is said to have dwelt for a long time among the Goths. With this tradition he associates Verg. *Aen.* III. 35, where Mars is said to be a tutelary deity of the *Getica arva*.

² Alaric, who captured Rome, A.D. 410.

³ *i.e.* the capture by Geiseric.

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Augusti subeas nomen. quid lumina flectis?
 invitum plus esse decet. non cogimus istud, 510
 sed contestamur: Romae sum te duce amicus,
 principe te miles. regnum non praeripis ulli,
 nec quisquam Latias Augustus possidet arces;
 qua vacat, aula tua est. testor, non sufficit istud,
 ne noceam; atque tuo hoc utinam diademate fiat, 515
 ut prosim! suadere meum est; nam Gallia si te
 compulerit, quae iure potest, tibi pareat orbis,
 ne pereat.' dixit pariterque in verba petita
 dat sanctam cum fratre fidem. discedis, Avite,
 maestus, qui Gallos scires non posse latere 520
 quod possint servire Getae te principe. namque
 civibus ut patuit trepidis te foedera ferre,
 occurrunt alacres ignaroque ante tribunal
 sternunt; utque satis sibimet numerosa coisse
 nobilitas visa est, quam saxa nivalia Cotti 525
 despectant, variis nec non quam partibus ambit
 Tyrrheni Rhenique liquor, vel longa Pyrenei
 quam iuga ab Hispano seclusam iure cohercent,
 aggreditur nimio curarum pondere tristem
 gaudens turba virum. procerum tum maximus
 unus, 530
 dignus qui patriae personam sumeret, inquit:
 'quam nos per varios dudum fortuna labores

521. quod *Mohr*: quid.

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shouldst take upon thee the name of Augustus. Why dost thou avert thine eyes? Thine unwillingness becomes thee all the more. We do not force this on thee, but we adjure thee: with thee as leader I am a friend of Rome, with thee as Emperor I am her soldier. Thou art not stealing the sovereignty from any man; no Augustus holds the Latian hills, a palace without a master is thine. I protest, it is not enough that I do thee no harm; I would that thine imperial diadem might bring me the means to do thee service. My part is but to urge thee; but if Gaul should compel thee, as she has the right to do, the world would cherish thy sway, lest it perish.' He spake, and straightway with his brother gave his solemn pledge in the form of words desired. But thou, Avitus, didst depart in sadness, knowing it could not be hidden from the Gauls that the Goths could be at their service if thou wert Emperor. Yea, when it was revealed to the anxious citizens that thou wert carrying back with thee a treaty, they eagerly rushed to meet thee, and without thy knowing it they spread a tribunal for thee beforehand, and when the crowds of nobles deemed they were assembled in sufficient multitude—those on whom the snowy rocks of the Cottian Alps look down, those around whom in their sundry regions wind the waters of the Tuscan sea or the Rhine, and those whom the long ridges of the Pyrenees shut off from Spanish rule—then did that throng approach with joy that man oppressed by a crushing load of care. Thereupon the oldest of all those lords, one right worthy to be his country's spokesman, thus began: 'Of the cruel fortune that hath long harassed us with divers hardships under a boy-

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principe sub puero laceris terat aspera rebus,
 fors longum, dux magne, queri, cum quippe dolentum
 maxima pars fueris, patriae dum vulnera lugens 535
 sollicitudinibus vehementibus exagitaris.

has nobis inter clades ac funera mundi
 mors vixisse fuit. sed dum per verba parentum
 ignavas colimus leges sanctumque putamus
 rem veterem per damna sequi, portavimus um-
 bram 540

imperii, generis contenti ferre vetusti
 et vitia ac solitam vestiri murice gentem
 more magis quam iure pati. promptissima nuper
 fulsit condicio proprias qua Gallia vires
 exsereret, trepidam dum Maximus occupat ur-
 bem; 545

orbem sat potuit, si te sibi tota magistro
 regna reformasset. quis nostrum Belgica rura,
 litus Aremorici, Geticas quis moverit iras,
 non latet: his tantis tibi cessimus, inclite, bellis.
 nunc iam summa vocant; dubio sub tempore reg-
 num 550

non regit ignavus. postponitur ambitus omnis
 ultima cum claros quaerunt: post damna Ticini
 ac Trebiae trepidans raptim respública venit
 ad Fabium; Cannas celebres Varrone fugato
 Scipiadamque etiam turgentem funere Poenum 555
 Livius electus fregit. captivus, ut aiunt,
 orbis in urbe iacet; princeps perit, hic caput omne
 nunc habet imperium. petimus, conscende tribunal,

546. orbem sat potuit *Leo*: orbem ego sat potui *MC*, orbem
 immo potuit *TF*.

¹ Referring to Valentinian III.

² This refers to Avitus's organisation of resistance to Attila; see *vv.* 316-356.

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emperor,¹ tearing our prosperity to shreds, it would belike be tedious to make plaint, O mighty leader, since verily thou wert the chiefest figure among the mourners, lamenting ever thy country's wounds and tortured by uncontrollable anxieties. Amid those calamities, that universal destruction, to live was death. But as we, taught by our fathers' words, paid homage to idle laws and deemed it a hallowed duty to cling to the old order even through disasters, we endured that shadow of Empire, content to bear even the vices of an ancient stock and to tolerate, more from custom than by reason of just claim, a house that had been wont to be invested with the purple. Of late a golden opportunity shone forth, whereby Gaul might make her own strength felt, while Maximus was possessing himself of the panic-stricken capital; and she might well have possessed herself of the world if with thee as Master she had restored to herself all her rightful lands. 'Tis no secret who of us it was that stirred up the Belgian land, the Aremoric shore and the Gothic fury.² In this dread warfare we yielded pride of place to thee, renowned one. Now the supreme office calls for thee; in time of peril a realm cannot be ruled by a poltroon. All ambitious rivalry gives place when extremity calls for men of renown. After the losses of Ticinum and Trebia the trembling republic came in haste to Fabius. By the election of Livius the disaster of Cannae, famous for Varro's rout, was undone; undone too was the Carthaginian, still exulting over the deaths of the Scipios. The world, they say, lies captive in the captive city; the Emperor has perished, and now the Empire has its head here. Ascend the tribunal, we beseech thee, and raise up

THE POEMS OF SIDONIUS

erige collapsos; non hoc modo tempora poscunt,
 ut Romam plus alter amet. nec forte reare 560
 te regno non esse parem: cum Brennica signa
 Tarpeium premerent, scis, tum respublica nostra
 tota Camillus erat, patriae qui debitus ultor
 textit fumantes hostili strage favillas.
 non tibi centurias aurum populare paravit, 565
 nec modo venales numerosoque asse redemptae
 concurrunt ad puncta tribus; suffragia mundi
 nullus emit. pauper legeris; quod sufficit unum,
 es meritis dives. patriae cur vota moraris,
 quae iubet ut iubeas? haec est sententia cunctis: 570
 si dominus fis, liber ero.'

“Fragor atria complet

Vierni, quo forte loco pia turba senatus
 detulerat vim, vota, preces. locus, hora diesque
 dicitur imperio felix, ac protinus illic
 nobilium excubias gaudens sollertia mandat. 575

“Tertia lux refugis Hyperiona fuderat astris:
 concurrunt proceres ac milite circumfuso
 aggere composito statuunt ac torque coronant
 castrensi maestum donantque insignia regni;
 nam prius induerat solas de principe curas. 580
 haud alio quondam vultu Tiryntius heros

572. uierni *M*, Ugerni *Sirmond.*: t(h)ierni.

580. nam *Mohr*: iam.

¹ Viernum, or Ugernum, modern Beaucaire, near Arles. The meeting here referred to was a hastily summoned assembly of Gallic notabilities, not the representative assembly of Gaul (on which see *Introd.* p. xii, *Bury I.* pp. 207 sq.), which met at Arles.

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THE POEMS OF SIDONIUS

pondera suscepit caeli simul atque novercae
cum Libyca se rupe Gigas subduceret et cum
tutior Herculeo sedisset machina dorso.

“Hunc tibi, Roma, dedi, patulis dum Gallia
campis 585

intonat Augustum plausu faustumque fragorem
portat in exsanguem Boreas iam fortior Austrum.

hic tibi restituet Libyen per vincula quarta,
et cuius solum amissas post saecula multa
Pannonias revocavit iter, iam credere promptum
est 590

quid faciat bellis. o quas tibi saepe iugabit
inflictis gentes aquilis, qui maxima regni
omina privatus fugit, cum forte vianti
excuteret praepes plebeium motus amictum!
laetior at tanto modo principe, prisca deorum 595
Roma parens, attolle genas ac turpe veternum
depone: en princeps faciet iuvenescere maior,
quam pueri fecere senem.”

Finem pater ore
vix dederat: plausere dei fremitusque cucurrit

¹ Juno. Her jealous hatred dogged Hercules from his birth, and was the prime cause of his “labours.” It was while engaged on one of these (the quest of the golden apples) that he temporarily took the burden of the heavens from the shoulders of Atlas (the “giant” of this passage).

² *i.e.* the Vandals, now pale with fright.

³ A very mysterious allusion. Avitus was proclaimed Emperor in July and reached Rome in September, A.D. 455. There is no reason to believe that he took a long time over his journey; the statement sometimes made that he left Gaul in July has neither common sense nor ancient authority to support it. It is scarcely credible that he turned aside at this time to make a demonstration against the “barbarians” in Pannonia. He may have sent a force under one of his generals; it was

VII. PANEGYRIC ON AVITUS

of old take upon him the burden alike of the sky and of his stepmother¹ when the giant withdrew himself from the Libyan mount and the firmament had sunk with greater safety upon the back of Hercules.

“ This man I have given thee, Rome, while Gaul throughout her wide plains thunders with plaudits for Augustus, and the north, now stronger, carries the auspicious clamour to the pale-cheeked south.² He shall restore Libya to thee a fourth time in chains—and when a man has recovered the lost Pannonias after so many generations by a mere march,³ 'tis easy to feel sure even now of what he can do by waging war. How he shall, time and again, bring nations under thy yoke, dashing his eagles against them!—that man who as a subject shrank from the glorious omens of sovereignty, when it chanced that as he journeyed a startled bird struck from his shoulders the common cloak he wore. But now be of good cheer with such a man for Emperor, O Rome, ancient mother of gods; lift up thine eyes and cast off thine unseemly gloom. Lo! a prince of riper years shall bring back youth to thee, whom child-princes have made old.”

The great Father had scarce ended his utterance when the gods clapped their hands and a shout of

quite in order to give the Emperor credit for a military success won under his auspices. If Avitus did not lead the expedition it may have taken place even after his arrival in Rome. It is, however, probable that *iter* means the journey of Avitus from Gaul to Rome, and that in the course of it there came some good news or friendly overtures from Pannonia, which Sidonius attributes to the prestige of the new Emperor and the fear produced by his journey southward. The contrast of *iter* with *bellis* seems to imply that there was no fighting on this occasion.

THE POEMS OF SIDONIUS

concilio. felix tempus nevere sorores
 imperiis, Auguste, tuis et consulis anno
 fulva volubilibus duxerunt saecula pensis.

600

VIII

AD PRISCVM VALERIANVM VIRVM PRAEFECTORIVM

Prisce, decus semper nostrum, cui principe Avito
 cognatum sociat purpura celsa genus,
 ad tua cum nostrae currant examina nugae,
 dico: "state, vagae; quo properatis? amat.
 dstrictus semper censor, qui diligit, exstat; 5
 dura fronte legit mollis amicitia.
 nil totum prodest adiectum laudibus illud
 Vlpia quod rutilat porticus aere meo
 vel quod adhuc populo simul et plaudente senatu
 ad nostrum reboat concava Roma sophos." 10
 respondent illae: "properabimus, ibimus, et nos
 non retines: tanto iudice culpa placet.
 cognitor hoc nullus melior; bene carmina pensat
 contemptu tardo, iudicio celeri."
 et quia non potui temeraria sistere verba, 15
 hoc rogo, ne dubites lecta dicare rogo.

¹ Almost the only information which we have about Priscus Valerianus is derived from this poem and from *Epist.* V. 10. The superscription of the poem shows that Valerianus had risen to be Praetorian Prefect of Gaul, but does not, as some authorities suppose, state that he held that office at the time when the verses were written.

² For the statue of Sidonius in Trajan's Forum see *Introd.*, p. xxxvii.

VIII. TO PRISCUS VALERIANUS

applause rang through the council. The fateful Sisters spun out a happy time for thy rule, Augustus, and for thy consular year they drew out with their whirling spindles a golden age.

VIII

TO PRISCUS VALERIANUS, OF PREFECTORIAN RANK¹

Priscus, my unceasing pride, whose race is by right of kinship linked with the majestic purple, now that Avitus is Emperor: as my trifling effusions are hurrying off to encounter your judgment, I say, "Halt, flighty creatures! Whither are you hastening? He loves me, and he who loves ever shows himself an unsparing judge; gentle friendship reads with harsh brow. It boots me not that there is added to the tale of my merits all the glory of my form in bronze² gleaming red in the Ulpian portico and the huzzas for me that still re-echo from the recesses of Rome's hills,³ while senate and people alike sound my praises." Then they reply: "We *will* hasten, we *will* go, and you shall not hold us back. With such a man to judge us even censure is sweet. There is no better critic than he; skilfully does he weigh poems, and though quick of judgment he is slow to scorn." And so, as I could not keep my reckless verses from going, hesitate not, when you have read them, to let the fire prey on them, I pray you.

¹ *Concava Roma* is a bold expression, in which *concava* is even more difficult to translate than it is in Verg. *Georg.* IV. 49 (also referring to echoes), *concava pulsu saxa sonant*. The circle of Rome's hills suggests the idea of a building with concave walls, from which echoes are flung back.