

## INTRODUCTION

The poet Pentadius is transmitted by four manuscripts (**ABVW**), the most important of which is **A** (= *codex Parisinus Latinus 10318* or *Salmasianus*), since it is the *codex plenior* and the oldest manuscript of the so called Salmasius's sylloge (from the name of the seventeenth-century owner of the manuscript), containing the poetic anthology gathered together at the end of the Vandal Kingdom in North Africa.

In this manuscript (and in some of the others) six poems are assigned to Pentadius, that are the only poems ascribable to this author with reasonable certainty. They are, in order, an elegy about the variability of destiny, illustrated through various mythological instances, with the title *De Fortuna* (*AL* 234  $R^2 = 226$  ShB); another elegy about the arrival of the spring season, entitled *De adventu veris* (*AL* 235  $R^2 = 227$  ShB), depicting a naturalistic setting; two epigrams on the same theme of Narcissus (*AL* 265-266  $R^2 = 259-260$  ShB); an epigram about a woman named Chrysocome (*AL* 267  $R^2 = 261$  ShB) and a final epigram concerning misogynous advice (*AL* 268  $R^2 = 262$  ShB).

The first three poems have a particular metric system, called the epanaleptic couplet, where the first *hemiepes* of the hexameter is repeated in an identical manner in the second *hemiepes* of the following pentameter. This metric system occurs in the same Salmasius's sylloge for the forty-two couplets of a similar booklet known as *Anonymi versus serpentini*; indeed another name of these particular verses (but truly inaccurate under the metric profile) is *versus serpentini*.

In the most recent edition of Pentadius's poems, by Guaglianone 1984, we can find fourteen more poems that were attributed to Pentadius during the history of the studies on this subject; the main part of these attributions goes back to the XVI-XVIII

century editions of minor Latin poets' *carmina*. For many of them we now know different authorships and for others it is more cautious still to speak of anonymity.

Exactly the poem *Tumulus Acidis* was assigned to Pentadius, starting from Burman 1759-1773, but it was anonymous in Scaliger 1572, Fabricius 1587, Pithou 1590 and Baehrens 1882. You can read the poem *Tumulus Hectoris* as a short elegy by Pentadius in Scaliger, Burman jr., Wernsdorf 1824, Raynaud 1831 and Meyer 1835, but not in Fabricius and Pithou.

The poem *Tumulus Achillis* is quoted by Scaliger as *Eiusdem* (sc. *Pentadii*), by Meyer as *Pentadii* and by Delrius 1576, who gave it *ad Senecae Troad.* 171, under the name of Pentadius, but Baehrens published it with the title *Eusthenii De Achille*.

Concerning another epigram on Narcissus, which many editors attribute to Pentadius, Wernsdorf and Barhrens raised serious doubts of attribution, while the same Wernsdorf assigned a following epigram on Narcissus to Pentadius.

Burman jr. again is responsible for the attribution to Pentadius of the *Epitaphium super Virgilium (sic)*.

Some poems, once attributed to Pentadius, are instead certainly parts of the so-called *Anthologia Vossiana* (from the name of its main manuscript, the *codex Leidensis Vossianus Lat. Q. 86*), where ps. Seneca's and Petronius's epigrams were collected (see Zurli 2001). These poems are the epigrams *In fratres Cascas* (= *AV* 47), *De vita humiliori* (= *AV* 11), *De vitae privatae commodis* (= *AV* 11a), *De vita beata* (= *AV* 37) and the long elegy *De spe* (= *AV* 18), which surely belong to the ps. Seneca's epigrammatic production. On the other hand, the poems entitled *De vita tranquilla* (= *AV* 62) and the two epigrams about the same subject *De navigatione* (= *AV* 65 and 69) belong to Petronius's short poems.

Under these circumstances, I decided to ignore the attributions by the philologists of the Humanistic and Modern Age and to trust the attributions of the oldest manuscript tradition, which agree about the six poems already mentioned above.

After these necessary clarifications, I shall briefly explain the chief purposes of my essay. Here I shall give a reconstruction, as reliable as

possible, of the identity of the poet Pentadius based on the surviving evidence, and consequently I shall propose his probably chronology. Above all, however, I shall show the extent to which he was indebted to classical literature and especially to Ovid. While I shall assess Pentadius's debt to his model, not only shall I provide an overall exegesis of his poetry with regard to his main themes (namely music – that is rhythm and metric –, myth and love), but I shall also propose a great number of corrections or restorations for the text of his poems. The literary exegesis and textual criticism of Pentadius's poems, in this essay, shall thus go hand in hand.