

# The poet, the saint and the imitation of Christ in Venantius Fortunatus' *carmen* 5. 6<sup>\*</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

In the paper, I am revisiting the complicated and many-layered interpretation of Ven. Fort. *Carm.* 5. 6, letter and figure poem. I am adding another layer by including the role of St. Symphorian, who is implicitly present in the poem through the addressee Syagrius, the bishop of Autun, Symphorian's hometown. The presence of the saint plays together with the story of father and son that is told in the letter; the parallelism of the story in the letter and the saint's legend could have laid additional pressure on Bishop Syagrius to give into Fortunatus's plea.

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### KEYWORDS

Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop Syagrius of Autun, Augustudunum, St. Symphorian, Symphorianus, Carmina, Imitatio Christi, Merovingian Gaul, figure poem, carmen quadratum, carmen figuratum

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Venantius Fortunatus' (530–600)<sup>1</sup> *carm.* 5. 6 is a pair of a figure poem, *carm.* 5. 6a, and its introductory letter, *carm.* 5. 6.<sup>2</sup> Letter and poem are, linguistically and in their content, complex texts, and different aspects of them have, maybe therefore, been commented on relatively frequently.<sup>3</sup> *Carm.* 5. 6 is, beyond the challenge arising from its complicated language, an interesting text because it is the only one remaining that describes the making of a figure poem. It is further an important witness for the concept of *imitatio Christi* and its application in the everyday in the Catholic minds of sixth century Gaul. In this paper, I would like to add another aspect to the interpretation of the religious meaning of this letter and poem. The *imitatio Christi*, that is suggested by the text to its addressee, Bishop Syagrius, is also applied to Saint Symphorianus and the poet Fortunatus. Their *imitationes Christi* function as mediating examples for the bishop.

Before this argument can be stated, the text and the story it relates have to be briefly explained.

## CARM. 5. 6 AND 5. 6A: SUMMARY AND RESEARCH

The letter (*carm.* 5. 6) and the poem are both addressed to Bishop Syagrius of Augustodunum, modern Autun. So, all that follows is, what the I of the letter and the poem wrote to the bishop. In the introductory letter the epistolary I states that at a time when the poet Fortunatus, the author of the letter, was suffering from writer's block, a desperate man visited him and asked him for help to free his son from captivity. It turns out that Bishop Syagrius, the addressee, for reasons that are not explained, is the one who can free the son. The poet, happy to have found something to write about, decides to offer a figure poem, something that is both poem and picture, to the bishop in exchange for his service to the father and son. As inspiration and authority for this creative choice he cites a verse from Horace's *ars poetica*.<sup>4</sup> The remaining half

<sup>1</sup>For an introduction to the poet and his time, see EHLEN, O.: *Venantius-Interpretationen: rhetorische und generische Transgressionen beim «neuen Orpheus»* [Altertumswissenschaftliches Kolloquium 22]. Stuttgart 2011, 12–36. For translations and notes in English, French, German and Italian, see ROBERTS, M. (ed.): *Poems* [Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 46]. Cambridge (Mass.) 2017; REYDELLET, M. (ed.): *Poèmes 2: Livres V–VIII* [Collection des Universités de France, Série Latine 346]. Paris 1998; FELS, W. (ed.): *Gelegentlich Gedichte: Das lyrische Werk. Die Vita des hl. Martin* [Bibliothek der Mittellateinischen Literatur 2]. Stuttgart 2006; DI BRAZZANO, ST. (ed.): *Venanzio Fortunato, Opere 1 (Carmi. Spiegazione della preghiera del Signore. Spiegazione del Simbolo. Appendice ai Carmi)*. [Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiae Aquileiensis VIII/1]. Roma 2001.

<sup>2</sup>For a discussion of the entire letter and poem, see EHLEN (n. 1) 95–103, 423–431.

<sup>3</sup>BRENNAN, B.: Weaving with Words: Venantius Fortunatus's Figurative Acrostics on the Holy Cross. *Traditio* 74 (2019) 27–53; CHAPPUIS SANDOZ, L.: La grille et la liberté: le carmen cancellatum de Venance Fortunat à l'évêque d'Autun (*car.* V,6). In *Belles Lettres. Les figures de l'écrit au Moyen Âge/Figurationen des Schreibens im Mittelalter*. Wiesbaden 2019, 33–47; ERNST, U. – EHLEN, O. – GRAMATZKI, S.: *Visuelle Poesie: historische Dokumentation theoretischer Zeugnisse I: Von der Antike bis zum Barock*. Berlin–Boston 2012, 87–110; EHLEN (n. 1) 95–103, 423–431; WALZ, D.: Text im Text: Das Figurengedicht V, 6 des Venantius Fortunatus. In *Text und Text in lateinischer und volkssprachiger Überlieferung des Mittelalters: Freiburger Kolloquium 2004*. Ed. by E. C. LUTZ ET AL. [Wolfram-Studien 19]. Berlin 2006, 59–93; PIETRI, L.: « Ut pictura poesis »: à propos de quelques poèmes de Venance Fortunat. *Pallas* 56 (2001) 175–186; GRAVER, M.: *Quaelibet Audendi: Fortunatus and the Acrostic*. *TAPhA* 123 (1993) 219–45.

<sup>4</sup>For a discussion, see GRAVER (n. 3) 220–221.



of the letter is spent mainly on a minute description of the different mechanics of the complicated figure poem and the poets struggle with the unwieldy form of the text.

The figure poem, *carm.* 5. 6a is broadly structured in two halves. The first half deals with the creation of Eve, Adam and Eve's time in Paradise and the Fall. At the exact middle position one verse describes the state of humans as mortals as the consequence of the Fall. The second half, then, sees Christ undo original sin by his sacrifice at the cross. The last four verses address Bishop Syagrius and encourage him to follow in Christ's footsteps by freeing the captive son for his own spiritual advancement. Fittingly to the poem's subject, the poem is written in 33 verses of 33 letters each, the number of Christ's years on earth. It is thus a *carmen quadratum* in the style of Optatianus Porphyrius.<sup>5</sup> Inscribed in this square of letters is a diagonal cross and a vertical mesostic, that forms a cross with the horizontal middle verse mentioned above. The acrostic and the telestic form verses as well.<sup>6</sup> These five intexts address the bishop again and describe Christ's sacrifice and the good deed the bishop could perform.

As others before me have shown, the interesting quality of *carm.* 5. 6, the letter and the poem, is the interconnection of different layers of meaning in the text. The most obvious one, that is also made explicit in the letter,<sup>7</sup> is the parallelism between the deed of Christ, when he frees mankind from the original sin, and the expected deed of Bishop Syagrius, when he will free the young captive.<sup>8</sup> Other such interconnections have been found in the text: the story of Christ's sacrifice for mankind, told by the poem, and the fitting cross-shape of the intexts,<sup>9</sup> an interpretation of the two cross-shapes as a snare in relation to the theme of captivity that is expressed in the poem with a bird-hunt,<sup>10</sup> the three vertical intexts (acrostic, mesostic and telestic) as symbols for Fortunatus, Syagrius and Christ,<sup>11</sup> and recently the interpretation of the frequently recurring metaphor of weaving as a hint to the possible materiality of figure poems as actual textiles.<sup>12</sup> All of these connections point to the general character of 'the diptych' of letter and poem<sup>13</sup> as a complicated whole, within which seemingly circumstantial details in many different places in (and around) the text work together to create one unified meaning. This has been expressed implicitly by Dorothea Walz in her analysis of *carm.* 5. 6a and explicitly by

<sup>5</sup>For an introduction to Optatianus, see SQUIRE, M.: Optatian and his lettered art: A kaleidoscopic lens on late antiquity. In *Morphogrammata, the lettered art of Optatian: figuring cultural transformations in the Age of Constantine* [Morphomata 33]. Ed. by M. SQUIRE ET AL. Paderborn 2017, 55–120. For a discussion of the letter in the light of the scholia to Optatianus, see PIPITONE, G.: Tra Optaziano Porfirio e Venanzio Fortunato: nota intorno alla lettera a Siagrio. *Revue des Études Tardo-antiques* 1 (2011) 119–127.

<sup>6</sup>See [Illustration 1](#).

<sup>7</sup>*Carm.* 5. 6. 8 *Dehinc cum pro captivo velim versu suggerere, adtendens quae fuerint tempora Redemptoris, quoto nos suae aetatis anno Christus absolverit, totidemque versiculis texerem carmen quot litteris.* – Then, as I want to arrange something in verse in exchange for a captive, paying attention to how old the redeemer was and in which year of his life Christ set us free, I want to weave a song of this same number, both of verses and of letters.

<sup>8</sup>EHLEN (n. 1) 428.

<sup>9</sup>PIETRI (n. 3) 176–7.

<sup>10</sup>*Carm.* 5. 6. 11; GRAVER (n. 3) 225.

<sup>11</sup>WALZ (n. 3) 70–72.

<sup>12</sup>BRENNAN (n. 3) 30–40, 46–53.

<sup>13</sup>EHLEN (n. 1) 103.





**Illustration 1.** St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 196, p. 147 – Educational manuscript: poems of Venantius Fortunatus; Aenigmata (riddles) of a poet named Symphosius or Symposius (Cod. Sang. 196, St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, <https://www.e-codices.ch/en/list/one/csg/0196>)

Oliver Ehlen in his conclusion on letter and poem.<sup>14</sup> I will therefore scan some of the as of now uncharted territory in *carm.* 5. 6, letter and poem, for further evidence of the inner cohesion of this artistic text.

The natural starting point for this endeavour must be places in the text that up to now defy understanding and appear to be either accidental or conventional. One such place is the introduction of St. Symphorian, the patron saint of Syagrius's see in Autun.

<sup>14</sup>WALZ (n. 3) 67–75, ERNST-EHLEN-GRAMATZKI (n. 3) 103 “umfassende[r] hermeneutische[r] Ansatz”.



## THE DEAL BETWEEN THREE PARTIES

After the poet has decided to help the father, he meditates on the right kind of offer to the bishop. The following thoughts arise:

6. [...] *De conpendio cogitans, ne vilitate pretii depretiaretur tibi merces captivi, illud certe metuens; si caperetur in nummo, res periret in talento; praesertim cum desiderem, thesauros ex aequo te tuo frui cum martyre.*

As I thought about profit, I surely feared this that the trade value of the captive to you might be diminished by a low price-offer. If it was paid in coins, the value of the deal in talents would go down. Especially as I desired that you would enjoy the treasure equally together with your martyr.

Many words in this passage are ambivalent (*conpendio; merces captivi, res*) and make its translation and interpretation difficult.<sup>15</sup> The focus lies on *conpendium*, ‘the (monetary?) profit’. An alternative is given: [*conpendium*] *in nummo* or [*conpendium*] *in talento*. *talenta* are used here in the sense of ‘heavenly talents’ of the biblical parable.<sup>16</sup> The alternative is immediately resolved in favour of the heavenly talents by the appearance of a third party to the deal: the bishop’s martyr saint (*martyre*). The martyr saint of Autun, who is never named in letter and poem, is St. Symphorian. St. Symphorian had been martyred in the city as a young man, possibly during the reign of Aurelian (270–275),<sup>17</sup> because he had refused to give sacrifice to the Goddess Cybele. The passage leaves the readers with two questions: 1. What is St. Symphorian’s enjoyment in Fortunatus’s gift to the bishop? 2. How is Fortunatus’s choice to write a figure poem providing heavenly talents to either saint or bishop?

The answer to the first question can be approximated more easily. The legend of St. Symphorian, which would have been known to Syagrius and other readers of the time,<sup>18</sup> can be connected with the story of *carm.* 5. 6: Symphorian’s most prominent feature is his youth<sup>19</sup> and the relationship to his parents plays a major role in his legend, as he is introduced as his father’s son and lead towards his martyrdom by his mother calling him ‘my son’ (*nate; fili*) many times.<sup>20</sup> This focus on the parent-child relationship in the legend of St. Symphorianus mirrors the description of the father’s caring love for his son in *carm.* 5. 6,<sup>21</sup> and makes Symphorianus the most fitting saint to appeal to in the case of a father and son in distress. Psychologically, the

<sup>15</sup>Compare *res periret in talento*: WALZ (n. 3) 63, n. 13 “die Sache am Geld scheitern könnte”; ROBERTS (n. 1) 315 “wealth in heavenly talents would be forfeited”.

<sup>16</sup>Mt 25. 14–30; Fortunatus uses the same alternative in *carm.* 10. 17. 13 *dans terrae nummum, missurus ad astra talenta* – “giving coins to the land, you send talents to the stars”; see ROBERTS (n. 1) 861.

<sup>17</sup>PH. BEAGON and D. LAMBERT in *CSLA* (2018) E06496, s.v. Symphorianus, Martyr of Autun.

<sup>18</sup>*Pass. Symphoriani* (BHL 7967); the legend most likely goes back to the founder of the church in Autun in the fifth century, BEAGON–LAMBERT (n. 17), HEINZELMANN, M.: *L’hagiographie mérovingienne. Panorama des documents potentiels*. In GOULLET, M. – HEINZELMANN, M. – VEYRARD-COSME C. (eds): *L’hagiographie mérovingienne à travers ses réécritures* [Beihefte der Francia 71]. Ostfildern 2010, 27–82, C. PIETRI in *Topographie chrétienne des cités de la Gaule des origines au milieu du VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle IV* (1986) 37–45, s.v. Autun.

<sup>19</sup>*Pass. Symphoriani* (BHL 7967) 1: *primaevae indolis florentes annos*.

<sup>20</sup>*Pass. Symphoriani* (BHL 7967) 1; 11.

<sup>21</sup>*Carm.* 5. 6. 1–4.



reader might think, Symphorianus, the martyred son, would be rather willing to intervene on behalf of another son.

More generally, Symphorianus is a saint and therefore he is to be pleased rather with heavenly talents than with worldly cash – even if the bishop of his church would prefer the other. Bringing Symphorianus into the bargain would then simply be another manoeuvre of the epistolary I in convincing the bishop to accept his offer.<sup>22</sup> From these attempts to answer the first question, I will now proceed to the second.

## THE SUFFERING OF THE POET

Asking for heavenly talents means asking for effort.<sup>23</sup> In the biblical parable those, who multiply their talents through hard work are awarded and those who do not cast out. It therefore appears meaningful that the poet's decision to pay with 'talents' is followed, just after the appeal to Horatian authority (7), with a description of his suffering in his struggle with the constraints of the figure poem, which fills the greater part of the remaining letter (8–13).

Interestingly, the suffering of the poet is introduced into the text almost simultaneously with the most important topic of the text, Christ. Christ's age is given as the number of verses and letters in the figure poem, because of his redemptive deed.<sup>24</sup> Immediately afterwards the suffering of the poet originates from these very numbers (8):

*hac protenus operis difficultate repulsus aut magis difficulter inclusus tam metri necessitate quam litterarum epitome, quid facerem, quo prodirem?*

As I was right from the start pushed back by the difficulty or rather locked in in hardship as much by the necessities of metre as much as by the lack of letters, what should I do? Where should I go?

Here and in the following sentences, the epistolary I tells the story of its poetic work like the physical labour of a Tom Thumb, who is physically stuck and practically endangered in the constraints of the figure poem. The physicality of the 'space' in this poem-labyrinth is striking. The little poet appears as a captive in the poem.<sup>25</sup> The work that has to be done there is the work of weaving, which is also described with astonishing realism beyond the conventional metaphor of 'weaving is poetry' (8):

*non licuit vel solvere vel fila laxare, ne numerum transiliens erratica se tela turbaret.*

It was not allowed to either let go of the strings or to let them run loose, for the erring loom not to get entangled, when it would overtake the [right] number.

This difficulty is directly connected to the 33 verses and letters of the figure poem (*numerum; nova calculatione*). A realistic explanation for this can be found in the relative shortness of 33 letters for a hexameter well below the average.<sup>26</sup> However this may be, the suffering of the poet

<sup>22</sup>For a perspective that sees *carm.* 5. 6 mainly as a means of persuasion, see EHLEN (n. 1) 102.

<sup>23</sup>On 'effort' as a central theme in *carm.* 5. 6 see GRAVER (n. 3) 230–236.

<sup>24</sup>See n. 4.

<sup>25</sup>See GRAVER (n. 3) 232 "language of restraint and bondage".

<sup>26</sup>In the first ten verses of Verg. *Aen.* no verse is as short; the lengths are (from long to short) 41, 38, 37 (x2), 36 (x2), 35 (x2), 34 (x2); the average is 36.3.





by the constraints of the new poem is shown directly as a consequence of the 33. The text therefore leads the readers to draw an analogy between Christ's suffering via his 33 years and the poet's suffering via his 33 letters. Later in the text, the sufferings of the poet by the poem are given different forms, among which the suffering of a little bird in a bird-catching net (11) or the journeying of a sailor on a dangerous trade journey (13), which, of course, also relate to other levels of meaning in the poem.<sup>27</sup> The suffering of the poet through the poem is nonetheless determined by the analogy with Christ's suffering at its first occurrence.

This analogy is strengthened by the stress on the spatial, the corporeal and the realistic in the description of his suffering.<sup>28</sup> In this, next to the mere co-occurrence of suffering in relation to 33, both the poet and the Christ are compared with the tertium comparationis of a spiritual being that is forced to exist in matter. While Christ is a god who willingly undergoes the constraints of physical existence, the poet of the figure poem would usually create with lighter matter – 'ordinary' poems – but willingly undergoes the additional constraints of the figure poem. Interestingly, in both cases the motivation is shown to be similar. Christ endeavours to save mankind out of compassion and love. The poet is brought to begin his efforts out of compassion with the father.<sup>29</sup> When he seems to be unable to bear his suffering any longer and is stuck in the poem like a bird in a net,<sup>30</sup> it is his active love towards the bishop, his patron, that allows him to continue his efforts.<sup>31</sup> The poet's efforts and *talenta*, in the sense of the text, are a veritable *imitatio Christi* as much as is possible in the world of poetry. In this the role of the poet, next to that of an exponent of the world of letters that the bishop is to mediate to the world of religion,<sup>32</sup> is that of an example for the bishop to follow.

At the same time the poet is opening the possibility for the bishop to fill the role of the *imitator Christi* himself – he is almost pushing the role on his patron. As Margaret Graver and Dorothea Walz have shown, the poet brings himself into a position, where he must be saved by the love towards his patron. This love is shown, in the tradition of the love elegy, as another binding force.<sup>33</sup> This play with different relationships of being bound is strongly reminiscent of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, from where our text maybe took its inspiration. There Christ's assault on hell is told as 'taking captivity captive' (*captivam duxit captivitatem*);<sup>34</sup> few lines earlier the letter writer calls himself 'bound in Christ Jesus' (*vinctus Christi Iesu*) and 'bound in the Lord' (*vinctus in Domino*).<sup>35</sup> This reciprocity between the bishop and the poet as far as their *imitationes Christi* are concerned is an interesting discovery that needs to be evaluated in the end.

<sup>27</sup>See nn. 5–10.

<sup>28</sup>See GRAVER (n. 3) 236 "the physicality of this text".

<sup>29</sup>*Carm.* 5. 6. 4 *Igitur cum me moveret lamentabilis concivis quam iactura tam patria [...]* – 'So as I was moved as much by the misfortune of my deplorable fellow citizen as much as by [our common] origin.' This compassion is also made palpable by a flood of words that describe the tears of the father; for a list of Fortunatus's lexicon of tears in the letter, see D'ANGELO, FR.: Le parole del pianto nella poesia di Venanzio Fortunato. *Euphrosyne* 47 (2019) 131–132.

<sup>30</sup>*Carm.* 5. 6. 11.

<sup>31</sup>*Carm.* 5. 6. 12 *amor blandus tyrannus est* – "Love is a flattering tyrant".

<sup>32</sup>WALZ (n. 3) 70.

<sup>33</sup>GRAVER (n. 3) 235, WALZ (n. 3) 70–71.

<sup>34</sup>*Eph.* 4. 8–10.

<sup>35</sup>*Eph.* 3. 1; 4. 1.



As the *talenta* the poet collects are clearer now, the attention of the paper shall return to its first object, St. Symphorian.

## THE ROLE OF THE BISHOP

In the last four verses of the poem Syagrius is explicitly invited to follow Christ and act as a redeemer:

*At vos, aeternae suffulti laude coronae,* 30  
*Gallorum radii vobis quo fulgeat et nox,*  
*rumpite lora iugis et sumitis arma diei:*  
*ipsave libertas vos liberat atque beabit.*

And you, who are supported by the praise of an eternal crown,  
 Rays of the Gauls, so that for you also night shines bright,  
 Break the chains of the yoke and you put on the arms of daylight,  
 And freedom herself liberates you and will bless you.

The perspective of liberation from original sin, also for Syagrius individually through his expected deed of redemption, (*libertas vos liberat atque beabit*) ends the poem. In this last picture Syagrius is shown almost as a heavenly being: Like before he is addressed together with the martyr saint, who is the patron of his see, without an explicit mention of his name. The crown that supports Syagrius' church and see is the crown of the martyr Symphorian. The other attributes of the bishop show him as a bearer of light (*radii; arma diei*) and position the father of the church of Autun close to God and Adam and Eve before the Fall, who are shown as bearers of light in the first half of the poem.<sup>36</sup> Symphorian, therefore, first of all appears to be another attribute of holiness in the bishop's presence. But the martyr is also meaningful in the context of the *imitatio Christi* and the liberation from original sin.

As a martyr Symphorian himself is an example for *imitatio Christi*. His *imitatio* must appear especially meaningful for Syagrius, as it takes places in Autun and is well known to everybody there. While recalling the martyr (30) and *imitator Christi* just before the final request (31–33) for the bishop to follow his Saviour must be understood as just another prompting example for *imitatio Christi*, a further meaning of his mention lies hidden in the legend of the saint.

When Symphorian is brought to court in Autun, he is condemned by a certain Heraclius, a *vir consularis in eadem urbe residens* – 'a man of consular rank, who lived in the same city'.<sup>37</sup> If Symphorian's martyrdom is read as an *imitatio Christi*, Heraclius' role would be the one of Pontius Pilatus. Symphorian is a young man, a son; Heraclius is an older man and the most influential politician of Autun. With the legend of Symphorian in mind, the constellation of the story in *carm.* 5. 6 is given another potential point of reference that is probably intended by the text: Syagrius, who is a member of the old Gallic aristocracy,<sup>38</sup> if he did not free the prisoner,

<sup>36</sup>*Carm.* 5. 6a. 4 *dyploide lucis aperti*; 5 *ore coruscantes*.

<sup>37</sup>*Pass. Symphoriani* [BHL 7967] 3.

<sup>38</sup>STROHEKER, K. F.: *Der senatorische Adel im spätantiken Gallien*. Tübingen 1948, 63; COVILLE, A.: *Recherches sur l'histoire de Lyon du V<sup>e</sup> au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle (450-800)*. Paris 1928, 5–29.





would in the light of St. Symphorian's legend appear, not as a follower of the young saint, but as a follower of the *vir consularis* Heraclius. At the end of the poem, the choice of the bishop on following in Christ's footsteps or not, is a much more dangerous decision than it would be without the presence of the young, local martyr saint. For him it is a decision between an *imitatio Christi* and an *imitatio Pilati*. Interestingly, if Syagrius was Pilatus, the nameless son would run the chance of becoming the martyr.

## CONCLUSION

The two examples, the poet and the martyr saint, that have been reconsidered in relation to *imitatio Christi* in the letter and poem of *carm. 5. 6* show how reconsiderations of single aspects can further the understanding of *carm. 5. 6*. As they are examples of *imitationes Christi* that seem to be less prominent in the text, they invite to rethink *imitatio Christi* and the social availability of the term. Who is supposed to experience *imitatio Christi*? Bishop Syagrius uncontestedly qualifies, so does the martyr saint. But already the supposed suggestion of a literary *imitatio Christi* of the poet might, in the eyes of the addressee, appear disrespectful, even more so the *imitatio Christi* of the son, who would follow in the footsteps of, if not Christ, the martyr saint, because of the rage, or neglect of a bishop.

If *imitatio Christi* appears to be more widely available in the implicit minds of the implicit readers of *carm. 5. 6*, it could be concluded that the text was designed to be read by a much wider audience than the bishop alone, and that Syagrius was the addressee to one but a protagonist in a timeless tale of *imitatio Christi* to many readers. This idea would be supported by the fact that *carm. 5. 6* was most likely made public by the author himself shortly after 576 in an assorted collection of poems.<sup>39</sup> The different possibilities to ascribe roles to figures in the text in every way speaks for the fact that different interpretations of the text were, if not intended, at least possible. Another observation that can be made based on this paper and on all the other ones mentioned above is that *carm. 5. 6* seems to be a text that does not follow a single line of thought or argument, but a whole web that needs to be considered.

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<sup>39</sup>REYDELLET, M. (ed.): *Poèmes I: Livres I–IV*. [Collection des Universités de France, Série Latine 315]. Paris 1994, LXX.

