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Grave Matters: Love, Death, Resurrection, and Reception in the *De laudibus Domini*¹

**Introduction**

This article is part of a larger project on love, death, burial, and resurrection. It is the point of departure for a longer and more elaborate story that will be presented elsewhere in a fuller, different form.² There the discussion will focus not on philology, but on reception and cultural history. But it starts with a poem. And these Strasbourg conference-proceedings are the perfect venue in which to argue philological and literary-historical matters.

**De laudibus**

The *De laudibus domini* is a 148-verse-long hexameter poem that is known (by those who know it) as the first description of a post-Biblical miracle from the ancient world³ or the earliest reasonably securely datable (post-316/17) Christian poem in Latin.⁴ Jacques Fontaine—described it as “ce singulier pot-pourri poétique.”⁵ Brandes split it into the miracle (1 – 35), the *laudes* (36 – 142: Christ the Creator and Christ the Redeemer), and concluding prayer (143 – 148). I would characterize it as a highly personal and regional, slightly schizophrenic, aretology that is above all concerned with Resurrection, both being resurrected and resurrecting. For a long time, it gets dis-

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¹ We don’t, thank goodness, work in a vacuum. Key points in the argument depend on the material realia of funerary culture. I am extremely grateful, first, to Barbara Borg for helping me get started with Roman double burial: *bis dat qui cito dat!* Patrick Pépin, Paul Van Ossel, and Bailey Young shared expertise about the situation under the ground in Gaul. Roger Tomin and Ekkehard Weber gave me epigraphic instruction. Renate Pillinger shared her photos of early Christian material. Victoria Zimmer-Panagl of the CSEL and David Morris of the Classics Collections of the University of Illinois Library generously provided scans of harder-to-find scholarship. Kurt Smolak corrected the German of a (different) oral version of this paper with his characteristic care and exquisite Sprachgefühl. My warm gratitude to all, and to the patronus operis, Michele Cutino, for the chance to take part in his wonderful conference in Strasbourg!

² A preliminary version of the latter was delivered as “Liebe, Tod und Auferstehung im Weltbild der Spätantike,” as part of the Maimonides Lectures, 7th Symposium. “Verkörperung des Geistes: Die Auferstehung des Leibes” OeAW, 28 June 2018. See now also Shanzer (2019).


⁴ For its early *fortuna* in literary histories, see Brandes (1887) 18.

⁵ Fontaine (1981) 101. Earlier see Brandes (1887) 16.

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tracted with the Son and with Creation. But it reins itself in and returns by its end to eschatology and triage at Interim and End Time. In one strange passage, where it is not strictly biblical (vv. 130–143), it describes the Harrowing of Hell. And it contains a rare testimonium for exorcism of the ghost-possessed. In its later sections it can sound quite like a biblical epic. As with the blind men’s elephant—it depends on which bit of it one has got in one’s hand.

**Grave affairs: “When one of us dies, I want to be buried in one grave ... “**

My concern is the charming miracle with which the author began. The English poet Andrew Marvell famously urged his coy mistress to make love to him, for, said he, “The grave’s a fine and private place, but none, I think, do there embrace ... .” But some were depicted embracing there in Antiquity as in the magnificent sarcophaguses of Ramtha Visnai and Thanchvil Tarnai from the Ponte Rotto Necropolis in Vulci now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Etruscan society was prepared to depict man and wife reclining on a dining couch for two, as in the terracotta monument from the Banditaccia Necropolis in the Villa Giulia in Rome. But not every couple was lucky enough to die at the same moment. Leonard Mosley relates the following of Lord Curzon:

“When the service was over, his body was put aboard the train and taken north to his beloved Kedleston. There, in the beautiful little Memorial Chapel which he had built, he was laid beside his beloved first wife, Mary, underneath the marble figure of the adoring Angel. And though the last years of his life had not been exactly filled with mirth, he did, in death, have his one little joke. Some months after his interment, Grace visited his tomb to leave some flowers. The electric light failed and she fumbled around among the shelves on which lay the remains of the Curzon ancestors. Her fingers encountered, on one of them, a slip of paper. When the lights went on again, she read it: ‘Reserved for the Second Lady Curzon,’ it said, in Curzon’s handwriting.”

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6 Bardy (1933) 46 and 50 is quite right about his curious relationship to the Bible. *Ibid.*, 50. for an intriguing comparison to Arnobius.
7 This has to be the import of De Laud. 137–39, where souls of the *biaoathanatoi* acquire other bodies and cry out at Jesus’ name and retreat from them. For the unusualness of the concept, see Shanzer (2017) 280–83.
8 Andrew Marvell, “To his Coy Mistress.” vv. 31–32.
9 Haynes (2000) 287–291 who says (291) that they are elsewhere unparalleled except at Chiusi, fig. 240. These are graves of the Tetnie family. Brelich (1937), 18 mentions the extreme polarities in Etruscan sepulchral imagery.
10 Mosley (1960) 269.
And Roman epitaphic practice helpfully left open the possibility of planning for a Hereafter with a partner of one’s choice. Ancient double burials of men and women have been excavated, such as the 5th C. CE “Lovers of Modena.” So far archaeology (for the moment).

The Miracle in *De laudibus*

The *De laudibus*’ initial miracle involves a similar situation but with a special twist. A loving married pair each hoped to predecease the other, but the woman died first. The bereft widower caused a large tomb to be excavated to accommodate both his wife and eventually himself, for in life they had slept in one bed. And when he died, the woman’s corpse, though bound tight in grave-bandages, was caught stretching out her left hand to her husband with a gesture of living love.

The text of this narrative is not sound: there are clear syntactic (and other) problems. And since in two cases I will be suggesting transposition, I will briefly annotate certain lines, noting either major problems (bold typeface), and observations, topics, or modality (smaller typeface) between square brackets. I am hoping that the desired logical sequence may thereby become clearer.

_De Laudibus_ 7–35

Nam qua stagnanti praelabitur agmine ripas
Tardus Arar, pigrumque diu vix explicat amnem
qua fraterna Remo progignitur Aedua pubes
coniugium memini summa pietate fideque:
lex divina tamen meritum cumulabat amoris
et votum ambobus socium praecedere morte
maerorique pio curam mandare sepulcri.
Sed prior uxorum decreti pagina legit.
Tunc desolatus largo iubet ore cavari,
post mortem fiant quae membris hospita saxa:

11 Sandys (1919) 61–62 on the uses of “V” and “θ.” Also Cagnat (1914) 292–293. The joke (which I have from Roger Tomlin) is one of “Beachcomber’s” who in the “By the Way” column in the Daily Express once advertised an ocean cruise (a competition prize?) that included ‘free burial at sea with partner of one’s choice.’ Pietri (1981) 577 says that _bisomus_ and _biscandens_ (IUR NS 8159 v. J. 393) are the terms for a grave for two people. The former is a hapax in Theodora’s inscription in ICUR I. 317 (Supplement 1703): _Theodora quaee vixit annos XXI m. VII d. XXIII in pace est bisomu._


13 _De laudibus_ 10–14.

14 For this as an authentically Gallic superstition, see Opelt (1978) 163 who cites Plin. _NH_ XXVIII.25: _Alius saliva post aurem digito relata sollicitudinem animi propritian. pollices, cum faveamus, premere etiam proverbio iubemur. In adorando dextram ad osculum referimus totumque corpus circumagimus, quod in laevum fecisse Galliae religiosius credunt. fulgetras popysmis adorare consensus gentium est._

†susciperet veniens, aeternaque foedera iungens; [syntactic disjunction: subject unclear]

ut, quos viventes tenuisset lectulus idem, post praecepta Dei, bustum commune levaret.

Sensit vota sui coniunx praesaga mariti, [could there be a lacuna before this?] (20)
magnaque temporibus tribuit miracula castis:

nam cum defunctis iungantur brachia membris, [bandages]
et repetita manus constringant vincula trunco, [bandages]

ne, quibus humanae complentur munera vitae, [explanation]
accidat informis fluitatio dissociatis. [explanation] (25)

Immensus dictu! Quo tempore vita peracta est, iungendus sociae prospecta sede maritus, [syntactic disjunction: maritus has no predicate: could be removed and not missed.]

postquam morte viri reserata est ianua leti, horrendumque larem iam lux ingrata rexit:

Deprensa est laevam protendens femina palmam, (30)
Invitans socium gestu viventis amoris.

Quis dedit affectum tumulo? Quis vincula solvit?
Unde sepulta videt venturi conjugis umbram?
Tu facis haec, tu Christie Deus, tua signa moventur paulatimque doces sopita resurgere membra (35)

Ihavedeleted the two main problems: verse 17, which I am inclined to obelize and delete, and verse 27, which I suspect is out of place and may belong above, after line 19, with a conjectured lacuna in its environment. This would yield the following second version of the text, where I have relegated some of the problems to the footnotes to make it easier to read. The precise solutions to these textual problems do not, however, in any way affect the argument that follows.

De Laudibus 7–35

Nam qua stagnanti praelabitur agmine ripas
Tardus Arar, pigrumque diu vix explicat amnem qua fraterna Remo progignitur Aedua pubes
coniugium memini summâ pietate fideque.
Lex divina tamen meritum cumulabat amoris et votum ambobus socium praeecedere morte maerorique pio curam mandare sepulcri. (10)
Sed prior uxor deceti pagina legit.
Tunc desolatus largo iubet ore cavari, post mortem fiant quae membris hospita saxa,16 ut, quos viventes tenuisset lectulus idem, post praecepta Dei, bustum commune levaret.
<iungendus sociae prospecta sede maritus>

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16 I have deleted †susciperet veniens, aeternaque foedera iungens for the moment. A possible logical subject would be the dead woman, in which case it would be necessary to emend veniens to venientem. But there still remains the problem of the subordination, for there isn’t an obvious way to add it after levaret in verse 19.
Sensit vota sui coniunx praesagam ariti, (20)
magnaque temporibus tribuit miracula castis:
ne, quibus humanae complitur munera vitae,
accidat informis fluitatio dissipatis—
Immensum dictu—quo tempore vita peracta est,¹⁸
postquam morte viri reserata est ianua leti,
horrendumque larem iam lux ingrata retexit—
deprensa est laevam protendens femina palmam,
invitans socium gestu viventis amoris!
Quis dedit affectum tumulo? Quis vincula solvit?
Unde sepulta videt venturi conjugis umbram?
Tu facis haec, tu Christe Deus, tua signa moventur
paulatimque doces sopita resurgere membra¹⁹

The passage could then be translated thus:

“For where the sluggish procession of the Saône glides by its banks and barely unfolds its lazy course, where the youth of Aeduans, brothers to Remus, is produced, I remember a marriage characterized by the greatest love and fidelity. Their Christian faith however crowned the merit of their love, and each prayed to predecease his/her spouse and to entrust arrangements for his/her tomb to her/his loving care. But the page of fate chose the woman first. The grief-stricken [husband] then ordered a rock-tomb to be excavated with a wide entrance to host [their] limbs after death, so that those whom one and the same marital bed had held when alive, after the commands of the Lord,²⁰ a shared grave should gently cover. The wife had a presentiment of her husband’s longing commitment and contributed a great miracle to these times of chastity: for, although the arms of the dead are joined to their limbs, and multiple bonds bind the hands tightly to the trunk, lest a repulsive dissolution befall those whose task in life was fulfilled once [their limbs] have fallen apart²¹—astounding to relate!—when, [the course of] his life was over, after upon the demise of the husband, the door of death had been opened, and the now unwelcome daylight had disclosed the fearsome abode, the woman was caught stretching out her left hand, inviting her husband with a gesture of living love! Who granted feeling to [the one in the] tomb? Who undid the bonds? From where did the buried woman see her husband’s shadow coming? You accomplish these things, you Christ, God, your signs are set in motion and you gradually²² teach that limbs that sleep rise.” (Trans. DRS)

¹⁷ I am conjecturing a lacuna here.
¹⁸ I have likewise deleted Iungendus sociae prospecta sede maritus. Its content suggests to me that it might belong above after 19 with a lacuna inserted.
²⁰ This presumably refers to the Lord’s commands about monogamous marriage, e.g. Gn 2.24, Mt 19.5.
²¹ I.e. been disunited.
²² Paulatim, if construed with consurgere, could mean that there will be various interim resurrections before the General Resurrection at End Time. But it might also be construed with docere: “you teach us gradually,” implying an ongoing divine revelation (cf. Montanism).
Models: Classical
In order to understand this miracle, we need to concentrate on sources and models. Classical source material includes Vergil. And there is plenty of fuzzy matching for themes such as one grave, chastity of the survivor, praying to die simultaneously. In a broader cultural context I would emphasize a somewhat different discourse from the one with which it has been associated: namely das *Unheimliche*, and the reception of the zombie, revenant, vampire, lamia etc. But that is in another venue.

Models: Christian
My concern here is with the *Christian* intertextualities, which oddly enough, have been ignored. There is an obvious and (oddly) unexploited relationship between this passage and Tertullian’s *De Anima* 51.6–8, which I shall discuss elsewhere. Here I am more interested in John’s Gospel, as mediated, I shall argue, by Juven-
cus.

Juvenecus
I am not going to discuss the relative chronology of the two poets here. Van der Weijden thought Juvenecus used the *De laudibus*. Salzano seems to have eliminated Juvenecus from consideration altogether. Warburg doesn’t discuss him. Green is agnostic. To me, however, it is clear that *De laudibus* is dependent on Juvenecus, and that the model for the miracle is not Christ’s resurrection, but Lazarus’ in John 11.

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24 Schierl (2008) discusses a range of parallel classical Gemeingut that is not actually meant to be source-material, but is thematically relevant: one grave, chastity of the survivor, praying to die simultaneously. I would add to the mix various Liebestode from Valerius Maximus IV.6, especially IV.6.3 the grave of the two lovers, Plautius and Orestilla.
26 Though secondary sources do note that the author knew about Lazarus’ resurrection in De Laudibus 118–119. E.g. Bardy (1933) 44.
27 Pace Salzano (2000) 93 who cites Jesus’ rock tomb at Mt 27.60.
28 Those who are bothered by the fact that the *De laudibus*, which plausibly antedates the violent deaths of Crispus and Fausta, quotes Juvenecus, who refers to Constantine’s achievement of peace, which should postdate his victory over Licinius could (for example) imagine that the envoi to Juvenecus was a later addition.
29 Van der Weijden (1967) 195. At 36–38 he does not cite relevant material from Juvenecus IV.
30 Salzano (2000) 171: no entry at all in the Index locorum. Id.. 21. dates the Laudes before Juvenecus and sees any similarities between them as due to their common use of Vergil. Warburg (2011) 24 sees the *De laudibus* as earlier.
31 Warburg (2011) From what I have been able to find without access to a hardcopy.
33 Juvenecus IV.747: *Nuntius et saxum tumuli de limine volvit*; 759: *nulla istic iaceant fuerant quae condita membra*.
Although John features two extended resurrection narratives, Lazarus’ and Jesus’, only Lazarus’ occurs under our eyes, and is relevant. Juvenecus paraphrased John in verse, and the author of the De laudibus adapted him somewhat creatively. The latter deliberately muted his dependence on these texts by not naming names at Laud. 115–119 where he alluded to the resurrection of Lazarus.

**Staub in De Laudibus**

**Rock tombs**

The immortal Richard Moritz Meyer noted in his “Kriterien der Aneignung” that, “das Übertragene ist innerhalb des Zusammenhangs nicht so organisch wie das dort Ge-wachsene.” “Staub, sagt der englische Spruch, ist ein Ding am unrechten Ort.” So let us now consider some remaining Staub bestrewing our poem! One must start with the tomb itself. Gallic aristocrats were buried in sarcophagi, not in rock tombs. But De laudibus describes the excavation of a rock tomb: 

\[ \text{Laud. 15–16 largo iubet ore cavari, / post mortem fiant quae membris hospita saxa}. \]

If we look at Juvenecus, we find numerous repeated allusions to Lazarus’ tomb, its impenetrability, and its material:

\[ \text{sepulchrum / Rupe sub excisa; lapidis quod pondere clausum / saxumque in-mane reuulsis / Obicibus patuit / complens cava saxa clamore. Cava saxa is not bibli-} \]

\[ \text{cal. This Gallic rock-tomb is artefactual biblical Staub, whose linguistic clothing (cava saxa) comes from Juvenecus. Lazarus’ tomb was a renowned pilgrimage-site in Late Antiquity, and our author may have liked the idea of a virtual link to the Holy Land.} \]

**Liquefying Limbs and “Wrapped burial”**

The gruesome realia of the grave could include measures against the corpse’s dissolution, such as mummification, embalming, and bandages. Also shrouds. And smells. Let us begin with bandages.

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34 Neither of the two book-length commentaries on the poem has picked up on this.
35 Meyer (1906) 376. The article is an interesting theoretical discussion that ranges over comparative mythology, linguistics, history, textual criticism, literary imitations, and behavioral scripts.
36 Ibid. 377.
37 Pace Opelt (1978) 161 who insists that it has to be a sarcophagus. Van der Weijden (1967) 69 seems exclusively interested in archaeology; Salzano (2000) 93 says it could be either.
38 Joh 11.38 venit ad monumentum erat autem spelunca et lapis superpositus erat ei;
40 If this is a legend from Autun, it is intriguing that the eventual dedication of the Cathedral of Autun was not to Nazarius, but to Lazarus, where it is now the 12th C. Romanesque Cathédrale St-Laz-are. For the career of Lazarus’ head in Autun, see Cabrol (1929) 2037ff.
From Smell to Bandages

John is terse about olfactory matters: 11.39 *iam fetet: quadriduanus enim est*, said Martha.⁴¹ Here Juvencus amplified:

"Quattuor en luces totidemque ex ordine noctes
Praetereunt, quo membra solo conposta quiescunt,
Crediderim, corpus motu fugiente caloris
Fetorem miserum liquefactis reddere membris."⁴²

"Look, four days and as many nights in succession have gone by during which his limbs have lain sleeping in the ground. I would imagine that, as its vivifying heat flees, his body is emitting a terrible stench from its liquefying limbs."

The phrase “liquefying limbs,” explains the smell. The *De Laudibus* feels it has to explain the need for grave-bandages to guard against *informis fluitatio*, “repulsive dissolution of limbs that are falling apart.”⁴³ The emphasis on liquid decomposition is not biblical and, I suspect, is a significant addition that comes from Juvencus.

Whether a feature is organic or transferred matters. By the early ⁴ᵗʰ C. images of the Raising of Lazarus in Early Christian art show him as a mummy in an *aedicula* ("Mumientypus").⁴⁴ But it is incorrect to assume that there is no biblical precedent for the bound corpse.⁴⁵ The grave-bandages (*institae*) are an important canonical detail from Lazarus’ resurrection, for his corpse was tightly bound: John 11.44 *et statim prodiit qui fuerat mortuus, ligatus pedes et manus institis et facies illius sudario erat ligata.*

The Gallic lady’s arms too are bandaged tightly to her trunk.⁴⁶ *De laudibus* 22ff., I suggest, respond directly to Lazarus’ grave-bindings, rendered by Juvencus IV.394–96 as *conexis manibus pedibusque et totum gracilis conectit fascia corpus.* Here again we have Meyer’s *Staub*, a detail that is a literary artifact, *not* an historical one. Archaeologist colleagues have assured me that there is no evidence for “wrapped” burial or “bandelettes” in the West: a shroud ("linceul") is quite a different matter.⁴⁷ Again, this Johannine detail has travelled West via Juvencus to manifest itself as

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⁴¹ It seems to me that her remark could be read either as a warning apology (It’ll smell.”) or a disincentive (“It’s too late.”) for going ahead. I thus don’t entirely agree with Deproost (2000) 140 on how Martha dilutes the “brutalité expressive” of the Gospel into “une diagnostique clinique.” Marchetti (2013) 81 thinks, as do some patristic exegetes, that John is emphasizing the miracle here.

⁴² *Juven. IV*.376–79.

⁴³ *De laudibus* 25 *accidat informis fluitatio dissociatis.*


⁴⁵ As does Albertson (1995) 123 who sees here only “strips on only his hands and feet.” Albertson seems to be mis-visualising John’s description.

⁴⁶ Not actually “a conventional part of funerary practice” (as says Rees [2010] 72).

⁴⁷ Here I have benefitted from the generous expertise of Patrick Périn, Paul Van Ossel, and Bailey Young.
an anomalous “wrapped” burial in a rock tomb in the Saône valley. How though do we know that it came via Juvencus? He alone features the added concern about dissolution combined with the grave-bandages.

**Accessing More Exegesis**

There is a comparative dearth of extant exegetic material about Lazarus in the West, some of which will be discussed below. But, fortunately, we have some access to the lower quarters of this iceberg by going over to the Eastern Empire to compare Nonnos of Panopolis’ *Paraphrase of the Gospel of John* with Spanoudakis’ fine commentary. Juvencus shows clear signs of contact with exegetic undercurrents, now attested only in Greek (which is not to say that he read them in Greek). A few examples:

**“Dead Man Walking:” Exegetic Reception of the Resurrection of Lazarus**

Haec cum dixisset voce magna clamavit, “Lazare, veni foras!” 44 Et statim prodiit qui fuerat mortuus ligatus pedes et manus institis et facies illius sudario erat ligata. Dicit Iesus eis, “Solvite eum et sinite abire!” (Joh. 11.43 – 44)

John thematizes Lazarus’ “wrapped” mummy-like burial, and Jesus subsequently gives a command to release him.⁴⁸ The Latin word used for his locomotion is the colorless *prodiit*. So, one may well ask, how did he walk? They wondered about this too back then and saw it as part of the miracle. It is just possible to discern such intent in Juvencus IV.394: *Nec morac onexis manibus pedibusque repente/ Procedit tumulo, i f one* "spins" the ablative absolute concessively to bring the point out. Ambrose’s funer al oration for his brother Satyrus contains one explicit highly rhetorical reflection on the problem from the Western Empire:


⁴⁸ Joh. 11.44 *Solvite eum et sinite abire!* And he is invariably depicted that way, see all the images in Cabrol (1929) 2009 – 2035.
“And so the dead man heard and emerged from the monument, bound hand and foot with grave bandages. And his face was wrapped in a napkin. Grasp, if you can, how he takes to the road with closed eyes, how he directs his steps although his feet are bound with steps that were not separable, but with progress that is. His bonds remained, but did not hold him; his eyes were covered, yet he saw. The one who was rising again, the one who was walking, the one who was abandoning his tomb could finally see. As the power of the divine command acted, nature did not pursue her normal course of duty, and, as if placed at the limit of its existence, complied not with her normal orders but with the divine command. The bonds of death were broken before those of the grave. His gait was set in motion before it was ready. If you marvel at this, see who gave the command so that you cease to be astonished: Jesus Christ, the power of God, the way, the light, the resurrection of the dead.”

On the Eastern side there is a spectacularly creepy passage in Nonnos’ Gospel-Paraphrase:

νεκρόν ἀελλήνεντα διαστείχοντα βερέθρου, (155)
ιλλόμενον δεσμοί καὶ οὐ πίπτοντα κονίῃ. ... ἄπνοον ἄνδρα κάλλεσε, καὶ ἔτρεχε νεκρὸς ὀδύτης (160)
στείχων αὐτοκέλευθος ὁμοπλέκτῳ χθόνα ταρσό- ἄπνοον ἄνδρα κάλλεσε, καὶ ἐν φθιμένῃν ἀκούσας ἐξ Ἀιδος νόστησε φυγάς νέκυς ... καὶ ποδὸς ὀρθωθέντος ἀκαμπτὰ γοῦνατα σύρων, τυφλὴν θυγκέλευθον ἐξον ἀντώπιον ὀρμήν αὐθεντεῖς νέκυς ἔσκε καὶ ἐκ ποδὸς ἀχρι καρινήν ορφιγομένῃν πλεκτήν ὠλον δέμας εἰς κερείας (170)

“a wind-swift corpse, walking out of the pit, bound in chains/bonds, but not falling in the dust ... he called an unbreathing man, and the dead traveler came running. Moving of his own accord on the ground with his ankles bound one to another. He called an unbreathing man, and the runaway corpse heard him among the dead and returned from Hades. ... With upright foot, dragging his unbending knees, and maintaining a blind, eyes-front, straight path, he was a speaking corpse and, from foot to head, his whole body was bound with coils of [swaddling-]bands”.

(trans. DRS)

The problem of the corpse’s locomotion is simply there in John. It may well be problematized in Juvenecus. It is discussed explicitly as a miracle in Ambrose. It is dramatized two different ways, walking (creepy) and running (all the way back from Hades), in Nonnos. Peter Chrysologus solves the problem by having Tartarus return Lazarus, bound hand and foot. In the De Laudibus, however, where the heroine plays the whole scene on her back, the problem is displaced to her arms, and we hear how she can stretch out a hand, bound tightly though she was. “To prevent dissolution” falls into the category of “too much information.” The Gallic lady is “bounding off” Lazarus, but Lazarus as depicted in Juvenecus.

50 Sermo 65: Tunc Tartarus, ligatis manibus et pedibus, Lazarum retulit ad superna.
Getting one’s Soul Back

Let us now turn to Juvencus IV.392–93

‘Lazare, sopitis redeuntem suscipe membris
En animam tuque ipse foras te prome sepulchro.

This passage reverses the usual formula for commending the soul of the departed to God: suscipe animam servi tui illius et illius. The separation of the winged soul is mentioned at Juvencus IV.369–70 quo condita nuper / Membra forent animae volucris spoliata calore. Why is Jesus depicted as giving Lazarus back his soul? It seems to be not just a gratuitous literary “point,” but an allusion to an exegetical comparison between the re-ensoulment of Lazarus and God’s ensoulment of the protoplast at Creation. In Nonnos XI.159 this is manifested as: ἀπνοον ἐψύχωσε δέμας νεκυσόος ἴχώ. One might conjecture that the form of Jesus’ thaumaturgy in Juvencus, giving back his soul to Lazarus with a bold gesture—en!—may have had some connection with what we see in the De Laudibus. There the lady is mysteriously re-ensouled to welcome back her partner. We are all familiar with the erotic discourse about the soul (as well as the runaway soul) and with endearments such as zoe and psyche. The diminutive lectulus and the naughty word deprensa, which is used of those caught in flagrante delicto, license associations with the amatory sphere. Our anonymous poet had some urbanitas! In Juvencus Jesus is the visible and audible thaumaturge within the story; in Gaul he acts post mortem and invisibly but is invoked by the rhetorical questions of De Laud. 32ff. This swift magical action is quite different from Sedulius who has the soul creeping back into its former marrow.

51 Chromatius of Aquileia, Sermo 27.106ff. is primarily concerned with the location of Lazarus’ soul, and how Jesus is able instantaneously to reunite it with Lazarus’ body using his voice. This same interest in the location of the souls of those resurrected can be seen in Petrus Chrysologus, Sermo 63. The daughter of Jairus and the son of the widow of Nain both lingered near their bodies. Lazarus was in Tartarus.

52 Hinted at by Prudentius in his Apotheosis 763–66, for which see Marchetti (2013) 87.


57 Jacques Fontaine imagined the author as the owner of a latifundium, someone with connections at court, a “grand homme de province.” See Fontaine (1981) 101–02. Contrast Brandes (1887) 25, who saw an Aeduan rhetor from Autun.

58 For depictions of Jesus with the thaumaturgic wand, see Albertson (1995) 124 and 128. Also Tsa- makda, (2009). For the pagan Lebensrute, see Waele (1927) 184–93.

Is Lazarus good to stink with?

These are stories about interim resurrections and interim resurrection bodies. How were Christians to imagine them? They use the (neutral) story of Lazarus to think with. Take smell. In John it is factual and has a narrative dialogic function. In Juvenecus likewise, but it is amplified to specify liquid putrefaction. It is quite properly omitted in the semi-erotic context of the De Laudibus. And then sublimated into the odor of embalming spices alone in Prudentius’ Lazarus narrative in the Apotheosis, a text well worth comparing, for its metapoetic re-conjuring or re-evocation of Lazarus from his tomb onto the page.

Prudentius, Apotheosis
ante fores tumuli, quas saxa inmania duro obice damnarant scopulis substructa cautus,
stat dominus nomenque ciet frigentis amici.
Nec mora funereus reuolutis rupibus horror euomit exequias gradiens cadavere uius.
Soluite iam laetae redolentia uincla, sorores!
solis odor sparsi spiramen aromatis efflat,
ne de corporeo nidorem sordida tabo aura refert.
pristinus in speculum decor excitat et putrefactas tincta rubore genas paulatim purpura uestit.
Quis potuit fluidis animam suffundere membris?
nimirum qui membra dedit, qui fictilis uluae perflandit uenam madidam, cui tabida glaeba traxit sanguineos infectou more colores.

Later on, in Severus of Malaga, the evil smell will be used as proof (had there been skeptics) that Lazarus really had been a corpse.

It is by now a famous cliché that Christians developed a different relationship with the grave and grave matters from that of their pagan confrères. Issues on the lectio difficilior. Some medieval readers preferred a swift re-entry, for which see the variant repetente listed on p. 111 of Huemer’s edition.

60 See above, p. 293, n. 22 on paulatim.
61 See above, p. 296, n. 41.
62 Which may implicitly, though not explicitly, set up and emphasize the wonder of the eventual resurrection.
63 Prudentius leaves it unclear whether Lazarus in fact doesn’t smell or whether the smell was miraculously gone by the time Mary and Martha undid his grave-bandages. Wright (2003) 443 concludes that (in the end) there was no smell.
64 Apoth. 741 titubanti voce contrasts with Jesus loud call in Joh 11:43.
65 See Cutino (2016 – 2017) 205 and 209 and Bischoff (1994) 78. In Petrus Chrysologus, Sermo 63. Lazarus who is four days dead and decomposing goes a step beyond Jesus himself, who was post triduum adhuc recentem.
tamination, proximity, dismemberment, handling, and also horror and disgust needed to be rethought. Some of the features of De laudibus can, as we have seen, be used to observe and track developing Christian attitudes towards the grave and the borders between life and death.

**Did they or didn’t they?**

I will end with a question that hasn’t really been asked in quite this form, namely: What sort of marriage was this? In Late Antiquity there is some evidence for the promotion of “mariage blanc,” marriage that was sexless right from the start, as preached, for example, in the *Acts of Thomas* 11–13. There were also what started as normal marriages, but morphed into continent ones, for example at the ordination of a spouse. Both seem to be reactive mechanisms, not outright goals, for remaining a virgin by refusing to marry may have been an option for only a minute and ascetically ambitious minority. One could see in the De laudibus simply the faithful marriage of a (textbook epigraphic) univira, or one might wonder, as we shall see, whether the author intended a mariage blanc. Did they or didn’t they <have sex>?

**Love in the grave’s reception and transformation**

By the later 6th C. we find more-than-thrice-told tales of animated corpses and married continence: first in Autun ascribed to Rheticius in Gregory of Tours *GC* 74. Rheticius lived in a chaste marriage with his wife, whose dying wish was to lie in the same grave. Rheticius was later elected bishop. When he died, his bier initially could not initially be moved, and he came back to life to fulfill his promise to his wife. Her bones gathered together into a heap, presumably to make space for him. There is a second version of this story told of a layman, Hilarious of Dijon, in *GC* 41, where

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67 It proves rather hard to find unified treatments of the subject even in books dedicated to relevant topics, such as Brown (1988), Clark (1994), or Cooper (1996), who at 114 says “It was not uncommon ... for a married woman to let it be known publicly ... that she was withholding conjugal rights from her husband,” but cites Ecdicia from Augustine, *Ep*. 262 alone. Old, but as always very helpful is Leclercq (1932) 1881–1888. covering a number of diverse phenomena, which Leclercq prefaces by (rightly) stating that “spiritual marriage” is to some extent a scholarly dream (or wish-fulfillment) that is not necessarily supported by its alleged proof-texts.

68 Josephs-ehre, weiße Ehe, Jungfernehe, white marriage.

69 See Hennecke – Schneemelcher (1974), vol. 2, 448–449. David Hunter kindly brought this passage to my attention. It is surprising both for its hostility to children and fertility and for its delivery (by Jesus impersonating Thomas).

70 Heiresses would have been under special pressure. See Brown (1988) 343–345.

the marriage is a normal one, and the dead man embraced his wife’s corpse when she joined him in his supersized Parian marble sarcophagus.

More interesting, and indeed, risqué is the related story of a lay-pair in the Auvergne in Gregory of Tours’, DLH 1.47: Iniuriosus and his wife, the two chaste lovers of Clermont. On his wedding night Iniuriosus was persuaded by his wife to live in a continent marriage. She died first. When he committed her for burial saying that he was commending her to the Lord in the same condition as he had received her, she memorably awoke to respond: “Quid loqueris, quod non interrogaris?” (In modern English—“Too much information!”) The story appears in a shorter form without names in GC 31, where both subsequently embraced the religious life. The mildly risqué joke was improved: the resuscitated wife told her husband with a smile, “Sile, sile, vir dei!” and not to let people know nostrum secretum, namely that they hadn’t had sex. And the tombs, now more respectively two, even if moved apart, reunite into a double resting place, even if not quite a letto matrimoniale.

There has been disagreement right from the outset about whether the De Laudibus is actually about Rheticius of Autun. The Histoire Littéraire de la France said yes, Brandes disagreed. ² I will limit myself to a few minor points. If the De Laudibus had been about Rheticius, why ever not say so? In addition, the poem’s action is not specifically located in Autun, but in the region of the Saône. Autun is ca. 28 miles west of Chalon-sur-Saône. Furthermore I am somewhat troubled by the fact that I can’t locate even a prose text that specifically associates Augustodunum with the Arar. ²³ But any Märchenforscher knows that the resemblances between these four stories are not fortuitous: they override variable “tweakings” such as lay/clerical status, who died first, corpse addresses the bereaved spouse/corpse embraces corpse, one sarcophagus/twin sarcophagi. ²⁴ The De laudibus cannot be Gregory’s source for GC 74, etc. and they must share a lost source other than Tertullian’s De Anima 51.6–8.

Tertullian’s Ad Uxorem 1.6.2 alludes to couples who voluntarily forgave one another the marital debt and lived like eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven. ²⁵ But it, like the Acts of Thomas, is an outlier. It is first in the later 4th C. that Jerome worked himself into a lather about subintroductae and whether one tectulum implied one

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² Brandes (1887)19–20. seems excessively skeptical about the Maurists’ identification. There are too many parallels for them to be coincidental, starting with the Aeduan location. We see the oscillation between names and no names in Gregory’s DLH and GC, why not here in De laudibus? Brandes doesn’t consider the possibility that the borrowing may have gone in the other direction, from the De laudibus Domini or its ancestor to the ancestor of the tale about Rheticius.

²³ And only Jerome, Vir. Ill. 82 of Rheticius associates Autun with the Aedui. Rees (2010) 73 identified the Aedui with the people of Autun.

²⁴ Heinzelmann (2003) 54–59 discusses the stories as réécriture and details their similarities and differences in tabular form. Strangely, he says nothing about GC 41 and 74, which certainly belong to the same complex.

²⁵ Quot item, qui consensu pari inter se matrimonii debitum tollunt, voluntarii spadones pro cupiditate regni caelestis? Abstinence within marriage is an argument for abstinence in widowhood.
lectulum.⁷⁶ It was he who famously staged the continent “marriage” between Malchus the Monk and his fellow-slave, a married woman in VMAlchi 6–7: “Habeto me ergo coniugem pudicitiae!” said she. The Younger Melania’s marriage took a continent turn after she produced two children who died in infancy.⁷⁷ And the battle about married bishops and episcopae was still being waged in the later 6th C.⁷⁸ Therefore, to the best of my knowledge, marital continence is almost entirely a controversy from the later 4th C. through the later 6th C.⁷⁹ For that reason, I am inclined to read De laudibus as about a normal marriage, where the two were both bedfellows and sexual partners. The phrase temporibus castis (De Laud. 21) may have been over-read, quite possibly in antiquity, and helped enable the back-reading of continence issues from the later 4th to 6th centuries into the Constantinian period.⁸⁰

Epigraphica

I began with the Roman practice of joint burial, and will close with a few epigraphic documents as documentary comparanda to our literary texts. A curious Latin inscription on a sarcophagus from the Basilica at Salona can be dated securely to 378 CE.⁸¹

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Fl(avius) Terentius Fl(aviae) Taiasiae ob meritis et fideiitatem / totiusque sanctitatem arcam posui coniugi / carissimae et sibi quam a parentibus ipsius suscepi / annos XVIII qi aeque inlibatae memec xivit annos XXXII / tradita sepulturae die Nonarum Septembres DD NN/ Valente VI et Vaientiniano iterum AUGG CONSS / si quis vero supir duo coriora nosira aliut / corpus voluptae ordinare dabit fisici viribus / argenti pondo quindecim.
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The text has been edited thus in Salona IV:⁸³

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Fl(avius) Terentius Fl(aviae) Taiasiae ob meritis et fideitatem / totiusque sanctitatem arcam posui coniugi / carissimae et sibi quam a parentibus ipsius suscepi / annos XVIII qi aeque inlibatae memec xivit annos XXXII / tradita sepulturae die Nonarum Septembres d(ominis)
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⁷⁶ As Jerome put it in the Ep. 1179: separantur domus uestrae diuidaturque conuiuium, ne maledici homines sub uno teculuo uos manentes lectulum quoque criminentur habere communem. On the Greek side, there was Chrysostom, for whom see Clark (1994) 99–100.

⁷⁷ VMel. Gr. 6–8; VMel. Lat. 1.7–8; See Melania 2 in Jones (1971) vol. 1 593.

⁷⁸ Ambrosiaster believed that post-mortal celibacy for clergy was practicable. See Brown (1988) 378. For problems in Gregory, see Shanzer (2002).

⁷⁹ Its practice is known from figures such as Paulinus of Nola and Therasia or in the Younger Melania and Pinianus on whom, see Brown (1988) 409–410.

⁸⁰ For similar concerns, see Grubbs (1994) 408.

⁸¹ See Diehl (1925) vol. 1 155–56, No. 821; Inscriptions chrétiennes de la Gaule antérieures au VIIIe siècle, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Paris: L’Imprimerie Impériale) For an image of the actual object, see Friederike Harl and Ortolf Harl, 24470 Sarkophag der Flavia Talasia; available from http://lupa.at/24470.

⁸² The engraver slipped up multiple times by using I for L, in one case I for a P, and an I for an E (venial).

n(ostris) / Valente VI et Va<1> entiniano iterum Aug(ustis) cons(ulibus) / si quis vero sup<e>r duo cor<p>ora nos<1>ra aliut / corpus voluerit ordinare dabit fisci viribus / argenti pondo quindecim.

It was written for/by one Flavius Terentius for his deceased spouse Flavia Talasia. Terentius marred Talasia when she was 18 and she lived with him *illibatae* for 32 years. But does *illibatae* represent a very rare adverb, meaning “impeccably,” (as it was taken by the *TLL*), or does it mean literally “untouched,” indicating that the pair were in a continent marriage? The first alternative seems less strange and certainly syntactically easier. The *interpretatio facilior* (as it were) would be the solution taken by the French editors to delete the *i* and supply a *u* giving *quaeque inlibatae* (= *inlibate*) “who lived irreproachably with me.” They may be right, but it might also be possible to read *quaeque* and to see *illibatae* as an aural *Perseverationsfehler* from *aeque*—and hence to be corrected/to/read as *aeque illibata* “as untouched as previously (sc. when with her parents).” In that case the stone could indeed commemorate a continent marriage.

I, Flavius Terentius, set out this casket for Flavia Talasia, dearest wife and for myself, for her good deeds, faithfulness, and the virtue of her whole life. I received her from her parents when she was 18 and she lived equally untouched with me for 32 years. She was laid to rest on the Nones of September when the Augustus Valens was consul for the sixth time and Valentinian for the second. If anyone should wish to lay out a third body on top of our two, he will pay [for the benefit of] the fisc 15-weight of silver.

There are examples of conciliar prohibitions against adding corpses to existing graves. This inscription for a double burial prohibits any eventual threesome with an unrealistically hefty fine.

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84 The adverb *illibate* ("impeccably") is very rare. *TLL* 7.1. 369.38 gives only 3 examples, one of which is this passage. *Inculpatim* in *CIL* 3.14524 may likewise be an inscriptive hapax or extremely rare.
85 As suggested by Leclercq (1932) 1964
86 *Qui for quae* is a VL development that will eventually be generalized in French.
87 Terentius wrote *sibi* through confusing first-person and third person *formulae*.
88 The French team do not print it, but rightly note that a word like *vitae* must have fallen out before *sanctitatem*. Marin (2010) 408.
89 *Fisci viribus* is a standard phrase from the *CTheod.* (also in Cassiodorus’ *Variae*), roughly equivalent to “zugunsten,” or “for the benefit of.”
90 For *pondum* (a by-form for *pondus*, ponderis. See *TLL* 10.1.2614.25 *legitur inde a Lege Sil. per totam fere latinitatem* ... ex acc. *pondum: it. pondo*.
91 Mâcon A( 585) can.17: *Comperimus multos necdum marcidata mortuorum membra sepulchra reserare et mortuos suos superimponere vel aliorum, quod nefas est, mortuis suis relegiosa loca usurpare, sine voluntate scilicet domini sepulchorum. Ideoque statuemus, ut nullus deinceps hoc peragat. Quod si factum fuerit, secundum legum auctoritatem superimposita corpora de eisdem tumulis reiactentur.* Also the Diocesan Synod of Auxerre (561/605) can.15: *non licet mortuam super mortuam mitti.*
Terentius and Talasia were thought not to stand entirely alone. *ICLV* 1727 commemorates a woman *que vixit inlibata cum virgino suo annis V*,\(^9^2\) which Leclercq took as referring to a continent marriage.\(^9^3\) But on the other hand, there is also *CIL* 3.13529 for Ursa who died in childbed. Her husband describes them as *convirginios*, a rare word\(^9^4\) that must in this context mean “pair who were married as virgins,” not “continent spouses.”\(^9^5\) The Clauss-Slaby epigraphic database now makes it possible to see that married men were regularly addressed as *virginii* by their wives in cases when the marriage produced offspring.\(^9^6\) But perhaps the word *inlibata* carries the weight and the marriage was indeed a continent one? The few other epigraphic examples of *inlibata* do not help resolve the question.\(^9^7\)

There is thus, as one might expect, virtually no Late Antique documentary evidence that attests such continent arrangements as recounted in Gregory’s *DLH* 1.47 and *GC* 31. The *Passio S. Caeciliae* 3–5, where the heroine informs her husband Valerianus that her lover, an angel, guards her chastity, reveals its extravagant and quite literary secret.\(^9^8\) Just as the irrepressible Wilhelm Kroll reproached Allia Potestas’ otherwise exemplary partner Allius for the epigraphic publication of the secrets of his bedroom,\(^9^9\) so too was the dead Gallic lady leery about the betrayal of their *secretum*. That glimpse of naughtiness in *De laudibus*’ *deprehensa* (*De laudibus* 30) could be compared to the “migrated” versions of the *duo amantes* of Clermont: “No need to advertise that we didn’t have sex!” They were caught *not* doing it.

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\(^9^2\) Diehl, *Inscriptiones latinae christianae veteres*, 336, No. 1727 from a sarcophagus found in the catacombs of Calixtus.

\(^9^3\) Leclercq (1932) 1963.


\(^9^5\) So likewise Blaise s.v. *virginiius*.

\(^9^6\) http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/epibeleg.php?s_sprache=de I note 152 hits for *virginio*.

\(^9^7\) In the (very corrupt) *CIL* 10.5409 *et inlibata erga me / superfuit* (which the CIL and Roger Tomlin think must stand for *semper fuit*), the word seems unlikely to have sexual connotations, since the issue is curial duties. TLL 7.1.369.27–28 says “uncorrupted.” I would prefer “unshaken” or “constant.” In *AE* 1982, No. 705, p. 183, since the honorand is a young mother, *exempli inlibatae casti(ta)tis* must mean “example of irreproachable chastity.”

\(^9^8\) Delehaye (1936) 196–197. *Amittis florem … iuventutis* almost sounds as if Valerianus were sexually threatened by the angel! In Chapter 8 they are mystically married by it.

\(^9^9\) Kroll (1914) 277: “Dazu kommt der Mangel nicht bloß an poetischem, sondern auch an menschlichem Takt, der ihn Dinge hat ausplaudern lassen, die das Geheimnis seines Schlafgemaches hätten bleiben sollen und ihn zu einem *Kandaules redivivus* stempeln.”
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