READING THE FUTURE, WRITING THE PRESENT

A literary and interpretive commentary on Sidonius Apollinaris Letter 8.11

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Longiuscule me progedi amor impulit…
(Sid. Ap. *Ep.* 8.11.14)

Table of Contents

Introduction

1 Sidonius Apollinaris: Life and Work[1]

Sidonius was born on the fifth of November in 429 or 432 in the city of Lyon, his full name being Gaius Sollius Apollinaris Sidonius.[2] He hailed from a distinguished family: his father, remaining anonymous, was Praetorian prefect of Gaul, just as his grandfather. His mother was somehow related to the family of the Aviti, a noble Gallo-Roman senatorial family. Hence, Sidonius was educated in the way of boys of noble birth, and after having received lower education in his place of birth, went to Lyon to study rhetoric and literature in Arles. His education shines everywhere through his writings, as he frequently shows off his knowledge by citing classical and post-classical poets (Virgil, Horace, Martial, Statius, Silius Italicus, Juvenal, Ovid) and prose authors (Cicero, Seneca, Pliny, Symmachus, Apuleius), as well as by the many references to mythological stories.

Nothing seemed to prevent Sidonius from following in his ancestors footsteps by starting a political career, especially not when he married Papianilla, the daughter of Eparchius Avitus from Auvergne, which brought him as a (not insignificant) dowry the estate of Avitacum, near modern Clermont-Ferrand. In 455, Avitus, now Sidonius' father-in-law, was proclaimed emperor, and Sidonius travelled with him to Rome. There, Sidonius delivered on 1 January 456 a panegyric to celebrate the consulship of the new emperor, which has been preserved in his oeuvre as *C.* 7. To crown it all, Sidonius was subsequently even rewarded with a bronze statue in the Forum of Trajan.

However, Sidonius' luck did not last forever. There have been definitely better times to make career than the fifth-century Roman West. The century was arguably one of the most chaotic and threatening periods of Roman history. Barbarian tribes, Vandals, Goths and Huns invaded the borders of the Empire, waging war on the Romans and on each other; in only seventy years, Rome was captured and plundered no less than three times, and the disasters and catastrophes that struck the Roman West ultimately led to its collapse at the end of the century.

A stable government seems not possible in this time, and one emperor followed the other. Neither did Avitus' reign last long: ten months after Sidonius delivered his panegyric, his father-in-law was forced to flee when a revolt broke out under general Ricimer. Sidonius was reconciled with the new regime (*C.* 4), and when Majoran, the new emperor, entered Lyon, Sidonius delivered a panegyric in his honour (*C.* 5). Sidonius was made *comes* in 461, which was although probably not an official state function, in any case a sign that Sidonius was accepted as a member of the court circle. Indeed, we find him and his friends dinning together with the new emperor in one of his letters (*Ep.* 1.11).

In that same year, Majoran undertook a campaign against the Vandal king Geiseric who threatened the southern border of the Roman empire, but was disastrously defeated. On his way back, he was assassinated by his former ally, Ricimer.

During the following years (461-467), Sidonius retired to his estate in Avitacum, where he is likely to have written a considerable part of his poems and letters. These years were

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[1] This overview is based on Anderson 1: ix-lii and Van Waarden 2010: 5-8.

[2] That is to say, according to the incipit of most manuscripts. See Van Waarden 2010: 4-5 for a discussion of Sidonius' name.

mainly devoted to literary activity, studying and visiting friends all over the country. *Carmen* 35, the poem inserted in *Ep.* 8.11, must also have been written around this time.

In 467, Sidonius was back in business, when he was sent to Ravenna by the Arvernians as head of a delegation to welcome the new emperor Anthemius. In the meantime, things had changed. After an interregnum during which Ricimer was *de facto* ruler of the Roman West, the emperor of the Eastern Empire had created Anthemius emperor, while Euric, after having murdered his brother Theodoric, had become king of the Visigoths. The latter's clear ambitions to extend Visigothic territory threatened Roman Gaul, and the delegation that the Arvernians sent to Anthemius was, besides a homage to the new emperor, at the same time a first appeal for help. In Rome, Sidonius for the third time in his career delivered a panegyric on the emperor, and again he was rewarded, this time with the responsible function of *praefectus urbi*. After a year, he returned to Gaul, just in time to avoid being present at the trial of his friend Arvandus, who had been accused and was next condemned for making agreements with Euric.

In the next year, we meet Sidonius as bishop of Clermont, rather surprisingly, since he himself is totally silent on his consecration. As can be read in his letters, the bishop Sidonius seems to have been mainly concentrated on preaching and patronage. Nevertheless, his bishopric was mostly dominated by the Visigothic siege of Clermont. By 471, King Euric was *ad portas* of Clermont and besieged the capital of Auvergne. Together with his brother-in-law Ecdicius, Sidonius organized the city's resistance against the Visigoths. They were backed by a garrison provided by their new allies, the Burgundians, who did not want to lose their barrier against the aggressive Visigoths. The Arvernians managed to fend off the Visigoths for four long years, hoping for rescue. But deliverance never came. Instead, after the current emperor, Anthemius, too had been assassinated by Ricimer in 472, and after a short rule of the next two puppet-rulers, the Byzantine emperor appointed Julius Nepos as emperor. Nepos entered in negotiation with Euric, and agreed to surrender the Auvergne, together with its capital Clermont, in exchange for the Provence (which would be conquered by the Visigoths next year anyway). No wonder that Sidonius felt himself betrayed (see esp. *Ep.* 7.7).

Sidonius, since he had changed his loyalty from the Visigoths to their rivals the Burgundians and resisted king Euric, was exiled to the fortress of Livia, near modern Carcassonne. In several letters, Sidonius bitterly moans his fate, but was not treated badly. He even appears to have been released after a while. Next, he appealed to his friends at the Gothic court, Leo of Narbonne, one of Euric's ministers, and Lampridius, who seems to have been a court poet or secretary, to intercede with the king on his behalf. Sidonius was pardoned somewhere around 476/477, and was reinstated as bishop of Clermont.

We hardly know anything about his later life. Sidonius went on writing and published his books of letters.[3] Neither is it certain when he died. The most probably date is 486/487, judging from a reference in the *Historia Francorum* by Gregory of Tours (2.23).

[3] Mathisen 2013: 231 proposes the following dates: Book 1-7 ca. 477/478; Book 8 ca. 480; Book 9 ca. 482.

2 Method and Aim of this Commentary

2.1 *Writing Commentaries*

Writing commentaries on classical texts has a long tradition. In fact, our 'modern' commentary continues the Greek *ὑπόμνημα* of Alexandrian scholars like Aristarchus, which consisted of explanatory notes on the Homeric texts, and the Latin *commentarius* of late antique scholars like Servius, with his extensive notes on the works of Virgil. There was a clear distinction between this *ὑπόμνημα*, and what has always been its counterpart, the *σύγγραμμα*, or what is now known to us as the monograph. Whereas the first splits the source-text into fragments, the latter strives to search for its coherence.[4] Both traditions of research have their advantages as much as their disadvantages.

For a long time, commentaries have been considered as the most 'objective', 'empirical' and 'scientific' of the two.[5] While writers of monographs seek to 'impose' their own (subjective) interpretation on the text, commentators stick to the text, explain what is actually written, indicate the problems in the text, but do not aim to give *the* solution to a given problem, or *the* interpretation of a particular text. Monographs are arguing against predecessors and trying to persuade their readers; commentaries, on the other hand, need to be in the first place useful or functional, helping the reader by providing a sound, readable text, linguistic and grammatical aid and a fundament from which further interpretive readings can start.[6]

This ideal of a commentary as being an objective, functional tool for reading a classical text must have been the reason that few commentators were concerned with questions of theory and methodology for a long time. An exception is C.O. Brink, who in his preface to his 1963 commentary on Horace' epistles mediates on the working methods of commentators *vis-à-vis* other philological activities. By providing not only a commentary, but also several interpretive essays, he made a step 'from the line-by-line approach to the poem as a whole and its constituent parts'.[7] By this, he tried to overcome what he deemed to be the greatest disadvantage of commentaries, which is at the same time also their strength, the fragmentation of material.

Around the beginning of the 21th century, two edited volumes on the phenomenon of the philological commentary appeared. Such a volume was overdue, since the contributors felt that commentaries 'have tended to be rather neglected as an object of theoretical consideration.'[8] Both Most's 1999 *Commentaries – Kommentare* and Gibson and Kraus' 2002 *The Classical Commentary* have been important for putting the methodologies of writing commentaries on the agenda. I have used both volumes to underpin my theoretical consideration of the commentary.

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[4] Brink 1982: x.
[5] Kraus 2002: 2.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Brink 1982: xi.
[8] Most 1999: viii.

2.2 *Writing commentaries: Dangers*

Despite the traditional view of commentaries as being objective, as has been indicated above, and monographs as subjective, commentaries are definitely not objective. There is already a paradox in the very opposition between commentaries and monographs, since commentaries, or at least modern commentaries, use insights of monographs in their discussions of the text.[9] At the same time, commentators select or reject suggestions made in monographs, and here we encounter a second problem that is raised by the traditional view: a commentary, as much as a monograph, is always a *reading* of a text.

The subjectiveness of commentaries comes most to the fore in the practice of selecting and ignoring text elements. The bits of the text that are selected for treatment in a commentary are already an interpretation, for they are the commentator's choice, they are the reflection of what the commentator considered to be worth commenting on, i.e. those passages that he thinks need explanation.[10] Moreover, the commentator's choice is not random, but is related to the audience the commentator has in mind (grammar explanation for undergraduates, questions of interpretation for graduates/scholars, etc.) as much as to the problems and obscurities in the text to which he aims to give a satisfying solution. However, and here we come to a second argument against the alleged objectiveness of commentaries, problems are in fact created by the reader, or, in Brink's words: 'The field [of aspects of poetic analysis] is there, but we have to find our own paths through it.'[11] According to Kraus in her introduction to *The Classical Commentary*, there are no problems in the text yet, problems only rise when the text becomes problematic to the reader, who then wants to find 'solutions' to clear the way. All those elements, selection of text, the problems the commentator encounters and the questions he puts to a given text, are therefore related to the commentator's own cultural, intellectual and educational background (in short, his 'horizon of expectation'),[12] and the academic context he works in. Therefore, a 21th century commentary on a classical text should not aim at complete comprehensiveness, which is not only an unattainable goal, but also unnecessary and only leads to a burdensome, overwhelming mass of information. Rather, it should focus on the questions that are, or are in the commentator's view, relevant for now.[13]

A third strand that enhances the commentary's subjectiveness is what Kraus calls 'tralaticiousness of lemmata'. Especially on authoritative texts, like Homer or Virgil, there is an already existing tradition of commentaries, within which, or against which, the commentator has to take his own stance.[14] However, a commentator is always influenced by the scholarship before him, and although the tradition may help him to understand the text better, there is always the danger of reading the text through the eyes of predecessors.

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[9] Kraus 2012: 3.

[10] Kraus 2002: 13.

[11] Brink 1982: xiv.

[12] Kraus 2002: 'Selection from a text its commentary-worthy bits is an act of interpretation that reflects the commentator's ideological and theoretical background, preconceptions, assumptions, and judgments of what an audience requires just as any other act of interpretation' (13).

[13] Cf. Dyck 2002: 26: 'Each generation can and should pose its own set of questions to the text, a process that can be inhibited by excessive or excessively early influence from one's predecessors (though, of course, there is a proper time for coming to terms with previous scholarship as well).'

[14] See previous note.

Indeed, some complain that commentators too often comment on the same point as their predecessors,[15] but the problem is not so easy to tackle. A commentary tradition, or in fact every scholarly tradition, can become authoritative on its own, submerging the scholar's own voice. The result is that the scholar's mind and thoughts are directed by the tradition, rather than the text, and that lemmata are copied from commentary to commentary.[16]

The same danger of authority also lurks for the reader of the commentary. A commentary, just like every monograph, could replace the text it comments on as being authoritative, and inhibits independent thinking. The subjectiveness of the commentary calls for responsibility both from the commentator and from the reader of the commentary. Both need to be aware that the commentary is not objective, but interpretive, and that the choice of lemmata was directed by several influences.

2.3 *Approach and method of this commentary*

In the previous paragraph, I described some dangers in relation to writing commentaries. Despite their reputation of being objective, commentaries are also based on individual choice and assumptions.

For my commentary, I do not deny that the lemmata I have chosen are subjective. I could have chosen other lemmata, and focused on other bits of the text. I have not, and my commentary thus reflects what in my opinion are the most interesting parts of the text. The questions I asked from the text, and what I pay attention to in my lemmata, are partly a reflection of my own interests (literary rather than historical), partly influenced by commentaries I took as models for my own commentary (Köhler 1995, Van Waarden 2010 and 2016, Whitton 2013a), and partly steered by recent scholarship on Sidonius (which sees Sidonius as an artistic, creative author, who did not randomly published his letters and books).

However, being aware of the dangers described above, I have tried to minimalize them in the following ways. First, to prevent imposing my own interpretation on the text and the reader, I inserted Sidonius' Latin text, clause-by-clause, throughout my commentary, and the whole Latin text at the beginning of a new section. In this way, the reader can always check my comments with the Latin text and his or her own thoughts. Secondly, to avoid the problem of tralaticiousness as much as possible, I have tried to read no secondary literature on *Ep.* 8.11 other than necessary before studying it and making some comments on it myself. In this way, I hoped to approach the text via a 'fresh' look. I think this approach has shown its worth: to name an example, contemporary scholarship states that the addressee of the letter, Lupus, was born in the city of Périgueux, and connected by marriage with Agen (see e.g. PLRE 2: 694, Anderson). However, a close reading of the text reveals that it is exactly the other way round (see Introduction 4.3.1 *Addressee*). The first editor of the text, Savaron, identified Lupus rightly in his notes, as I detected, but somehow the two places came to be confused in later scholarship. If all the editors and scholars who have worked on this letter in

[15] Dyck 2002: 326.

[16] Kraus (2002: 19): 'Dare you tackle a text with a prestigious commentary already ringing it round?'

the past hundred years had not simply copied this note, but critically studied it, they would have spotted the error, I suppose.

Finally, where necessary, I have written down my own interpretation of words, passages and possible parallels/intertextuality carefully, by explicitly stating that it is my own opinion or by using modal verbs (*maybe*, *might*, etc.). Some commentators are reluctant to use the first person, but I think it is necessary to clearly distinguish between facts and opinion.

Lastly, there is the question of parallel places. Gibson 2002 explores the problems inherent to the collecting of parallels in commentaries. Parallels are used to support a reading in a text, to construe a text, identify allusions or intertexts, and give a covering-ground for further interpretation.[17] However, here the subjective decision of the commentator is again at issue. Gibson raises the question of 'intentional allusion' versus 'accidental confluence',[18] which is left to the commentator to decide. In any case, parallels in commentaries should not become simply 'fillers' without any function than filling up the lemma. I tried to use parallels as an argument for my interpretation of words and clauses. Especially in a difficult, late antique Latin author like Sidonius, the meaning of words or sentences is not always immediately clear, not even with the help of a classical Latin dictionary. Parallel places are therefore functional in so far as they support the interpretation of a particular word or clause. For parallels, I adhered to the following order: first trying to interpret Sidonius out of himself (*Sidonium ex Sidonio*), next looking for parallels in contemporary or earlier authors.

Parallels are also in danger of closing down meaning, or, by their overwhelmingness, of becoming authoritative (this is even worsened given that they naturally distract the reader's attention from the text to the commentary[19]). Nonetheless, parallels are no evidence for a particular reading, they serve as arguments, that might or might not support the commentator's interpretation. Therefore, I decided to give the Latin text of the parallel as much as possible, and, in case of longer quotations, a translation.

Nevertheless, I know that my commentary is still very much the result of the way I interpret the text. The goal for my master thesis was to learn to write a commentary, but at the same time to come to a better understanding of a letter of a difficult author. In the end, a commentary, because of the close reading it involves, is a perfect tool to come to a better understanding of a text, especially a text by a difficult author as Sidonius Apollinaris, and to be better able to give an interpretation of a text. I have therefore made my own understanding of the function and meaning of the letter explicit in the introduction to the letter (see 4.5 *Interpretation*).

3 Book 8

3.1 *Reading ancient letter collections*

How to read ancient letter collections is a topic that has been much debated in the last years. For decades, ancient letters were only interesting to scholars for the historical information

[17] Gibson 2002: 331.
[18] Idem: 342.
[19] Gibson 2002: 355.

that can be culled from the texts. Late antique correspondence in particular was condemned for being mannerist and lacking in historical relevance, which led some to consider them as mere literary works.[20] In the last forty years or so, scholars have come to recognize the aesthetic conventions of late antiquity,[21] which has, indeed, given new attention to late antique letters. As has become more and more clear, letters were the foremost mode of communication in the late antique world, fulfilling several important functions.[22] Beyond its often ''banal'' content, the letter was the essential medium for establishing and maintaining friendship (*amicitia*) between members of late antique aristocracy, and for showing off the author's education (*paideia,* or in late antique Gaul, often his *Romanitas* vis-à-vis the barbarians), by which he legitimated his place as member of the aristocracy.[23] Recent appreciation of the work of Pliny has also given rise to another aspect of late antiquity letter collections. As scholars are becoming more and more aware, letter collections, when arranged by the author, could contain hidden messages by its very arrangement. Regarding Sidonius' letter collection, much important work on the arrangement of letters and the books has already been done. Harries devoted a section of her book to this aspect. In 'Decoding Sidonius' (pp. 11-19), she explores 'the allusive method of Sidonius in the arrangement of the letters' in book 7 and 8, where she sees some hidden political messages.[24] Understandably, this is a very debatable strand of research,[25] and despite some scholarly conventions, there is still much debate going on about Sidonius' letter collection.

3.2 *Reading Sidonius' books of letters*

In *Ep.* 1.1.1, at the very beginning of his book collection, Sidonius declares that he has followed the style of two illustrious predecessors, the 'rounded style' (*rotunditatem*) of the fourth-century statesman Quintus Symmachus, and the 'artistry' (*disciplinam*) and 'perfection' (*maturitatem*) of Pliny the Younger. Nevertheless, it is clear that Sidonius' imitation of his predecessors went beyond mere style. As it seems, Sidonius initially intended to publish only seven books (see *Ep.* 8.1.1) in imitation of the seven books of correspondence by the fourth-century statesman Symmachus. Later on, Sidonius published two additional books on behest of Petronius and Firminus (8 and 9 respectively), to whom he also dedicated the books. Sidonius apparently changed his initial plan, and thus his model: in *Ep.* 9.1.1, he now explicitly mentions the nine-book collection of Pliny as his inspiration: *addis et causas, quibus hic liber nonus octo superiorum uoluminibus accrescat: eo quod Gaius Secundus, cuius nos orbitas sequi hoc opere pronuntias, paribus titulis opus epistulare determinet* ('You also added reasons, why this ninth book should join the eight earlier books: namely, because Gaius Secundus, whose paths you proclaim me to be following in this work, ends his collection of epistles with the same number of letters').

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[20] LAGPW s.v. 'Epistolography'.
[21] Especially thanks to the work of Michael Roberts.
[22] Van Waarden 2010n31.
[23] LAGPW s.v. 'Epistolography'.
[24] Harries 1994: 16. See also Van Waarden 2010: 40, 244.
[25] Cf. Mathisen' (2013: 243) scepticism about Harries' ''findings''.

Gibson 2013a suggests another reading of Sidonius' book collection. In his 2013 article, Gibson is mainly interested in the 'architecture', or the overall structure of Sidonius' collection of letters, which he reads in the light of Sidonius' great predecessor, Pliny. As Gibson argues, scholars have tended to focus too much on individual letters to detect allusions to Pliny, which are, apart from book 1-3, disappointingly few, but overlook the overarching structure of the collection.[26] Right from the beginning, Sidonius had Pliny in mind as model (see Gibson 2013a: 333-334 on the allusions to Pliny's programmatic opening letter 1.1 in Sidonius' first epistle), which he follows throughout the collection (although difficulties arise in book 6 and 7, where the letters have been arranged by addressees rather than being a medley of different persons, 'a clear move away from the Plinian book unit'[27]). The ending in book 7 and 8 should therefore not be read as evidence for different book instalments, but as false endings, as some claim to have detected in the letters of Pliny (e.g. Whitton 2013b). The idea is attractive, and would testify of Sidonius' artistic genius. Nevertheless, others are more careful (Van Waarden 2016: 30) or even sceptical about seeing too complex types of organization in Sidonius' letter collection. For instance, Mathisen 2013 explains the arrangement of letters (at least partly) by means of archives. He suggests that Sidonius sometimes inserted 'dossiers' in his collection, with letters written to the same persons, about the same topic, carried by the same messenger, etc. This hypothesis would temper too speculative ideas around artistic arrangement of the letters.

Probably, the truth is somewhere in between. As Van Waarden (2016: 30) remarks, Sidonius had thousands of letters to choose from, and one might rightly wonder according to which criteria he selected exactly these letters that can now be found in his collection. For book 8 at least, the wide range of dates of the letters (between 463 (8.12 and 479/480 (8.16)) also argues against, or at least modifies, archive theories.

Recent studies of Sidonius' letters and books of letters have evinced, in my opinion quite convincingly, a certain degree of structure and intentionality. Giannotti 2001 has pointed out the political content of book 1, the focus of book 2 on family and leisure instead, and the turn from the aristocratic world to the crises in the Auvergne during Sidonius' bishopric in book 3. Concerning the placement of individual letters within books, here as well some design is likely. Harries 1994 already pointed at the salient contrast between *Ep.* 8.9, where Lampridius is at the height of his career, and 8.11, where he appears to be murdered by his own slaves.[28]

Nevertheless, Mathisen, with the attention he pays to the material context of letter collections, rightly warn us against too readily finding hidden messages everywhere. An example of pushing the search for coded messages too far forward is, I think, the 2009 article by Overwien. According to him, it was Sidonius' intention by collecting his books of correspondence 'in einer Rückschau darzulegen, wie es zur Herrschaft der Goten kommen

[26] Gibson 2013a: 336: 'we have been staring at the trees and ignoring the forest.'

[27] Gibson 2013a: 350.

[28] I also like the irony of *Ep.* 4.19, the shortest letter in the longest book in terms of letters (25 letters): *Et moras nostras et silentium accusas. Utrumque purgabile est; namque et venimus et scribimus*, 'You blame both my delay and my silence. Both can be easily excused: for I am both coming and writing.' Probably, Florentinus once complained about Sidonius' silence. Now, he finds the answer to his letter back in the collection at the end of the longest book.

konnte und wie man sich ihr (immer noch) widersetzen kann'.[29] In the same way, he reads book 8 as a hidden political resistance ('eine historisch-politische Zielsetzung under dem Deckmantel privater Korrespondez'). Although he offers some interesting insights for the interpretation of the letters of book 8, some of which I will follow in my own overview of book 8 below, I fear that he goes too far in reading 'versteckte Kritik' in every letter. Still, we should always be aware of coded messages in the letters of an artist as Sidonius, although finding them remains a matter of subjective interpretation.

In my opinion, critique on the Visigothic domination is not to be excluded (I will give an example of what I think is hidden critique in my discussion of the structure of book 8 below). Overwien is certainly right in saying that the annexation of the Auvergne by the Visigoths and subsequently their rule over Gaul must have had some impact on Sidonius and his Gallo-Roman aristocratic friends, who considered them as successors of the Roman classical world, and therefore far superior to the Visigothic barbarians. Throughout his letters, Sidonius does not hide his aversion to the Goths (e.g. *Ep.* 3.3, 7.6.4), and his letters as a whole, with their emphasis on literature and orthodox faith, can easily be seen as a statement, or provocation, against those illiterate and Arian barbarians.

3.3 *The structure of book 8*

As is well known, Sidonius' letters are not chronologically ordered. To name an example from book 8, *Ep.* 8.11 - which is, except for the beginning and ending dedicatory letters (8.1 and 8.16), probably the last/most recent letter of book 8, dated somewhere between 476 and 479[30] - is followed by the letter to Trygetius, written around 463. The lack of chronology in Sidonius letters has led scholars to suspect that Sidonius might have had other criteria in mind for the positioning of his letters. One of those criteria might have been theme. in her analysis of the structure of a book of letters, Giannotti 2001 detects other 'criteri orginazzativi' that may have lied behind the arrangement of letters in book 3 (e.g., the first three letters to dignitaries are balanced by the last 3 addressed to *familiares*). She remarks that book 1 focusses on politics, book 2 is concerned with Sidonius' retirement from 461-467, and thus with family and personal properties, and book 3, in which Sidonius appears for the first time as bishop, the focus is mainly on the community and the Visigoths. Nevertheless, although several references are made to the siege by the Visigoths and the distress of the Arvernians, on the whole, a rather hopeful tone prevails (e.g. 3.2, 3.3). Sidonius does not even allow a hint to the outcome of the mission of imperial praetor Licinianus, which will lead to the surrender of Clermont to the Visigoths (3.7). Those topics in turn are withheld for covering in books 7-9.[31]

However, some scholars have detected a rough chronological progress between the first three books.[32] The narrative, so to speak, of the first two books takes place against the background of the Visigothic threat, but before the siege of Clermont at the beginning of the

[29] Overwien 2009: 94.
[30] Mathisen 2013: 229.
[31] In imitation of Pliny, as Gibson 2013ab argues.
[32] See Harries 1994: 7-8, 13-16; Gibson 2013b: 206-219.

470s. Time progresses in book 3, and now the period of the siege by the Visigoths is covered. However, this proceeding pattern is suddenly interrupted from the fourth book onwards, where Sidonius has included letters ranging from 467 and 477, while book 5 concentrates on events before the surrender of Clermont in 475, and book 6, in which only one reference is made to contemporary reality (*Ep.* 6.10.1). Nevertheless, Gibson 2013b sees a pertinacious silence to talk about the events between 475-477, when Clermont was betrayed and Sidonius exiled, as a the binding factor between those books. In fact, exact details of what happened to Clermont and Sidonius are only made known in books 7 and 8 (e.g. the surrender of Clermont and the Auvergne to the Visigoths in 7.7; Sidonius' exile in 8.3). So, as Gibson claims, Sidonius follows the example of Pliny in preserving the most distressful events for the last three books.[33] What, then, is the position of book 8 within the corpus?

Book 7 has been called 'a climax in Sidonius' oeuvre'.[34] It is in this book that Sidonius included the letters relating to his struggle to rescue Clermont and the Auvergne, but *Romanitas* and Catholic faith as well, from the political and social upheavals caused by the coming of the Visigoths. We would expect then that book 8, right after the climactic book 7 where we have read how the Visigoths seized Auvergne and Rome failed to help, would portray life under Visigothic rule. It does so, but in a more subtle and subversive way than might be expected. I think the following themes play a role in book 8:

- **Preserving the Roman heritage:** Book 8 can be read as the aftermath of book 7. In the second letter of the eighth book, we read what aristocratic life looks like in the new political and social situation. No longer able to maintain the positions the Gallo-Roman aristocracy formerly had, the only way to preserve their *Romanitas* is resorting to writing and discussing literature: 'the only token of nobility will be from now one the knowledge of letters'. Hence, the inclusion of letters written during Sidonius' phase of retirement (8.8; 8.12 and the poem in 8.11) in Avitacum, the time that he indeed devoted himself to such an aristocratic life style: literature, writing, visiting friends and the several literary *collegia* in southern Gaul. Several times, he encourages his friends to take a step back from the world of the Visigoths and their business to read and study the Roman heritage. Thus, Leo should put aside his daily occupations as royal spokesman, and study the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (8.3, especially sections 3-5), and Namatius, naval officer under Euric, is sent works by Varro and Eusebius, to study this literature to remove 'the linguistic rust from his mond' (8.6.18: *ori…tuo loquendi robiginem*). Studying literature is absolutely vital, because the Roman heritage is in real danger of extinction under barbarian rule, a theme that occurs in 8.2.2 (and possibly even in the poem inserted in 8.11, where Phoebus-Sidonius, condemned to taverns, becomes more 'barbarian than barbarians' which also effects his poetry). Indeed, literature, like Sidonius' letters, is the only way to preserve *Romanitas* and themselves as aristocracy (cf. 8.5 to Fortunalis, whose excellence will be known to future generations thanks to the place Sidonius gives him in his book). Thus, most of the letters of book 8 concentrate on topics relating to literature and aristocratic life, and conjure up the world of the traditional Roman aristocracy.

[33] Gibson 2013b: 206.

[34] Van Waarden 2010: 41.

- **Illusion versus reality:** Nevertheless, Sidonius makes this aristocratic world heavily collide with the real word. By putting those letters side by side with letters dealing with the harsh reality of the Visigothic rule they live in, he shows the traditional world of Roman aristocracy to be an 'illusory world', so to speak. As Harries (1994: 18) already remarked, the world of the *cursus honorum* and political ambition of *Ep.* 8.7 and 8.8 is betrayed by its juxtaposition with 8.9, where the real condition of Roman aristocracy is revealed. This contrast is even stronger in 8.6, where Sidonius assumes that the addressee Namatius is quietly living the life of an aristocrat, but in reality is waging war against Saxon pirates with the Visigoths. This theme is most subtly worked out in the doublet 8.9 and 8.11, i.e. the letter about Lampridius' fortunate situation followed by 8.11, the letter on his murder. The message seems clear: a life in the style of the traditional Roman aristocracy is no longer possible after the social and political upheavals that the new reign of the Visigoths entailed.
- **Unsteadiness of happiness:** Related to these earlier points, another (sub-)theme of the book is the changeability of happiness, or, to borrow a phrase from Sidonius, the 'wheel of human mutability' (8.11.4: *volubilitatis humanae rota*), especially in the new political and social reality. Sidonius has experienced a turn of fate himself when he was exiled, but the theme is most clearly developed in the Lampridius letters (8.9 and 8.11). However, the arbitrariness of luck also offers an opportunity for glory; after all, 'it is reckoned more noteworthy when times of adversity prove you to be steadfast than prosperity conceals you while happy' (8.5.2: *eminentius censeatur quod probaverunt te adversa constantem, quam si celarent secunda felicem*).

3.4 *Overview of the letters*

With these themes in mind, I will now give an overview of the letter of book 8:

1 The first letter of the book is a reaction to a question of Petronius, a friend of Sidonius and a lawyer from Gaul.[35] As it seems, Sidonius continued writing and added book 8 to the already existing collection of book 1-7 at Petronius' request. Sidonius adds the caveat that annexing another book may find fault with some jealous criticasters. He mentions the example of Demosthenes and Cicero, who both had to suffer from detractions of respectively Demades and Antonius.[36] Despite these drawbacks, Sidonius decides to continue the work, using the *topos* of sailing a stormy sea for his writing activities.

2 Johannes is praised for his endeavour in the study of literary culture in a time of political and literary decline of the Roman culture. Johannes will be compared to Demosthenes and Cicero by contemporaries and posterity alike because thanks to him, they will manage to preserve their ancient roots despite their present subjugation to 'an unconquerable and alien

[35] It does not seem likely to me anymore, but once I thought there might be a pun in the name of Petronius. As Gibson 2013 has pointed out, Sidonius puns on the name of his dedicatees: *Constantius* meaning 'the constant one', and Firminius, 'the firm one'. In the same way, the name *Petronius* is etymologically related to *petra*, 'rock', another symbol for firmness and hardness.

[36] Overwien 2009 thinks that Sidonius' choice for Demosthenes and Cicero as examples is a hidden message. Just like Sidonius, both of them had to go in exile. However, there are some problems with this identification: Demosthenes fled to the island of Kalaureia not out of fear for Demades, but for Antipater.

race'. There might be a hidden warning here: indeed, literary activities are a way of resistance against the barbarians, but both Demosthenes and Cicero were murdered for their resistance against the political leaders. Now the antique Roman culture has been destroyed, 'the only token of nobility will be from now one the knowledge of letters'. After the dedication letter, this is the first letter of the book and is I think programmatic for the rest of book 8. Now, in a time of barbarian rule, the only way of preserving Roman culture is by writing and studying literature.

3 Sidonius sends either a translation or a transcription of the *Life of Apollonius the Pythagorean* to Leo.[37] The work was delayed because Sidonius made this translation/transcription during his exile in the fortress of Livia, where he was continually harassed by anxieties, obligations and rumour of his barbarian neighbours. Leo is encouraged to put aside his obligations as the royal spokesman and court poet of king Euric, and to study this piece of literature instead – again the theme of retreat and study of the literary inheritance. As Overwien (2009: 98) indicates, the copyist Tascius Victorianus and Flavius Nichomachus, in whose footsteps Sidonius claims himself to follow, were important figures for the preservation of ancient Latin literature. Leo is compared to Apollonius in some characteristics, but also implicitly exhorted to follow his example, not to keep the royal gifts for himself, but bestow them to others (Sidonius?).[38]

4 Sidonius praises Consentius' manor, his library and his poetry, which will lead to praise from his contemporaries and fame with posterity. However, Sidonius has begun to live a new life, dedicated to God and Christianity, which included serious thinking and serious reading. Although Consentius is already a devoted Christian, Sidonius encourages him to practice his faith in public. In the end, as Sidonius makes clear, the wealth and richness of this life is only temporal – especially, we might perhaps add, under Visigothic rule (for which Sidonius himself, whose land and position have been taken away, is the perfect example[39]).

5 In this letter, Sidonius speaks about the immortality of and through his letter collection. The addressee Fortunalis has also been given a place in Sidonius' corpus of letters. The reason for this, as Sidonius explains, is that he wants future generations to know the excellent qualities of Fortunalis, even in bad circumstances. Steadiness in adversity deserves more praise than happiness in prosperity.

6 The second longest letter of book 8 is addressed to Namatius, a Gallo-Roman naval officer under the Visigoths, and consists of three parts:
- Praise of Flavius Nicetius. Sidonius feels himself both honoured and ashamed because of Nicetius' praise of his books of letters, which he did not deserve, since the literary efforts of

[37] There has been much discussion about the exact meaning of *exscripsit* and *translatio* in 8.3.1: did Sidonius copy a Greek or a Latin text of the *Life*? Did he translate a Greek work or revise a Latin translation? See most recently on the issue: Cameron 2011: 546-554, who concludes: 'there never was a Latin translation of the *Life of Apollonius*' (554).
[38] Overwien goes even further and thinks that the imprisonment of Apollonius by emperor Domitian served as an encouragement of Leo to free himself from the prison of Euric's influence (100).
[39] Overwien 2009: 101.

his time cannot compete with those of bygone ages. The only exception is Nicetius, whom Sidonius heard speaking when he was still a young man. In what follows, Sidonius extensively describes Nicetius' personality.
- Inquiring about Namatius' well-being. Sidonius assumes that Namatius is living the life of a typical late antique aristocrat: hunting, building, and farming, in the manner of the ancient Romans (Vitruvius and Columella). Sidonius elaborates somewhat on the hunting-part: he berates Namatius for failing to hunt properly and gives him some advice.
- Namatius' real activities as naval captain. Although Sidonius assumed that Namatius is at leisure, the reality is completely different: when he was to close this letter, Sidonius suddenly hears that Namatius is presently campaining against Saxon pirates, the most cruel men who ever lived. However, Sidonius tries to reassure himself that he is worrying in vain: they are no reasons to worry about Namatius' safety (there seems however some implicit irony here: how will Namatius, who cannot even hunt on goats and deer, ever be able to capture the Saxons?). Finally, Sidonius sends him some religious and Roman literary to study, and advises Namatius to put at regular times his businesses aside to keep on working on his own cultivation, to remove 'the rust of his tongue' (*loquendi robiginem*, 8.6.18).

Again, this letter contains a tension that existed for the Gallo-Roman aristocracy between the dream world of leisure and the harsh reality of Visitgothic rule. The message is clear: the Gallo-Romans should persevere in studying their ancient literature, to keep their Roman culture alive which is under the Visigoths in danger of extinction.

7 Sidonius rhetorically asks the addressee Audax what happened to those people who based their status only on their age and wealth rather than on merits or character, and despise a new generation who actually does so. Under the present just emperor (Julius Nepos), such individuals has been set aside. Audax, on the contrary, who has just been appointed as *praefectus urbi,* has not relied on his ancestry, however noble, to gain glory, but on his own efforts.

8 Letter 8 forms a pair with letter 7, in the sense that they convey the same message. Sidonius berates Sygrius - in the manner of Cicero's Catiline orations - for retiring himself from public life and busing himself only with rustic activities. Sidonius urgently exhorts Syagrius to be ambitious and dedicate himself to the state. He needs to find the right balance between private and public affairs.
As Harries (1994: 19) remarks, the reality, where *honores* are not possible anymore at the moment of publication of these letters, is at odds with Sidonius' exhortations to aspire to them. Sidonius conjures up the world of classical Rome, where such ambitions were still possible.

9 From the content of this letter it is clear that it was written during or just after Sidonius' exile. He arrives in Bordeaux where he received a verse epistle from Lampridius who challenges him to write one back. Sidonius complains about the huge difference between their situations: while Lampridius enjoys Visigothic favour, Sidonius has been punished and now desperately tries to gain mercy from king Euric. Nevertheless, he does include a poem in his letter, in which he compares Lampridius to Tityrus and himself to Meliboeus, figures from Virgil's first Eclogue. Like Meliboeus, Sidonius has lost his land and like Tityrus, Lampridius has been favoured, by respectively Augustus and Euric. The song also serves to gain Euric' favour, by (exaggeratedly) praising the Visigothic king.

The contrast with letters 7 and 8 is striking: while these letters concerns the world of Roman state, with its *honores* and offices, the reality under Visigothic domination is completely different: the aristocrat Sidonius has to beg for forgiveness by Euric.[40] However, there seems to be some hidden criticism in the poem, that would detract from the sincerity of Sidonius' praise of Euric. For instance, in the *Eclogue*, Meliboeus complains that they have sown their fields for barbarians (*Ecl.* 1.70-73), a situation similar to Gaul after the arrival of the Visigoths (see e.g. Overwien 2009: 109-110). The fact that Sidonius uses Phalaecian hendecasyllables for his panegyric on Euric, a metre elsewhere used for his *nugae* poems, and refuses to use the dactylic hexameter, which is the proper metre for panegyrics on emperors (cf. his own panegyrics), already indicates that Sidonius does not really regard king Euric of much important (cf. Fo 2002: 173).[41]

10 Sidonius praises the eloquence and style of a letter by his addressee Ruricius, which has however only one shortcoming: its choice of material: the letter was an eulogy of Sidonius. Sidonius inverts the praise of him into praise of Ruricus: the fact that Ruricus could even excel on a 'subject of sterile material' (*materiae sterilis argumentum*) proves the more his brilliance. Sidonius adds some examples of rhetors who in a similar way managed to praise an unworthy subject. Nevertheless, Sidonius ends the letters with some requests for prayers for his shortcomings rather than false flattering eloquence.

Although letter 9 and 11 (the 'Lampridius-letters') clearly form an unity, they are separated by this letter to Ruricus. I think that Sidonius intended some irony with the particular arrangement of these letters. A letter about the praising of unworthy subjects right after a letter in which Sidonius extensively eulogized the Visigothic king Euric (letter 9) must have been very appropriate in the eyes of the Gallo-Roman aristocrats under Visigothic rule. Several scholars have already detected some subversive elements in the panegyric on Euric (see above), and I think the ordering of the letters only adds to undermining Sidonius' sincerity in his praise of king Euric.

11 The letter to Lupus on the murder of Lampridius forms a doublet with 8.9. In 8.9, Sidonius has been exiled and bereaved from his land, and is begging Euric to be pardoned, while Lampridius is already enjoying the king's favour and occupies a honourable position as royal spokesman and court poet. On the other hand, in letter 8.11, Sidonius seems to be restored, and is now the fortunate one, while Lampridius has been murdered by his own slaves. On request of Lupus, Sidonius inserts a poem in the letter, which deals with Sidonius' arrival in Bordeaux and seeking for accommodation, which must have been somewhere in the 460s. Next, he elaborately praises Lampridius' personality, literary style and writings, but with some reservations: Lampridius was not perfect, but had his faults. He was hot-tempered (which may have been the reason for his being murdered), and, what seems to have been fatal, he once consulted astrologers on the end of his life, and gave credence to their predictions. Lampridius died in exactly the manner and time as has been predicted: he was strangled by his slaves. Sidonius ends the letter with an urgent warning: everyone who pries into areas forbidden by the Church, deserves a similar fate.

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[40] Cf. Harries 1994: 17-18: 'it was Euric, and the other Germanic kings, who had denied to Gauls like Syagrius and his descendents the chance to pursue Roman careers'.

[41] Thus, we may wonder if it is true that the 'poem in praise of Euric included in the letter installs the king in the place of the Roman emperor' (Gibson 2013b: 215). Cf. Fo 2002 and Overwien 2009 for a critical reading of this letter.

The theme of unsteadiness of fortune under barbarian rule comes most clearly to the fore in the doublet 8.9 – 8.11. Even someone as fortunate and lucky as Lampridius is in danger of losing his life. Possibly, Sidonius utters some critique at the Visigothics: in their kingdom, even their protégés are not safe, but can be murdered by their own slaves.[42]

At the same time, Sidonius repeats another theme running through book 8: the difference between the ideal aristocratic world and the harsh reality: the poem, which conjures the world of literature and friendship, is a *Sehnsucht*, as it were, amidst the cruel reality described in the rest of the letter.

12 After the Lampridius-letters, Sidonius inserted a letter to Trygetius, whom he invites to come to Bordeaux again. Apparently, for one reason or another, Trygetius was staying in the town of Bazas, and had no intention to go to Bordeaux. Sidonius tries to persuade the addressee by reminding him of the good old times that they travelled around together. He mentions a possible reason for his staying away, i.e. the bad season in Bordeaux, but immediately refutes this argument. Finally, he tries another path, and says that the whole literary circle of Bordeaux is eagerly waiting for him, and goes on to describe the beauty of their house and the delicious food, and challenges Trygetius to defeat the typical food of Bordeaux with his Mediterranean cuisine - which must be, I believe, a metaphor for poetry and poetry competition.

This letter is probably the oldest of book 8 (ca. 463), so there must be good reasons for Sidonius to include it in his book. The position of this letter right after 8.9 and 8.11 is striking: an invitation to Bordeaux seems not be attractive, given that the reader has just read that Bordeaux is the place where the Visigothic court is located and Lampridius was murdered. Thus, there are in fact two good reasons to avoid Bordeaux: the city is both the lion's den and a place full dangers.

13 The next three letters (13-15) are addressed to bishops. Nunechius, bishop of Nantes, received a letter by Sidonius in which the latter praises the bishops' virtues, and, especially, his charity Sidonius has heard about. After these homages, he recommends his letter-bearer, Promotus, a former Jew who has converted to Christianity, to Nunechius. Sidonius describes Promotus' conversion in allegorical sense by using Biblical language.

14 Sidonius, although not having seen the addressee, bishop Principius, in real life, knows of the bishop's saintly conduct because he has heard about it. The good report is reliable, since Sidonius heard it from bishop Antiolus, the former head of the Lérins community. Sidonius compares the triad of Principius' father, his brother and Principius himself with Aaron and his two sons, but the former even surpasses Aaron's family, since Aaron also had two other sons, Nadab and Abihu, who were punished for offering strange fire to God. In the following, Sidonius praises Principius' conduct as bishop in terms of the Old Testament priesthood and sacrificial system. Sidonius refers to the letter-bearer, Megethius, and expresses his hope to receive more letters from Principius in the nearby future, or, when the route is too difficult for frequent communication, at least hopes for his prayers.

[42] Overwien 2009: 111.

15 In the last bishop's letter, Sidonius reacts to a request from Prosperus to write the history of the war with Attila, in order to preserve the character, merits and virtues of Annianus, the former bishop of Orléans. During the siege of Orléans by the Huns, Annianus prophesied that Aëtius would bring help, which he indeed did. Sidonius had started with the work, but quickly realised that it was too much for him. He promises to write a panegyric on Annianus instead, and asks Prosperus to exempt him from his former promise.

The three letters to bishops at the end of book 8 seems strange. We have had a whole series of letters directed to bishops in book 6 and 7. On the other hand, the insertion of these letters in book 8 seems understandable in light of what Van Waarden (2016: 26) says about the letters of book 6 and 7: 'Bishops (6.1-7.11) and monastic figures and clerics-to-be (7.12-18) are at the centre of the world-to-come, replacing – or rather, transposing and exalting – the existing aristocratic hierarchy.' Sidonius understood that in his time the old Roman world is slowly being transformed into the new Christian society, with its clerics and bishops (a theme also addressed in the fourth letter, where Consentius is encouraged to show his faith publicly). No wonder that book 9 will mainly consists of bishops' letters as well: they show the new reality. Nevertheless, Sidonius does return to old-style poetry at the end of book 9, and closes the book with several poems. These are presented as a last farewell, but could just as well be seen as a token of resilience of the old aristocracy as well.

16 Book 8 is sealed off by a letter to Constantius, the dedicatee and reviser of the first seven books. In it, Sidonius explains why he did not ask Constantius but Petronius to revise this book: although Petronius has been asked to revise the book, Constantius has been given the honour of being the dedicatee of the entire corpus. Sidonius writes further about the style and content of his book: he did not allow a 'fictitious Muse' (*commenticiam Terpsichorem*), avoided commonplaces, and used an old-fashioned diction. The smallness of the work is an advantage, since it will please the reader and at the same time gives the criticaster less material to carp at. He closes the letter with belittling his own book and saying that his potential readers will either deceive him to refuse criticism or themselves in their affection for him.

3.5 *Counting words*

Besides chronology and theme, there are, however, other ways of looking at the structure of Sidonius' books. In his commentary on Pliny's book 2, Whitton takes a novel approach to the arrangement of letter corpora. He argues that Pliny actually minutely paid attention to the number of words or syllables of his letters and that this was one of the guiding principles behind the positioning of the letters. By doing this, Pliny followed ancient rhetoric procedure, which was concerned with syllabically matched phrases.[43] Although aware of the dangers inherent to 'pattern-hunting', he suggests some parallels and symmetries in the book on basis of word number.[44] Furthermore, Giannotti 2001 notices that first three and the

[43] Whitton 2015: online.

[44] E.g. 2.1-3 (843 words) and 2.18-20 (842 words), 2.9-11 (1298 words) and 2.12-16 (1088 words). See Whitton 2013a: 14.

antepenultimate and the penultimate letter of the third book of Sidonius' correspondence are the longest letters of the book and might form 'un pendant'.[45]
I have analysed book 8 in a similar way, by counting the numbers of words of each letter. The following table gives the results of the analysis:

Letter	**Addressee**	**Word Number**	**Number of Paragraphs (Loeb)**
8.1	Petronius	177	3
8.2	Johannes	134	3
8.3	Leo	387	6
8.4	Consentius	281	4
8.5	Fortunalis	100	2
8.6	Namatius	1092	18
8.7	Audax	219	4
8.8	Syagrius	177	3
8.9	Lampridius	629	6
8.10	Ruricius	277	4
8.11	Lupus	1181	14
8.12	Trygetius	467	8
8.13	P Nunechius	241	4
8.14	P Principius	446	8
8.15	P Prosper	129	2
8.16	Constantius	314	5

If we exclude the dedication letters 8.1 and 8.16, a 'pattern-hunter' may spot at least some attention to balance in the book: the two letters at the beginning and the end, 8.2 and 8.15 have approximately the same number of words (134 and 129 respectively); with a few exceptions, the same balance could be detected in each of the letters following or preceding them: 8.3 and 8.14 (resp. 387 and 446), 8.4 and 8.13 (resp. 281 and 241), 8.6 and 8.11 (resp. 1092 and 1181), and 8.7 and 8.10 (resp. 219 and 277). The inner two letters, 8.8 and 8.9 do not follow the pattern (resp. 177 and 629), nor do they have special importance as being the central two letters of this scheme. 8.5 and 8.12 (resp. 100 and 467) also seems to disrupt the pattern.
Although such patterns are always a matter of interpretation, and to be accepted or not, the analysis does definitely not exclude the possibility that word counts may have played a role in the arrangement of letters.

[45] Giannotti 2001: 30.

4 Letter 8.11

4.1. *Status Quaestionis*

Letter 8.11 have attracted interest from a couple of scholars, mainly in the form of a translation or a short overview of the letter with some interpreting notes. Since translators are at the same time also interpreters, I also pay attention in my commentary to their translations, which betray their interpretation of the text.

In his 1609 edition of Sidonius' poems and letters, Savaron makes some notes about the text, which are especially valuable for the detecting of possible inter- and intratexts. His remarks on the Latin text about the two contending cities in the first sections of the letter (11.1-11.2) support my own interpreting of this passage. However, although his notes are helpful, Savaron was mainly interested in individual words and phrases, but nowhere aims at a more interpretive reading of the letter.

The Loeb edition by Anderson offers some explanatory footnotes on difficult passages and obscure words (e.g. *pavimentum*), but also has some more interpretive notes. In particular, Anderson and the reviser of Anderson's translation, E.H. Warmington, briefly discuss the ambiguity that lurks behind Sidonius' view on astrology (11.9-11.10). They conclude: '[Sidonius] has a lurking suspicion that there is something in astrology, but as a good Catholic he condemns it as false. In these concluding paragraphs he is not consistent' (468n.2). However, as might be expected from a translation, their contribution to interpret the letters remains limited.

The same verdict goes for the translation by the French Sidonius-specialist André Loyen. In the few footnotes he offers at the end of his third volume of text and translation of Sidonius' oeuvre, he does not give new insights; for instance, about the astrology-passages, he comments: 'La phrase est embarrassée, peut-être à dessein : Sidoine est partagé entre l'intérêt qu'il a toujours porté à l'astrologie et la doctrine de l'Église à ce sujet' (Loyen 3: 201n49).

Besides translations notes, Ep. 8.11 has attracted some further attention from scholars. In her 1979 study Furtiva Lectio, Gualandri mentions the letter passim, but since her book is a study on the style of Sidonius, she is mainly interested in single words. The same applies to other monographs on Sidonius' style, e.g. Condorelli 2008 and Onorato 2016. Other works pay some attention to *Ep.* 8.11 in the context of other letters of book 8. In her important 1994 monograph on Sidonius, Harries shortly discusses coded messages in the books of Sidonius. She points out the salient near juxtaposition of 8.9 and 8.11, and suggests to read an intentional strategy here. Overwien 2009 analysis the letters of book 8 for their hidden political message, but hardly mentions *Ep.* 8.11 (see Introduction 3 *Book 8*). Mratschek's chapter in the recent volume Late Antique Letter Collections (2017) discusses 8.11 in context of the swan metaphor in Sidonius' letters. She makes some interesting readings of the letter, but very limited, which is understandable since Mratschek aims to sketch Sidonius' poetic self-presentation in his letters.

There are in fact two more detailed studies on Ep. 8.11. In 1995, Antonio La Penna wrote

an article in the journal Maia, entitled 'Il Poeta e Retore Lampridio. Un Ritratto di Sidonio Apollinare'. As the title indicates, La Penna is interested in the representation of Lampridius in Sidonius' letters. He closely analyses *Ep.* 8.9 and 8.11; in fact, his study comes close to a commentary: he translates a couple of sentences each time and give a short explanation of the text. Often, his commentary is not more than a paraphrase of the Latin, but he does give some interesting insights into the text. However, since he is only interested in the person of Lampridius, his analyses and comments are restricted to the passages that deal with Lampridius. Neither does he read the letters in context, or explore the intertextuality between the two letters.

The second study on Ep. 8.11 is by the French Latinist Étienne Wolff, who published his article 'La lettre VIII, 11 de Sidoine Apollinaire sur le rhéteur Lampridius' in 2015. His article is written for a broader audience, and a big part of the text is used for paraphrasing the letter. Wolff is the first who examines in some detail the intertextuality of the letter with Pliny *Ep*. 3.14 on the murder of Larcius Macedo (193-194), and points out the reversion of situation in 8.9 and 8.11 (195-196). He too remarks on Sidonius' ambiguous attitude towards astrology (195). He ends his article with a discussion of the relationship between Sidonius and Lampridius, and for the first time ventures into the question of the function of the poem in the letter. He concludes: 'L'insertion d'un poème léger d'autrefois…a en réalité une fonction, qui est double. Il s'agit, d'abord, d'opposer le temps passé du bonheur insouciant et de la création poétique au temps présent de la violence et de la suprématie wisigothe…Ensuite, le poème annonce la nature des relations entre Sidoine et Lampridius, essentiellement une amitié littéraire qui a dépassé les clivages politiques' (196). The poem functions as a bridge between past times, when Roman culture was still flourishing, and the current days, under the dominance of the barbarian Visigoths: writing belles-lettres to Sidonius was a mark of Roman identity.

4.2 *Date*

Book 8 as a whole must have been published after the publication of book 1-7 (477/478), and is by most scholars dated to around 480. Hence, this date forms an *ante quem* for all the letters of book 8. Loyen first attempted to date the letters from their content, and his suggestions have been mostly accepted by later scholars. While some letters can be dated quite precisely (8.3, 8.7), for 8.11 only a relative date can be given. It is clear that 8.11 forms a doublet with 8.9, and that 8.11 was written after 8.9. 8.9 was evidently written during Sidonius' exile, which took place between 475-476. Since 8.11 does not say a word about his exile, but speaks in a jovial manner to the addressee Lupus, the letter is very likely written after his exile, thus after 475/476. Further specification of the date is not possible, and proposed dates range from 477 to 480 (*477-478:* Loyen 3: 216; *479-480*: La Penna 1995: 215) but these are all speculative.[46] To Mathisen 2013: 229 it is even likely that 8.11, except for the dedicatory letters at the beginning and the end of the book (8.1 and 8.16), is the last letter of the corpus.

Indeed, besides the mention of the death of Lampridius, there are not many historical clues

[46] Mathisen 2013: 229.

in the letter which allow any further specification of date. However, I incline towards a later date, i.e. rather 479 than 477, mainly because of that lack of any references to the historical context. In some of his letters written just after his exile, e.g. *Ep.* 4.10, Sidonius complains about the situation and the difficulties of communication (he even has to ask his patron for permission to visit another city: *patronus indulgeat, advolaturi, ut rebus amicitia vegetetur, quae verbis infrequentata torpuerat*, 4.10.2). In 8.11, those references are completely absent: as if nothing has happened, Gallic cities, now under Visigothic rule, compete for Lupus' services, rhetorical education is given (8.2: *a te instructio rhetorica poscatur*), and letters are freely being sent, apparently without any trouble (8.14: *citus indica* (But for 'illusion' in Sidonius letters of book 8, see Introduction 3.3 *The structure of book 8*). Apparently, peace seems to be restored for Sidonius, which should have taken some time.

4.3 *Names*

4.3.1 Addressee

Nothing more is known of the addressee, Lupus, than can be inferred from the content of this letter. From the scarce information Sidonius gives us about this person, we know that he was related to two cities in the ancient province *Aquitanica Secunda*, in modern southern France: the *Nitiobroges*, the name for the inhabitants of the ancient city of Agennum (modern Agen), and the *Vesunnici* from the city of Vesunna, now Périgueux. For the latter, Sidonius uses an ancient tribe name, since the city was called *civitas Petrucoriorum* at the time of Sidonius. See BNP s.v. *Nitiobroges* and *Petrocorii*.

Sidonius funnily remarks how both cities compete for Lupus to name him their citizen. One city claims Lupus, because Lupus' own family hailed from there, the other because it was the city of origin of Lupus' family-in-law.

However, there seems to be some confusion in modern literature around which city is which. Anderson 2: 455, Loyen 3: 200n40, PLRE 2: 694, Kaufmann 1995: 322-323 and other secondary literature (e.g. Wolff 2015: 191, who bases himself on PLRE) all say that Lupus was born in Périgueux and that he was through marriage connected to the city of Agen. They base their assertion on the beginning of letter 11: *Quid agunt Nitiobroges, quid Vesunnici tui?... unus te patrimonio populus, alter etiam matrimonio tenet; cumque hic origine, iste coniugio, melius illud, quod uterque iudicio*. However, the structure of the Latin, in which the words that refer to birth (*patrimonio, origine*) are placed first and the words relating to marriage (*matrimonio, coniugio*) second, would suggest that Lupus was actually born in Agen and his family-in-law was from Périgueux:

Nitiobroges/Agen	Vesunnici/Périgueux
unus…populus + patrimonio	*alter…matrimonio*
hic + origine	*iste coniugio*
Drepanium illis	*istis…Anthedium*

Savaron, one of the first editors of Sidonius' oeuvre, did identify the cities correctly: see e.g. his note on *unus te patrimonio populus:* 'id est, populus Nitiobrogum; alter, id est, populus Petrocororum. Postea: *Hic origine*, i. Aginnensis, *iste coniugio*, i. Vesunnicus. Unde et Lupus Aginnensis recte dictus est' (1599: 505). So, the error must have been slipped in after Savaron.[47]

Further, according to Sidonius, Lupus gave *rhetorica instructio* (see section 2), which means that he was probably a rhetor and/or a professor in rhetoric. He was probably a member of the literary circle of Bordeaux, just like Sidonius. Finally, in 8.11.10 Sidonius shortly remarks on another occupation of Lupus: *licet et ipse arithmeticae studeas et, quae diligentia tua, Vertacum Thrasybulum Saturninum sollicitus evolves, ut qui semper nil nisi Arcanum celsumque meditere* ('although you yourself as well studies arithmetic and, with a diligence that is characteristic of you, painstakingly reads Vertacus Thrasybulus, Saturninus, and those with your great care, so that you never meditate on anything unless the secret and lofty'). Apparently, Lupus concerned himself with the study of arithmetic, an important subject within the field of astrology, and 'painstakingly' read astrological handbooks.

Lupus may be identical with the addressee of a letter by Ruricius, bishop of Limoges and friend of Sidonius. One of Lupus' home towns, Périgueux, bordered on the territory of Limoges, [48] so it is not unlikely that those two members of the aristocracy might have known each other. Ruricius' letter 1.10 is addressed to *Domino pectoris sui Lupo* ('Lupus, lord of his own heart'). In any case, this letter does not reveal anything more about Lupus.

4.3.2 Lampridius

Although 8.11 is addressed to Lupus, Sidonius does not pay much attention to him. Instead, the recently deceased Lampridius receives most attention. Lampridius frequently occurs throughout Sidonius' oeuvre, and from those occurrences, we can glean some information about Lampridius' life.

Although his birthplace is unknown, Lampridius used to live in the city of Bordeaux (*Ep.* 8.9), where he taught poetry and rhetoric (*[Lampridius] declamans gemini pondere sub stili / coram discipulis Burdigalensibus*, '[Lampridius], declaiming for his pupils of Bordeaux under the weight of both styles'). He was also a member of the circle of Bordeaux, and maintained contact with the imperial court (*Ep.* 9.13.4). Under the Visigoths, he was in favour with Euric: according to *Ep.* 8.9 C. 12, his lands were restored to him by the Visigoths, although this might be metaphorical language. In any case, he enjoyed the king's munificence (8.9.1), which included citizenship (8.9.3). See PLRE 2: 656-657.

Ep. 8.11 gives some information about Lampridius' character. He appears to have been 'hot-tempered' (8.11.4) and possibly even 'cruel' (*naevo crudelitatis*, but see *comm. ad loc.*). He was slightly credulous (8.11.4), and superstitious, since he believed the astrological predictions that were made about his death. Finally, he was murdered in his own house at the hands of his own slaves, somewhere between 476 and 480.

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[47] In his fortcoming chapter in the Prolegomena to Sidonius Apollinaris, Mathisen gives the right combination.
[48] Mathisen 1999: 120.

4.4 *Intertextuality and models*

Intertextuality in Sidonius' letters is rarely specific.[49] When it is found, one should still bear in mind the difference between a real allusion, i.e. where the original context in which the allusion appears is meaningful for Sidonius' letters, and phrases and words borrowed from ancient authors that serve no further goal in Sidonius' letters other than embellishing the text or showing off knowledge.

Meaningful allusions made be find when Sidonius uses intertextuality to indirectly compare Lampridius to the famous poet Horace. In his defence of Lampridius' character, he seems to refer to Horace' *Satires*, where the poet defends himself against accusations of criticasters (see *comm. ad* 8.11.4 *licet quibusdam… erratis implicaretur atque virtutibus minora misceret* and *naevo crudelitatis*). And like Horace and Pindar before him, Lampridius is said to be flying away as a swan, symbol for poetic immortality (but for ambiguity here, see *comm. ad* 8.11.7 *evolaturum*).

Further, apart from some micro-allusions, intertextuality in *Ep.* 8.11 is probably most clear in its use of models. The letters has been inspired by two letters of Pliny. First, as has already been detected in earlier literature, *Ep.* 3.14 on the murder of Larcius Macedo. Just like Lampridius, Macedo too has been murdered by his own slaves. Wolff (2015: 194) names some similarities between the two letters: Macedo was cruel and overbearing (3.14.1), Lampridius was quick-tempered (8.11.4), both were murdered in their houses by their hands of their own slaves. Besides, there are also some words which both letters have in common, e.g. both Macedo and Lampridius were put down after the attack on a *pavimentum*. It is also interesting to see where Sidonius deviates from his model: while Pliny notes that Macedo lived long enough to get revenge (3.14.4), Sidonius explicitly says that Lampridius did not (8.11.13). With *Ep.* 3.14 as model in mind, we might even suspect that Lampridius was killed for the same reason as Marcedo: Marcedo was *superbus* and *saevus*, which led the slaves to murder him; although Sidonius does not say so in so many words, he seems to suggest that Lampridius besides being quick-tempered was also cruel (8.11.4: *crudelitatis*). It is quite self-evident that Sidonius chose this letter as a model. He was very familiar with the letters of Pliny, and it was obvious to take a letter on someone murdered by his own slaves as model for a letter on the death of a friend who was also murdered by his own slaves.

However, as I argue in my commentary, there is another letter by Pliny that served as a model for Sidonius' letter. 3.21, a letter from the same book as the Macedo-letter, is a homage to the deceased poet Martial, mainly known for his books of epigrams. Just like Pliny, Sidonius inserts a poem in his letter. Both poems deal with Thalia. In Pliny's poem – which is, in fact, borrowed from Martial 10.20 - the Muse is sent to the house of Pliny to offer him some verses; in Sidonius' poem, Thalia is exhorted to go ahead to Bordeaux to ask Lampridius and his other friends for accommodation. Although the poems are admittedly not similar in content, the fact that Sidonius decided to insert this particular poem about Thalia in his letter on the death of Lampridius would have suffice to make the allusion (for further analysis of the two poems, see the introduction to the poem in the commentary).

These intertexts, the choice for Plin. *Ep.* 3.21 model for 8.11, and the allusions to Horace,

[49] Van Waarden 2016: 48.

clearly serve a deeper goal: the comparison with the great poets Horace and Martial enhances Sidonius' already extensive praise of Lampridius only further. Other examples of (possible) meaningful allusions are the references to Statius' *Silvae* in the context of the poem of this letter (see *comm. ad loc.*), which adds to Sidonius' sorrow, and the allusions to Pseudo-Clemens' *Recognitiones* in Sidonius' dismission of astrology (for a discussion of which see 4.6 *Sidonius and astrology*).

One final intertext deserves mention, not because it is meaningful, in the sense that it adds to the interpretation of the text, but because it shows Sidonius' extensive education. In 8.11.11, Sidonius bemoans the death of Lampridius. He compares the manner in which his friend died, by strangling, to some other famous examples of figures from Roman history who were killed by strangulation. As in a *praeteritio*, he says not to want to compare Lampridius to some negative historical figures (the conspirator Lentulus, Rome's archenemy Jugurtha, the usurpator Sejanus), but to the Roman hero Scipio Numantinus, who destroyed Carthage in 146 BC and ended the Spanish war in 133 BC by capturing Numantia. Interestingly, as I try to show in my commentary (see *comm. ad loc.* 8.11.11 *Numantini Scipionis*), the account of his death that is given by the Greek historiographer Plutarch is strikingly similar, not only in terms of events, but also in vocabulary. The question remains open if we might infer from this that Sidonius had even read Plutarch.

4.5 *Interpretation*

An interpretation of one letter of Sidonius is not possible. As has become clear in recent research, Sidonius' letters gain meaning through their clustering together. Sidonius was not so much interested in individual letters, but the message he wanted to communicate must be sought beyond the individual letter, i.e. in the context of the whole book of letters, or even the entire corpus. So, I will firstly interpret the letter according to the themes I have identified in the whole of book 8 (see *3.1 Structure of book 8*), and show why this letter was inserted in the eighth book. Secondly, apart from its place in book 8, there are still some issues in *Ep.* 8.11 that deserve some attention. Indeed, the letter was once sent as an individual letter, without context. Therefore, we might justly ask the question what Sidonius actually wanted to say with this letter.

4.5.1 The message of Ep. 8.11 in the context of book 8

As many have noticed, *Ep.* 8.11 forms a doublet with 8.9. Both deal with the figure of the rhetor and poet Lampridius, but form a sharp contrast. In 8.9 Lampridius sends Sidonius a letter in verse and challenges him to write verses back, but for Sidonius it is not the proper time for poems: while Lampridius is in favour with Euric and enjoys royal favour, Sidonius has just returned from exile, his properties have been confiscated and he is begging king Euric to pardon him. In 8.11, we do not read anything about Sidonius' exile, so probably he has already been reinstated as bishop of Clermont. By then, the picture has been turned around: Lampridius, once fortunate, has been killed at the hands of his own slaves. As has

been said above (3.3. *The structure of book 8*), the theme of unsteadiness of fortune plays an important role in this letter. At the same time, criticism of Visigothic rule also lurks in the background of this pair of letters: nothing is safe in the new political and societal reality, not even king Euric's favourites.[50]

Another theme, 'the ideal world of past times versus the harsh reality of the present' also returns in this letter. The poem in the letter, which was written during Sidonius' period of retirement, calls to mind the good old times of aristocratic leisure, poetry and friendship, while it heavily contrasts with the surrounding letter about Lampridius' cruel death.[51] For these reasons, *Ep.* 8.11 neatly fits in the context of book 8.

4.5.2 The message of Ep. 8.11

Studies on this letter mainly concentrate on Lampridius. As has been shown in the *Status Quaestionis*, the two main studies on this letter, by Wolff and especially the one by La Penna, are concerned with the relationship between Sidonius and Lampridius and the personality of Lampridius as presented in the letter. Reading this letter with an eye on the figure Lampridius is, of course, a legitimate approach, given that Lampridius and his death are the main topics in the letter. However, we should bear in mind that the letter was originally directed to Lupus. We might just as well ask what the importance of the letter was to him: what was Sidonius' original message to Lupus?

I think we might find an answer in the two different parts the letter consists of. Like other letters of Sidonius, such as 8.6, *Ep.* 8.11 can roughly be divided into two, contrasting parts. In the first, smaller part of the letter (8.11.1-2), the tone of the letter is casual and light-hearted. Sidonius inquires after Lupus' hometowns, and in a cheerful manner describes how they compete to claim him as their own. In this first part, Sidonius presents Lupus as a successful, blessed (*munere Dei*) and lucky man (*felicem*), who is highly popular with the cities of Agen and Périgueux, who both desire him as a professor of rhetoric.

All of a sudden, when Sidonius turns to Lupus' request for poems, he appears to be in great mourning, since he has just heard that his friend Lampridius has been killed. Unlike the first part, the tenor of the second part of the letter (8.11.3-14) is therefore very saddened. In extensive length, Sidonius praises the deceased's character and poetical and rhetorical qualities. In fact, besides his quick-temper, he had only one real shortcoming: once he consulted astrologers on the end of his life, and what was worse, he put faith in their predictions. For that reason, Sidonius' verdict is very harsh: 'For anyone who has ventured to pry into interdicted, secret, forbidden things, I fear that such kind of person will stray away from the rules of the church's doctrine and deserves to come to a situation that he gets unfavourable answers, since unlawful things are being inquired' (8.11.13: *nam quisque praesumpserit interdicta secreta vetita rimari, vereor huius modi catholicae fidei regulis*

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[50] Cf. Overwien (2009: 111): 'Ist dies das neue Arkadien neue Friedensordnung der Goten, in der Sklaven ihre Herren töten?'

[51] Cf. Wolff (2015: 196): [Le poème léger] s'agit d'abord, d'opposer le temps passé du bonheur insouciant et de la création poétique au temps présent de la violence et de la suprématie wisigoths (même si la mort de Lampridius n'a pas de rapport avec la domination des Wisigoths). Nevertheless, there might be some hidden critique in the poem, as it may have some parallels with Sidonius' exile. See *comm. ad* Carmen 35, *Position* and *A hidden message?*

exorbitaturum et effici dignum in statum cuius respondeantur adversa, dum requiruntur inlicita). Inferring from what we know about Lupus from this letter, the warning definitely applies to him. Indeed, in 8.11.10, we have just read that Lupus himself also – just like Lampridius – is a fervent student of arithmetic and astrology. Sidonius does not say so in so many words, but it seems clear that he urgently warns Lupus. Sidonius uses the case of Lampridius' murder to make clear to Lupus that astrology is a very dangerous territory. This is exactly the reason why he pays so much attention to prove that Lampridius was murdered according to the manner and time that has been foretold: he points out the traces on his body that suggest strangulation, and mentions the confession of the slaves, who were, as he is quick to add, examined *separately* (8.11.12). Regardless of the exact reliability of astrology, the bishop Sidonius discourages Lupus from prying into an area that is forbidden for humans: the future belongs to God alone.

However, there is more: the indirect comparison between Lampridius and Lupus is made even stronger when one considers the former situations of both men: both were happy, fortunate and blessed. In 8.9, Lampridius is called 'happy' (8.9.3: *felicem*); the same adjective is applied to Lupus in 8.11.1. Of course, Lupus did not know *Ep.* 8.9, as the readers of the book do, but he did know Lampridius' former fortuitous situation. So what is true for Lampridius, is true for Lupus: human happiness is not steady, don't waste it by prying into forbidden secrets of one's future, like the hapless Lampridius did.

4.6 *Sidonius and astrology*

The relationship between Sidonius and astrology has always puzzled scholars. Sidonius' attitude towards astrology does not immediately seem straightforward. In this section, I will delve somewhat deeper into the astrological passages of the letter.

4.6.1 Ps-Clemens

At first glance, Sidonius condemns the practice of astrology. To him as a good Christian, consulting the stars is similar to *vana consultat* ('consulting idle things') and straying from the orthodox faith (*catholicae fidei regulis exorbitaturum*). Sidonius might have emphasised his renouncement of astrology by an allusion to the pseudo-Clementine literature, stories around Clement, a companion of St. Peter on his travels. In the most famous part, the *Recognitiones*, Clemens describes how Peter and himself, while staying in the Palestine city of Caesarea, were harassed by an annoying old man who despises their Christian faith because in his eyes everything is governed by fate. The discussion that ensued, in which Peter and Clement tried to refute the old man's belief in astrology, is one of the longest refutations of astrology in early Christian literature. In one passage, Peter and Clement bring up the argument that if someone goes to two different astrologers, he will receive two different predictions. The syntax and vocabulary of their argument is very similar to Sidonius' in *Ep.* 8.11:

[Mathematicus] respondebit tibi sine dubio, quia tempora tua malitiosus suscepit Mars aut Saturnus, aut aliquis horum apocatastaticus fuit, aut aliquis annum tuum aspexit ex diametro aut coniunctus

aut in centro, vel alia his similia respondebit, addens, quia in his omnibus aliquis aut asyndetus fuit cum malo aut invisibilis aut in schemate aut extra haeresim aut deficiens aut non contingens aut in obscuris stellis, et multa alia his similia secundum rationes proprias respondebit et de singulis adsignabit (Ps-Clem. 10.11.3)

'[The astrologer] will answer you without doubt that a malignant Mars has taken up your dates or Saturn or one of those was returning, or one looked upon your year from opposition or in conjunction or in the centre, or he will answer other things very similar to these, adding that in all these things something was either standing-alone with evil or invisible or in your horoscope or outside division or eclipsed or not connecting or in dark stars, and many other things similar to those will he answer according to his own calculations, and consign about particulars.'

In a same way, Sidonius also offers a list of different possibilities which mockingly imitates the astrologer: *hunc in occasu cruentis ignibus inrubescentes seu super diametro Mercurius asyndetus seu super tetragono Saturnus retrogradus seu super centro Mars apocatastaticus exacerbassent*. Moreover, the adjective *apocatastaticus* ('annually returning to the same position') only occurs in Ps-Clemens in the literature before Sidonius, as does *asyndetus* ('standing-alone') in the astrological sense of the word. The Greek text of the *Recognitiones* - which must have been written before 350 AD - has unfortunately been lost, but we have a Latin translation by Tyrannius Rufinus (344/345-411), with whom Sidonius certainly was familiar, as he mentions him as a translator in *Ep.* 2.9.5 and *Ep.* 4.3.7. If Sidonius modeled himself after the *Recognitiones*, his message is clear: the reference to a famous passage in which Peter refutes astrology would strengthen his own critique of Lampridius' astrology.

4.6.2 Sidonius' ambiguity

Nevertheless, there are also some good reasons to question Sidonius' sincerity in dismissing astrology. First, Sidonius happens to have a remarkably extensive and precise knowledge of astrology - especially for a bishop – that goes beyond what could be possibly learnt from the *Recognitiones*. Sidonius seems to know the meaning of the position of the planets very well (e.g. a *Mercurius asyndetus* means problems for *quicumque docti sermonis disciplinam fuerint assecuti,* see *comm. ad* 11.9 *super Mercurius asyndetus*). Furthermore, in 8.11.10, Sidonius mentions three other writers of astrological handbooks, two of which also appears in *C.* 22 *Ep.* 3 where he praises them as *membris philosophiae* and *peritissimos conditores*. Reading through Sidonius' oeuvre, it becomes clear that astrology was well known and even popular among the Gallic aristocracy, as not only the case of Lampridius shows, but also the mysterious Phoebus in *C.*22 *epist.* 2, a member of the literary circle of Bordeaux, who even 'surpasses all mathematicians and astrologers in the art of discoursing' (*arithmeticos et astrologos disserendi arte supervenit*). Lupus, the addressee of *Ep.* 8.11, finally addressed again by Sidonius in 8.11.10, appears to have 'painstakingly' (*sollicitus*) read the astrological handbooks. The fact that Sidonius invites Lupus for further discussion about astrology in 8.11.10 (*rectius coram*) indicates that Sidonius himself also has a good share of knowledge about and interest in the subject.

Secondly, Sidonius' narrative seems even to suggest that he believed that astrology was reliable. After all, 'the time and manner of death that was predicted entangled' Lampridius (*tempus et qualitas praedictae mortis innexuit*) (cf. Anderson: 468n2 and Wolff 2013: 195). The time and the manner of death that was predicted by the astrologers to Lampridius have turned out, rather surprisingly, to be true. One wonders what to make of Sidonius' perseverance in calling astrology nevertheless *maxime falsa ideoque fallentia* (8.10).

However, we should keep in mind that the Christian attitude to astrology in late antiquity was not clear-cut. For sure, astrology was a widespread phenomenon and very popular in late antiquity. Despite resistance from Church and State, even at the (Christian) Imperial courts astrology was still practiced. Zeno, an emperor who reigned during Sidonius' life time, consulted astrologers to protect him against usurpers. In fact, as some scholars have suggested, prohibition of astrology by law might have been motivated by fear that someone to ascertain the lifespan of the emperor.[52] Indeed, not everyone dismissed the validity of astrology *a priori*. Some Christian theologians condemned astrology as an independent means of discovering the future,[53] or as the work of evil demons,[54] but not necessarily as unreliable. Even Augustine, one of the fiercest opponents of astrology, admits that astrological predictions by demons sometimes come true. According to him, sometimes God reveals glimpses of the future to the demons (which they often spoil by false predictions),[55] or they predict what they themselves are going to do.[56] Nevertheless, the official position of the Church was to dismiss astrology as unreliable: they threaten God's power and human free will.[57] Baptism and faith in the Lord can free humans from the power of fate and demons.[58]

As a bishop Sidonius condemns the practice of astrology. The adjectives he uses to denote astrology are 'false' (*falsa*), 'deluding' (*fallantia*), and 'vain' (*vana*), and I think that Sidonius believed there is a lot of sham involved in it. But more important, astrology is forbidden (*interdicta secreta vetita,* 8.11.13) and thus illegal (*inlicita*). Like other leaders of the Church of his time, he believed that is only to God to know someone's life-span, and that it is forbidden to inquire into the future: humans should rather trust God's providence, not astrological predictions. Hence, Sidonius says that he fears that everyone who attempts divination, strays away from the Catholic faith. Lupus, which his interest in astrology, is unaware of the dangers inherent to astrology, but Sidonius is. Although astrology might be partly or altogether unreliable (depending whether interprets *maxume falsa* in 8.11.10 as 'mostly false' or 'very much false'), Sidonius has to mention in *Ep.* 8.11 to Lupus that in at least the case of Lampridius the predictions did come true, which he painstakingly tries to point out. This serves as a strong warning to Lupus to keep abay from that mysterious and dangerous territory of astrology.

Possibly, when Sidonius says that everyone who rather curiously and rashly resorts to

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[52] Hegedus 2007: 9.
[53] Barton 2003: 72
[54] Idem 2003: 78.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Aug. *De Gen. ad Lit.* 12.22.46. Cf. Hegedus 2007: 131.
[57] Hegedus 2007: 372.
[58] Hegedus 2007: 168, 321.

divination to know one's future 'will stray away from Catholic faith and come into a state in which ill-boding answers are given' (8.11.13: *catholicae fidei regulis exorbitaturum et effici dignum in statum cuius respondeantur adversa*), he might follow the ideas of several Church fathers who stated that Christian faith saves one from the influence of fate and demons who work through astrology.[59] When a Christian, although baptised, pries into astrology and asks questions about one's life's end, which he is in fact not allowed to ask, he places himself outside the safe protection of the Catholic faith (*exorbitaturum*); in this state (*in statum*), he is again subjected to the influence of fate and demons, and thus deserves it to receive unfavourable answers. The future is God's, everyone encroaching on that area will meet due punishment. That astrology is *fallentia* might therefore also mean that whoever hopes to find a secure and happy life in it, will find himself deceived.

[59] Ibid.

Commentary

Section 1

Quid agunt Nitiobroges, quid Vesunnici tui, quibus de te sibi altrinsecus vindicando nascitur semper sancta contentio? unus te patrimonio populus, alter etiam matrimonio tenet; cumque hic origine, iste coniugio, melius illud, quod uterque iudicio. te tamen munere dei inter ista felicem, de quo diutius occupando possidendoque operae pretium est votiva populorum studia confligere!

Quid agunt Nitiobroges, quid Vesunnici tui
'How are you Nitiobrogians doing, how your Vesunnians?'

Quid agunt: Used in colloquial language to ask someone about his or her well-being (LS s.v. *ago* II1c). The formula is e.g. frequently used in Plautus and Terentius, but rarely in epistolography. Interestingly, Pliny the Younger even explicitly says that he despises the use of such 'vulgar' language: *epist*. 3.20 *Et hercule quousque illa vulgaria 'Quid agis? ecquid commode vales?' Habeant nostrae quoque litterae aliquid non humile nec sordidum, nec privatis rebus inclusum* ('And, by Hercules, how long will there be those vulgar phrases: 'How're you doing? Are you doing well? Let our letters neither contain something base or paltry, or something confined to personal affairs'). [60] Sidonius' use of such colloquial language is indicative of the close relationship between Lupus and Sidonius, and suits the playful and familiar tenor in which Sidonius begins this letter (compare also the frequent use of the second person in the first two sections), in sharp contrast to the dramatic story from section 3 onwards.

Nitiobroges…Vesunnici: For these people and a discussion of Lupus'descent, see Introduction 4.3.1 *Addressee*.

quibus de te sibi altrinsecus vindicando nascitur semper sancta contentio?
'For whom there is an always innocent rivalry from both sides for claiming you for themselves'

semper sancta contentio: Both Dalton and Anderson interpret 'sancta' in its Christian meaning of 'holy', and translate as resp. 'pious emulation' and 'a rivalry…that is never unchristian'. A more secular meaning of *sanctus* is 'innocent' or 'harmless' (LS s.v. *sancio* II2),

[60] All translation are my own unless otherwise stated.

which fits the context better (Loyen: 'une louable rivalté). Cf. *epist.* 4.4.1, in which Sidonius reminisces his youthful years with Simplicius: *cumque abhinc retro iuvenes eramus, in plia in tesseris, saltibus cursu, venatu natatu sancta semper ambobus, quia manente caritate, contentio* ('And when we were young a long time ago, there was for both of us in ball-games, in dice-games, in leaping, in running, in hunting, in swimming an always guileless rivalry, because love always remained). Here, the meaning of *sancta* seems close to 'playful'.

te sibi: Intentional juxtaposition of *te* and *sibi* to emphasize the wish of both people to claim Lupus for themselves.

altrinsecus: An archaic word, frequently used by Plautus, and one of the examples of obsolete, archaic words that were revived in later Latin during the period of antiquarianism, starting in the second century AD with Apuleius and Florus. *Altrinsecus* is frequently used by late antique authors like Prudentius, Ammianus and Boethius. See TLL. s.v. *altrinsecus*. For the reviving of archaic comic lexicon in late antiquity, see Pezzini 2016: 14-46 (for *altrinsecus*, see p. 43).

unus te patrimonio populus, alter etiam matrimonio tenet
'One people holds you on ground of you ancestral inheritance, the other too, on ground of the inheritance of your family-in-law'

unus populus: Most likely refers to Nitiobroges, *pace* PLRE 2 s.v. *Lupus*.

patrimonio: An estate inherited from one's father or any ancestor (LS s.v. *patrimonium*). Lupus belongs to this people because his own family hailed from it.

alter: Most likely refers to the Vesunnici.

matrimonio: The opposite of *patrimonium* and refers to the dowry that came into a man's possession after his marriage. It is therefore often used as a metaphor for marriage (e.g. Plaut. Trin. 3.3.4: *in matrimonium dare*) or married women (e.g. Tac. Agr. 2.13: *matrimonia et pecudes hostium praedae destinare*). So, here the city of Périgueux can claim Lupus as its own because his family-in-law comes from that city.

cumque hic origine, iste coniugio, melius illud, quod uterque iudicio
'and while this one claims you on grounds of birth, that one on grounds of marriage, is this better, that both claim you with good

This clause is very elliptical, lacking any verb. *Cumque* to *coniugio* and *quod* to *iudicio* should be read with *tenet* of the previous sentence, *melius illud* with the verb *est*.

hic origine, iste coniugio: *Origine* refers back to *patrimonio* and *coniugio* to *matrimonio*, *hic* to *Nitiobroges* and *iste* to *Vesunnici*.

iudicio: Although the two cities lay claim to Lupus on different grounds, both do so with *iudicio*, i.e. have justified arguments for their claim.

Anderson thinks *iudicio* here means 'deliberate choice', probably interpreting *iudicio* as meaning 'with discretion' or 'with good judgment' (OLD s.v. *iudicium* 11b). Both cities appear to have an exquisite judgment given that both want such an excellent man as Lupus for their own.

te tamen munere dei inter ista felicem
'Yet amid all this how fortunate you are through God's gift'

te…felicem: The acc. is a so-called 'accusative of exclamation', an expression with a personal pronoun and an evaluative adjective, which are both in the accusative (Pinkster 2015: 365).

For further implications of the use of the adjective *felicem* for the meaning of this letter, see Introduction 4.5 *Interpretation*.

tamen: Usually expresses a weak contrast with the preceding sentence: 'in spite of what has been said' (OLD s.v. *tamen* 1), but *tamen* adopts a more explicative function as well in later Latin (Spevak 2005: 208; Van Waarden 2010: 396; cf. Dalton: 'verily'). I think that Sidonius means here that, although Lupus is subject of a rivalry between two cities, he is despite these circumstances (*inter ista*, cf. *Ep.* 7.1.3) nevertheless fortunate (Anderson: 465n.1); thus, I take *tamen* as being contrastive.

munere dei: Common Christian expression. *Munus* originally denoted one's duty to the city (related to *moenia*), but was also used to describe the gifts of gods or Fortune, to the city or to someone's benefit. Hence expressions like *munere deorum* (Cic. *De Na. Re.* 3.66) or *deorum munere* (Plin. *Ep.* 6.18.1). See OLD s.v. *munus* 4.

Sidonius uses several similar expressions in his letters: *sub ope dei* (*Ep.* 1.5.1), *sub divina ope* (*Ep. 7.4.2*), and *sub ope Christi* (*Ep.* 7.1.1). See Van Waarden 2010: 88 for further comments.

de quo diutius occupando possidendoque operae pretium est votiva populorum studia confligere
'since you are worth that the longing eagerness of peoples contend with each other for obtaining and possessing you a longer time'

votiva…studia: The adjective *votivus* in classical Latin means 'something one has prayed for' (see OLD s.v. *votivus*), in later Latin it simply means something longed for, or something

very devoted, as it does at other places in Sidonius' letters, e.g. *Ep.* 4.5.2: *votiva memoratu*, 'news such as one would like to tell'; *Ep.* 1.9.6: *in obsequium novi consulis…votivum*, 'in humble duty to the new consul' (transl. Anderson).

confligere: Lit. 'to clash'. Often used in a military sense of 'fighting between armies', as e.g. in Caesar B.C. 1.57: *cum Massiliensibus confligunt*. As is the case with *contentio*, *confligere* does not necessarily imply real hostility. E.g. in Sidonius *Ep.* 8.12.8, the word is used to describe the addressee Trygetius' efforts to excel in hospitality: *nam quamvis super hoc studio tam ipse quam patria confligant* ('For though both he himself and his fatherland compete for this effort'), while earlier in the letter, Sidonius uses *pugnandi* to describe the same competition.

Competition among the aristocracy for acquiring and maintain status was a characteristic of the aristocracy of fifth-century Gaul, which was a 'society dominated by pride, respect for class-feeling, and imperious good taste' (Dill 1899: 2010).

Section 2

Tu vero utrisque praesentiam tuam disposite vicissimque partitus nunc Drepanium illis, modo istis restituis Anthedium. et si a te instructio rhetorica poscatur, hi Paulinum, illi Alcimum non requirunt. unde te magis miror, quem cotidie tam multiplicis bibliothecae ventilata lassat egeries, aliquid a me veterum flagitare cantilenarum. pareo quidem, licet intempestiva videatur recordatio iocorum tempore dolendi.

tu vero utrisque praesentiam tuam disposite vicissimque partitus
'You, while you divides your presence orderly and alternately between both'

vero: changes the focus to Lupus. After Sidonius has described how two peoples contend for Lupus in two parallel colons (*unus…alter; hic origine…iste coniugio*), now he moves on to describe what Lupus has done for them both, also in two parallel colons (*nunc…illis … modo istis; hi…illi*).

praesentiam tuam…partitus: Lupus alternately (*vicissim*) lives in Agen and Périgueux.

disposite: 'orderly'. The word suggest that Lupus divides his presence under the two peoples fairly. *Disposite* is also often used in rhetorical contexts (e.g. Sid. *Ep.* 8.6.6: *dixit disposite graviter ardenter*), and is therefore a fitting word for a rhetor (see TLL 5.1.1430.38ff s.v. *disposite*).

nunc Drepanium illis, modo istis restituis Anthedium
'brings at one time Drepanius back to these, to those at another time Anthedius'

Drepanius: Latinus Pacatus Drepanius was a rhetor and poet who flourished around 400 AD. According to Sidonius' remark in this letter, he was apparently born in Agen (*illis*). Drepanius is mainly known as the author of the second panegyric in the *Panegyrici Latini,* addressed to Theodosius I in Rome in 389 AD. He was probably a professor in rhetoric in Bordeaux. The famous poet Ausonius, who also lived in Bordeaux, dedicated three works to Drepanius, and called him the greatest poet after Vergil, although nothing of his poetry has survived (Aus. *Ec. Praef.* 12: *quem pluris faciunt nouem sorores, / quam cunctos alios Marone dempto* ('whom the nine sisters esteem more / than al the others with exception of Maro'). See PLRE 1, 272; Nixon and Rodgers 2015: 437-428).

Anthedium: Anthedius is not known except for the information Sidonus gives us about him. In *Carm*. 9, addressed to Sidonius' friend Felix, Anthedius appears in a list of literary figures with whom Sidonius - according to himself - cannot be compared: *nostrum aut quos retinet solum disertos / dulcem Anthedion, …* ('or those eloquent men whom our soil possesses: / charming Anthedius, …', ll. 311-312). According to PLRE 1: 93, Anthedius was a poet, but the way Sidonius describes him does not necessarily lead to that conclusion. The adjective *disertos* in *Carm.* 9 is very often used to qualify rhetors in particular (cf. the many examples in e.g. Cicero, Quintilianus, and Tacitus). Although *disertus* is used for poets as well (cf. e.g. Cic. *Brut.*167), and Anthedius might also have written poetry, it makes more sense to think that Sidonius lists in this poem Anthedius as rhetor/professor rather than poet (other figures in the list were definitely rhetors, for instance Hoënius, who was Sidonius' *magister*, a common term to denote teachers of rhetoric (see TLL. 8.0.84.40 s.v. *magister*), and Severianus, who is compared to the famous rhetor Marcus Quintilianus, ll. 315-317).

Anthedius also makes an appearance in the prologue of *Carm.* 22 to Leontius, where Sidonius describes Anthedius as the leader of the Bordeaux *collegium* (*collegio vir praefectus*) of someone nicknamed *Phoebus* and skilled in music, geometry, arithmetic and especially astrology (*non modo musicos quosque verum etiam geometras, arithmeticos et astrologos disserendi arte supervenit* (*Carm.* 9 *Prol.* 2), unless these sentences apply not to Anthedius, but to the *Phoebus*). For the several literary *collegia* in fifth-century Gaul, see Loyen 1943: 65-72, 72-76, 87-92). For the use of nicknames in Sidonius' literary circles, see Mathisen 1991).

et si a te instructio rhetorica poscatur
'And when instruction in rhetoric is urgently demanded from you'

instructio rhetorica: Rhetorical education was the highest level of the tripartite educational system of the Latin West. Students went to a *rhetor* who taught them rhetoric delivery and argumentation by means of handbooks and exercises, the *progymnasmata*. The task of a *rhetor* went further than only teaching; he could also deliver epideictic speeches on behalf of the city at the imperial court. Gaul boasted some famous rhetorical schools (see ODLA 2018: 522).

poscatur: Is not simply 'asking', but 'urgently demanding' (LS s.v. *posco*, TLL 10.2.70.45 s.v. *posco*). It underscores the popularity of Lupus as rhetor among the populations of Agen and Périgueux: they do not simply ask him for education, but almost beg him.

hi Paulinum, illi Alcimum non requirunt
'these do not need Paulinus, those not Alcimus'

hi…illi: Respectively Agen and Périgueux (in my opinion, but cf. Savaron 1599: 505n8-9).

Paulinum: It is not certain who Sidonius means with this Paulinus, who was apparently a teacher in rhetoric. He might be the same as the Paulinus mentioned in *Ep*. 4.3.7 addressed to Claudianus Mamertus, in which Sidonius praises the latter's *De Statu Animae* and compares a whole range of authors to his writing style. According to Sidonius, Mamertus' book 'challenges' (*provocat*) as much as Paulinus, which is indeed a rhetorical term for challenging (juridical) decisions (see OLD s.v. *provoco* 6). However, Anderson suggest to identify the Paulus in *Ep.* 4.3.7 with Paulinus of Nola, the famous bishop and poet, as another option, which seems to be preferable, given that the name Paulinus appears here in a list of bishops: *iam si ad sacrosanctos patres pro comparatione veniatur* ('if we now turn to the venerable fathers for comparison'), together with Church Fathers like Jerome, Lactantius, Augustine, Basil and Gregory.

Probably, all that we can say about the Paulinus of 8.11 is that he was a teacher of rhetoric who lived or worked in either Périgueux or Agen (PLRE s.v. *Paulinus* 7 says Périgueux, I prefer Agen, see Introduction 4.3.1 *Addressee*).

Alcimus: Savaron was the first to identify this Alcimus with the Alcimus who is honored by Ausonius with a poem in his *Commemoratio Professorum Burdigalensium*, and this would make Sidonius' Alcimus indeed a professor of rhetoric in Bordeaux (*instructio rhetorica*). If Savaron was right, Alcimus' full name would have been *Latinus Alcimus Alethius* (cf. Anderson 457n5; PLRE 1, 39; ODLA 45, *Alethius*).

Sidonius also mentions an Alcimus in *Ep.* 5.10.3, where he compares the style of the addressee of the letter, Sapaudus, to the style of other orators: *Tua vero tam clara, tam spectabilis dictio est, ut illi divisio Palaemonis gravitas Gallionis, abundantia Delphidii Agroecii disciplina, fortitudo Alcimi Adelphii teneritudo, rigor Magni dulcedo Victorii non modo non superiora*

sed vix aequiperabilia scribant ('But your style is so clear, so outstanding, that the division of Palaemo, the dignity of Gallio, the richness of Delphidius, the method of Agroecius, the power of Alcimus, the subtleness of Adelphius, the rigidity of Magnus, the sweetness of Victorius are not able not only to write better, but hardly comparable texts'). Anderson 205n4 notices that this Alcimus is otherwise unknown, but it is not unlikely that he is in fact identical with Alcimus Alethius: Jerome mentions Latinus Alethius in his *Chronicon* (AD 360) as a teacher in Aquitania, and paired him with Delphidius – as Sidonius does in *Ep*. 5: *Alcimus et Delphidius rhetores in Aquitania florentissime docent* (Helm 1956: 239.18-19), 'Alcimus and Delphidius teach in an excellent way in Aquitania'.

unde te magis miror, quem cotidie tam multiplicis bybliothecae ventilata lassat egeries
'Therefore, I am all the more amazed that you, whom the winnowing of the dung of such an extensive library exhausts every day'

The idea is that Lupus is busy everyday with purging his library from bad literature.

multiplicis bybliothecae: Lit. 'multifold library'. Anderson translates *multiplicis* as 'comprehensive', Loyen as 'bien fournie'. However, *multiplicis* might refer to the different sections in a library, e.g. the library of Ferreolus, a friend of Sidonius, was divided into a part with religious books (*stilus religiosus*), including Augustine and Prudentius, and a part with older 'secular' literature (*coturno Latiaris eloquii*), like Horace and Varro (see *Ep.* 2.9.4). Cf. *Ep.* 4.6. *Carm.* 4, where Sidonius praises Claudianus Mamertus' *threefold* library, consisting of Roman, Greek and Christian literature: *triplex bibliotheca quo magistro / Romana, Attica, Christiana, fulsit* ('with him as master a threefold library, Roman, Attic and Christian, shone'). Aristocrats in late antiquity prided themselves on their libraries, which could be quite extensive and contain many books, as again the example of the library of Ferreolus shows (Mathisen 2003: 24n62).

ventilata: Lit. 'winnowed,' and in more metaphorical sense 'purged'. Augustine frequently uses *area ventilata* as a metaphor for the Last Judgment, when the 'wheat' is separated from the 'chaff' (e.g. Aug. *Enn. Ps.* 126.3). Here the idea is that the *egeries* is separated from good literature. Cf. *Ep.* 8.1.1, where Sidonius uses the same metaphor for his own library, in answer to a request to publish some more letters from his archive: *scrinia Arverna petis eventilari…* ('you ask me to go through my Arvernian book-cases…').

egeries: A very rare word for 'dung', compared to the much more common words *stercus* and *excrementum*. In Latin literature, the word only appears in Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 31.281: *siue per egeriem, qua sese animalia purgant / reddunt digestis membra uorata cibis* and in the Latin grammarian Solinus (3rd century AD): *ita egerie noxia submovet insequentes*. Sidonius compares bad literature, and indirectly his own writing, to dung (although his choice for this very unusual word is everything but dung).

aliquid a me veterum flagitare cantilenarum
'urgently demands from me something of old doggerels'

The colon contrasts with *et si a te instructio rhetorica poscatur*. The great orator Lupus, who has achieved so many literary feats and who himself (*a te*) was asked (*poscatur*) to give rhetorical teaching now asks (*flagitare*) Sidonius *(a me*) for literature.

veterum…cantilenarum: The word *cantilena* has connotations of triteness and bad quality (LS s.v. *cantilena*). *Cantilena* is a favorite word of Sidonius for introducing his own poetry. Cf. *Ep.* 2.10.4: *quin potius paupertinus flagitatae catilenae culmus immurmuret* (with a variation on the iuxtaposition of *flagitare* and *catilena*); *Ep.* 4.18.6: *obtulimus, ut cernis, quod cantilenae recentis obvium manui fuit*; *Ep.* 5.17.11: *Da postulatae tu veniam cantilenae*.

Flagitare: a strong word for demanding. It is used for repeatedly and urgently asking (LS s.v. '*flagito'*).

Section 3

Lampridius orator modo primum mihi occisus agnoscitur, cuius interitus amorem meum summis conficeret angoribus, etiamsi non eum rebus humanis vis impacta rapuisset. hic me quondam, ut inter amicos ioca, Phoebum vocabat ipse a nobis vatis Odrysii nomine acceptus. quod eo congruit ante narrari, ne vocabula figurata subditum carmen obscurent. huic quodam tempore Burdigalam invisens metatoriam paginam quasi cum Musa praevia misi. puto hanc liberius offerri, quam si aliquid super decedentis occasu lugubre componens, qui non placebam per eloquentiam, per materiam displicerem.

Lampridius orator modo primum mihi occisus agnoscitur
'I have only recently heard that the rhetor Lampridius has been killed'

modo primum: Cf. *Ep.* 7.9.23: *non modo primum qui essetis, seb ubi essetis agnovi*. Waarden 2010: 525 notes that the key to this latter passage was found by Shackleton Bailey by taking *modo* as *nuper:* 'only recently', 'now for the first time': 'this is not the first time I learn who you are, although it is the first I learn where you are'. A similar use of *modo primum* here in 8.11.3 seems fitting.

There is a strange discrepancy in tone between the first two opening sections and the remaining part of this letter. Whereas Sidonius seems to be in a good mood in 8.11.1 and 8.11.2, making jokes and talking about trivialities, after 8.11.3, and especially after 8.11.4, his mood turns into deep sadness, that makes that he is not able to talk about anything but Lampridius (8.11.14). A comparable incoherent structure can be detected in Pliny *Ep.* 3.14 on the murder of Larcius Macedo, which was one of the texts Sidonius had in mind when writing down this letter. After the horrible news of Macedo' murder, Pliny's page is not filled yet and he asks how his addressee is doing: *Quid praeterea novi?* a same sort of question as Sidonius begins this letter with.

occisus: Lit. 'struck down'. In this section, Sidonius uses no less than four different words to describe Lampridius' death, all having a connotation of death by violence.

agnoscitur: Lit. 'is recognized', but frequently used especially by Sidonius in the sense of 'reported' or 'heard'. Cf. *Ep*. 7.17.4: *vis ut paucis quid velim agnoscas?* ('Do you want to hear in a few words what I want?' Transl. Van Waarden 2016), and the formula *quibus agnitis* ('having heard this') in *Ep.* 1.7.7, 4.12.3, 7.4.2, and 8.13.4.

cuius interitus amorem meum summis conficeret angoribus
'whose death would end my love with the greatest anxieties'

interitus: Could indicate a 'violent or untimely death' (OLD s.v. *interitus*), but the interpretation of *interitus* here as 'natural death' would best fit the context (cf. TLL 7.1.2216.25 and 41 for *interitus* used as a synonym for *mors*). Sidonius means that even a natural death of Lampridius would have overwhelmed him with sorrow, let alone a violent one.

amorem meum conficeret: 'To end' or 'to kill my love (for him)'. A strange and unique combination of the verb *conficere* with *amorem*. The translators of Sidonius' letters paraphrase this sentence: 'To a man who loved him as I' (Anderson), 'moi qui avais de l'affection pour lui' (Loyen), 'he was my very dear friend' (Dalton).

The idea is that Lampridius' death also 'kills' Sidonius' love for him, because now Sidonius cannot longer have a relationship with his friend. Geisler compares Plin. *Ep.* 1.12.1: *Decessit Cornelius Rufus et quidem sponte, quod dolorem meum exulcerat* ('Cornelius Rufus has passed away and even of his own will, which aggravates my sorrow'), but I think the phrases *amorem meum conficeret* and *dolorem meum exulcerat* differ too much to speak of an allusion here.

summis…angoribus: *Angor* literally means 'strangling', hence 'anxiety'. *Angor* is a very appropriate word in this context given that Lampridius is also murdered by strangling (see section 11: *pressus strangulatusque servorum minibus obstruct anhelitu gutture obstricto*). Sidonius might have had this meaning in mind: in the same way Lampridius is killed by being strangled, also Sidonius' love for him is 'killed' (*conficeret*) by 'strangling' (*angoribus*). A possible parallel is in *Ep.* 8.9.2, where Sidonius uses similar vocabulary to describe his distress. Given the metaphor he uses (*hunting snares*), here he is clearly thinking of both meanings of *angor*: *non statim sese poetica teneritudo a vinculo incursi angoris elaqueat* ('the delicateness of poets is not able to extricate itself immediately from the shackles of an aggressive strangling').

etiamsi non eum rebus humanis vis impacta rapuisset
'even if human-inflected violence had not snatched him away'

rebus humanis vis impacta: The next word to describe Lamrpidius' death is *vis* ('violence'). Although the reader could have guessed it already from the preceding sentence, this is the first time Sidonius explicitly says that Lampridius has been murdered. *Vis* is further qualified by *rebus humanis…impacta*. *Impacta* derives from *impingo*, meaning 'to push', 'to force on'. I take *rebus humanis* as the actor of *impacta* (but cf. *Ep.* 1.11.15: *tibi crimen impactum*, 'the crime that has been fastened *upon you*'), meaning 'by human acting', although elsewhere in Sidonius, *rebus humanis* means 'society' (*Ep.* 1.7.12: *a rebus humanis veluti vomitu fortunae nauseantis exsputus*, 'and having been spewed out from human society as through the vomiting of a nauseous fortune'). Cf. Anderson: 'violent assault', Loyen: 'des humains par un acte de violence'.

hic me quondam, ut inter amicos ioca, Phoebum vocabat, ipse a nobis vatis Odrysii nomine acceptus
'He used to call me, as jokes under friends, ''Phoebus'', he himself accepted from me the name of the Odrysian poet'

Phoebum: Literary nicknames were common in Sidonius' literary circle of Gallic authors. Here, Sidonius tells Lupus that 'Phoebus' was his nickname, 'Orpheus' Lampridius'. In *C.* 22 *Ep.* 2, another pseudonym, Dionysius, is mentioned, whose identity is uncertain. Mathisen 1991 suggests that the choice for 'Apollo' as nickname for Sidonius may have had to do with his surname 'Apollinaris'. It might be tempting to read 'Apollo' as a pseudonym for Sidonius elsewhere in his poems and letters, as Mathisen does in e.g. *C.* 22, but seems not always warranted.

vatis Odrysii: According to mythology, the mythical singer Orpheus was the son of the Muse Calliope and the Thracian king Oeagrus. In Antiquity, the Odrysians were the most powerful tribe in Thrace, and dominated the whole of Thrace by the time of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC). In later time, the name became a synonym for Thracians in general (BNP s.v. *Odrysae*).

From Ovid onwards, and especially in later Latin poetry (especially Martial, Statius and Claudian, cf. also Sidon. *C.* 23.181: *Odrysio…in antro*), the adjective *Odrysius* was frequently used for 'Thracian'. The phrase *vatis Odrysius* to describe Orpheus occurs only once before Sidonius, by Statius in *Silv.* 5.1.203, which makes Sidonius' choice for using the exact same words to designate Orpheus remarkable.

The context in which *vatis Odrysius* appears in Statius makes this choice even more interesting. In *Silv.* 5, Statius mourns for the deceased Priscilla, the wife of Abascantus, who was an official under emperor Domitian (81-96 AD). Statius says in the first lines that he would wish to provide a physical monument for Priscilla, but a literary one, i.e. his poem, is ever-lasting. At the end of the poem, Abascantus in his mourning is compared to Orpheus after he lost Eurydice. It is possible that Sidonius intended to evoke Statius' poem by using the otherwise unique phrase *vatis Odrysii*. Is his poem also meant to be *longa nec obscurum finem latura perenni…iusta* ('lasting obsequies that will not end in obscurity'? Transl. Loeb 206) for Lampridius?

quod eo congruit ante narrari, ne vocabula figurata subditum carmen obscurent
'which is fitting to tell beforehand, lest the figurative names obscure the appending poem'

eo: 'In view of this', 'for this reason' (see LS s.v. *eo* 1B).

vocabula figurata subditum carmen: *Vocabula figurata* means 'allusive speech', in this case the use of the names *Phoebus* and *Orpheus* for resp. Sidonius and Lampridius. Although rather speculative, *subditum* may be a pun: in the context of letters, it can mean 'appended', as Anderson translates, taking the word to refer to the poem that is inserted in the letter (or maybe originally attached to the letter). However, literally, *subdere* means 'to place under', which could therefore also refer to the real meaning of the poem underneath the *vocabula figurata*.

huic quodam tempore Burdigalam invisens metatoriam paginam quasi cum Musa praevia misi
'When I was at a certain time visiting Bourdeaux, I sent him a guest letter with a Muse as way-preparer, as it were.

Burdigala: Sidonius was a frequent visitor of Bordeaux. In *Ep.* 8.9, 8.11 and 8.12, he writes about a stay in Bordeaux. According to 8.12, Bordeaux was the place where Sidonius used to join a literary circle. In later times, Bordeaux had become the court of Euric, as can be inferred from *Ep.* 8.9, where Sidonius was seeking absolution.

Quodam tempore Burdigalam invisens: Refers the reader of the collection back to 'the beginning of *Ep.* 8.9, the letter to Lampridius, where Sidonius also tells about a visit to Bordeaux: *cum primum Burdigalam veni* ('As soon as I came to Bordeaux…'). Lampridius sent Sidonius a poem and challenged him to answer with a poem as well. However, just as in 8.11, Sidonius does not think the time is appropriate for him 'to dance' (*saltare*, 8.9.2), since unlike Lampridius, who was favoured by king Euric and functioned as his court poet, Sidonius was punished with exile because of his resistance to Euric when he was besieging Clermont (see Harries 1994: 'The End of Roman Clermont' for details). However, his reluctance to write poetry in 8.9 was due to his own bad circumstances compared to Lampridius' present fortunate situation, while in 8.11 the picture is reversed: now the murder of the once fortunate Lampridius is the cause of Sidonius' sad mood.

Further intertextuality between letters 8.9 and 8.11 underlines the complete inversion of the situation. In 8.9.2, Sidonius describes the mental state of himself and of poets in general in harsh and bad circumstances: [*poetae*] *quorum sic ingenia maeroribus ut pisciculi retibus amiciuntur; et si quid asperum aut triste, non statim sese poetica teneritudo a vincula incursi angoris elaqueat* ('[poets], whose spirits are enmeshed by sorrows as fish by nets; and if there is something harsh or sorrowful, the delicateness of poets is not able to extricate itself immediately from the shackles of an aggressive strangling), with words that reminds one of

strangling (*retibus amiciuntur, a vincula incursi angoris*). In 8.9, Lampridius is free, Sidonius is strangled, whereas in letter 11, Lampridius has been murdered by strangling, while Sidonius has probably already been reinstated (see Introduction 4.2 *Date*).

metatoriam paginam: The adjective *metatorius* does not occur somewhere else in Latin literature, and may therefore have been coined by Sidonius. It derives from the verb *metari,* 'to measure off a place', e.g. for a *castra* (as in Caes. *BG.* 3.13.3), or a place to stay in general. A *metator* is someone who measures out a place (e.g. Cic. *Phil.* 11.5.12) and in this letter, the *pagina* (carmen) functions as a *metator* which Sidonius sends forth to his friends to ask for lodgement. Loyen translates as '*une letter destinée à preparer le logement*', Anderson has 'a billeting-letter', thus staying closer to the military context. It is possible that such 'lodging-letters' were an existing letter genre. See TLL 8.0.894.15 s.v. *metor, meto*: *habitaculum vel hospitium in usum advenarum praeparatum*.
Sidonius' oeuvre contains several similar adjective-*hapaxes*: *Ep.* 9.7.5: *increpatorius* ('chiding'), 6.6.2: *compunctorius* ('stimulating'), 5.17.5: *fatigatorius* ('bantering'); close comes 8.12.4: *epistulam…evocatoriam* ('letter of summons'). For *hapaxes* in Sidonius, see Gualandri 1979: 173-181.

Musa praevia: 'A way-preparing Muse'. In his poem, Phoebus sends the Muse Thalia to Bordeaux to ask Sidonius' friends for lodging, thus acting as a way-preparer (*praevia*) or place-preparer (*metatrix*) for Sidonius. The Muse functions in the poem as a self-reflexive metaphor for the carmen itself.

puto hanc liberius offerri, quam si aliquid super decedentis occasu lugubre componens
'I think that this can be offered to you with less reservations than if I would compose something about the mournful death of the deceased'

liberius: Anderson thought *liberius* means 'this will be a more generous offering', but in his revision of Anderson's Loeb translation, Warmington correctly states 'Sidonius is speaking of the difficulty of producing a tribute, or memorial, to the dead man' and that he can offer an old poem 'with less compunction, with less constraint, more freely' (Loeb n.1). Loyen has 'plus indiqué'. Sidonius believes this old poem would cause less sadness than composing a new one on the death of Lampridius, which would be mournful both in theme and verse composition. Although Sidonius has just said that *intempestiva videatur recordatio iocorum tempore dolendi* (zie 8.11.2), the poem he offers is rather playful.

decedentis occasu lugubre: Two other words describing Lampridius' death. *Occasu* (literally 'downfall'), is further qualified by the word *lugubre*, 'mournful' (see LS s.v. *lugubris*).

qui non placebam per eloquentiam, per materiam displicerem
[I], who would not please through eloquence, would through subject displease

placebam…displicerem: A common combination in Latin literature. Sidonius is fond on wordplays and uses this antithesis no less than nine times in his *Carmina* and *Epistles* (*C.* 3.10, 18.2, 22. *Prol.* 3; *Ep.* 1.9.8, 5.2.2, 5.17.11, 7.9.2, 8.11.3, 9.11.3). With the exception of *C.* 18.2 and *Ep.* 5.2.2 and 7.9.2, in all other *loci* Sidonius uses the combination to refer to his own work, keeping - out of (false) modesty - the option open that his work could displease the reader. For wordplays in Sidonius, see Van Waarden 2010: 57-58.

Sidonius places himself in the tradition of imperial poetry, as e.g. Statius' *Silvae*, where the poet takes a similar modest stance in the prose preface to his poems (e.g. *Silv.* 1 *prol*: *Haec qualiacumque sunt, Melior carissime, si tibi non displicuerint, a te publicum accipiant; si minus, ad me revertantur,* 'These [poems], of whatever quality there are, my very beloved Melior, if they will not displease you, let them be published by you; if they do, let them return to me').

In our letter, Sidonius says that if he would compose a poem about a tragic subject, the poem would not only displease Lupus because of the bad poetry, but also because of the sad subject. However, Sidonius immediately subverts his own claim that he might displease though his lack of eloquence by using a rhetorical figure in the very same clause, i.e. a chiasmus:

placebam (A) – *per eloquentiam* (B) – *per materiam* (B) – *displicerem* (A)

Carmen 35

1 *Position*

Only two poems can be found in Book 8, and both are addressed to Lampridius. In *Ep.* 8.9, Sidonius describes how Lampridius sent him a letter when he was in Bordeaux, partially or fully written in poetry, with the request to send him a poem back (8.9.1: *aliquos versuum meorum versibus poscis*). Sidonius obeys, but not without complaining his present situation vis-à-vis Lampridius'. Sidonius has been punished for his resistance to Euric when the latter was besieging Clermont, and was banished by the king to Livia, most likely modern Carcassone in southern France. Probably, Sidonius went back to Bordeaux where Euric had his residence to bid the king for absolution.

Carmen 35 in *Ep.* 8.11 describes another visit to Bordeaux, seemingly in the 'good old times' of Sidonius' phase of retirement in Avitacum (461-467), before the arrival of the Visigoths and before Sidonius' exile. Sidonius sends this poem ahead to a couple of friends to ask them to prepare a lodging for him, and does so in the persona of the god Apollo exhorting Thalia, the Muse of comedy, who functions as a metaphor for the poem. If his friends do not have place for Phoebus/Sidonius, the Muse is said to go to the 'doors of bishops' and ask the bishop Gallicinus for accommodation. Otherwise, Phoebus has to go to an inn, with 'damping kitchens', 'stinking food' and 'hoarse singing'. The poem gives an insight in the literary circle of Bordeaux, which consisted of at least Lampridius, Leontius, Rusticus, maybe the bishop Gallicinus, and the son of Leontius, Paulinus, as can be read in *Ep.* 8.12.5.

Because of the intentional juxtaposition of *Ep.* 8.9 and 8.11, the reader is obviously encouraged to read both letters and poems together. Like the letters (for which see the general introduction), the carmina also share some, thematically similarities: in both poems Sidonius is rejected or fears to become rejected; in *C.* 34 by the Visigoth king Euric, in *C.* 35 by his friends and the bishop. As Euric is occupied by his subjects who make suit to him (*C.* 34.19: *nec multum domino vacat vel ipsi*), so are the houses of his friends already fully-booked (*C.* 35.37: *tecta negant ut occupata*; 41: *domo negata*). The result is the same: Sidonius is condemned to an awful, noisy place among barbarians (*Ep.* 8.3.2: *nam fragor ilico, quem movebant vicinantes impluvio cubiculi mei duae quaepiam Getides anus, quibus nil umquam litigiosius bibacius vomacius erit*, 'For immediately a din rises, caused by two certain old Gothic women near the skylight of my sleeping room, the most quarrelsome, alcoholic and vomiting creatures that will ever exist'; *Ep.* 8.11 *C.* 35.54: *plus illis ego barbarus*), in an environment which is by no means stimulating for his literary qualities: in *Ep.* 8.9, Sidonius apologises for the low quality of his poem because he has written it *inter animi supplicia* (*Ep.* 8.9.4), words that refer to his exile. In a similar way, his banishment to inns places him among crackling plates (*crepitantibus patellis*) and hoarse singing (*ravos cantus*, which may have metapoetical meanings, see *comm. ad loc.*), and saddles him with a drunken Muse (*vinosi hospitis excitus Camena*). Although the poem of 8.11 may originally not have this implication (but see the

comments at *cotidiana saxa et robora corneasque fibras* below), by placing it together with *Ep.* 8.9 in the same collection, Sidonius may, in hindsight, have intended to make *C.* 35 mirror his own exile.

2 *Structure*

A 1-17 Phoebus exhorts Thalia to prepare herself for travelling, which ends with a minute description of Thalia's shoes.
B 18-40 Phoebus exhorts Thalia to visit his friends and to ask for accommodation. Orpheus/Lampridius' literary achievements are praised. Descriptions of other friends and bishop Gallicinus.
C 41-54 Phoebus warns that he, if Thalia's request meets with no response, would be forced to resort to inns. Descriptions of the inns, the food, and its visitors. Phoebus concludes with the negative effects such surroundings will have on his poetry.

3 *Models*

While the letter as a whole is modelled after Pliny *Ep.* 3.14, on the death of Larcius Macedo (see general introduction), for the poem Sidonius took another letter of the same book by Pliny to imitate. Pliny closes Book 3 with the famous letter addressed to Cornelius Priscus on the death of the poet Martial (3.21). In the letter, Pliny tells about their friendship and inserts by heart (*Ep.* 3.21.4: *quosdam tenerem*) a part of a poem that Martial had written in praise of Pliny, which has been preserved in its entirety in Martial 10.20. There are several similarities between *Ep.* 8.11 and Pliny's letter. In the letter, Pliny expresses his grief after having heard of the death of Martial. He continues with a short praise of Martial' qualities as poet, and then introduces the poem Martial had written in honour of Pliny:

Sed ne tempore non tuo disertam
pulses ebria ianuam videto.
totos dat tetricae dies Minervae,
dum centum studet auribus virorum
hoc, quod saecula posterique possint
Arpinis quoque comparare chartis.
Seras tutior ibis ad lucernas;
haec hora est tua, cum furit Lyaeus,
cum regnat rosa, cum madent capilli.
Tunc me vel rigidi legant Catones

But see that you do not knock drunk
at his eloquent door at the wrong time.
He devotes all days to the grim Minerva,
while he toils for the ears of the Hundred Men
at this, what the ages and posterity can compare
with the writings of the man from Arpinum.
You will go safer to the lamps that burn late.

That is your hour, when Lyaeus [name for Bacchus] revels,
when the wreath of roses reigns, when the hairs are sodden.
Let than even severe Catos read me!

Pliny quotes only the second part of Martial's poem. The first half, which Sidonius seems certainly to have in mind when composing his poem, runs as follows (Mart. 10.20):

Nec doctum satis et parum severum,
sed non rusticulum tamen libellum
facundo mea Plinio Thalia
i perfer: brevis est labor peractae
altum vincere tramitem Suburae.
illic Orphea protinus videbis
udi vertice lubricum theatri
mirantisque feras avemque regem
raptum quae Phryga pertulit Tonanti;
illic parva tui domus Pedonis
caelata est aquilae minore pinna.

Go, take my not very learned and not much serious
but nevertheless not rustic little book,
my Thalia, to the eloquent Plinius:
It is little effort to conquer the steep way
after the Suburae has been passed through.
There you will immediately see Orpheus
standing slippery on the top of his wet theatre
and the wondering beasts and the royal bird
who brought the seized Phrygian to the Thunderer;
There is the little house of your Pedo
engraved with the smaller feather of an eagle.

Just like Sidonius' carmen, Martial stages the Muse Thalia as messenger. She is exhorted to bring Martial's book to Pliny's house. After some remarks about her coming journey (Mart. ll. 4-5; cf. Sidonius' comments about the clothes Thalia is to wear, ll. 3-17), Martial tells Thalia that she will first see 'Orpheus', possibly a water basin with a statue of Orpheus (see Loeb 94: *ad loc*.), who is in the figure of Lampridius also the first visiting address for Sidonius' Thalia. After describing the house of Pedo where Pliny lives, Martial continues with praising Pliny. Just like Lampridius, he is compared with 'the Arpinian' (Plin. *C.* l. 6; Sid. *C.* 22).

Interestingly, by day the Muse, already drunk, will not meet response from Pliny, because he is busy with his work (Plin. ll. 1-4). Martial advises her to come in the evening, when it is the time of feasting and drinking, because then Pliny is in the right mood to read his poetry, even in the way of the severe Cato (Plin. l. 10: *tunc me vel rigidi legant Catones*. Cf. Sid. *Ep.* 8.9.2: *tu utcumque moderere Catonianum superciliosae frontis arbitrium*). The Thalia of Sidonius also runs risk of being rejected, when she would have to go to inns, where others feast and

eat, and get drunk, which is, paradoxically, the right moment for Phoebus/Sidonius to write poetry (*tunc tunc carmina digniora vobis…susurrem*).

Sidonius thus modelled his letter partly after Plin. *Ep.* 3.21. Both are about the death of a poet and contain an inserted poem about the journey of Thalia as a metaphor for literature to friends. Fashioning his letter in this way, Sidonius could give implicit compliments. Lampridius is compared to the great poet Martial, a name that is missing from the list of poets to whom Sidonius equals Lampridius in his poem (ll. 22-25). Simultaneously, if Lampridius on the basis of the analogy of the letters can be compared to Martial, then Sidonius equals himself to Pliny, who wrote the letter and inserted the poem. However, while it was Martial who wrote the poem Pliny quotes in his letter, it is of course Sidonius who wrote both the letter and the poem, not Lampridius. Thus, Sidonius implicitly appropriates the honour of being compared to Martial as well.

4 *Metre*

The poem is written in the Phalaecian hendecasyllables (x x - v v - v - v - x). The metre is one of Sidonius' favourites and he uses it in many poems (*C.* 9, 12, 13b, 14, 23, 25-26, 27, 28, 30, 34, 35). The metre is called by Sidonius 'smooth' and 'harmonious' (*dulces*, 23.27, *rotundatos*, 8.4.2, *lubricos et enodes*, *Ep.* 8.11.5).

5 *A hidden message?*

Mythology tells that Orpheus' voice was so enchanting that he enthralled trees, wild animals and even rocks, as e.g. Ovid says in *Met.* 10.1-2: *Carmine dum tali silvas animosque ferarum / Threicius vates et saxa sequentia ducit*, ('While the Thracian bard with such music draws the trees and the minds of the wild animals and following stones'…). Hence, in his comparison of Orpheus to Lampridius, Sidonius says about the latter: *qui cotidiana saxa et robora corneasque fibras / mollit dulciloqua canorus arte* ('who [Orpheus-Lampridius] day by day mollifies stones and oaks and hearts of horn / melodiously with his sweet-sounding art'). Unlike Ovid, Sidonius puts much emphasis on the toughness of the objects that are moved by Orpheus' singing: instead of the simple *silvas* of Ovid, Sidonius uses the more specific word *robur*, which refers to a very hard kind of wood, and is therefore often metaphorically used for hardness. *Fibras* are veins, and in figurative sense 'hearts', which is Sidonius' equivalent for the *animos ferarum* of Ovid. Here, the hearts are of horn (*corneas*).

It is maybe possible to push the comparison between Orpheus and Lampridius a little bit further. If Orpheus is Lampridius, what does it mean that Lampridius enthrals stones, oaks, and hearts of horn?

In *Ep.* 4.1.4, a letter to his cousin Probus, Sidonius praises their common teacher Eusebius for his philosophical precepts, which are, according to Sidonius, so brilliant that when a philosopher would bring them to the barbarian tribes, those ferocious barbarians would certainly mitigate, and soften their senselessness and ferocity. Sidonius uses the same words as in *Ep.* 8.11 to describe this softening of the barbarians: …*bestialium* ***rigidarum****que nationum corda* ***cornea fibrae****que glaciales procul dubio* ***emollirentur*** *egelidarentur…* ('…without doubt the

hearts of horn and the veins of ice of those bestial and hardened tribes would be mollified, thawed…').

If the *saxa, robora,* and *corneas fibras* in 8.11 also refers to barbarians, than the words might allude to Euric and his court of Visigoths, and *mollit* to Lampridius' activities as court poet (hence, *cotidiana*). In *Ep.* 8.9, the letter which is closely connected to this one, Sidonius complains that Lampridius has been favoured by Euric and now acts as his court poet, while Sidonius is still waiting for Euric's pardon (*Ep.* 8.9 *C.* 34. 17-20). The same situation might be described here in 8.11: while Lampridius has succeeded in 'mollifying' the hearts of Euric and his Visigoths, for Sidonius, they are still like *saxa, robora,* and *corneas fibras*. If this interpretation is right, we find here another link between 8.9 and 8.11. Of course, since the poem dates to the time before Sidonius' exile, such an allusion only gained meaning after his exile, or must have been inserted later.

Lines 1-2

Dilectae nimis, et peculiari
Phoebus commonitorium Thaliae
'A memorandum of Phoebus to his very beloved and own Thalia'

commonitorium: Sidonius presents the poem as a *commonitorium* of Phoebus to the Muse Thalia. A *commonitorium* designates an epistolographic genre, in which the sender of the letter exhorts or instructs the addressee. Several letters of e.g. Augustine are entitled '*commonitorium*' (e.g. *Ep.* 7-10, 148). The word does not occur in classical Latin, but seems to be restricted to the late antique period. Of course, Sidonius and Lampridius would have known that *commonitorium* is not a classical word, and that is was mainly used in a Christian contexts, so the use of this non-classical word in the mouth of Phoebus in a classicizing poem is an example of what Sidonius would call *inter amicos ioca*. See TLL 3.0.1934.15 s.v. *commonitorius*.

Thaliae: Thalia was the Muse of comedy and of minor poetry or light verse, like eclogues (Verg. *Ecl.* 6.2), elegy (Ov. *Ars* 1.264), comedy (Stat. *Silv.* 2.1.116) and epigram (Mart. *passim*). She is therefore the appropriate Muse for Sidonius' poem in Phalaecian hendecasyllabic metre. In Martial's epigrams, which Sidonius imitates in this poem, Thalia is often brought up as a metaphor for his poetry or poetic *ingenium*, referred to as *nostra (mea) Thalia* (e.g. 4.8.12, 8.73.3, 12.94.3). In a similar way, Sidonius presents Thalia here as a personification of his guest letter, who is knocking at the doors of Sidonius' acquaintances and begging for lodging.

Thalia functions as metaphor for poetry in Sidonius' poems more than once. Cf. *C.* 9.16-18 *Non nos currimus aggerem vetustum / nec quicquam invenies, ubi priorum / antiquas terat orbitas Thalia* ('Not do we hasten over an old path / neither will you find something where Thalia

treads in the ancient wheel-tracks of predecessors'), *C.* 12.10-11: *spernit senipedem stilum Thalia, / ex quo septipedes videt patronos* ('Thalia despises the six-footed stylus / from the moment she beholds patrons of seven-feet'), *C.* 23.434-435: *nunc quam diximus hospitalitatem / paucis personet obsequens Thalia* ('Now, let my obedient Thalia resound in few words / the hospitality we have mentioned').
Three other Muses are also invoked by Sidonius (Calliope, Muse of epic poetry, in *C.* 14.6; Clio, Muse of history, in *C.* 5.568; Erato, Muse of love poetry, in *C.* 22.12 and 20).

Lines 3-4

Paulum depositis, alumna, plectris
sparsam stringe comam virente vitta,
et rugas tibi syrmatis profundi
succingant hederae expeditiores
'For a short time, pupil, lay aside your quills
and bind your flowing hair with a green hairband
and let ivy gird for you the folds of your long
robe so that it is more suitable for travelling'

Note the careful composition of the first two lines of the poem:
paulum de**p**ositis alumna **p**lectris / ***s****parsam* ***s****tringe comam* ***vi****rente* ***vi****tta.*

Positis…plectris: Cf. the very similar phrase in Stat. *Silv.* 5.1.203-204: *Odrysius vates positis ad Strymona plectris*. As already said above (see comm. at *vatis Odrysii*), Sidonius applied the unique phrae *Odrysius vates* from Stat. *Silv.* 5.1 to Lampridius. In *Silv.* 5.1, Abascantus is compared to Orpheus in his mourning for his wife; Lampridius is also nicknamed 'Orpheus' by Sidonius, but by using the words *vatis Odrysii* to describe Lampridius in the letter, the reader is invited to think of the passage from *Silv.* 5.1 and its funeral context. Here, Sidonius uses two other words from the very same line from *Silv.* 5.1. Although *positis…plectris* does occurs more times in Latin literature (e.g. *Silv.* 4.4.36: Achilles; Sen. *Phaedr.* 297: Phoebus), the coincidence of both phrases is very remarkable. Off course, the reference to the funeral context of *Silv.* 1.5 in a poem addressed to the deceased Lampridius implies that Sidonius must have revised the text of the poem afterwards.

syrmatis: The *syrma*, borrowed from the Greek *σύρμα* was a robe with a long train worn by actors on the stage. Because of the slow and trailing movement such a long robe entailed, the *syrma* was especially used in tragedy, and is therefore also used as a symbol for tragedy in Latin literature (e.g. Mart. 4.49.8). See LS s.v. *syrma*.

Strangely enough, Sidonius' Thalia, although the Muse of comedy, wears here the tragic

syrma. In these first 5 verses, Phoebus exhorts his pupil to change appearance: she has to put aside her *plectrum* (*depositis...plectris*), bind her hair (*sparsam stringe comam*) gird up her *syrma* with ivy ((*rugas...syrmatis...succingant hederae*), so that she is more equipped for travelling. In the first five verses, Thalia looks more like Eumolpe, the Muse of tragedy, with her *syrma*, loose hairs – a sign of mourning in antiquity – and her plectra, which were used to play the lyre, the tragic instrument *par excellence*. In line 7-8, Thalia is said not to wear *soccos*, the boots of comic actors, nor, *ut solebat*, *coturnos*, the large buskins worn by actors of tragedy. Thalia is for Sidonius apparently a mix between both light and heavy poetry, so a symbol for his poetry in general.

The image of Thalia as a Muse who is not restricted to light verse might have precedents in Virgil and Claudian. In both poets, the Muse makes a transformation from the Muse of light verse to more majestic poetry, like epic (cf. Virg. *Ecl.* 6.1-8 and Claud. *Theod. pr.* 1-6), and becomes a generically transitional or cross-over Muse (see Ware 2012: 63-66).

On the other hand, we should possibly attach not too much important to the word *syrma*. In *C.* 15.16, the goddess Athens is also wearing a *syrma*, so in Sidonius' time, a *syrma* might just have been a long robe in general, without the connotation of tragedy. Still, the explicit combination of the Muse presiding over comedy and a typical tragic piece of cloth remains a very remarkable choice.

hederae rugas: 'less impeding ivies'. This phrase, and the idea of the Muse changing clothes seem to allude to Stat. *Silv.* 2.7.8-11: *... Hyantiae sorores/ laetae purpureas novate vittas, / crinem comite, candidamque vestem / perfundant hederae recentiores* ('Hyantian sisters, / renew joyfully your purple hairbands / comb your hair, let fresher ivy spread out over your snow-white clothes'). Ivy was sacred to Bacchus, and wound round the *thyrsus* (LS s.v. *hedera*). Ivy is therefore appropriate decoration for the Muse of comedy.

expeditiores: Anderson translated *expeditiores* as an attributive adjective with *hederae*, 'freer ivies', but which was corrected by Warmington, because 'surely it is accusative with *rugas* and is to taken proleptically "gird to a more convenient shape" (Loeb: 459 n.3). However, the allusion to *Silv.* 2.7, where *recentiores* is an adjective with *hederae*, speaks in favour of Anderson's suggestion. Nevertheless, it makes more sense for *expeditiores* to agree with *rugas.* For Sidonius and his audience, the metrical position without the same agreement could easily have sufficed to make the allusion. Loyen in his translation takes *expeditiores* as an adjective with *syrmatis* ('relève avec une ceinture de lierre les pils de ta robe traînante, pour la rendre plus apte à la marché').

Lines 7-8

Soccos ferre cave nec, ut solebat,
laxo pes natet altus in coturno;
'Refrain from wearing the slippers of comedy, nor let your high foot, as usual, sink in a loose tragic buskin'

soccos: A small, low-heeled shoe especially worn by comic actors and therefore a fitting shoe for the Muse of comedy. The word is also used as a metaphor for comedy. See LS s.v. *soccus* II.

ut solebat: Apparently, the comic Thalia is wont to wear the tragic *cothurnus*. See the comments at *syrmatis* above.

laxo pes natet altus in coturno: Sidonius seems to have had Ovid. *Ars Amat.* 516 in mind, without further implications, apparently: *Nec vagus in laxa pes tibi pelle natet* ('Don't let your foot float about in a shoe too loose').

pes...altus in coturno: The *cothurnus* was especially worn by tragic actors. As opposed to the low-heeled *soccus*, the *cothurnus* was a boot-like shoe with a high heel, hence *pes altus*. Anderson translates *pes altus* aptly as 'high-perched foot'. The word is also used as a metaphor for tragedy (e.g. Hor. *A.P.* 80) or elevated, 'heavy' poetry (e.g. Hor. *Carm.* 2.1.12). For Muses wearing *socci* or *cothurni*, cf. e.g. Ov. *Ep. ex Pon.* 4.16.29-30: *Musaque Turrani tragicis innixa cothurnis / et tua cum socco Musa, Melisse, levi* ('And the Muse of Turranus, wearing the tragic *cothurnus* / and your Muse, Melissus, with her light *soccus*').

Lines 9-11

sed tales crepidas ligare cura,
quales Harpalyce vel illa vinxit,
quae victos gladio procos cecidit
'But make sure that you lace on such sandals,
as Harpalyce, or she tied on,
who killed her conquered suitors with a sword'

crepidas: A Greek sandal-like shoe fastened by large loops running through thongs. The crepida was the standard shoe for travellers in classical times, and thus a fitting shoe for a *praevia Musa*. See LS s.v. *crepida*.

Harpalyce: Daughter of Harpalycus, king of Thracia. After the latter's death, Harpalyce withdrew into the forests where she lived on hunting and stealing cattle. According to Servius *Com. In Aen*. 1.317, she was so fast that she could outrun the horses of her persecutors (*insequentes etiam equites in celeritate vitaret*). Finally, she was snared and killed by shepherds (see BNP s.v. *Harpalyce*).
Thalia is told by Apollo to tie on similar shoes as Harpalyce, so that she would be as fast as Harpalyce. Of course, Sidonius chooses mythological female figures as examples for Thalia, who is female as well.

illa: The Arcadian princess Atalante who only agreed to marry when someone defeated her in a footrace, but killed those who lost. With the help of three golden apples given by Aphrodite, Meleager was able to slow down Atalanta and won the race. Again, Thalia should wear shoes with which she could run like Atalante (BNP s.v. *Atalante*).

Lines 12-17

perges sic melius volante saltu,
si vestigia fasceata nudi
per summum digiti regant citatis
firmi ingressibus atque vinculorum
concurrentibus ansulis reflexa
ad crus per cameram catena surgat
'In this way, you will move better with a flying leap
when your toes, left bare at the tips,
direct your swaddled foot soles,
stable with quick paces, and a chain of ropes,
bent back with the side-loops drawn together,
goes up the leg through the vault'

What follows now is a very detailed description of the shoes Thalia is exhorted to wear. The way the shoe is described, with open front (*nudi per summum digiti*) and crossing straps (*concurrentibus ansulis*), suggests Sidonius has indeed the sandal-like *crepida* in mind.

Ekphrases are a common feature of ancient poetry, but Sidonius seems to have a remarkable preference for shoes as subject of his *ekphrases*. In *C.* 2, the panegyric on Anthemius, most lines in the description of the goddess Roma are devoted to her shoes. Roma too wears *crepidae*, and they are described in almost similar terms as Thalia's: *perpetuo stat planta solo, sed fascia primos / sistitur ad digitos, retinacula bina cothurnis / mittit in adversum vincto de fomite pollex / quae stringant crepidas et concurrentibus ansis / vinclorum pandas texant per crura catenas,* 'the sole of the foot stands on a base of one piece, but the strap ends at the top of the toes, the great toe sends a double string from the swathed base in the opposite direction / that binds the *crepidae* together and weaves with the side-loops drawn together vaulted chains of ropes over the legs' (ll. 400-404). *Ekphrasis* in traditional Greek and Latin literature focuses the audience's attention on a certain object by pausing the narrative, in an attempt to 'to rival the visual arts' (Webb: 2009: 36). The subjects of *ekphrasis* are therefore traditionally impressive, great works of art, like shields (Homer, Vergil), beautifully embroidered cloaks (Apollonius Rhodius), or carvings on temples (Ovid). Besides, ekphrases are important from the perspective of interpretation as well, because they often contain meta-poetical statements.

The 'realism turn' in Hellenistic time led to more attention for less impressive, everyday objects, both in *ekphrasis*, such as goatherd's cups (Theoc. *Id.* 1.27-60), and sculpture, a tradition which Sidonius follows here ((see BNP s.v. *Hellenistic Poetry*). Cf. Watson, who states on this passage: 'Highlighting of the unexpected and apparently insignificant marks out the tendency to Neo-Alexandriansm' (cited in Onorato 2016: 106n42).

However, I cannot help but believe that Sidonius, by describing an ordinary shoe, while in *C.* 2 only a few words are spent to Roma's shield (*inseritur clipeo victrix manus illius orbem / Martigenae, lupa, Thybris, Amor, Mars, Ilia complent*) - the subject *par excellence* for poets to place themselves in a literary tradition that runs from Homer to Claudian, is parodying the ancient tradition.

Lines 18-21

hoc pernix habitu meum memento
Orpheum visere, qui cotidiana
saxa et robora corneasque fibras
mollit dulciloqua canorus arte
'Agile through this dress, remember
to visit my Orpheus, who day by day
mollifies stones and oaks and hearts of horn
melodiously with his sweet-sounding art'

hoc pernix habitu: The purpose of making Thalia change her clothes is to make her faster, so that she can run ahead of Sidonius. In the end, she is a *praevia Musa* (see section 3). Sidonius sends this poem ahead to asks for lodging.

meum…Orpheum: The Muse must first visit Orpheus, i.e. Lampridius, who apparently lived in Bordeaux.

cotidiana saxa et robora corneasque fibras: Mythology tells that Orpheus' voice was so enchanting that he enthralled trees, wild animals and even rocks, as e.g. Ovid says in *Met.* 10.1-2: *Carmine dum tali silvas animosque ferarum / Threicius vates et saxa sequentia ducit*, ('While the Thracian bard with such music draws the trees and the minds of the wild animals and following stones'…). See the introduction to this poem for a possible 'hidden message' in this line.

dulciloqua…arte: The adjective *dulciloquus* is a rare, late Latin word. In its two other occurrences in Latin poetry, it is connected to reed playing. Cf. Apul. *Apol.* 9.13: *iam carmina nostra / cedent victa tuo dulciloquo calamo* ('then my defeated poems will yield to your sweet-sounding reed') and Ps-Aus. *Anth. Pal.* 664: *dulciloquis calamos Euterpe flatibus urguet* ('Euterpe plays her reeds with sweet-sounding blowing'). Here, however, since Lampridius is a poet and rhetor, it must refer to composing poetry and/or panegyric.

For other rare compound adjectives, cf. *C.* 36.8: *plectripotentibus* and *Ep.* 9.16 *C.* 41.22: *blattifer* (both *hapaxes*), and see Gualandri 1979: 174-175.

canorus: 'Melodious'. The adjective with which Horace describes himself after being transformed into a swan: *Syrtisque Gaetulas canorus / ales Hyperboreosque campos* (*Carm*. 2.20.15-16).

Lines 22-25

Arpinas modo quem tonante lingua
ditat, nunc stilus aut Maronianus
aut quo tu Latium beas, Horati,
Alcaeo melior lyristes ipso
'whom now the Arpinian with his thundering tongue
enriches, now either the Maronian style
or the style with which you bless Latium, Horace,
a better lyrist than even Alcaeus'

modo…nunc: Lampridius' is compared to three writers from the Roman past, Cicero, Virgil and Horace. Each represents a different genre (rhetoric, epic and light verse), and the comparison indicates that Lampridius mastered all three genres excellently. Lampridius' versatility is even further emphasized by the technique of *varatio* Sidonius applies here: Whereas Cicero is called by his city of descent, Sidonius uses the metaphor *stilus Maronianus* for Virgil, and addresses Horace by a quote from his own oeuvre (see below).

Arpinas: 'From the city of Arpinum'. Arpinum was a hill town in Latium southeast of Rome and mainly known as the birthplace of Cicero, who is meant here, and of Marius (BNP s.v. *Arpinum*). The adjective *Arpinas* is often used by Sidonius to designate Cicero (E.g. *C.* 2.185, 23.146, *Ep.* 5.5.2, 8.6.1).

tonante lingua: A rhetor is sometimes said to have a 'thundering voice', as, e.g. Drances in Virg. *Aen.* 11.383 or Pericles in Plin. *Ep.* 1.20.19. Storm metaphors are frequently used for rhetoric (e.g. *fulgurare,* see TLL 6.1.1521 s.v. *fulgurare*).

stilus…Maronianus: Virgil full name was Publius Vergilius Maro. The adjective *Maronianus* is first found in Statius *Silv.* 2.7.74, and became relatively common in late antiquity. Sidonius uses the adjective a couple of times throughout his writings.

quo tu Latium beas, Horati: Quoted from Horace *Ep.* 2.2.120-121: *Vemens et liquidus puroque simillimus amni / fundet opes Latiumque beabit diuite lingua* ('Vigorous and flowing and very similar to a pure river / will he pour out riches and bless Latium with rich tongue'). The context of this quote is interesting, because Horace speaks here about the ideal poet. Horace

names two characteristics of this poet: he digs up old words 'lost in darkness' to use in his poetry (ll. 115-116: *obscurata diu populo bonus eruet atque / proferet in lucem speciosa vocabula rerum*), and he uses new words (ll. 119: *adsciscet nova, quae genitor produxerit usu*). This profile must have been appealing to Sidonius, who exactly does both in his prose and poetry. As the quote is applied to Lampridius, he must have had a similar working method.

lyristes: Remarkably, this word only occurs in Pliny and Sidonius.

Alcaeo: Alcaeus was a Greek lyric poet from the sixth century BC. Horatius was by later Romans considered to be his great successor (e.g. Aphtonius *De Metr. Omn.* 3.129: *cuius exemplum apud Horatium reperimus, qui in hoc genere carminis Alcaeum secutus est*, 'whose example we find by Horace, who has in every kind of poetry followed Alcaeus').

Lines 26-29

et nunc inflat epos tragoediarum,
nunc comoedia temperat iocosa,
nunc flammant satirae et tyrannicarum
declamatio controversiarum
'and now the epic style of the tragedies inspires,
now the funny comedy tempers him,
another time satires and the declamation
of tyrannical disputes inflame him'

Inflat epos tragoediarum: After rhetoric, epic, and lyric, four more literary genres follow. *Epos tragoediarum* should probably be understood here as the style and subject matter of tragedies, which took their material from epic poetry and were classified by the Romans as being written in an elevated, lofty style, just like epic. *Inflat*, literally 'to swell up', is therefore an appropriate verb for the writing of tragedies. Cf. e.g. Quintilianus *Inst. Rh.* 1.8.8: *copiam verborum, quorum in tragoediis gravitas, in comoediis elegantia et quidam velut ἀττικισμός inveniri potest* ('an abundance of words, whose majesty in tragedies, whose elegance and a certain 'atticism' can be found in comedies'). See TLL. 7.1.1467.35ff s.v. *inflo*).

comoedia temperat iocosa: If tragedy has an elevated style, its counterpart, the comedy, has a less lofty, and more modest style. Hence, comedy 'tempers' Lampridius in his use of language.

Flammant: 'to burn', 'or to grow hot' is in metaphorical sense used to describe passions or anger. Applied to satire and declamations, it probably refers to the sharp and fierce tone in which such pieces were written. Cf. *Ep.* 1.11.4: *Paeonius exarsit, cui satiricus ille morsum dentis igniti avidius impresserat* ('Paeonius flared up, into whom that satirist had greedy sink the bite of his burning tooth').

tyrannicarum declamatio controversiarum: *Declamationes* are exercises in oratorical delivery. There are two forms of declamation, *suasoriae*, in which the rhetor aims to advise or persuade concerning a certain topic, and *controversiae*, in which he argues for or against a certain standpoint in a dispute. The often fictive topic matter ranges from historical to mythological cases, and often the rhetor spoke from the standpoint of a certain character, like pirates, princesses, or tyrants, as here (BNP s.v. *declamationes*). Given Lampridius' function as poet at the court of the Visigotic Euric, Sidonius might not have chosen the '*controversiae* of tyrants' as his only example of *controversiae* coincidentally.

Lines 30-33

dic: 'Phoebus venit atque post veredos
remis velivolum quatit Garumnam;
occurras iubet, ante sed parato
actutum hospitio.'
'Say: ''Phoebus comes, and after the post-horses he stirs up the sail-flown Garonne with his oars; He commands you to meet him, but after having first immediately prepared the guest-chamber''

veredos: Quick horse, a.o. used for post and hunting. *Veredi* were known for their speed (LS s.v. *veredus*). Cf. Mart. 12.14.1: *rapiente veredo*.

velivolum…Garumnam: The river Garonne flows through Bordeaux. *Velivolum*, literally 'sail-flying', or 'winged with sails', is usually used as an epithet for ships, but is also applied to waters, like the sea (LS s.v. *velivolus*). In the latter case, the adjective is best taken in the sense of 'covered with ships'. Cf. e.g. Virg. *Aen.* 1.224.

parato…hospitio: The purpose of Sidonius' poem is of course to ask his friends from Bordeaux for lodging.

Lines 33-36

Leontioque,
prisco Livia quem dat e senatu,
dic: 'iam nunc aderit.' satis facetum et
solo nomine Rusticum videto.
'And to Leontius, whom Livia brought forth from the old senate, say: ''he will be here any moment''. Go to see the very elegant and Rustic only in name'

Leontioque…dic: La Penna 1995: 216 seems to believe that it is Lampridius who, encouraged by Thalia, goes to Sidonius' friends to ask for lodging, and not the Muse: 'Ella dirà ad Orfeo che Febo…sta per arrivare: dunque gli si trovi un alloggio. Orfeo si rivolgerà dapprima a Leonzio…in seconda instanza si rivolgerà a Rustico.' However, this cannot be correct. The similar structure of the sentences does not allow such an interpretation: the first imperative *dic* is definitely meant for Thalia, and there is no reason to believe that by the second *dic,* which is paralleled to the first *dic* by *–que*, the addressee has suddenly changed. Moreover, it is the Muse who is the *metatoriam paginam* (see above).

Leontioque*:* We do not know anything about this Leontius besides the information Sidonius gives us about him. He was an inhabitant of Bordeaux and probably the same as the Pontius Leontius who is the addressee of *C.* 22, a poem which gives a poetical description of Leontius' castle (*burgus*) near Bordeaux (cf. *C.* 22.101-104: *est locus…qua…Garunna…Durani muscose…iam pigrescentes sensim confunditis amnes*, 'There is a place where you, the Garonne and the mossy Dordogne, commingle gently your already sluggish streams'). He was the father of Paulinus, mentioned in *Ep*. 8.12.5: *ecce Leontius meus, facile primus Aquitanorum, ecce iam parum inferior parente Paulinus* ('here you have my Leontius, the first of the Aquitanians by far, here Paulinus, already hardly less than his father'). Leontius came of a senatorial family (*prisco…e senatu*, cf. *C.* 22.116: *plus celsos habiturus eros vernamque senatum* and 197: *inlustris pro sorte viri*), the most famous member of which was probably the poet and bishop Paulinus of Nola. See PLRE s.v. *Pontius Leontius* 30; Delhey 1993: 6.
Although we do not know anything about his activities, Leontius was, as addressee of a poem, part of the literary circle of Sidonius in Bordeaux. According to Mathisen 1991, he even had a literary nickname - just like Sidonius and Lampridius -, which was 'Dionysus'. However, Mathisen's identification of *meo Baccho* in *C.* 22. *ep.* 5 with Leontius is not correct, since the words refer in my opinion to the poem itself, not to Leontius: Sidonius says that his Bacchus will be judged (*iudicium decemvirale passuro*), which was a *topic* of him to say about his work (e.g. *Ep.* 9.13.5, 9.16.3).

Livia: The mother of Leontius, who descended from a senatorial family. Although he does not favour it himself, Anderson gives another option, i.e. that *Livia* refers to a town mentioned in *Ep.* 8.3.1, near Carcassonne. However, I would not *a priori* discard this second option. Why would Sidonius only mention Leontius' mother and her family, while he has some very illustrious forebears (including senators) in his paternal family? Another argument for reading *Livia* as the city rather than a female's name is a parallel passage from *C.* 23. 161-162: *Quid celsos Senecas loquar vel illum / quem dat Bilbilis alta Martialem?* ('Why would I speak of lofty Seneca's or of him / whom high Bilbilis brought forth, Martial?'). *Bilbilis* was a city in nowadays Spain and birth place of the poet Martial. The same *city – dat – person-* construction is used in the lines as in *Ep.* 8.11 (cf. *C.* 23.88-90, where Sidonius uses *dedisti* in the same sense for the city of Narbo: *Felix prole virum, simul dedisti natos cum genitore principantes*, 'Blessed in offspring of men, you brought forth ruling sons with father together').

prisco…e senatu: I.e. 'brought forth from an old senatorial family'.

Nunc aderit: The idea might be a bit far-fetched, but *(nunc) adesse* is often used in the context of divine invocations (cf. Ovid *Fast.* 6.652: *Nunc ades o coeptis, flaua Minerua, meis*; Hor. *Ep.* 5.53: *[Nox et Diana] Nunc, nunc adeste, nunc in hostilis domos*). The use of similar words by the god Phoebus would be fitting.

Rusticum: Nothing is known about this Rusticus from Bordeaux. He might be the same Rusticus as the addressee of *Ep*. 2.11. Sidonius makes a pun on his name. *Rusticus*, 'rustic', is in Sidonius' letters often synonym for an uncultivated style (cf. e.g. *Ep.* 4.18. *nam carmen ipsum…tam rusticanum est tamque impolitum*).

Lines 37-40

sed si tecta negant ut occupata,
perge ad limina mox episcoporum,
sancti et Gallicini manu osculata
tecti posce brevis vacationem
'But if they refuse their lodgings as being already occupied,
Go next to the thresholds of bishops ,
and after having kissed the hand of the saintly Gallicinus
ask him for the availability of a small room'

Gallicinus: When his lay friends do not have place for Sidonius, the Muse is said to go on to Sidonius' ecclesiastical friends. Gallicinus is a bishop or other clerical figure (*sancti*) in Bordeaux, but not known otherwise. Apparently, he also appreciated poetry.

Lines 41-44

ne, si destituor domo negata,
maerens ad madidas eam tabernas
et claudens geminas subinde nares
propter fumificas gemam culinas
'lest, when I am left destitute because a house is denied to me
I have to go sadly to damp inns
and, while immediately closing both my nostrils
because of the smoky kitchens, have to groan'

These verses have a recurring and almost rhyming -as sound:
madidas…tabernas…geminas…fumificas…culinas.

Lines 41 to 54 contain, after Thalia's shoes, another detailed *ekphrastic*-like description. The subject of this description are the inns, their food and their visitors to which Phoebus/Sidonius is condemned when his friends in Bordeaux refuse him shelter. While Latin epic usually does not go into details about the food (with exception of Ovid, e.g. *Met.* 8.647-678), food descriptions are a favourite subject of the 'lighter' Latin poetry, offering them the possibility to use many exotic words (cf. e.g. Hor. *Sat.* 2.2.116-122; Juv. *Sat.*5; Mart. 11.78; see Leigh 2015)

In Sidonius, however, the mention of food has sometimes a metapoetical meaning. Besides borrowing metaphors from food to describe literary style, a common practice in Latin literature (e.g. *Ep.* 4.16.1: *accepi per Paterninum paginam vestram, quae plus mellis an salis habeat incertum est*, 'I have received through Paterninus your letter, and it is uncertain whether it has more of honey or salt'), Sidonius also makes more explicit comparisons between food and poetry. E.g. in *Ep.* 8.12, Sidonius invites his friend Trygetius to come to Bordeaux and join again the literary circle there. Sidonius describes the activity of composing and reciting poetry in terms of eating and dining: in Bordeaux, Trygetius will find a 'very abundant larder, richly stuffed with masses of costly delicacies' (*copiosissima penus aggeratis opipare farta deliciis*), he is invited to be fed and feed others (*veni ut aut pascaris aut pascas*), because Sidonius is sure that his 'Mediterranean commissariat' (*mediterraneo instructo*) will defeat Sidonius' guests with their local tableware (*Medulicae suppellectilis epulones*) and products of the area, like fish from the Garonne (*Garumnicis mugilibus*) and his small, negligible crabs (*vilium turba cancrorum*). This connection of food and poetry that Sidonius makes in this letter to Trygetius refers to the late antique habit of composing and reciting poetry during dinner (cf. *Ep*. 1.11).

The food that is served in the tavern, which stinks (*olet*), and damps (*nebulae vapore iuncto / fumant*) mirrors the poetry that Phoebus would produce when he is refused shelter, after he has become barbarian (*plus illis ego barbarus*). Furthermore, several words used in the description have elsewhere in Sidonius a poetical meaning. For food and dinner habits as a social/cultural marker in Sidonius, see Raga 2009.

madidas…tabernas: Latin literature is generally negative about inns, which were considered as meeting places for the lower classes, and were therefore to be avoided by people with higher status. Accusing someone of visiting *tabernae* was a common strategy to discredit members of the upper class. See BNP s.v. *inn* 2.

fumificas…culinas: In Martial, *culinae* are often 'blackened' (*nigra*), cf. 1.92.9, 3.2.3, 10.66.3. Sidonius uses the epithet *fumificus*, 'smoke-making', which has only precedents in Ov. *Met.* 7.114, Prud. *Per.* 3.118 and Nam. *De Re. Su.* 252. Although Sidonius does not explicitly allude to one of those passages, the word is in all three used in a very negative and threatening context, which might for the reader have added to the overall negative picture of the inn.

Lines 45-48

qua serpylliferis olet catillis
bacas per geminas ruber botellus
ollarum aut nebulae vapore iuncto
fumant cum crepitantibus patellis
'where a red sausage attached to
a double ring on thyme-bearing plates
or steam of pots together with vapor
smoke with clattering vessels'

Onorato 2016 remarks on this passage 'il lessico dei vv. 45-48 esibisce alcune significative consonanze con quello di un epigramma di Marziale (5.78) concepito come ennesima variazone sul tema della vocation ad cenam.' However, I do not see any reason to think that Sidonius directly alludes to this epigram by Martial. It is indeed 'a variation on the theme of invitation to a dinner'.

serpylliferis… catillis: *Serpyllifer*, 'thyme-bearing' is a *hapax legomena*, formed after words like *pomi-fer.*

botellus: Except for some cooking-books, the word only occurs in Mart. 5.78 and 11.31. There is however no indication of allusion here.

bacas per geminas: It is unclear what Sidonius means (cf. TLL 2.0.1658.50 'interpr. incertae'). *Baca* is a berry, so is the sausage decorated with two berries on each side? Or does it refers to the buttons at the end of the sausage, as Anderson wonders? Loyen takes the word as a metaphor for 'metal rings' to which the sausage is attached ('fixées par deux anneaux de metal'). There are indeed some parallels in Latin literature where the word *baca* is used for iron studs. Cf. e.g. Prud. *Peri.* 1.46: *carcer inligata duris colla bacis inpedit* ('the prison held them fast, their necks shackled with hard links'). In *Ep.* 8.9 *C.* 34.11, the meaning is clearly 'berries'. (*duplaeque frondis / hinc bacas quatiam*).

crepitantibus: 'Clattering' of plates, but also used in in *Ep.* 9.2.2 in a negative sense of Sidonius' own writing*: nunc scilicet tibi a partibus meis arida ieiunantis linguae stipula crepitabit* ('certainly, from my side the dry stalk of a parched tongue will now crackle for you').

Lines 49-51

hic cum festa dies ciere ravos
cantus coeperit et voluptuosam
scurrarum querimoniam crepare,
'Here, when a feast day has begun to give rise to hoarse songs and resound the popular complaints of buffoons'

ravos: Elsewhere in Sidonius, *ravus* has metapoetical implications. Sidonius often uses the word to compare his own writing style to the honking of geese, as opposed to more melodious birds. Cf. *C.* 22 *Ep.* 3: *nos vestigia doctrinae ipsius adorantes coram canoro cygno ravum anserem profitemur* ('While we admire the footsteps of such learning, we confess our hoarse goose in the presence of a melodious swan'; *Ep.* 9.2.2: *hoc more tu et olorinis cantibus anseres ravos et modificatis lusciniarum querelis inproborum passerum fringultientes susurros iure sociaveris* ('in this way, you might just as reasonably join the hoarse geese with the songs of swans and the chirping muttering of impudent sparrows with the melodious plaints of the nightingale'). The situation in which Phoebus would end up is in poetical terms the opposite of the circle of his friends where he wants to be (cf. l.21 about Lampridius: *mollit dulciloqua canorus arte*).

Lines 52-54

tunc, tunc carmina digniora vobis
vinosi hospitis excitus Camena
plus illis ego barbarus susurrem.
'Then, then, I will mutter, incited by the Camena of a drunk host, more barbarian than them poems more worthy of you'

carmina digniora vobis : It is not wholly clear what Sidonius meant with these last four lines. Who are *vobis*? Is the addressee still Thalia, as in the rest of the poem, or does Sidonius address here the addressees of the poem, Lampridius, Leontius, Rusticus and Gallicinus, which would explain the shift from singular to plural? And what does the words *carmina digniora vobis* ('songs more worthy of you') mean? If Thalia is still the addressee, Sidonius

might want to say that he will murmur poetry that is more fitting of Thalia, i.e., light verses. But if *vobis* refers to his friends, are those *carmina digniora* a kind of retaliation because Sidonius was not given shelter and meant sarcastically ('I will compose the most indecent and insulting verses you ever see, which is exactly what you deserve!'), or, as Dalton interprets this lines, does he want to say that even under such circumstances he will manage to produce poetry ('yes, even there and even then, my voice incited by the muse of a thirsty host, I, worse barbarian than all, shall whisper verses more worthy of your praise')? The problem with such a positive view of the poetry that Sidonius will compose in tavern-like surroundings, is the negative word *susurrem* (see comm. *ad loc.*). I therefore prefer the sarcastic interpretation of those verses, and believe that *vobis* addresses Sidonius' friends, which seems to me the best option.

vinosi hospitis excitus Camena: Now Sidonius/Phoebus has finally found lodging in a tavern, his style of poetry changes according to the circumstances. His new Muse is the Muse of his host, who is *vinosus*, 'drunk' or 'wine-loving'. His poetry will therefore also be like drinking songs.

plus illis ego barbarus: Sidonius/Phoebus is affected by his barbarian surroundings and becomes even more barbarian than they. Interestingly, a similar idea is expresses in the third letter of book 8, where Sidonius complains about his exile and where the barbarian environment in which he has to live also affects the quality of his literature. It is no wonder, therefore, that the copy (or translation) he made of *The Live of Apollonius of Tyana* at that time is *semicruda* (barbarians were notorious for eating (half-)raw flesh, see Jerome *Ad. Iovin.* 2.7) and *Opica* ('Oscan', 'barbarian', 'uncultivated', see LS s.v. *opicus*). A similar complaint is uttered time and again by Ovid during his exile (see e.g. *Trist*. 5.7.55-58; *Ex P.* 4.13.17-22.

susurrem: 'muttering'. In the already mentioned passage from *Ep.* 9.2.2 (see comm. *ad* l.49 *ravos*) the 'chirping muttering (*susurros*) of hoarse geese' is contrasted with the melodious plaints of nightingales'. So, in Sidonius' poetics, *susurrare* is again a word that connotes bad literature.

Section 4

O necessitas abiecta nascendi, vivendi misera, dura moriendi! ecce quo rerum volubilitatis humanae rota ducitur. amavi, fateor, satis hominem, licet quibusdam, tamen veniabilibus, erratis implicaretur atque virtutibus minora misceret. namque crebro levibus ex causis, sed leviter, excitabatur, quod nilominus ego studebam sententiae ceterorum naturam potius persuadere quam vitium; adstruebamque meliora, quatenus in pectore viri iracundia materialiter regnans, quia naevo crudelitatis fuerat infecta, praetextu saltim severitatis emacularetur. praeterea etsi consilio fragilis, fide firmissimus erat; incautissimus, quia credulus; securissimus, quia non nocens. nullus illi ita inimicus, qui posset eius extorquere maledictum; et tamen nullus sic amicus, qui posset effugere convicium. difficilis aditu, cum facilis inspectu, et portandus quidem, sed portabilis.

O necessitas abiecta nascendi, vivendi misera, dura moriendi!
'O how contemptible the necessity of being born, how miserable the necessity of living, how cruel the necessity of dying!'

According to Thomas Hodgkin in his paraphrase of this letter, this sentence in prose 'comes nearer to poetry than anything else written by him' (Hodgkins: 1892: 337). Indeed, the sentence is carefully constructed: it consists of a *tricolon*, with *alliteration* (***n**ecessitas*…***n**ascendi* – ***m**isera*…***m**oriendi*) and *chiasmus* (*vivendi* (A) - *misera* (B)- *dura* (B)- *moriendi* (A)).

necessitas: 'necessity', or 'destiny'. Complaints about the *necessitas* of birth, life and death was a commonplace in pre -and especially Christian time. Cf. Sen. *Cons. Polyb.* 11.9; Aug. *Civ. Dei* 13.23. However, this 'necessity' takes on a different nuance when read in the light of the astrological predictions Lampridius received about his death (see sections 9-10).

ecce quo rerum volubilitatis humanae rota ducitur
'Look, to what the wheel of human mutability is rotating!'

volubilitatis, rota: Sidonius uses here standard vocabulary to describe the fickleness of human life. *Volubilitatis* is an epithet of Fortuna, *rota* an object with which she is often depicted (cf. Cic. *Pro Mil.* 69: *vide quam sit varia vitae commutabilisque ratio, quam vaga*

volubilisque Fortuna; Fulg, *Exp. Virg.* 107: *Fortuna rotam ferre dicitur, id est temporis uolubilitatem*). In the context of Book 8 - and especially in contrast with *Ep.* 8.9, where Lampridius is fortunate while Sidonius banished and dispossessed of his possessions -, the mutability of human fate Sidonius describes here is very clear-cut for the reader (for this theme in book 8, see Introduction 3.3 *The structure of book 8*).

ducitur: For *ducere* in the sense of 'rotating', see TLL 5.1.2148.43 ff.

amavi, fateor, satis hominem, licet quibusdam, tamen veniabilibus, erratis implicaretur atque virtutibus minora misceret.
'I loved the man very much, I admit it, although he was ensnared in a few but forgivable errors, and he mixed virtues with smaller errors'

veniabilibus: A late antique word. Cf. *Ep.* 4.11.3 about the death of Claudius Mamertus: *haec apud eum culpa veniabilis erat* ('this fault was in his eyes forgivable'). *–bilis* was a very productive adjective-forming suffix in later Latin (see Kircher-Durand 1991: 118). *Veniabilibus* already points forward to *cupabile* in 11.9 (see *comm. ad loc.*)

licet quibusdam… erratis implicaretur atque virtutibus minora misceret: As Anderson remarks, this phrase may be an imitation of Hor. *Sat.* 1.4.131-132: *mediocribus et quis / ignoscas vitiis teneor*, 'I am held in small faults which you would forgive', where Horace is speaking about his upbringing by his father. Cf. *comm. ad naevo crudelitatis*.

minora: i.e. *errata*, and more specific, his hot-temper, as Sidonius explains in the next phrase, and the list of negative qualities that follows further on in the text. These *errata* are *minora,* because as will become clear in 11.9, Lampridius made one *gravius erratum*, which was not *culpabile*.

namque crebro levibus ex causis, sed leviter, excitabatur
'Since he frequently lost his temper because of the slightest thing, but slightly'

Note not only the pun Sidonius makes on *levibus* and *leviter*, but also the playful composition of this phrase: ***levi-bus ex cau**sis – **levi-ter ex-ci**tabatur*.

quod nilominus ego studebam sententiae ceterorum naturam potius persuadere quam vitium
'none the less, I always tried to convince others' opinion that this is rather due to his nature than a vice'

Again, a carefully structured sentence: ***s****tudebam* ***s****ententiae cetero****rum*** *natu****ram*** ***p****otius* ***p****ersuadere qu****am*** *viti****um***

naturam…vitium: Sidonius defends Lampridius' quick temper by opposing *natura* to *vitium*. His quick temper should not be considered as a vice, but an imperfect quality of his character, i.e. a *naturale vitium* (*Ep.* 5.10.4), which is of course more *venialis* than a vice. The opposition between *natura* and *vita* was a well-known *topos* in theological/philosophical literature: see e.g. Ambrosias. *In Phil*. 2.4: *quia non naturae vitium est, sed voluntatis*; Aug. *C. Pelag.* 2.2.2: *peccatum non natura, sed uitium est*.

adstruebamque meliora, quatenus in pectore viri iracundia materialiter regnans, quia naevo crudelitatis fuerat infecta, praetextu saltim severitatis emacularetur
'and I always made better suggestions, as that the quick temper in the heart of the man that reigns physically, because it was tainted with a wart of cruelty, could be healed by at least an appearance of severity'

A rather difficult sentence, in which Sidonius tries to defend Lampridius' bad temper further. The sentence does not only have some words that are difficult to interpret (*quatenus, materialiter*, *crudelitatis*), but its syntax as well is quite unclear. Not surprisingly, translators differ in their interpretation of this sentence. Anderson translates: 'and I added a more favourable interpretation, suggesting that, since, this tendency to anger so constitutionally inherent in the man's breast had been infected by an element of cruelty, it might be excused at least on the plea of stern rectitude'. In his interpretation, Sidonius attempts to counterbalance Lampridius' *crudelitas* as *severitas*. Dalton agrees with Anderson: 'I suggested other points in his favour, as that his passion was a physical tyranny, dominating his nature; I tried to clear him of the blot of cruelty by lending it the colour of mere severity.' Van Waarden 2010: 332 gives a more neutral interpretation: 'I gave a more favourable interpretation, in order that the anger which dominated the man's heart might be excused.'

The problem with Anderson's and Dalton's translations is that they give a rather negative picture of Lampridius, since it suggests that Sidonius admits that Lampridius was indeed cruel. Therefore, Loyen inserts *non* in the Latin: *quia non naevo crudelitatis fuerat infecta*. Now, Sidonius' argument is that Lampridius was *not* affected by the vice of cruelty, but was only severe. Looking at the Latin, I incline to Anderson's and Dalton's interpretation (but cf. *comm. ad quia non nocens*). *Emaculatur* consists of the words ex- and macula, 'spot' and literally means 'to clear from spots'. This words refers back to the *naevo crudelitatis,* 'the spot of cruelty' of which Lampridius had to be cleansed. Sidonius does so by using a *praetextus*, literally 'something wrought in front' to cover the Lampridius' spot, i.e. a *praetextus* of severity.

The complexity of the phrase might reflect the complexity of the argument with which Sidonius tries to persuade Lampridius' critics.

iracundia: 'proneness to anger or temper'. Earlier defined as *levibus ex causis… excitabatur*. See LS s.v. *iracundia*.

materialiter: A very rare word and not attested before Sidonius. It derives from the adjective *materialis*, which means literally: 'relating to matter'. In later texts (e.g. Mar. Vict. *Comm. in Ep. Ad. Eph.* 1.2.1), *materialiter* is contrasted to *spiritualiter*, thus pertaining to the body instead of the spirit (cf. Anderson: 'constitutionally', Dalton: 'physical tyranny', Loyen: 'matériellement'). In Beda *De Rer. Na.* 4.6, it refers to physical matter (*ignis materialiter accensus*). For other rare adverbs ending in *–ter* in Sidonius, see Gualandri 1979: 178n115. What does it mean that the *iracundia* of Lampridius 'reigns' physically? Sidonius might mean here that the *iracundia* only concerns Lampridius's body, but does not affects his soul. This would fit with his earlier remark that Lampridius' *minora errata* are no *vitia*, but due to his (physical/earthly) *natura.*

naevo crudelitatis: Sidonius resorts again to Horatian vocabulary for his description of Lampridius. Sat. 1.6.66-67: *velut si egregio inspersos reprehendas corpore naevos* ('as if you blame the warts scattered upon a flawless body'). Horace uses this comparison to criticize his criticasters who berate Horace's small imperfections. Sidonius clearly places Lampridius in the same position as Horace: he defends Lampridius with the same arguments as Horace defended himself for not being perfect (for the intertext, see Onorato 2016: 202).

As discussed above, either Sidonius means here that Lampridius was indeed cruel, but condones it as severity, or we should read *non*, as Loyen does, which means that Lampridius was not cruel, but only severe. If the first interpretation is correct, and I think it is, this could give an interesting possible clue for the reason why Lampridius was murdered by his slaves, which Sidonius nowhere states explicitly in this letter. However, the fact that Sidonius starts with excusing Lampridius' quick temper, and here suggests that Lampridius was 'tainted with cruelty', might point the way. With respect to the letter which Sidonius took as inspiration for his own letter, Plin. *Ep.* 3.14, it is interesting that Larcius Macedo was murdered because of his harshness (*superbus*) and cruelty (*saevus*) by his own slaves. Is Sidonius, because of what he says himself and shows by his imitation of Pliny's letter, implying here the same cause for Lampridius' murder (cf. Wolff 2015: 194)?

praetextu…severitatis: For a similar expression, cf. *Ep.* 9.14.8: *neque vereare me quospiam iudices Catonianos advocaturum, qui modo invidiam, modo ignorantiam suam factae severitatis velamine tegant* ('and do not fear that I will bring up some Cato-like judges, who conceal now their jealousy, now their ignorance under a veil of severity').
As Van Waarden 2016: 175 points out, *praetextus* varies in meaning from negative ('pretext') to neutral ('excuse', 'reason'). A more negative meaning seems to be most appropriate here (see *comm. ad naevo crudelitatis*).

emacularetur: A late antique word, used in medical sense for the cleaning of ulcers, but in Christian context also metaphorically applied to the cleansing of the soul from sins (e.g. Plin.

Nat. 21.129: *[Narcissus] nigras vitiligines emaculat;* Tert. *Res.* 8.37.1: *scilicet caro abluitur, ut anima emaculetur*). Sidonius uses here the metaphorical meaning of the word: he tries to heal a defect of Lampridius' character by covering it under a *praetextus* of severity. See TLL 5.2.440.40 s.v. *emaculo.*

praeterea etsi consilio fragilis, fide firmissimus erat; incautissimus, quia credulus, securissimus, quia non nocens
'Further, although he was weak in council, he was very firm in his conviction; very incautious, because he was credulous, very safe, because he did no harm'

Sidonius often uses series of paired antitheses for describing someone's character. However, while elsewhere opposing a positive trait of someone to a negative one someone does not have (thus affirming positive and negating negative), as e.g. in *Ep.* 7.13.3, here Sidonius does in fact attributes some shortcomings to Lampridius, which are balanced by positive qualities. These pairs of good and bad traits have already been announced earlier by Sidonius (*virtutibus minora misceret*). See for further comments on Sidonius' use of paired oppositions: Van Waarden 2016: 158.

From the very beginning, Sidonius seems to not fully approve of Lampridius' character (*quibusdam, tamen veniabilibus, erratis implicaretur*), although he loved him very much (*amavi, fateor, satis hominem*).

The first antitheses are emphasized by the use of alliterations and sound repetitions: ***f**ragilis, **f**ide **f**irmissimus*; *in**cau**tissimus **cre**dulus se**cu**rissimus **no**n **noce**ns*

incautissimus, quia credulus: Lampridius was very careless, since he was credulous. When Sidonius uses *incautus* in his letters, is it mostly about careless persons who are ensnared by their enemies (e.g. Arvandus in *Ep.* 1.7.6; Catullinus in *Ep.* 1.11.3; ships on sea seized by Saxons in *Ep.* 8.6.14). So, this might be a reference to Lampridius' murder: he was very incautious and too trusting of his slaves, because he considered himself to be safe as he did no harm. At the same time, Lampridius can also justly be called *credulus* because he believed the astrological predictions (see 8.11.9 and 8.11.10), in which case *superstitious* would be an apt translation (see TLL. 4.0.1152.5 s.v. *credulus* 1).

quia non nocens: That Lampridius feels himself very secure, because he does no harm is used by Loyen to justify his insertion of *non* in *naevo crudelitatis* and argues in favour of his reading.

nullus illi ita inimicus, qui posset eius extorquere maledictum; et tamen nullus sic amicus, qui posset effugere convicium
'None was so hostile to him, that he could provoke him to curse; and neither was someone so loved by him, that he could escape his reproach'

extorquere: Another word that will reoccur in Sidonius' description of the murder of Lampridius: *qui exanimati cadavere inspecto non statim signa vitae colligeret **extortae**?*, 'who would not after examining the lifeless body immediately mark the traces of strangled life?' (*Ep.* 8.11.11).

difficilis aditu, cum facilis inspectu, et portandus quidem, sed portabilis.
'Difficult to approach, while easy to see, and admittedly someone who has to be tolerated, but tolerable.

difficilis aditu, cum facilis inspectu: It was not difficult to get to see Lampridius, but much harder to get to know him really. Lampridius is presented here as being aloof. *Inspectu*, from *inspicere*, can be interpreted as either physical, as Anderson does ('though easy enough to get a view of') or mentally, as Loyen does ('il était par contre facile de scruter ses sentiments'). Like several other words in the portrait of Lampridius, *inspectu* might take up another nuance in light of what follows: the same word is used for both the astrological observation of the stars Lampridius believed in (*Ep.* 8.11.9: *[urbium cives Africanarum], qui constellatione percontantis **inspecta** partir annum mensem diemque dixerunt*, '[Inhabitants of African cities], who after examining the constellation of the inquirer said both the year, the month and the day…') and the inspection of Lampridius' death body (*Ep.* 8.11.11: *exanimati cadavere **inspecto***, 'after his lifeless corps had been examined'), which clearly shows the traces of the strangling (*signa vitae…extortae*), and would therefore also ironically fit the description *facilis inspectu*.

portandus quidem, sed portabilis: *portare* means here 'to tolerate', but the literal meaning is 'to carry'. Probably too speculative, but if Sidonius has intentionally picked some ambiguous words to portray Lampridius that also refer to his death (*incautissimus, credulus, extorquere, inspectu*), and is doing this here as well, then *portandus* and *portabilis* could refer to the carrying away of Lampridius' corpse.

Section 5

De reliquo, si orationes illius metiaris, acer rotundus, compositus excussus; si poemata, tener multimeter, argutus artifex erat. faciebat siquidem versus oppido exactos tam pedum mira quam figurarum varietate; hendecasyllabos lubricos et enodes; hexametros crepantes et cothurnatos; elegos vero nunc echoicos, nunc recurrentes, nunc per anadiplosin fine principiisque conexos.

de reliquo, si orationes illius metiaris, acer rotundus, compositus excussus
'For the rest, if you would judge his speeches, he was clever, full-sounding, well-ordered, vigorous'

de reliquo: Marks the shift from description of Lampridius' character to his literary style.

acer rotundus, compositus excussus: The first literary genre Sidonius considers are Lampridius' speeches. Lampridius as rhetor is defined by two pairs of adjectives.

Acer in the context of orations means 'shrewdness' (cf. Cic. *Orat.* 2.84 *sed animus acer et praesens et acutus idem atque versutus invictos viros efficit*, 'but a shrewd and alert and again keen and willy mind makes men invincible'). *Rotundus* in oratory refers to a 'well-rounded', smooth style, with full periods as opposed to choppy and lose sense-units (Rudd 1989: 203; cf. Cic. *Orat.* 40: *Theodorus autem praefractior nec satis, ut ita dicam, rotundus*, [the rhetor] Theodorus though is rather broken and not, to say so, 'well-rounded''). The same qualification is used for Quintilian in *Ep.* 1.1.1: *Quinti Symmachi rotunditatem*.

Compositus means 'well-ordered' (TLL. 3.0.2134.15 s.v. *compositus*), but the adjective with which it is paired, *excussus* is more difficult to define. It derives from *excutere* 'to shake off' or 'to beat off'. In adjective and adverbial form, it means 'violently extended', so its meaning in rhetorical context would be close to 'vigorous' (cf. Anderson: *energetic*; Loyen: *un soin attentif*). Cf. Alc. Avit. *C.* 6.9: *tunc licet excusso libeat tibi versu.*

The pairs of adjectives *acer-rotundus* and *compositus-excussus* seem to contradict themselves: Lampridius is at the same time 'sharp' (*acer*) and 'round' (*rotundus*), and 'well-ordered' (*compositus,* lit. 'placed together') and 'vigorous' (*excussus,* lit. 'shaken' or 'driven' out'). Maybe a chiasmus can be detected here as well: the two outer members are outgoing and aggressive, while the inner two are more poised and composed. The uses of antithetical words in a chiasmus might contribute to the image of Lampridius that Sidonius creates here: Lampridius is hardly describable, Sidonius almost seem to struggle to find the right words to describe his friend.

si poemata, tener multimeter, argutus artifex erat.
'If you would judge his poems, he was a tender, multi-versed, melodious, artistic'

Note the many assonances in this single clause: ***te*n*er* *mu*l*timeter* *ar*gutus *ar*tifex**

tener: The adjective is traditionally applied to poets who turned away from 'heavy' epic poetry, and chose to write about 'lighter' subjects, especially love (cf. e.g. Catul. 35.1, Ovid. *Am.* 2.1.4). Sidonius calls Ovid *tener* in *C.* 23.159, while referring to his love poetry (*et te carmina per libidinosa / notum, Naso tener*, 'and you, tender Naso, known for your lascivious poems'). See Soldevilla 2006: 184-185.

It seems not very likely that Sidonius praises Lampridius here for his love poetry. However, the word was also used to refer to the meter in which love poetry was written, i.e. the elegiac distichs (cf. *Ep.* 9.16 *C.* 58: *teneroque metro / vel gravi*, 'in the light meter or the heavy').

multimeter: 'he mastered many meters'. The word is a *hapax legomena*. For similar unique compositions, cf. e.g. *serpyllifer* (*Ep.* 8.11 *C.* 45), *ronchisonus* (*C.* 3.8). A complete list of the *hapax legomena* in Sidonius can be found in Onorato 2016.

In the literary circles in Gaul Sidonius was part of, members were expected to be able to compose in any metre. Cf. the poetry contest in *Ep.* 9.13.5.

argutus: 'sharp-sounding', 'melodious'. Used to describe the playing of instruments and the singing of poets. Cf. Virg. *Ecl.* 9.36, where 'melodious' swans are opposed to the 'cackling' of geese: *videor…sed argutos inter strepere anser olores.*

artifex: Could either be an noun, 'artist' (Dalton) or an adjective, 'artistic' (Anderson and Loyen). As noun the word occurs more frequent, but I think *artifex* is used as an adjective here because of the analogy with the previous clause (*acer, rotundus,* etc.). In Sidonius' letters, *artifex* is often used as an adjective (cf. e.g. *Ep.* 2.2.20: *artifex lector*, *Ep.* 8.1.2: *Ciceronisque sententiae artifices*).

faciebat siquidem versus oppido exactos tam pedum mira quam figurarum varietate
'Since he used to make very precise verses with an admirable variety of both feet and figures'

siquidem: A reason-giving particle (see Pinkster 2015: 651). Especially in later Latin, there is almost no distinction in meaning between *siquidem* and *nam* (Leumann 1963: 420). Thus, this phrase, introduced by *faciebat siquidem*, gives the reason why Lampridius is worth the praise Sidonius gives him in the previous passage.

pedum: Feet of a meter. Refers back to *multimeter*.

figurarum varietate: *figurae* are figures of speeches, but are also used for words/phrasing (cf. Anderson: 'a remarkable variety both of feet and of phrasing'). See LS s.v. *figura* B1 and B2.

hendecasyllabos lubricos et enodes, hexametros crepantes et cothurnatos
'polished and smooth hendecasyllables, boasting and loftily hexameters'

hendecasyllabos lubricos et enodes: According to Sidonius, the hendecasyllable is a 'smooth' metre. Here, he calls them *lubricos* (lit. 'slippery') and *enodes* (lit. 'without knots', said of planed wood. *Enodes* is another example of a craftsman metaphor Sidonius frequently uses for composing poetry). Cf. Plin. *Ep*. 5.17.2: *elegis … fluentibus et teneris et enodibus*.

In *Ep.* 8.4.2, the letter to Constantius, Sidonius praises the addressee's *rotundatos hendecasyllabos*, 'smooth hendecasyllables'. Probably, the metre is qualified as 'smooth' because it consists of a spondee and two iambs, which is also a quick foot (cf. *Ep.* 8.4.2: *citos iambos*; Hor. *AP.* 251-252: *iambus / pes citus*). As far as I was able to find out, there are no other authors who describe the hendecasyllable as 'smooth'. In *C.* 23.27, Sidonius uses the adjective *dulces* for this meter (like Prudentius in *Peri.* 6.162), in 8.4.2 *rotundatos* and in *Ep.* 9.13.2 *C.* 36.1: *teretes*. Sidonius is almost the only author who qualifies the aesthetic quality of this metre.

hexametros crepantes et cothurnatos: The hexameters are called *crepantes* and *cothurnatos*. *Cothurnatos* derives from *cothurnus*, a shoe that was especially worn by actors of tragedy. This high shoe became a fitting metaphor for the high, elevated style of poetry, i.e. tragedy and epic, the latter of course being written in hexameters (cf. e.g. Mart. 5.5.8: *cothurnati Maronis*).

The meaning of *crepantes* in this context is less clear, because the word usually refers to a cracking sound, e.g. the cracking of doors (e.g. Plaut. *Am*. 1.2.34) or the breaking of materials (*C.* 23.411: of spokes). Anderson translates *crepantes* as 'resounding' and Loyen as 'sonores', but I would like to suggest another translation, which is I think more fitting with *hexametros*. *Crepare* is also used to describe someone boasting, as e.g. in Plaut. *Mil.* 3.1.56 (see LS s.v. *crepo* 2B). 'Boasting' is more appropriate to describe the grand, lofty hexameters than a crackling sound. A similar description of hexameters occurs in *C*.23.22: *Ibant hexametri superbientes*, where the hexameters are called 'being proud'.

elegos vero nunc echoicos, nunc recurrentes, nunc per anadiplosin fine principiisque conexos
indeed, elegies sometimes echoing, sometimes returning, sometimes by means of reduplication with their end and beginnings connected.

echoicos: According to the third-century grammarian Maurus Honoratius Servius, *echoicus* means that the last and the penultimate syllable of a verse are similar (*Metr. Alb.* 467.4: *echoicum est, quotiens sonus ultimae syllabae paenultimae congruit, ut est hoc, ''exercet mentes fraternas grata malis lis''*). Note the echoes in this line: *eleg**os**…echoic**os**…conex**os***.

recurrentes: I.e. palindromes, verses that make sense in two directions. Sidonius himself gives two examples of *recurrentes versus* in *Ep.* 9.14.4: *Roma tibi subito motibus ibit amor* ('Rome, in tumult love will suddenly come to you' and *sole medere, pede ede, perede melos* ('heal with the sun, eat with your feet and consume your song'). On palindromes in Sidonius, see Condorelli 2008: 225-227.

anadiplosin: Reduplication of the last word of a verse by the first word of the next verse (cf. Diomedes *Ars Gr.* 2.445.7: *Anadiplosis est cum ultima prioris versus dictio initio sequentis iteratur*. He gives an example from Verg. *Aen.* 10.180-181: *sequitur pulcherrimus Astyr / Astyr equo fidens*).

Section 6

Hic, ut arreptum suaserat opus, ethicam dictionem pro personae temporis loci qualitate variabat, idque non verbis qualibuscumque, sed grandibus pulchris elucubratis. in materia controversiali fortis et lacertosus; in satirica sollicitus et mordax; in tragica saevus et flebilis; in comica urbanus multiformisque; in fescennina vernans verbis, aestuans votis; in bucolica vigilax parcus carminabundus; in georgica sic rusticans multum, quod nihil rusticus.

Huc, ut arreptum suaserat opus, ethicam dictionem pro personae temporis loci qualitate variabat
'He changed, as the undertaken task required, the register of speech depending on person, time and place'

Huc: The meaning is difficult to define: 'to this purpose', i.e. the *arreptum opus*, or should we translate *huc* as 'further' like Anderson? Or should it be corrected to *hic*? Concerning the first two option, both are possible. The meaning 'to this purpose' for *huc* can be found in some late antique texts (see e.g. L.S. s.v. *huc* IIF: Cels. 5.19.21); according to TLL 6.3.3069.32 ff, Sidonius frequently (2.13.7, 5.17.7, 9.11.3) has *huc* in the sense of 'aditionally' (*insuper*). I prefer the latter option, both because of the parallel places in Sidonius, and because if *huc* would mean 'to this purpose', and the purpose would be indicated by the *ut*-clause, we would expect *suaserat* had been a subjunctive (*suasisset*) instead of a indicative.

ethicam dictionem: Refers to the rhetorical exercise of *declamatio*, in which the rhetor speaks in the persona of a realistic, historical or mythological figure. Lampridius was able to change his style of speaking according to the person, time or place in which he was asked to imagine himself speaking. Cf. *tyrannicarum / declamatio controversiarum* in ll. 28-29 of the poem.

personae temporis loci qualitate: Three of the elements of rhetoric a rhetor has to take into account. Cf. Donatus *Inter. Verg.* 1.1.134 about Virgil: *narrationis istius principia multas virtutes oratorias continent: nam et loci et temporis et personarum Vergilius memor est et Aenean ipsum inducit proposita retinere* ('The principles of this story contain many oratorical virtues: for Virgil bears in mind both the place and the time and the persons and represents Aeneas as holding the general principles himself').

idque non verbis qualibuscumque, sed grandibus pulchris elucubratis
'and this not with any kind of words, but with grandiose, beautiful, carefully selected words'

elucubratis: Lit. 'toiled over by night'. Poetic *insomnia* caused by diligently working on verses was a *topos* in Greek and Latin literature from Callimachus onwards (Sacerdoti 2014: 27). Works, carefully wrought and with attention to every detail were an essential element of the so-called late antique *sermo cultus*, see Schwittler 2015: 148.

In *Ep.* 9.3.5, Sidonius opposes *elucubratus* to *repentinus* ('ex tempore'): *[praedicationes tuas] nunc repentinas, nunc, ratio cum poposcisset, elucubrates* ('[Your preaching] sometimes *ex tempore*, at other times, when the matter had required it, painstakingly prepared').

in materia controversiali fortis et lacertosus, in satirica sollicitus et mordax
'in controversy subject matter he was firm and strong, in satiric excited and biting'

There follow seven clauses that describe Lampridius' style in a variety of genres. Although the clauses are similarly constructed - beginning with *in*, followed by a genre and ending with adjectives qualifying Lampridius -, there is variation in word number, syntax and conjunctions as the list proceeds. The literary genres covered here are rhetoric, satire, tragedy, comedy, epithalamia, bucolics, and georgics. In section 7, Sidonius adds epigram and lyric. The only genre which is conspicuous for its absence is epic.

materia controversiali: First is *materia controversiali. Controversiae* are fictive rhetorical exercises on legal subjects. Lampridius is said to be *fortis* and *lacertosus* in such exercises, which would probably mean that he did not easily yield to the opposite party, but successfully defended his case. *Controvers(i)alis*, the adjective of *controversia*, only occurs here and in *Ep*. 7.9.2: *controversalium clausularum*.

sollicitus: Anderson translates *sollicitus* as 'earnest', while referring in a footnote to section 10, where Lupus is said to have read astrological works *sollicitus*, which Anderson translates as *painstakingly*. According to Loyen, *sollicitus* should be translated as resp. 'opiniâtre' and 'avec fièvre'. Cf. LS s.v. *sollicitus* IID.

mordax: Sidonius frequently describes satire with metaphors of 'biting' in the sense of carping. Cf. e.g. *Ep*. 1.11.4: *Paeonius exarsit, cui satiricus ille morsum dentis igniti avidius impresserat* ('Paeonius flared up, into whom that satirist had greedy sink the bite of his burning tooth') and *C.* 23.452, where Horace is also called *mordax*: *mordacem faciat silere Flaccum*. For another author using the same metaphor, cf. Paul. Nol. *C.* 10.263.

in tragica saevus et flebilis, in comica urbanus multiformisque
'in tragic furious and tearful, in comic humorous and versatile'

saevus et flebilis: Greek and Latin tragedy knows many furious personages (Hercules, Medea, etc.) and pitiful events. Aristoteles already described the two main characteristics of tragedy as 'fearful' and 'pitiful' (Arist. *Poet.* 1452b: *ταύτην φοβερῶν καὶ ἐλεεινῶν εἶναι μιμητικήν (τοῦτο γὰρ ἴδιον τῆς τοιαύτης μιμήσεώς ἐστιν*, '… the *mimesis* of fearful and pitiful events – for this is the special feature of such *mimesis*').

urbanus: Lit. 'of the city'. Metaphorically used for 'polished' or 'witty' speech (LS s.v. *urbanus* IIA2a-b). Especially the last meaning fits comic writing well.

multiformis: 'versatile', but is also used to describe the manifold sides of someone's character. Many different typical characters appear in Latin comedy, a characteristic at which Sidonius might also have hinted with *multiformis*.

in fescennina vernans verbis, aestuans votis
'in fescennine blooming with words, burning with wishes'

fescennina: Fescenninian verses were songs sung at weddings. Traditionally, they were obscene verses with an apotropaic function. The tradition of writing *fescennini versi* persisted into the Christian period. See BNP s.v. *Fescennini versi*.

Sidonius dubs his own *epithalamia* - which was a genre on its own and celebrated a married couple by wishing them good luck – *fescennina* (*C.* 10.21, 12.2), so the two genres had become intermingled by Sidonius' time. Here, Sidonius is thinking of *epithalamia* as well, since he says that Lampridius is 'burning with (good) wishes' (*aestuans votis*) in this genre. Wishes are a characteristic of *epithalamia* (cf. the wishes at the end of Sidonius' own *epithalamia*: *C.* 11.131-133, 15.199-201).

vernans…aestuans: Lit. 'blooming' and 'burning'. The meaning of these words in this context are not immediately clear to me. There are several ways to interpret these words. When relating to rhetoric, a similar juxtaposition can be found in *Ep.* 4.3.6: *vernat ut Hortensius, aestuat ut Cathegus*. In his *Brutus* 95, Cicero presents Hortensius as a representative of the Asiatic oratorical style, known for its bombast and richness of refined and ornate words. So, *vernare* might refer to a very ornate style. Roberts (1989: 51) points out that words relating to flowers were common in late Latin literature to denote richness of diversity and variety, on 'various levels of composition, including the individual word' (also cf. the same epithet in *Ep.* 4.3.2).

Cathegus is possibly Marcus Cornelius Cethegus (Cathegus), a famous orator in the third century BC, praised by both Ennius and Horace. Interestingly, in his *De Senectute*, Cicero places Cathegus under the men of old who 'burned with eagerness' in their several vocations (Cic. *DS* 50: *…his studiis flagrantis senes vidimus. M. vero Cethegum, quem recte "suadae*

medullam" dixit Ennius, quanto studio exerceri in dicendo videbamus etiam senem! 'We saw the elders burning in this pursuits. With how much devotion did we see M. Cethegus, whom Ennius justly called 'the bone marrow of eloquence', training himself in speaking, even as an old man!'), thus using a word (*flagrantis*) that is semantically related to *aestuans*. Possibly, Sidonius had this passage in mind when attributing *aestuans* to Cethegus. From Cicero's text, we might infer that words relating to 'burning', like *flagrare* and *aestuare*, in the context of oratory refer to devotion and eagerness in speaking.

However, besides the meanings of *vernare* and *aestuare* as metaphors for speaking, it should be born in mind that Sidonius might also have chosen these words for their literal meaning since they aptly fit the context of *epithalamia*. *Vernare* literally means 'being verdant', 'blooming'. Metaphors of spring and blooming are often associated with marriage in *epithalamia*. Cf. *C.* 9.126-128, where the winter is driven out by the spring that accompanies the marriage, and *C.* 14.4-5. *Aestuare*, 'burning', can also mean 'burning with passion' or 'love'. See LS s.v. *aestuare* IIA.

in bucolica vigilax parcus carminabundus
'in bucolic watchful, sober, versifying'

vigilax: 'Watchful' is of course a fitting term for bucolics.

parcus: 'sober' or 'frugal'. It is not wholly clear why Sidonius uses this word in context of bucolics. Possibly, it has something to do with the modest life style of herders.

carminabundus: A *hapax legomenon*. Adjectives in *–bundus* are in meaning similar to a (often intensified) present particle (Lipka 2001: 4): 'versifying'.

in georgica sic rusticans multum, quod nihil rusticus
'in georgic so much rusticating, that he was by no means rustic'

rusticans…rusticus: Sidonius makes a double pun. First, *rusticus* literally means 'rustic' and refers back to the genre of georgics, poems about farming and rural life. Secondly, *rusticus* is also used to describe a boorish style of speaking or writing, as opposed to *urbanus*. Sidonius means that Lampridius was so good at writing georgics, that his writings were by no means boorish. See LS s.v. *rusticus* II. Sidonius made a similar pun on the name of Rusticus in the carmen (ll. 35-36, see *comm. ad Rusticum*).

Section 7

praeterea quod ad epigrammata spectat, non copia sed acumine placens, quae nec brevius disticho neque longius tetrasticho finiebantur, eademque cum non pauca piperata, mellea multa conspiceres, omnia tamen salsa cernebas.
in lyricis autem Flaccum secutus nunc ferebatur in iambico citus, nunc in choriambico gravis, nunc in alcaico flexuosus, nunc in sapphico inflatus.
quid plura? subtilis aptus instructus quaque mens stilum ferret eloquentissimus,
prorsus ut eum iure censeres post Horatianos et Pindaricos cygnos gloriae pennis evolaturum.

praeterea quod ad epigrammata spectat
'Further, regarding his epigrams'

The excessive praise on Lampridius continues. Sidonius now shifts the focus to epigrams, a very popular genre in late antiquity. Famous representatives of this genre are Ausonius, Claudian and the poets of the Anthologia Palatina (see ODLA, p. 546). A few epigrams by Sidonius have been preserved among his poetry and in his letters. For Sidonius as epigrammatist, see Consolino 2015.

non copia sed acumine placens
'he did not please by abundance but by wit'

An epigram should be short and witty, ending in a point. About the proper length of an epigram, cf. *C.* 22 *ep.* 5: *si quis autem carmen prolixius eatenus duxerit esse culpandum, quod epigrammatis excesserit paucitatem…* ('But if anyone would consider that such a long poem should be censured because it has extended the brevity of an epigram…'). Cf. Mart. 8.29.1: *Disticha qui scribit, puto, vult brevitate placere* ('He who writes distichs, wants, I believe, to please in shortness').

quae nec brevius disticho neque longius tetrasticho finiebantur
'which were never shorter than a distich or longer than a tetrastich'

disticho: A double verse consisting of a hexameter and pentameter. Sidonius gives an example of a distich by himself in *Ep.* 9.14.5-6.

tetrasticho: A double distich, thus following the pattern hexameter – pentameter – hexameter –pentameter. *C.* 19, 20 and 21 are examples of tetrastichic epigrams by Sidonius.

eademque cum non pauca piperata, mellea multa conspiceres, omnia tamen salsa cernebas
'and although you would observe that not few of them were peppered, many honeyed, you nevertheless noticed that the same epigrams were all salted'

piperata…mellea…salsa: 'salt' and 'honey' are words Sidonius frequently uses to describe his own literary style. According to Van Waarden 2010: 59, the salt refers to 'the complex and contrived conceits of the thought' and the honey to 'the smooth and well ordered flow of the period.' The 'pepper' is in the caustic and mockingly element of satiric poems. Cf. Sidonius' assessment of a satiric poem in *Ep.* 5.8.2: *deus bone, quid illic inesse fellis, leporis, piperataeque facundiae minime tacitus inspexi!* ('Good heavens! what a presence of gall, charm and peppered eloquence I saw - by no means remaining silent!'). According to Sidonius, one and the same epigrams (*eadem*) of Lampridius have more savors: sweet or peppered but all salted.

in lyricis autem Flaccum secutus nunc ferebatur in iambico citus, nunc in choriambico gravis, nunc in alcaico flexuosus, nunc in sapphico inflatus.
'Further, in lyrics, following Flaccus, he was at one time swiftly carried by the iambic, at another time with dignity by the choriambic, then tortuous by the Alcaic, then puffed up by the Sapphic verse.'

lyricis: Finally, Sidonius turns his attention to the last genre, lyric. Lampridius is praised for his versatility in several lyric verses, the iamb, choriamb, the Alcaic and the Sapphic measure, three genres Quintius Horatius Flaccus, the great Roman lyrist, practiced as well. A comparison between Horace and Lampridius has already been made earlier in poem (ll. 24-25).

Flaccum secutus: Given what follows, 'following Flaccus (Horace)' is here to be understood in terms of metre, rather than a general poetic influence (Condorelli *forthcoming*).

in iambic citus: The iambic, consisting of a heavy and a light syllable, was traditionally characterized as a 'swift foot'. Cf. Hor. *AP.* 251-2: *syllaba longa brevi subiecta vocatur iambus / pes citus; Ep.* 8.4.2: *citos iambos*.

in choriambico gravis: The choriambic consists of a two short feet between two long: - v v – and was used in the context of the lesser Asclepiads, a metre first used in Latin by Horace, who was responsible for some interventions in the metre (see Condorelli *forthcoming*). In late antiquity, some poets, like Martianus Capella, Ausonius and also Sidonius used the lesser Asclepiads again, which testifies of Horace's popularity in late antiquity. Cf. *Ep.* 9.13, where Tonantius asks Sidonius for a poem in the Asclepiad metre in the style of Horace. The poem that follows is in the lesser Asclepiads, consisting of spondee, followed by two choriambs and ending in a disyllable. Apparently, they were *gravis* to Sidonius.

in alcaico flexuosus: The Alcaic stanza is named after the Greek poet Alcaeos (7th century BC) and consists of four lines of feet. It was the favorite meter of Horace to use in his lyrics (37 odes). Because three of the four lines of the stanza have a slightly different meter, the Alcaic stanza can be called *flexuosus*.

in sapphico inflatus: The fourth lyric meter Sidonius mentions is the Sapphic strophe, named after the Greek poetess Sappho (7th century BC), the second favorite meter of Horace. The meter was not very much used in late antique poetry, but Sidonius' biographic poem in *Ep.* 9.16 consists of 21 Sapphic verses.

Why does Sidonius associate this stanza with *inflatus*? Some scholars in the 19th century, when meter was a popular academic subject, believed that the Sapphic verse is more appropriate for dignified subject because the accent in its meter is more marked than in the other lyric meters (Homer and Sleath 1824: 19-20). In their view, Horace uses the Sapphic meter to create an air of dignity around a particular verse. Cf. Condorelli *forthcoming*, who thinks that the adjective 'conveys the sense of the lofty and pompous gait typical of Sapphic stanzas as employed in Christian hymns and eulogies.' Nevertheless, *inflatus* might also just mean 'inspired by', as Anderson has it ('loftily inspired by').

quid plura? subtilis aptus instructus quaque mens stilum ferret eloquentissimus
'What more? He was subtle, appropriate, learned, most eloquent wherever his mind led his stylus'

quid plura: With these words, Sidonius ends his panegyric of Lampridius' literary style. What follows now, is a summary in a few words of what has been said above: in short, Lampridius as poet was *aptus, instructus* and *eloquentissimus*.

subtilis: Lit. 'fine', 'thin'. In *Ep.* 4.3.4, Sidonius defines the *subtilitas* of Claudianus Marmertus' *De Statu Animi* as the midway between *scaturrigines hyperbolicas* and *tapinoma* (a figure of speech whereby something is degraded). So, *subtilis* is a style that is not too pompous and not too much lacking in ornament.

aptus: 'appropriate'. Used a.o. to describe a rhetorical speech in which all the elements are in balance and the style fits the subject (TLL s.v. *aptus* 2.0.330.30 and 2.0.335.20). *Aptus* is similar to *subtilis* in the sense that both adjectives describe balance.
One might wonder how *aptus* Sidonius himself is in his excessive praise of Lampridius in this letter.

prorsus ut eum iure censeres post Horatianos et Pindaricos cygnos gloriae pennis evolaturum
'Certainly, that you would rightly think that he would fly away after the Horatian and Pindaric swans on wings of glory'

Horatianos et Pindaricos cygnos: The praise of Lampridius' literary merits reaches its climax. Sidonius compares the murdered poet to Horace and Pindar. The expression 'Horatian and Pindaric swan' is an allusion to Hor. *Carm.* 2.20.1-8, the famous passage in which Horace transforms into a swan, and *Carm.* 4.2, where Horace describes the great Greek lyrist Pindar as a swan: *Dircaeum…cygnum*, (l.25), whom none is able to imitate (however, apparently with the exception of Horace, who modestly compares himself in 4.2 to a humble bee in comparison to the high-soaring swan Pindar, while his readers have just read in 2.20 that he himself is a swan as well). It was a common practice in Greek and Latin literature to compare poets to swans and other birds. (Harrison 2017: 236).
Interestingly, in *Carm.* 2.20, Horace's metamorphosis into a swan functions as a symbol for his immortality as poet. Hence, a funerary for him is pointless (*inani funere*, l.21).

evolaturum: At first glance, Sidonius seems to attribute the same poetical immortality to Lampridius as Horace and Pindar have achieved. Instead of dying, Horace and Pindar transformed in swans. However, there is possible an ambiguity in the word. *Evolare*, 'flying away' is of course a fitting term for swans, but it is also metaphorically used for 'dying' (e.g. Cic. *Re.Pu.* 6.14; Aug. *in euang. Ioh*. 7, 1 p. 1438. See TLL. 5.2.1065.55-65). Thus, while on the one hand praising Lampridius' immortality by explicitly alluding to Horace's Odes 2 and 4, Sidonius emphasizes at the same time the very fact that Lampridius has died and turned out to be mortal after all.

Section 8

Aleae ut sphaerae non iuxta deditus; nam cum tesseris ad laborem occuparetur, pila tantum ad voluptatem. fatigabat libenter, quodque plus dulce, libentius fatigabatur. scribebat assidue, quamquam frequentius scripturiret. legebat etiam incessanter auctores cum reverentia antiquos, sine invidia recentes, et, quod inter homines difficillimum est, nulli difficulter ingenii laude cedebat.

Aleae aut sphaerae non iuxta deditus. nam cum tesseris ad laborem occuparetur, pila tantum ad voluptatem.
'To the dice or to the ball he was not in the same way dedicated. For whereas he engaged in dice games as an obligation, in the ball-playing only for fun'

After praising Lampridius' literary merits, Sidonius now turns his attention to Lampridius' occupations in his spare time. Subsequently, he mentions dice -and ball game, reading and writing. These four activities are frequently referred to in Sidonius' corpus as typical pastimes of men of higher ranks, to which both Sidonius and Lampridius belonged. E.g. in *Ep*. 2.9.4 - a letter about his stay with Ferreolus and Apollinaris -, Sidonius gives an (idealized) insight into the daily life of noblemen. He mentions the same four activities they do as relaxation: ball playing (*huc sphaeristarum*), dice games (*huc aleatoriarum*) and reading and discussing literature (*huc libri*). Cf. also *Ep*. 5.17.6, where again *pila/sphaerae*, *tabula* and *libro* are mentioned together. According to *Ep*. 5.17.6 and 1.8.2, ball playing was more appropriate for young people, while dicing was associated with elder people. See Dill 1910: 195-212 for an elaborate, although disparaging, description of the ideal of life of the Roman upper class in Sidonius' time. That Lampridius was very engaged in such activities is stressed by Sidonius in what follows by the use of the imperfect and adverbs of continuation: *assidue - frequentius – incessanter*.

aleae aut sphaerae: Anderson and Loyen interpret the phrase as that Lampridius preferred playing ball games to dice games. Lampridius played ball games for fun, but dice only when necessary. Shackleton-Bailey (1982: 356) thinks it is the other way round, and interprets *ad* as *usque ad:* Lampridius indulged so much in gambling that it almost became compulsive. I think Shackleton-Bailey is right, because his interpretation better explains *ad* ('until'), and *tantum* 'only'. He dedicated himself to both activities, but so much to gambling that it became almost an addiction, but to ball games to a lesser degree, it remained a hobby. For a similar use of *ad*, cf. Val. Max. 3.7.7: *a quo in administratione rei publicae ad multum odium*

dissidebat ('with whom [Ti. Gracchuc] he [Cato the Elder] disagreed on public affairs (which led) to much hostility'

fatigabat libenter, quodque plus dulce, libentius fatigabatur
'He enjoyed to tease someone, and what is more pleasing, he enjoyed to be teased himself even more'

There is a chiasmus around the centre words: *fatigabat libenter …-… libentius fatigabatur*.

fatigabat…fatigabatur: *Fatigare* means 'to exhaust', but Sidonius also uses it for 'teasing'. Cf. e.g. *Ep.* 1.8.1: *id tamen quasi facete et fatigationem salibus admixtis*, '[You congratulate me'], but you do so in a joking way and mixed with a taste of teasing'. Lampridius liked to banter others, but did not mind at all when he was bantered himself. See *Ep.* 4.10.2 for another example of a *fatigatio*.

scribebat assidue, quamquam frequentius scripturiret
'He wrote constantly, although more often he would have wanted to write'

The first chiasmus is balanced by a second: *fatigabat* and *fatigabatur* by resp. *scribebat* and *scripturiret, libenter* and *libentius* by resp. *assidue* and *frequentius*.

scribebat… scripturiret: I.e., Lampridius wrote almost incessantly, but he had a desire to write even more than he could possibly do. *Scripturire* is a rare word, composed of *scribere* ('to write') and *urire* ('to burn with desire). It occurs only twice in literary language, here and in *Ep.* 7.18.1: *quamquam incitatus semel animus necdum scripturire desineret* ('Although my mind, once incited, has not ceased yet to desire to write'). The word only occurs in some late antique grammarians (Pompeius Maurus (6th century AD) and a commentary on the grammar of Donatus attributed to one Sergius) who probably all lived after Sidonius, so *scripturire* might have been coined by Sidonius himself. In any case, it is characteristic for Sidonius and his fondness for rare, exotic words to use a word that otherwise only occurs in grammars. Cf. *lecturire* (*Ep.* 2.10.5, 7.18.4, 9.7.1) and *taciturire* (*Ep.* 8.16.3).

legebat etiam incessanter auctores cum reverentia antiquos, sine invidia recentes, et, quod inter homines difficillimum est, nulli difficulter ingenii laude cedebat
'He also read incessantly the ancient authors with reverence, without jealousy modern, and, what is most difficult among humans, he ceded to none with difficulty in praise of ingenuity'

auctores…recentes: To read both ancient and modern authors is just the right balance, according to Sidonius' own remarks in *Ep.* 3.8.1: *Veneror antiquos, non tamen ita ut qui aequaevorum meorum virtutes aut merita postponam* ('I reverence the ancients, but not in such a way that I disregard the virtues or feats of my own contemporaries').

quod inter homines difficillimum est: According to Sidonius, to praise the talents of others is what people consider as most difficult. However, Sidonius has easily been doing this the last few sections with his excessive praise of Lampridius. The compliment therefore also indirectly applies to Sidonius himself.

Section 9

illud sane non solum culpabile in viro fuit, sed peremptorium, quod mathematicos quondam de vitae fine consuluit, urbium cives Africanarum, quorum, ut est regio, sic animus ardentior; qui constellatione percontantis inspecta pariter annum mensem diemque dixerunt, quos, ut verbo matheseos utar, climactericos esset habiturus, utpote quibus themate oblato quasi sanguinariae geniturae schema patuisset, quia videlicet amici nascentis anno, quemcumque clementem planeticorum siderum globum in diastemata zodiaca prosper ortus erexerat, hunc in occasu cruentis ignibus inrubescentes seu super diametro Mercurius asyndetus seu super tetragono Saturnus retrogradus seu super centro Mars apocatastaticus exacerbassent.

Lampridius' trespass

After having gone through all Lampridius' good qualities, Sidonius now turns to one severe mistake Lampridius once made. With this, Sidonius recapitulates the topic he had already started in section 4. However, the fault in 11.4, his hot temper, was forgivable (*veniabilis*), whereas the fault here was not only blameworthy (*cupabile*), but even turned out to be fatal (*peremptorium*): Lampridius consulted African astrologers on the end of his life. This consultation of astrology proved to be fatal in two ways: first, the astrologers predicted a violent death for him. Secondly, astrology was forbidden. Despite its great popularity in the early empire, astrology was since the beginning of the fourth century, when Christianity became the dominant religious power in the Roman world under emperor Constantine, being looked upon with great suspicion. However, early church fathers were ambiguous in their attitude towards astrology, because, so they argue, the Bible was (e.g. the Magi in the nativity story). They believed in the power of the stars over men, but God and baptism had freed Christians from it (so Ignatius and Tertullian; see Barton 1994: 76). When Christianity grew in power, astrology – considered to be a rival (Barton 1994: 77) – became more and more outlawed. Practitioners and clients alike were punished with the death penalty when caught in the act (e.g. Cth. 9.16.4). This idea lies behind Sidonius' assertion that everyone who encroaches on this area, is worthy of getting ill-boding answers (11.13: *nam quisque…vereor…effici dignum in statum cuius respondeantur adversa dum requiruntur inlicita*). For possible intertexts in this passage, and Sidonius and his attitude towards astrology, see Introduction 4.6 *Sidonius and astrology*.

illud sane non solum culpabile in viro fuit, sed peremptorium
'Indeed, this was not only blameworthy in the man, but fatal'

sane: After having gone through all Lampridius' good qualities, Sidonius now turns to a big mistake Lampridius once made. Sidonius recapitulates the topic he had already started in section 4: *licet quibusdam, tamen veniabilibus, erratis implicaretur atque virtutibus minora misceret*. However, whereas these earlier faults were forgivable (*veniabilibus*), the one Sidonius mentions now turned out to be fatal (*peremptorium*) for Lampridius.

The topic shift is indicated by the particle *sane*, which, at first glance, seems to have a concessive value here. However, according to Risselada 1998, *sane* is a particle that expresses agreement. She argues against the traditional view that *sane* can be used as a concessive particle, and states that it is instead a marker of interactional agreement which affirms what has been said before.

However, there has been nothing in the text so far that hints at Lampridius' consultation of astrologers and to which *sane* could refer back. Maybe Lampridius' trespass was commonly known by his friends, and that Sidonius is with *sane* reacting to that rumour: 'It is indeed true what they say, that what Lampridius has done was not only blameworthy, but even fatal.'

culpabile: Late antique word, opp. of *laudabilis*. Thus, after praise of Lampridius, now Sidonius turns to reproach of Lampridius. The word is contrasted with *veniabilibus* in section 2, where Sidonius mentions a fault of Lampridius, his quick temper, which is pardonable, unlike the one he is about to mention here.

peremptorium: This fault even turned out to be 'fatal' for Lampridius. The word derives from the verb *perimere*, 'to destroy'. *Peremptorius* is used both for things that cause physical destruction (e.g. Apul. Met. 10.11.12: *venenum*), and for things that lead to spiritual ruin (Cassian. Coll. 5.26.2: *vitia*). Sidonius could have had both senses in mind: Lampridius' consultation of astrologers led to his death, but since astrology was forbidden by the church (8.13: *interdicta secreta vetita*), it was also harmful to his soul. A third use of *peremptorium* is legal, as in *Ep.* 8.6.7: *peremptoriis abolita rubricis lis omnis*: 'every law-suit has been annulated by peremptory laws', referring to unconditional laws.

quod mathematicos quondam de vitae fine consuluit, urbium cives Africanarum, quorum, ut est regio, sic animus ardentior
'that he consulted some astrologers about the end of his life, citizens of African cities, whose mind, like the region, is overfervid'

mathematicos: *Mathematicus*, lit. 'mathematician', a Greek word that became the common term for an astrologer in Roman times, due to the mathematics involved in it for calculating the position of celestial objects. Probably thanks to the popularity of astrology among the Roman aristocracy in the first century BC, astrologers changed their name from *Chaldaei* to

the more noble title *mathematici*, a name they borrowed from the Pythagorean school (according to Bourché-Leclercq 1899: 545-546). In this way, the status of astrology was enhanced to that of a science. In practice, astrology and astronomy were not always clearly separated (BNP s.v. 'Astrology').

de vitae fine consuluit: Antique astrology fell into broad categories, e.g. astrology relating to peoples and cultures, or celestial guidelines for practice of medicine. The astrology Lampridius consulted, belongs to the *γενεθλιαλογία*, in which the course of one's life was predicted on the position of the celestial bodies at the time of one's birth (See LAGPW s.v. 'astrology'). For a similar fatal prediction, cf. the example of Caligula, whose murder, according to Suetonius *Cal.* 57.2, was likewise predicted by a *mathematicus*: *Consulenti quoque de genitura sua Sulla mathematicus certissimam necem appropinquare affirmavit* ('When he [Caligula] also consulted the astrologer Sulla about his natal star, the latter declared that his murder was most certainly at hand').

urbium cives Africanarum: Sidonius identifies the *mathematici* with 'citizens of African cities' as though *mathematici* are almost synonymous with Africans. Indeed, we know from several works of Augustine (*Conf.*; *De Civ. Dei; De Cath. Rud.*) and Tertullian (*De Idol.*), in which they lash out at astrology, that astrology was popular among the Christian laymen in late antique North-Africa. A similar association of North-Africa with magic and astrology is also made in a passage from the *Hist. Aug.* where Septimus Severus visited an astrologer in certain city also somewhere in North-Africa (*Severus* 2.8-9): *tunc in quadam civitate Africana, cum sollicitus mathematicum consuluisset positaque hora ingentia vidisset, astrologus dixit ei: 'tuam non alienam pone genituram'* ('When, in a certain city in Africa, he [Severus] had consulted an astrologer out of anxiety, and after the astrologer had casted his horoscope and had seen high destinies in store for him, said to him: 'Tell me your own nativity and not that of someone else').

regio: As both Anderson ('climate') and Loyen ('climat') show in their translation, *regio* does not only means 'territory', but is also used to describe the five climes or parts in which the earth according to Greek-Roman astronomy was divided. Every *regio* had its own climate. Africa belonged to one of the torrid climes (*Descr. Orb. Tripart.*: *Africa caeli male subiacet climati*).

animus ardentior: Sidonius makes a pun on the word *ardentior*, which on the one hand refers to the African climate, and on the other, in metaphorical sense, to the minds of the Africans. *Ardeo* in combination of *animus* is used for burning with a certain emotion, like greed, fear, or love (LS s.v. *ardeo* 2C). So, Sidonius might mean that the Africans are very passionate people.

However, *ardens* is also said of orators and their speeches, in the sense of passionate and excited discourses (LS s.v. *ardens* B5). Sidonius seems to imitate those *ardentes* speeches of African *mathematici* in the lines that follow.

qui constellatione percontantis inspecta pariter annum mensem diemque dixerunt
'who told the inquirer after examining his constellation both the year, the month and the day'

constellatione: Augustinus (*Contr. Pelag.* 2.6.12) says the following about *constellatio*: *Fatum quippe qui affirmant, de siderum positione ad tempus, quo concipitur quisque uel nascitur, quas constellationes uocant, non solum actus et euenta, uerum etiam ipsas nostras uoluntates pendere contendunt* ('Since they who declare one's destiny from the position of stars according to the time in which someone is conceived or born, which they call '*constellations*', not only claim that our deeds and life events, but even that our will depends on it'). *Constellatio* is not the mere equivalent of the English word 'constellation', but has an astrological connotation and is used to refer to the position of the stars at the time of one's birth (see TLL s.v. *constellatio*).

inspecta: in the context of astronomy/astrology *inspicere* means 'to observe', but often with the intention to derive divinations from the positions of the stars. Likewise, *inspicere* is used for all sorts of divinations (TLL s.v. *inspicere* 7.1.1953.60-1954.10).
Sidonius has already used the verb once before in 8.11.4: *difficilis aditu, cum facilis inspectu*. They word will occur once again in 8.11.11 once again, this time to describe the autopsy on Lampridius' body: *exanimati cadaver inspecto* (8.11.11). We could say that *inspicere* is a rather charged word within this letter.

quos, ut verbo matheseos utar, climactericos esset habiturus, utpote quibus themate oblato quasi sanguinariae geniturae schema patuisset
'which, to use a word from the astrology, would be climacteric for him, since the position of his, as it were, blood-thirsty natal-star was after his horoscope had been revealed evident to them'

climactericos: The climacteric was a dangerous and critical point in one's life, according to Gell. *Noct. Att.* 3.10.9, every age that is a combination of seven. So, Lampridius had probably reached an age which was a multiplication of seven.

Sidonius explicitly says that *climactericos* is astrological jargon (*ut verbo matheseos utar*). However, he uses many technical terms in this passage that belong to the domain of astrology (*constellatione, themate, geniturae, schema*). This explicit remark may be an indication that Sidonius is alluding to *Ep.* 2.20 of Pliny, who for the first time in Latin literature uses the adjective *climactericus* (Cf. Whitton 2013a: *ad loc.*). Moreover, that Sidonius is alluding to this letter is also supported by the phrase *climactericos esset habiturus* / *habes…climactericum tempus*, which has only been attested in Pliny and Sidonius. In any case, Sidonius inverts the situation: whereas Pliny writes about an impostor who predicts someone's recovery from illness, while that person in fact dies, the divination of Lampridius' death has come true.

themate: Very rarely used in astrological context. It refers to the position of the stars at one's birth. Cf. Suet. *Div. Aug.* 94: *tantam mox fiduciam fati Augustus habuit, ut thema suum uulgauerit nummum que argenteum nota sideris Capricorni, quo natus est, percusserit* ('Soon Augustus had

such a great fidelity in his destiny, that he publicly announced his horoscope and minted a silver coin with the sign of the Capricorn constellation in which he was born').

sanguinariae geniturae: The *geniturae* is the word used to refer to the star someone is born under. Cf. the passage from Suet. *Div. Aug.* 94 already referred to above: *Reticere ipse [Augustus] genituram suam perseverabat* ('He [Augustus] persisted in keeping secret his nativity star'). Lampridius' *geniturae* is *sanguinarius* 'bloody' for two reasons. First, as Sidonius will explain, his nativity star coloured red as blood when it was setting, secondly, it predicted the murder of Lampridius, and was therefore 'blood-thirsty'.

schema: It is not completely clear what Sidonius means by *schema.* Literally, it means 'external appearance', but is in Latin literature widely applied to denote figures of speech, arrangement of words, design, cloths (see LS s.v. *schema*). Anderson has 'diagram', Loyen 'la figure géométrique, and Dalton, not very helpful, translates as 'scheme'. The word occurs in a similar context in Ps.-Clem. *Recogn.* pp. 319-320 (Rehm): *audi coniugis meae thema, et invenies schema cuius exitus accidit. habuit enim Martem cum Venere super centrum, Lunam vero in occasu in domo Martis et finibus Saturni. quod schema adulteras facit et servos proprios amare, in peregre et in aquis defungi, quod et ita factum est* ('Hear the *schema* of my wife, and you will find the *schema* whose issue has occurred. For she had Mars with Venus above the centre, next Luna in setting in the house of Mars and the confines of Saturn. This *schema* makes (women) adulteresses and makes them love their own slaves, and meet their end in foreign travel and waters, just like it has come to pass'). Here, *schema* clearly means 'horoscope', and thus comes close in meaning to *thema*. Together with *sanguinariae geniturae*, the word seems to refer to the position of Lampridius' nativity star in the Zodiac system.

quia videlicet amici nascentis anno, quemcumque clementem planeticorum siderum globum in diastemata zodiaca prosper ortus erexerat
'Because of course in the year our friend was born, whatever propitious globe of the wandering stars a favourable rising had elevated into their zodiac houses'

videlicet: A commitment marker that bases its evidence on what is said in the context or on what is reasonable: 'of course', 'as is obvious' (Schrickx 2014). The word is sometimes used in ironical sense (LS s.v. *videlicet* IB), and so it could be interpreted here: after the mass of exotic words by which Sidonius tries to imitate the astrologers' abracadabra, it is anything but evident how they have come to the conclusion that Lampridius is going to be murdered.

clementem… prosper ortus erexerat: The astrological conditions under which Lampridius was born, at first appeared to be very favourable. All planets (*planeticorum siderum globum*) were in a propitious place in the zodiac (*in diastemata zodiaca*). However, when his natal-star set, its appearance was turned blood-red by one of the planets. Sidonius must have had Lampridius' carrier in mind, which followed a similar pattern. First favoured by king Euric

(*Ep.* 8.9.1: *tu munificentia regia satis abutens iam securus post munera*; 8.9.3: *felicem*), now unhappily murdered by his own slaves.

diastemata zodiaca: *Zodiacus* as adjective is not attested anywhere else. *Diastemata*, 'interval' is another rare grecism (borrowed from Pythagorean philosophy, see *C.* 15) after *thema* and *climactericos*. It is used in astronomical context for the spheres or, to use an astrological term, 'houses' in which celestial objects move (as in *C.* 15.58-66; Claud. Marm. *De Sta. Anim.* 1.25: *quid enim mihi proderit uspiam altitudinem corporei caeli quaerere, planorum siderum diastemata uel circulorum uias uel singulorum interualla rimari,* 'Since why would it be useful for me to examine somewhere the altitude of a celestial object, the spheres of the planets, or to explore the trajectories of their orbits or the space of every object separately'). For Sidonius' tendency to heap together grecisms, see Gualandri 1979: 145-163, for this passage esp. 153-154.

hunc in occasu cruentis ignibus inrubescentes seu super diametro Mercurius asyndetus seu super tetragono Saturnus retrogradus seu super centro Mars apocatastaticus exacerbassent.
'This was in its setting reddened with bloody fires and had been exasperated either by a Mercurius standing-alone in diametrical opposition, or a Saturn retrograding above in a square, or by a Mars returning above a centre'

hunc in occasu: *Hunc* refers back to *globum* of the previous line. The orbit that had such a favorable outlook when it rose, turned into an ominous red colour during its setting.

super Mercurius asyndetus: Mercurius, alone-standing and thus in opposition to another celestial object always means trouble. A good possibility is that at the time of Lampridius' birth Mercurius stood in opposition to Jupiter, because 'this constellation attacks those who have had a training in learned speech' (*illos inpugnat ista radiatio, quicumque docti sermonis disciplinam fuerint assecuti*) and 'fearful riots of the mob' (*populi metuendas seditiones*. Firm. Matern. *Math.* 6.16.6).

super tetragono: 'above in the square'. Astrologers call a constellation a 'square' when two planets form an angle of 90° in the natal chart. *Super tetragono Saturnus* means that Saturn is the planet above in the angle. The technical term used by Firm. Matern. for 'square' is *quadratum*. A *quadratum* is always a guarantee for problems: [*quadratae radiationis decreta*], *quae societas forti ac minaci semper radiatione conponitur* ('[the indications of a square aspect], whose combination is always composed of a strong and threatening aspect.' *Math.* 6.9.1). For an astrological example of Saturn above in the square: *Si Iuppiter et Saturnus quadrata fuerint radiatione coniuncti, et sit superior Saturnus … et vitae discrimina decernunt* ('If Jupiter and Saturn have been joined in a square, and Saturnus is above, they destine life dangers.' *Math.* 6.9.2).

Saturnus retrogrades: Cf. Firm. Matern. *Math.* 4.16.10: *Si vero per noctem minuta luminibus Saturno retrogrado vel stationem facienti se Luna coniunxerit, magnarum infelicitatum decernit <incommoda>; quidam secundum naturam <signorum> vel secundum locorum potestatem biothanati pereunt* ('But if through the night a moon waning in its light has connected itself with Saturn while being retrograde or stationary, it destines troubles of great misfortunes. According to the nature of the signs or according to the power of the houses, some will perish by a violent death').

super centro Mars: I.e., Mars stays in conjunction with another object at an angle of 0°.

Apocatastaticus: Very rare adjective from the noun *apocatastasis*, which indicates the annual return of a planet in the same Zodiac sign. As an adjective in astronomical sense, it is only used in the pseudo-Clementian Recognitiones (10.11.3).

Section 10

sed de his, si qua vel quoquo modo sunt, quamquam sint maxume falsa ideoque fallentia, si quid plenius planiusque, rectius coram, licet et ipse arithmeticae studeas et, quae diligentia tua, Vertacum Thrasybulum Saturninum sollicitus evolvas, ut qui semper nil nisi arcanum celsumque meditere. interim ad praesens nil coniecturaliter gestum, nil per ambages, quandoquidem hunc nostrum temerarium futurorum sciscitatorem et diu frustra tergiversantem tempus et qualitas praedictae mortis innexuit.

sed de his, si qua vel quoquo modo sunt, quamquam sint maxume falsa ideoque fallentia, si quid plenius planiusque, rectius coram, licet et ipse arithmeticae studeas
'But about these things, if they do in one way or another exist (although they are very much false and therefore deceiving), if we want <to discuss> it more at length, it's better to do it face-to-face, even though you yourself too study arithmetic'

What does Sidonius exactly mean? Interpreters and translators do not agree about how to exactly interpret this passage. First, the main sentence (*de his…rectius coram*) lacks any verb, but the ellipsis is perfectly idiomatic (see next two lemmata). It is clear that Sidonius means: 'But it is better <to talk about> these things face-to-face.' Secondly, I would interpret this sentence as an urgent invitation to Lupus to discuss the matter, knowing that Lupus is just like Lampridius very interested in astrology, whereas Sidonius is very careful and wary, as we will see. Thus, I would like to take the first clause beginning with *si* as the content of the discussion (following Loyen and *pace* Anderson, who interprets the first si-clause as conditional), with Sidonius' own opinion immediately following: 'We'd better discuss face-to-face, if they (astrological matters) are real in a way or another – although they are certainly mostly false'. The second *si*-clause is conditional: 'if we want to discuss this more at length, let's do it face-to-face'. The last sentence (*licet...etc.*) is an polite addition: in fact, the discussion would not be necessary since Lupus himself is an expert in astrology.

sed de his: This phrase with ellipsis of a verb is common idiomatic language: cf. *Ep.* 7.11.1: *sed de his ista haec*, Cic. *Att.* 16.6.3: *sed de his satis*.

rectius coram: Common formula in Pliny's letters. Cf. e.g. Plin. *Ep.* 6.2.9: *Sed de his melius coram ut de pluribus vitiis civitatis* ('But it is better <to talk about> these things face-to-face, as

about many other vices of our city'); *Ep.* 8.22.4: *Nuper quidam – sed melius coram* ('Someone recently – but it is better <to tell you> face-to-face').

et ipse: Either means 'just like Lampridius' or it forms a pair with the next *et*: Lupus both (*et*) studies arithmetic and (*et*) reads astrological handbooks. I prefer the first option, since *et* is placed right before *ipse* and thus reinforces it ('*you yourself* as well…').

arithmeticae: The study of numbers, algebra and mathematics. Astrology requires a great deal of arithmetic.

et, quae diligentia tua, Vertacum Thrasybulum Saturninum sollicitus evolvas, ut qui semper nil nisi arcanum celsumque meditere
'and, with a diligence that is characteristic of you, painstakingly read Vertacus, Thrasybulus, Saturninus, and those with your great care, so that you never meditate on something unless on something secret and lofty'

quae diligentia tua: *Quae* has here the meaning of *qualis* and should be read as: *'*with a diligence that is characteristic of you'. Cf. Tac. *Hist.* 4.37: *Cuius est lenitatis Galba, iam fortasse promisit* ('Galba is so merciful, that perhaps he has already made promises').

Vertacum Thrasybulum Saturninum: Three authors of astrological handbooks. Vertacus and Saturninus are mentioned in *C.* 22 *Ep.* 3 as resp. Julianus Vertacus and Fullonius Saturninus. There, they are identified as *in libris matheseos peritissimos conditores*, but we know nothing more about them than what we can glean from Sidonius. Thrasybulus' name also occurs in the *Hist. Aug.* 62.2, where the author calls him a *mathematicus*, who lived during the reign of Alexander Severus (222-235 AD), and predicted to the emperor that he was destined to fall by a barbarian sword – a prediction that came true.

arcanum: For *arcanus* in contexts of magic, cf. *C.* 2.85-87: *Chaldaeus in extis / pontificum de more senex arcana peregit / murmura* ('The old Chaldaean uttered secret murmurs over the entrails in the manner of pontiffs').

celsumque: A remarkable positive qualification of astrology by someone who has just claimed that it is false and deceitful. Of course, there might be an ambiguous pun here on the double meaning of *celsum*, which could refer to both metaphorical height, e.g. philosophy, and physical height, like the stars (cf. *tenuisse celsa iunctus astra Pindaro*, 'who [Consentius] together with Pindar holds the high stars'). Another option is that there is a shift in focalization here: Sidonius renders Lupus' opinion on these issues.

interim ad praesens nil coniecturaliter gestum, nil per ambages.
'In this case though, nothing conjectural has happened, nothing ambiguous'

interim: Besides its temporal meaning, *interim* can also have a more adversative function. Here, it contrasts Sidonius' resolute claim that astrology is unreliable with the simple fact that Lampridius' prediction has exactly come true. This seems of course to undermine his earlier standpoint: Sidonius has to admit that, although astrology is *maxume falsa*, in this particular case, there was nothing ambiguous or doubtful about the prediction of Lampridius' death (see introduction 4.6.2 *Sidonius' ambiguity*).

ad praesens: 'at the moment', or 'at the present case'. Cf. *Ep.* 4.6.4: *interim ad praesens*, which changes the topic of conversation (Anderson *ad loc.* translates: meanwhile there is a question of the moment to be dealt with…').

nil coniecturaliter gestum, nil per ambages: The situation around the murder of Lampridius left no room for any speculation: it was crystal-clear what had happened: date and manner of the murder were exactly as had been predicted. *Coniecturaliter*, an adverb formed from the adjective *coniecturalis* 'relating to conjecture'), is a rare, technical word that is only used in commentaries and technical manuals. The noun c*oniectura* is, very paradoxically, also used for conclusions drawn from signs, omens, etc. in divination (LS s.v. *coniectura*) - which would mean there is in fact something *coniecturaliter gestum* here.

Quandoquidem hunc nostrum temerarium futurorum sciscitatorem et diu frustra tergiversantem tempus et qualitas praedictae mortis innexuit.
'For our heedless inquirer of future things and although he tried for a long time to evade it, was ensnared by the time and manner of death that was predicted'

sciscitatorem: 'Inquirer'. A rare word that made its first appearance in Martial 3.82.13, but became slightly more common in Late Antiquity (e.g. Prud, Auson, Ammian. Marc.).

tergiversantem: Lit. 'turning one's back to' in the sense of 'flying'. Anderson interpreted the word as 'long halting between two opinions on the matter' – as though Lampridius doubted whether the prediction was reliable or not. This translation was, I think, justly corrected by Warmington in 'trying to dodge but in vain' (his destiny). In *Ep.* 9.9.15, its meaning is closer to 'trying to talk one's way out'.

tempus et qualitas praedictae mortis: Lampridius died exactly at the time and the manner as was predicted by the astrologers. In the next section, Sidonius will prove this point to Lupus.

Section 11

nam domi pressus strangulatusque servorum manibus obstructo anhelitu gutture obstricto, ne dicam Lentuli Iugurthae atque Seiani, certe Numantini Scipionis exitu periit. haec in hac caede tristia minus, quod nefas ipsum cum auctore facti parricidalis diluculo inventum. nam quis ab hominum tam procul sensu, quis ita gemino obtutu eluminatus, qui exanimati cadavere inspecto non statim signa vitae colligeret extortae?

nam domi pressus strangulatusque servorum manibus obstructo anhelitu gutture obstricto
'For at home seized and strangled by the hands of his slaves, with his breath obstructed, his throat tied up'

The clause contains a double chiasmus (*domi pressus – strangulatus servorum manibus // obstructo anhelitu – gutture obstricto*). An intentional figure of speech to imitate with words a throttling?

nam: Presentational particle that 'marks a relation of explanation' (Kroon 2011: 184). To Sidonius, there is nothing conjectural (*coniecturaliter*) or ambiguous *(per ambages*) about Lampridius' death: everything happened as was predicted. *Nam* introduces here the arguments that support Sidonius' assertion that the *qualitas* of the murder was just as it had been predicted (*qualitas praedictae mortis*).

domi pressus: Lampridius was not at all the only Roman ever murdered by the hands of his own slaves. Tacitus (*Ann*. 14.42) mentions the case of the City Prefect Lucius Pedanius Secundus, who was killed by his own slave, either because he refused to free the slave despite an agreement, or because of a rivalry for a boy. In his description of the murder of Lampridius, Sidonius had most of all Pliny's letter to Acilius (*Ep.* 3.14), which deals with the assassination of Laecius Marcedo, in mind. The most striking similarities are the situation (both murdered by slaves at home), the detailed description of the murder, and the putting of the corpse on the *pavimentum* (11.12). See Introduction 4.4 *Intertextuality and models*.

strangulatusque servorum manibus: Sidonius' rendition of Pliny's *alius fauces invadit* (*Ep.* 3.14.2).

gutture obstricto: Lit. 'his throat tied up', which suggests that the slaves killed Lampridius with a rope.

ne dicam Lentuli Iugurthae atque Seiani certe Numantini Scipionis exitu periit
'he died in the manner, I would not say of Lentulus, Jugurtha and Seianus, but certainly of Numantius Scipio'

ne dicam…certe: Sidonius does not want to compare Lampridius to Lentulus, Jugurtha or Seianus. Understandably, since Lentulus and Seianus were both condemned as conspirators and Jugurtha was one of Rome's archenemies. All three of them were punished with the death penalty by strangulation (see below). Nevertheless, the mentioning of the three names is clearly a *praeteritio*, and one suspects that there is something more behind those three examples than can at first glance be inferred.

Indeed, Lentulus and Seianus could be seen as even more fitting examples for Lampridius, given that the destinies of both men were predicted by resp. an oracle and several omens (see below). Seianus is also an example for Lampridius insofar as he also gained a high and privileged position, but subsequently fell down – a theme which also plays at the background of Sidonius' Ep. 8.9 and 8.11. One wonders whether there is more behind this implicit comparison of Lampridius with three punished criminals than Sidonius pretends.

Lentuli: Publius Cornelius Lentulus Sura was one of the conspirators of Catilina. He interpreted a Sibylline oracle that predicted that three Cornelii would reign Rome as applying to himself, since he considered himself the third Cornelius after Sulla and Cinna. In the aftermath of the Catilinarian conspiracy, Lentulus was condemned and consequently murdered by strangling in the Mamertine prison. See BNP s.v. *Cornelius* I 56.

Iugurthae: Jugurtha, the great king of Numidia with whom the Romans were long at war, was finally defeated, captured and brought to Rome in 105 BC. His death is described by Plutarch as follows: ἀλλὰ τοῦτον μὲν ἓξ ἡμέραις ζυγομαχήσαντα τῷ λιμῷ καὶ μέχρι τῆς ἐσχάτης ὥρας ἐκκρεμασθέντα τῆς τοῦ ζῆν ἐπιθυμίας εἶχεν ἀξία δίκη τῶν ἀσεβημάτων, 'But after having been struggling with hunger for six days and been depending on his will to live until the very last hour, a just punishment for his crimes befell him (Mar. 12.4)'. Some modern history books have drawn the conclusion that he thus died of starvation, but Livy (*Peri. Libr.* 67.13) clearly speaks of execution (*Iugurtha cum duobus filiis et in carcere necatus est).* Nowhere is mentioned that hanging was the manner by which he died, but strangulation was a common way of execution in the Mamertine prison (BNP s.v. *Tullianum*). Both Claudian (Six. Consul. Honor. 381) and Sidonius (C. 2.229) assumed Jugurtha was killed that way (and if he was, we should read ἐκκρεμασθέντα in Plutarch's account of Jugurtha's death cited above as a rather crude pun).

Seiani: Lucius Aelius Seianus was a powerful senator who exerted much influence on Tiberius. In fact, when the emperor retreated to the island of Capri for a while, he was *de facto* sole ruler of the empire. In 31 AD, he was accused of conspiracy against the emperor, condemned and executed on the same day (BNP s.v. Aelius II.19). Although it is nowhere

explicitly stated that he was strangled, the standard method of execution of conspirators was indeed strangling. Dio Cassius, who neatly describes Seianus' rise to power (when he considered himself 'through the excessive of his proudness and the vastness of his power' superior to Tiberius) and subsequent downfall, mentions that Seianus' fall was predicted by bad omens (Cass. Dio *His. Rom.* 58.5), which he however neglected.

Numantini Scipionis: Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus destroyed Carthage in 146 BC and conquered the kingdom of Numantia in 132 BC, to which he resp. owns his cognomens 'Africanus' and 'Numantinus'. He showed himself a fierce opponent to the Gracchian reforms, and when he was found dead in 129 BC, the suspicion was indeed easily fastened upon the group of reform sympathizers (BNP s.v. *Cornelius* I 70). In his *Life of Romulus,* Plutarch compares the mysterious death of the first Roman king with that of Scipio Africanus:

Οὐ δεῖ δὲ θαυμάζειν τὴν ἀσάφειαν, ὅπου Σκηπίωνος Ἀφρικανοῦ μετὰ δεῖπνον οἴκοι τελευτήσαντος, οὐκ ἔσχε πίστιν οὐδ᾽ ἔλεγχον ὁ τρόπος τῆς τελευτῆς, ἀλλ᾽ οἱ μὲν αὐτομάτως ὄντα φύσει νοσώδη καμεῖν λέγουσιν, οἱ δ᾽ αὐτὸν ὑφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ φαρμάκοις ἀποθανεῖν, οἱ δὲ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τὴν ἀναπνοὴν ἀπολαβεῖν αὐτοῦ νύκτωρ παρεισπεσόντας. καίτοι Σκηπίων ἔκειτο νεκρὸς ἐμφανὴς ἰδεῖν πᾶσι, καὶ τὸ σῶμα παρεῖχε πᾶσιν ὁρώμενον ὑποψίαν τινὰ τοῦ πάθους καὶ κατανόησιν ('But it is not necessary to wonder about the uncertainty [of Romulus' death], when the manner of death of Scipio Africanus, who passed away at home after dinner, has no certainty or proof, but some say that he died naturally because he was of a sickly habit, others that he killed himself with poison, others that his enemies had broken in at night and cut off his breath. Yet Scipio lied down, his corpse clearly visible to all, and his body gave everyone who inspects it a feeling of suspicion and observation about what had happened to it.' Rom. 27.4-5).

The similarity between Scipio and Lampridius is obvious: both were murdered by strangling. However, at a verbal level, the similarities between Plutarch's and Sidonius' accounts go even further: the murder at night (νύκτωρ / *diluculo inventum*), the airway that was cut off (τὴν ἀναπνοὴν ἀπολαβεῖν / *obstructo anhelitu*), the body being inspected (τὸ σῶμα… ὁρώμενον / *cadavere inspecto*), the clear signals of what had happened (ὑποψίαν τινὰ τοῦ πάθους καὶ κατανόησιν / *non statim signa vitae colligeret extortae*). I do not dare to draw the conclusion that Sidonius had the Greek Plutarch as a model, but the similarities are striking – to say the least.

haec in hac caede tristia minus quod nefas ipsum cum auctore facti parricidalis diluculo inventum
'These things were in this murder less sorrowful, that together with the perpetrator of the deed of homicide the crime itself was discovered at dawn'

parricidalis: Rare, late Latin denominal adjective from *parricida*. *Parricida* probably derives from *pater* + *caedere*, thus meaning 'to kill one's father', but is also applied to the killing of every family member (LOEB 240: 119-120). In loser sense, it refers to killing of any human being. However, the use of *parricidalis* here seems appropriate insofar slaves were members of the *familia*.

diluculo: Rare word in classical Latin. It occurs several times in Plautus, only twice in Cicero, but becomes very popular in late antiquity, and may thus considered as another example of the late antique trend of reviving rare, archaic words. See OCD s.v. 'Archaism in Latin'.

nam quis ab hominum tam procul sensu, quis ita gemino obtutu eluminatus qui exanimati cadavere inspecto non statim signa vitae colligeret extortae?
'For who is so far removed from human sense, who so bereft from both eyes, that he after having inspected the lifeless body would not immediately mark the traces of strangled life?'

nam: In the previous sentence, Sidonius said how, together with the murder, it was discovered what had happened (*nefas ipsum*). Here, Sidonius gives the reasons why it was crystal clear what had exactly happened: the traces of strangling were still on the body (*signa vitae…extortae*). Thus, *nam* introduces what Kroon (1995: 146) calls the justification of the previous sentence: *nam* 'does not so much provide evidence for the truth or validity of the central act, but somehow justifies the fact of its having been uttered at all.'

Sidonius adopts a style that reminds one of forensic rhetoric. He has just told what has happened and now he tries with typical rhetorical questions to convince the reader that Lampridius has been strangled.

gemino obtutu: 'Seeing', 'gaze', but in late antiquity also 'eye' (LS s.v. *obtutus*). The expression *gemino obtutu* occurs once more, in Apul. *Metam.* 1.4.4.

eluminatus: 'Deprived of the light (of the eye)' (*ex* + *luminare*). The word is a *hapax legomena* in Latin literature.

vitae… extortae: *vitam extorquere* is a common expression in Latin, from Lucr. *DRN* 6.1224 (*vis morbida*) to Greg. Tur. *Lib. Glor. Mart.* 1.2.28 (about a suicide by hanging).

Section 12

etenim protinus argumento fuere livida cutis, oculi protuberantes et in obruto vultu non minora irae vestigia quam doloris. inventa est quidem terra tabo madefacta deciduo, quia post facinus ipsi latrones ad pavimentum conversa defuncti ora pronaverant, tamquam sanguinis eum superaestuans fluxus exinanisset. sed protinus capto qui fuerat ipsius factionis fomes incentor antesignanus ceterisque complicibus oppressis seorsumque discussis criminis veritatem de pectoribus invitis tormentorum terror extraxit.

etenim protinus argumento fuere livida cutis, oculi protuberantes et in obruto vultu non minora irae vestigia quam doloris
'For indeed, immediately his bluish skin, protuberant eyes, and traces of anger no less than of pain on his covered face served as evidence'

etenim: Particle that marks a explicative-causal connection. Sidonius provides evidence for his claim that everyone with normal human sense would surely have noticed the traces of strangling on Lampridius' body. *Protinus*, 'immediately', emphasizes the clearness of the evidence.

For someone who has heard about Lampridius' death 'only recently' (11.3: *modo primum mihi occisus agnoscitur*), Sidonius is remarkably familiar with all the (gruesome) details.

livida t/m **oculi:** Sidonius' description of the murdered Lampridius comes remarkably close to modern medical diagnoses of suffocation by strangling. A medical source book mentions the following physical symptoms of death by strangling (Gooszen et al. 2012: 624): bluish discoloration of the skin (*cyanosis*), purple spots on the skin (*petechia*), bulging out of the eyes (*exophthalmos*), nose - and earbleed (*rhinorrhea* and *otorrhea*), and several bleedings from the stomach and longs (*hematemesis* and *hemoptysis*). These symptoms neatly agrees with Sidonius' description: *livida cutis*, 'bluish skin', *oculi protuberantes*: 'bulging eyes' and *sanguinis superaestuans fluxus*, 'an overflowing stream of blood'.

livida cutis: 'Lead-coloured', 'bluish'. When used in the context of the body, it usually refers to bruises produced by beating or lashes (cf. Hor. *C.* 1.8.10; Petron. *Satyr.* 63.7.58; cf. Plin. *Ep.* 3.14.2: *Alius fauces invadit, alius os verberat, alius pectus et ventrem, atque etiam (foedum dictu) verenda contundit*, 'One (slave) seized his (Larcius Marcedo) throat, another beat his face, another hit him in his chest and stomach, and even – shameful to say – his private parts').

However, a blue-red color is one of the symptoms of suffocation: due to lack of oxygen in the blood, the skin turns blue (*cyanosis*).

oculi protuberantes: *Protuberare* is a rare word that only occurs in Ausonius and Sidonius (cf. *Ep.* 3.13.6 about Gnatho's physical appearance: *et tofosis umore verrucis per marginem curvum protuberantibus,* 'and with tufa-like warts on his shoulder that bulge out along the exterior curve').

in obruto t/m **doloris:** This phrase does not seem to be one of the *vestigia* of 'extorted life' (see previous section), but can nevertheless serve as evidence that Lampridius was strangled, since the traces of anger (*irae vestigia*) on Lampridius' face betrays that he was indeed murdered. Ironically, it might have been Lampridius' quickness to anger which led his slaves to murder him (see comm. ad 11.4 *naevo crudelitatis*).

It is not wholly clear where *obruere*, litt.'to cover' or 'to oppress', refers to. It might describe his prostrate face (Anderson, Loyen), 'the distorted features' of his look (Dalton), or maybe the blood on Lampridius' face. Anderson's and Loyen's suggestion seems less probable to me, since in the next line Sidonius mentions Lampridius' *conversa defuncti ora* ('the face of the deceased down') as if new information.

inventa est quidem terra tabo madefacta deciduo
'Admittedly, they found the earth wetted by dropping blood'

quidem: A possible counter-argument, indicated by *quidem*, against Sidonius' belief that Lampridius has been murdered by strangling, is that much blood was found on the ground (although bleedings do occur by suffocation, see above). This argument is shortly dealt with: the murders had laid Lampridius on the ground with his face down as though he died from a hemorrhage.

terra tabo: Sidonius had probably Verg. *Aen.* 3.28-29, the story of Polydorus, in mind, the only other time that this exact juxtaposition occurs: *…huic atro liquuntur sanguine guttae et terram tabo maculant* ('Drops of dark blood drip down from him and / stained the ground with gore'). The letter pattern ***t****erra* ***t****abo* ***ma****culant* is also kept by Sidonius: ***t****erra* ***t****abo* ***ma****defacta*.

terra…madefacta: Common combination, cf. e.g. Ovid. *Met.* 8.402 'cruore'.

quia post facinus ipsi latrones ad pavimentum conversa defuncti ora pronaverant tamquam sanguinis eum superaestuans fluxus exinanisset
'because after the deed the villains themselves had laid the face of the deceased down on the floor, as if an overwhelming stream of blood had drained him'

ad pavimentum: In these lines Sidonius most explicitly alludes to Plin. *Ep.* 3.14. Just like Larcius Macedo, his slaves threw Lampridius on the *pavimentum* after the deed: *cum exanimem putarent, abiciunt in fervens* ***pavimentum****, ut experirentur, an viveret* ('When they thought he was dead, they threw him on the burning floor, to test if he was alive'). *Pavimentum* is the general term for the floor of a building (LS s.v. *pavimentum*). In Pliny's letter, the adjective *fervens* makes clear that the floor of the bath is concerned; in Sidonius, such an explicit reference is lacking.

pronaverant: *pronare*, 'to prostrate', 'to lay down', only occurs here and in *Ep.* 5.17.7: *per catastropham saepe pronatus* ('often he prostrated with a roll') where Sidonius writes about a ball-game.

tamquam t/m **exinanisset:** The murders aim to pretend (*tamquam*) as though Lampridius was struck by a hemorrhage and had fallen forward (*conversa…ora*). However, they could not trick Sidonius, who points to the clear signs of strangling.

superaestuans: 'over-whelming'. *Aestuare* is used for the swelling of the sea; here it refers to a sudden hemorrhage. The prefix *super-* reinforces the verb and indicates the overwhelmingness of the blood. Verbs prefixed by *super-* are a common phenomenon in late antique Latin, cf. e.g. *superabundare*, *supercinere, supercomponere*. Nevertheless, *superaestuare* is only attested here.

The murderers tried to make Lampridius look like he had thrown up blood due to a bleeding.

exinanisset: 'To drain'. Semple's suggests to read *exanimasset* ('to kill') instead, which would be an allusion to Pliny's *exanimem* in *Ep.* 3.14, a second explicit reference to this letter after *pavimentum*. However, the original reading *exinanisset* seems preferable to me, because it better explains what Sidonius concerns here, i.e. why blood was found on the ground: the blood was drained from his body because the slaves laid him on the ground with his face down.

sed protinus capto qui fuerat ipsius factionis fomes incentor antesignanus
'but immediately after he who was the inciter, instigator, ringleader of this gang had been captured'

factionis: 'tumult', 'gang' (TLL. s.v. *factio* 6.1.135.75). Sidonius denotes the slaves who murdered Lampridius as a gang.

fomes incentor antesignanus: Much emphasis is put on the instigator of the murder, who is described with not less than three nouns with an increasing number of syllables: *fomes*, lit. 'kindling-wood', but metaphorically used for the inciter of a crime; *incentor*, used for an inciter of chaos, quarrels, wars, crimes, sins, etc.; *antesignanus*, a military word used to

describe soldiers who are picked out to fight before the standards, but also used for commanders in battle (LS s.v. *antesignanus*). I have been able to find only one other use of *antesignanus* in the sense of a 'ringleader', in Amm. Marc. 15.7.4: *ut seditiosorum antesignanum olim sibi compertum…post terga manibus vinctis, suspendi praecepit* ('He [Leontius, Urban Prefect] orders to hang him [Peter Valuomeres] up with his hands bound behind his back, knowing him from old as the ringleader of turbulences').

ceterisque complicibus oppressis seorsumque discussis
'and after the other accomplices had been seized and separately examined'

ceterisque complicibus oppressis: Cf. Plin. *Ep.* 3.14.4 : *Diffugiunt servi; quorum magna pars comprehensa est, ceteri requiruntur* ('The slaves fled away, the majority of them was caught, the others are being looked for').

seorsumque discussis: *discutere*, lit. 'to strike', also adopts the meaning of 'to examine' in late antique Latin (cf. TLL. s.v. *discutio*). Sidonius painstakingly points out that there is overwhelming evidence that Lampridius was murdered by strangling (cf. *etenim protinus argumento* etc. above). Here he adds another argument, i.e. the slaves were examined *separately* (*seorsum*), to exclude any possibility of lying.

criminis veritatem de pectoribus invitis tormentorum terror extraxit
'Fear of tortures drew out the truth about the crime from their unwilling breasts'

criminis veritatem: Sidonius is mainly concerned with proving that Lampridius has been murdered (cf. the salient prominent position of *criminis veritatem* in this clause) according to the astrological prediction. In short, Sidonius arguments are the traces on his body that point to strangulation and the separate confession of the slaves.

tormentorum terror: Fear of tortures made the slaves confess. However, slaves who murdered their master were likely to be executed anyway. Cf. Plin. *Ep.* 3.14.4; Tact. *Ann.* 14.42ff. Probably, these slaves were executed as well, since Sidonius will speak about revenge in 11.13 (*secuta quidem est ultio extinctum*).

Section 13

atque utinam hunc finem, dum inconsulte fidens vana consultat, non meruisset excipere! nam quisque praesumpserit interdicta secreta vetita rimari, vereor huius modi hominem a catholicae fidei regulis exorbitaturum et effici dignum, in statum cuius respondeantur adversa, dum requiruntur inlicita. secuta quidem est ultio extinctum, sed magis prosunt ista victuris. nam quotiens homicida punitur, non est remedium sed solacium vindicari.

atque utinam hunc finem, dum inconsulte fidens vana consultat, non meruisset excipere!
'if only he had not deserved to meet this end, because he consulted deceitful things with rash credulity!'

atque utinam: Introduces a wish clause, reinforced by the copulative *atque* (OLD s.v. *atque* 2).

inconsulte fidens vana consultat: Sidonius makes a pun here: *inconsulte* means 'without consideration', and is from the same stem as *consultat*, 'to consult'. *Fidens*, 'trusting' is opposed to *vana*, 'deceitful things'.

non meruisset: Clearly, Sidonius thinks Lampridius did deserve his death because he consulted astrologers on the end of his life, and credulously believed the predictions.

nam quisque praesumpserit interdicta secreta vetita rimari
'For anyone who has ventured to pry into interdicted, secret, forbidden things'

nam: Introduces the legitimation for Sidonius' implicit assertion that Lampridius did in fact deserve the end he has met: everyone who engages himself will deviate from the rules of catholic faith. For *nam* introducing a unit of text that serves as evidence or justification, see Kroon 1995: 145.

interdicta secreta vetita: Three adjectives to denote astrology: those practices are 'secret' and, especially, 'forbidden' (indicated by two synonyms). Astrology was a practice that was forbidden by both Church and state. See *comm. ad* 8.11.9 *Lampridius' trespass*.

rimari: 'to examine thoroughly'. The verb is often used in context of secrets or divination: e.g. Tact. *Ann*. 6.3: *omnium secreta rimantem*; Cic. *Div.* 1.57.130: *sed tamen id [genus divinationis] quoque rimatur, quantum potest, Posidonius.*

vereor huius modi <hominem> a catholicae fidei regulis exorbitaturum
'I fear that such kind of person will stray away from the rules of the Catholic faith'

huius modi hominem: 'such kind of person'. Not a common expression in later Latin literature, cf. e.g. Aug. *Ep.* 177.44.2; Hist. Aug. 17.10.3, and always rather denigrating.
<hominem> is Lütjohann's conjecture, but seems correct to me: without *hominem* the determiner *huiusmodi* would lack a noun.

catholicae fidei regulis: The doctrine and believes of the mainstream Church of Sidonius' time. although astrology was still popular among the population (see *comm. ad* 8.11.9). For the phrase, cf. *Ep.* 7.9.1: *bibliotheca fidei catholicae* ('the library of Catholic faith) and 8.3.5: *fidei catholicae pace praefata* ('with all due respect to the Catholic faith').

exorbitaturum: *Exorbitare* is a late antique word and lit. means 'to stray from the path'. For the expression, cf. Tert. *Adv. Marc.* 3.378.9: *Suspectum habebitur omne quod exorbitarit a regula rerum* ('Everything that strays away from the rule of nature is bound to be suspicious').

One might justly wonder if there is in fact a difference between the kind of person Sidonius describes here and Lupus, the addressee of the letter, of whom Sidonius has just said that he 'never meditate[s] on anything unless on the secret and lofty' (*semper nil nisi arcanum celsumque meditere* (11.10)). Since Sidonius says that someone who engages himself with forbidden things *will* deviate from the Church's doctrine, and deserve to receive ill-boding answers, it is clear that Lupus himself is on very dangerous ground (see Introduction 4.5.2 *The message of Ep. 8.11*).

et effici dignum in statum cuius respondeantur adversa dum requiruntur inlicita
'and deserves to come to a situation (in which) he gets unfavourable answers, since unlawful things are being inquired'

This is a difficult construction. Both Anderson and Loyen avoid the difficulties by offering a paraphrastic translation of this clause (resp. 'by enquiring into unlawful matters he deserves to get answers that bode ill for him' and 'en posant des questions sur des matières illicites, de n'obtenir que des réponses de malheur touchant sa destinée').

The clause depends on the verb *vereor* and is the second complement after the *exorbitaturum*-phrase with as its subject (*huius modi*) *hominem*. This *hominem* deserves it (*dignum*) to be *effici*. *Efficere* has several meanings, but lit. means 'to work out' or 'to accomplish'. In later Latin, the verb also achieves a meaning close to 'to become' (e.g. Ambros. *Comm. Ad Rom.* 6.8: *ut [hos, qui carnem crucifixerunt] gloriae Christi similes effici mereantur*, 'in order that they [who have crucified the flesh] deserve to become similar to the glory of Christ'; Vulg. 1 Cor. 14:20: *nolite pueri effici sensibus*; 1 Cor. 7:23: *nolite effici serui hominum*). In this case, I think it means that the *hominem* comes into a 'state' (*statum*).

The state in which is the man comes, is that the divinatory signs that he inquired predict his own downfall. It is not clear who or what the antecedent is of *cuius*, but I think it refers back to the *hominem*, meaning 'his misfortunes' (cf. for this construction Tact. *Ann.* 14.38.3: *Suetonio, cuius adversa pravitati ipsius, prospera ad fortunam referebat*). The *dum*-sentence gives the reason why the man receives ill-boding answers ('because...').

So, Sidonius suggests here that someone who practices and believes astrology comes into a state that he is (divinely) punished for his aberrations from orthodox belief by predictions that come true. This would, paradoxically keep the door ajar for the reliability of astrology. See introduction 4.6.2 *Sidonius' ambiguity*).

secuta quidem est ultio extinctum, sed magis prosunt ista victuris
'Indeed, revenge followed the deceased, but these things rather benefit the survivors'

ultio…prosunt ista victuris: Interesting reversion of Plin. *Ep.* 3.14.4, where Larcius Macedo does live long enough to witness revenge on the slaves: *ipse paucis diebus aegre focilatus non sine ultionis solacio decessit, ita vivus vindicatus, ut occisi solent* ('He himself, being brought back to life with difficulty for a few days did not pass away without the consolation of revenge, thus avenged being alive, in the way they are usually executed'). Sidonius seems to deliberately allude to this passage from Pliny, to underscore the very fact that Lampridius did *not* get revenge when still alive (cf. La Penna 1995: 224).

nam quotiens homicida punitur, non est remedium, sed solacium vindicari
'for how many times a murderer is punished, being avenged is not a remedy, but a solace'

nam t/m **vindicari:** Sidonius ends his letter (except for the epilogue) with a *sententia.*

non est remedium: I.e., retribution cannot undo the deed.

solacium vindicari: Cf. the similar vocabulary in Plin. *Ep.* 3.14.4: *non sine ultionis solacio decessit, ita vivus vindicates.*

Section 14

longiuscule me progredi amor impulit, cuius angorem silentio exhalare non valui. tu interim, si quid istic cognitu dignum, citus indica, saltim ob hoc scribens, ut animum meum tristitudine gravem lectio levet. namque confuso pectori maeror, et quidem iure, plurimus erat, cum paginis ista committerem sola. neque enim satis mihi aliud hoc tempore manu sermone consilio scribere loqui volvere libet. vale.

longiuscule me progredi amor impulit
'My love has urged me to go on a bit too long'

Sidonius frequently begs pardon for the excessive length of his letter, as in e.g. *Ep.* 2.11.20; 7.2.9-10). One of the rules of epistolography is that letters need to be brief and clear, but making excuses for breaking this rule is also a common *topos* (Van Waarden 2010: 187), especially by Sidonius.

longiuscule: A rare word – although slightly more common in late antiquity. The adjective of the word only occurs twice in classical Latin (Cic. *Arch.* 25.43 and Plin. *HN* 10.107). Originally, the suffix *–culus* forms the diminutive of nouns of the third and fourth declension (e.g. *flos-culus, lacus-culus*; see Kühner and Holzweissig 1978.1: 985-986). In *longiusculus* and in a few other cases (e.g. *saepiculus*), the suffix is instead attached to an adjective. The function of the suffix remains the same: it decreases the semantic value of the adjective: 'long' → 'a bit long', 'longish'. Since *longius* is the comparative form of *longe*, the suffix tempers the comparative degree: 'longer' → 'a bit too long'.

Sidonius' use of the diminutive form of *longius* is highly ironic, after having written what is by far the longest letter in book 8 and one of the longest in the whole corpus (Cf. *comm. ad neque* t/m *libet* below).

amor: Sidonius returns to what he has written at the beginning of the letter, in 8.11.3, with similar words: *cuius interitus amorem meum summis conficeret angoribus*. Scholars have pointed to the use of ring compositions in Pliny's letters, a textual device to demarcate his letters (e.g. Whitton 2013a: 11). Similarly, Sidonius speaks at the end of his letter again of his love for Lampridius.

cuius angorem silentio exhalare non valui
'whose anguish I could not breath out in silence'

angorem t/m **valui:** The meaning of the sentence is clear: Sidonius, because of his distress, cannot keep silent. The exact phrasing, however, is more intricate, since there seems to be a paradox in these words. *Angorem* is the object of *exhalare*, 'to breath out', but *angorem* lit. means 'strangling', which of course impedes breathing. Similarly, *exhalare animam* is an expression for 'to die' (e.g. Ovid. *Met.* 15.528), but *exhalere* in this context means 'to breath out and to get rid of it (*angorem*)'.

angorem: I have already pointed out the salience of this word in this particular context, given its literally meaning 'strangling' (see *comm. ad* 8.11.3: *summis…angoribus*). However, *angor* is also an important word in the whole of Sidonius' corpus of letters. The few other times he uses this word, it always refers to his exile and the impact it has on Sidonius: *Ep.* 7.16.1: *sollicitudines ipsas angora succiduo concatenates* ('Those anxieties chained to my sinking anguish'); *Ep.* 8.9.2: *non statim sese poetica teneritudo a vincula incursi angoris elaqueat* ('The poet's tenderness would not immediately be able to free itself from the fetters of a pressing anguish'); *Ep.* 9.3.3: *hoc [solo patrio] relegatus variis quaquaversum frangor angoribus* ('I am banished from it [my own soil] and am broken in every part by diverse tortures'). Why did Sidonius use this particular word, after *Ep.* 8.9, where Sidonius is in anguish and Lampridius fortunate, again in this letter, where Lampridius has been murdered and Sidonius restored?

Cf. Van Waarden 2016: 189 on *sollicitudo* for another example of a particular word used by Sidonius when he speaks about his exile.

tu interim, si quid istic cognitu dignum, citus indica
'You, meanwhile, if there is something there in your place worth knowing, notify me quickly'

tu interim: *interim* is not only a temporal adverb, but marks here, together with the emphatic pronoun *tu*, a topic shift to Lupus. See Spevak 2010: 71.

istic: 'the situation at your place'. In text genres where an addressee is involved (as epistolography), the pronoun *iste* or adverb *istic/istunc* refers to the addressee (see Risselada 2013: 286-293 for the pronoun *iste* in Sidonius). This is a very clear instance of such direct referring use of *iste*: Sidonius asks how things are going at Lupus' place. Nevertheless, as Risselada 2013: 292 observes, there are also more 'problematic' uses of the pronoun. An example is *ista* in 8.11.13, which does not refer to the addressee.

saltim ob hoc scribens ut animum meum tristitudine gravem lectio levet
'but in any case writing for this reason, that the reading would alleviate my mind that is burdened with sadness'

saltim t/m **levet:** Letters as a means for giving consolation is a common *topos* in epistolography. Cf. e.g. Cic. *Ep.* 5.13.1 9 (*Quamquam ipsa consolatio litterarum tuarum mihi gratissima est*); *Plin. Ep.* 8.19.1 (*Et gaudium mihi et solacium in litteris*); Symm. *Ep.* 7.55 (*vale et ad scribendum esse diligens persevera. nos litterarum solacia suggeremusi*). Consolation letters (*litterae consolatoriae*) were even a separate register of letters: Cic. *Ep.* 13.20.1: *A Caesare litteras accepi consolatorias datas prid. Kal. Mai. Hispali*; Sidon. *Ep.* 7.16.1: *quod peregrine curas amici litteris mitigas consolatoriis*. See OCD s.v. 'letters, Latin' and 'consolation'.

Since letters were seen as representing the author, Sidonius urges Lupus to write anyway (*saltim*) even if he has nothing important to write about: his very writing, indicative of his presence, would already console Sidonius. On letter writing as a representative of the authors, see Edwards 2011: 270-271; Van Waarden 2010: 30-32.

namque confuso pectori maeror, et quidem iure, plurimus erat, cum paginis ista committerem sola
'for the sorrow on my troubled heart was great - and certainly rightly so -, when I put down these, and only these words on paper'

namque: Sidonius frequently has *namque* for simple *nam* in his prose and poetry. The difference between *namque* and *nam* seems to be that *namque* is more grammaticalized and less marked than *nam*. See Schrickx 2009; for an analysis and discussion of *namque* in Sidonius, see Van Waarden 2010: 85-86.
Here, *namque* gives a motivation for Sidonius' bidding of Lupus to write a letter in return to console him.

et quidem iure: Cf. Plin. 4.21.2 : *Adficior dolore, nec tamen supra modum doleo* ('I am seized by grief, but not unduly do I grief').

ista: As Risselada 2013: 290 points out, the use of the pronoun *ista* is appropriate in instances like this, for it refers to the letter that is now with the addressee at the moment of reading.

sola: Because of his love for Lampridius, Sidonius has written more than he had intended to do (*me progredi amor impulit*). However, as we will say in the last line, the grief at the same time hinders him to write anything at all (*neque…aliud…scribere*). There is no contradiction here, because his love for Lampridius and his sorrow for the latter's death make that the only

subject he is at the moment able to write about is Lampridius (*sola*).

The first two sections of the letter, where Sidonius asks Lupus about his doings, are not in line with this statement (see 11.3 comm. *modo* for the stark contrast between both parts of the letter).

Geisler points to the similarities between these lines and Plin. *Ep.* 8.23.8: *in tantis tormentis eram cum scriberem haec, <ut haec> scriberem sola* ('I was in such great torments when I wrote these words, that I wrote these words only'). Geisler is probably right, all the more because Pliny's letter deals with the death of a friend of his.

neque enim satis mihi aliud hoc tempore manu sermone consilio scribere loqui volvere libet. Vale
'and, really, it does not please me at this moment to write, speak or think something else by hand, in speech or in thought. Greetings.'

neque t/m **libet:** Very similar in vocabulary to the already mentioned *Ep.* 8.23 by Pliny (Geisler): *neque enim nunc aliud aut cogitare aut loqui possum* ('and, really, now I cannot either think or speak something else').

enim: Described by Kroon as a consensus particle, that seeks the involvement, cooperation and empathy of the addressee (Kroon 2011: 192). It is assumed that the addressee is of the same opinion as the speaker.

In this case, it asks Lupus' understanding for the fact that Sidonius cannot longer write letters because of the sorrow that has overwhelmed him.

manu sermone consilio: A tricolon with increasing word length (resp. 2, 3, and 4 syllables). Cf. 8.11.12 *fomes incentor antesignanus* for another example of a *tricolon climax.*

Bibliography

Abbreviations

BNP: *Brill's New Pauly.* (eds. H. Cancik et al.; English translation eds. C.F. Salazar and F.G. Gentry), online.

HDCLA: *Harper's dictionary of classical literature and* antiquities (ed. H.T. Peck). 1898. New York, Harper & Brothers Publishers.

LAGPW: *Late Antiquity. A Guide to the Postclassical World* (eds. G.W. Bowersock, P. Brown, O. Grabar). 1999. Harvard University Press: Harvard.

LS: *Lewis, C.T. and Short, C.* (1975): *A Latin Dictionary.* Clarendon Press: Oxford.

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ODLA: *Oxford Dictionary of Late Antiquity* (ed. Nicholson, Oliver). Oxford University Press: Oxford.

OLD: *Oxford Latin Dictionary* ((ed. P.G.W. Glare), 2nd edn. 2012. Clarendon Press: Oxford.

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Summary

The present thesis is a literary and interpretive commentary on Sidonius Apollinaris *Ep.* 8.11. The letter is addressed to Lupus, a rhetor from Agen. After praising Lupus, Sidonius turns to Lupus' request for a poem. However, since Sidonius has just heard of the shocking death of Lampridius, who was murdered by the hands of his own slaves, he is not in the mood of writing poetry, and inserts an old poem instead about his journey to Bordeaux. After the poem, there follows a long funeral oration, as it were, on the man Lampridius. However, as Sidonius makes clear, Lampridius made one great mistake: he once consulted astrologers on the end of his life, which proved to be fatal: as Sidonius meticulously points out, he was murdered on the exact manner and time that had been predicted to him.
The goal of this commentary is to come, by a close reading of the text, to a better understanding and interpretation of the letter. The commentary consists of two parts: an introduction, and the commentary proper, which comments on the text. The commentary part especially pays attention to themes and structures within the text, and attempts to explain linguistical difficulties. In the introduction, in which the results of the close reading of the commentary are summarized and interpreted, several topics are addressed (date, addressees, intertextuality and models), but it especially deals with the interpretation of the letter. It does so in two ways: firstly, the letter is analysed in the context of book 8. It is showed that *qua* themes and position the letter fits well in the overall structure of book 8. Secondly, the letter is interpreted on its own. Its main conclusion is that by this letter Sidonius urgently warns Lupus for the dangerous field of astrology, and uses the death of Lampridius as a cautionary example.