Judith Hindermann: Sidonius Apollinaris' Letters, Book 2. Text, Translation and Commentary. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2022 (Edinburgh Studies in Later Latin Literature). XXVII, 468 p., 1 ill. £ 125.00. ISBN: 978-1-3995-0630-4.

In recent decades a decentralised and highly international cottage industry has sprung up, devoted to providing monograph commentaries on the *Epistulae* of Sidonius Apollinaris one section at a time. Helga Köhler provided the initial impetus with a commentary on Book 1,[1] followed by David Amherdt on Book 4,[2] while Filomena Giannotti wrote on Book 3,[3] and Joop van Waarden elevated the art form with his magisterial commentary on Book 7 in two volumes.[4] I myself have a commentary under preparation on Book 6 and should I seem to attach too great weight to matters of little import, I hope the reader will forgive me this all-too-common failing of the specialist. Also forthcoming from "Edinburgh University Press" is Giulia Marolla's commentary on the first half of Book 5.[5] It is in this context of high standards and rising expectations that my comments on Judith Hindermann's work are to be understood.

Broadly speaking, commentaries can either serve as educational aids, helping the undergraduate through difficult passages and explaining terms of art, or as extremely close readings of texts intended for advanced scholars, intended as much to problematize the text as resolving problems, an independent and original contribution to the scholarly literature. On the one hand one has the

1 H. Köhler: C. Sollius Apollinaris Sidonius, Briefe, Buch 1. Einleitung, Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar. Heidelberg 1995 (Bibliothek der klassischen Altertumswissenschaften II N. F. 96).

2 D. Amherdt: Sidoine Apollinaire, Le quatrième livre de la correspondance. Introduction et commentaire. Bern et al. 2001 (Sapheneia. Beiträge zur Klassischen Philologie 6).

3 F. Giannotti: Sperare meliora. Il terzo libro delle *Epistulae* di Sidonio Apollinare. Introduzione, traduzione e commento. Pisa 2016 (Studi e testi di storia antica 22).

4 J. A. van Waarden. Writing to Survive. A Commentary on Sidonius Apollinaris Letters Book 7. Vol. 1: The Episcopal Letters 1–11. Leuven/Paris/Walpole, MA 2010 (Late Antique History and Religion 2); J. A. van Waarden: Writing to Survive. A Commentary on Sidonius Apollinaris Letters Book 7. Vol. 2: The Ascetic Letters 12–18. Leuven/Paris/Walpole, MA 2016 (Late Antique History and Religion 14).

5 G. Marolla: Sidonius, Letters Book 5, Part 1. Text, Translation and Commentary. Edinburgh 2023 (Edinburgh Studies in Later Latin Literature).

green Cambridge commentaries, which shun references, on the other Eduard Norden's commentary on Book 6 of the *Aeneid*[6] with its extensive appendix on metre. Some middle-ground exists between the two extremes, but it is difficult to strike a balance that does not alienate either one type of reader or the other. It is not always clear to me who the intended audience of Hindermann's book is. As will be discussed in the following, some sections seem aimed at the novice student, offering help with vocabulary and syntax, while others seem to presuppose specialist knowledge and familiarity with Sidonius scholarship. A few prefatory remarks on the author's aims and choice of method would have been welcome.

On balance, Hindermann's volume belongs primarily to the first category, albeit with occasional departures into the esoteric. Read as an educational commentary, principally aimed at helping students through the text and introducing them to the scholarly discussion surrounding it, it is both comprehensive and competent. If I were teaching an honours course on Late Roman Gaul and the students were struggling with Sidonius' difficult prose, I would not hesitate to refer them to Hindermann's volume as an aid and a guide. The last commentary on Book 2 that could justly be called comprehensive was in Jean Savaron's 1599 edition of Sidonius' œuvre,[7] described aptly by the Loeb translator of Sidonius William B. Anderson as "ill-digested learning, with much irrelevance, but useful in several places."[8] In this light, Hindermann's commentary undoubtedly represents an advance in the field.

1 Introduction

The volume opens with 18½ pages of introduction (pp. VIII–XXVI), covering the central theme of *otium/negotium*, the intertext with the epistolary corpus of Pliny the Younger with a convenient table of parallels, the dating of the individual letters and the book, the inclusion of epigrammatic poetry, and textual criticism. The first section on *otium/negotium* also includes a brief biography and the context of the circulation of the work within Sidonius'

6 E. Norden: P. Vergilius Maro, Aeneis, Buch VI. 3. ed. Leipzig 1926 (Sammlung wissenschaftlicher Kommentare zu griechischen und römischen Schriftstellern).

7 J. Savaron (ed.): Caii Sollii Apollinaris Sidonii Arvernorum episcopi Opera. Paris 1599.

8 W. B. Anderson (ed.): Sidonius. Poems and Letters. Vol. 1: Poems. Letters, Books I–II. Cambridge, MA/London 1936 (Loeb Classical Library 296), p. LXX.

broader self-fashioning. This section serves as a good introduction to the book as a whole as well as to recent trends in Sidonian scholarship and wider developments in the study of late antique epistolography.

As regards dating, Hindermann subscribes to the prevalent view within Sidonius scholarship, propounded especially by Michael P. Hanaghan and Gavin Kelly,[9] that the letters should be viewed primarily in the context of the collection rather than as individual pieces of correspondence. According to Hindermann, the letters of Book 2 are deliberately timeless meditations on evergreen topics and have a "dramatic date" in the 460s (p. XII). Although each of the individual letters includes a prefatory section called "dating", all of these with the exception of 2.1 (which refers to the emperor Anthemius), and 2.13 (which mentions that Petronius Maximus has had unfortunate successor*s*, plural, meaning it must at least postdate Majorian) limit themselves to the general remark that the letters are difficult or impossible to date. While I hesitate to accept the term "dramatic date" with its implications of fictionality and *post factum* composition, such caution is preferable to André Loyen's subjective conjectures based on Sidonius' word choice and the general mood of individual letters. Although these were never intended as more than educated guesses, they were too often taken as hard numbers by readers and reference works.[10] It is more responsible to refrain from speculation.

2 The text

The text ("Text and Translation", pp. 1–53) is based on Christian Lütjohann's 1887 MGH edition but uses the new stemma of Franz Dolveck in the modified form of Marolla,[11] bringing it up to date. The text itself does

9 M. P. Hanaghan: Reading Sidonius' *Epistles*. Cambridge 2019 and G. Kelly: Dating the Works of Sidonius. In: G. Kelly/J. van Waarden (eds.): The Edinburgh Companion to Sidonius Apollinaris. Edinburgh 2020, pp. 166–194.

10 The "Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire" is especially prone to citing Loyen's dates without context and without distinguishing between the speculative and the certain, which naturally will lead to further dating entanglements downstream.

11 C. Lütjohann (ed.): Gai Sollii Apollinaris Sidonii Epistulae et carmina. Berlin 1887 (MGH AA 8); F. Dolveck: The Manuscript Tradition of Sidonius. In: G. Kelly/J. A. van Waarden (eds.): Companion (note 9), pp. 479–542; G. Marolla: Sidonius

not have an apparatus, however. Instead, all deviations from Lütjohann, thirteen in total, are listed in a negative apparatus in the introduction (p. XXV). Some of these are trivial. In 2.8.1, for example, *subolis* has been substituted for *soboles*. This is a purely orthographic change; it remains the nominative singular. Printing *suboles* might have been preferable since the *su(/o)bolis* of some manuscripts is most probably an example of case attraction with the following *sexus alterius* rather than a nonstandard nominative form.

In 2.2.10, Hindermann opts for *columnis invidiosa monubilibus* "arousing envy through monumental columns" of some manuscripts over Lütjohann's conjecture *monolithis*, adopted from Fridolf Gustafsson,[12] who is often the source of Lütjohann's bolder emendations. This is part of a general and laudable tendency to defend the readings of the manuscripts where possible. It would, however, have been better if Hindermann had consulted Gustafsson, who is not mentioned and does not appear in the bibliography, and addressed his argument, namely that the sense of *monubilibus* does not fit the context, rather than mischaracterise it thus (p. 131): "Lütjohann (1887) 24 emends it to *monolithis*, 'consisting of a single stone', because of the phrase in Laber. *Mim.* 38 *columnas monolithas*, 'monolithic pillars'." This is wrong for two reasons. Firstly, Lütjohann provides no justification for the emendation, just a naked *scripsi*. Laberius is only introduced in the index of *Loci similes auctorum Sidonio anteriorum* by Eugen Geisler, who also cites Gustafsson. This is included in Lütjohann's MGH volume but is strictly speaking separate from the edition. At least, the reference should have been to p. 24, the text, *and* p. 357, the index. Secondly, as becomes clear if one consults Gustafsson, Laberius provides the precedent necessary to support the emendation, not the underlying rationale. The change in sense from 'monitory' or 'memorial' to simply "grand" – however natural it may seem to a speaker of a modern language where 'monumental' is but a four-syllable word for 'big' – remains uncomfortable, especially in a coinage that would only be intelligible etymologically as a derivative of *moneo*. Manuscript L's *monobilibus*, derived from Greek μονόβολος, 'single-cast' or 'made of one piece',[13] should perhaps have been given more serious consideration, especially in view of the flurry of Greek

Apollinaris, *Letters* Book 5 (*Epp.* 1–10). Text, Translation, and Commentary. Diss. San Marino 2021.

12 F. V. Gustafsson: De Apollinari Sidonio emendando. Helsinki 1882, pp. 43–44.

13 TLL 8.1423.1–21.

architectural terms in this passage and the ease with which o and u are confused.

In the same passage *hypodromus*, 'a covered promenade' or perhaps 'an underpass', is preferred to Lütjohann's *hippodromus*. The manuscript authority is roughly equal. In fact, since the alteration of y to i is trivial and most manuscripts have a single p, it may even be said to slightly favour *hypodromus*. It also yields a more satisfying sense than *hippodromus*, as already Jacques Sirmond points out, calling it a *certa emendatio*.[14] The discussion in Hindermann's note, however, leaves something to be desired (pp. 131–132). The line is *A parte vestibuli longitudo tecta intrinsecus patet mediis non interpellata parietibus*, *quae*, ***quia nihil ipsa prospectat***, ***etsi non hypodromus***, *saltim cryptoporticus meo mihi iure vocitabitur* (my emphasis). It is stated that *hippodromus* has been used in Latin since Plautus, whereas "*hypodromus* is attested only here, as part of Sidonius' announcement that he will use Greek terms". The passage and the change are thus directly relevant to the broader discussion of Sidonius' knowledge and use of Greek, a debate that has increased in salience recently.[15] If Sidonius is actively borrowing or even inventing obscure Greek architectural terminology – ὑποδρόμος is not attested in Greek in this sense[16] – that would weigh more heavily than the reuse of a loanword from Pliny or Martial.

The problem here is that *hypodromus* is in fact attested elsewhere, namely as a variant to virtually every occurrence of *hippodromus*, including to Pliny 5.6.19: *A capite porticus triclinium excurrit*; *valvis xystum desinentem et protinus pratum multumque ruris videt*, *fenestris hac latus xysti et quod prosilit villae*, *hac adiacentis* ***hippodromi*** *nemus comasque* ***prospectat*** (my emphasis).[17] Throughout her

14 J. Sirmond (ed.): C. Sollii Apollinaris Sidonii Arvernorum episcopi Opera. Paris 1614, *Notae* pp. 27–28.

15 See A. John: Learning Greek in Late Antique Gaul. In: CQ 70, 2020, pp. 846–864.

16 ὑπόδρομος, of course, exists, but not as a term for a portico, but rather a cove or a port in which ships could 'run in' and seek shelter. See F. Montanari: The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek. Leiden/Boston 2015, s.v. ὑπόδρομος 2, a, the other two senses of the word being 'influx', e. g. of water, and a sort of spider.

17 Not reported in the *apparatus* of Mynors' 1963 OCT edition (R. A. B. Mynors [ed.]: C. Plini Caecili Secundi. Epistularum libri decem. Oxford 1963 [Oxford Classical Texts]), which only cites γ's "heliodrome" as an alternative, variants presumably being regarded as trivial medieval misspellings of a Greek word, but a very cursory inspection of the manuscripts reveals the expected variations: "hippodromi" (M), "hyppodromi" (F), "hypodromi" (Paris Lat. 8620, a representative of the Θ branch).

commentary on 2.2, Hindermann rightly draws attention to the dense intertextuality with Pliny's two villa letters, 2.17 and 5.6, and she even notes that *prospecto* occurs in the same sense of "to look towards" in Pliny 5.6.19, among several other places, but this is framed purely as a lexical note and the intertextuality seems to have passed Hindermann's notice by. In my view, *quia nihil ipsa prospectat* is an 'Alexandrian footnote'; it only makes sense within the context of an allusion since there is no reason, either etymologically or *per definitionem*, to suppose that a *hypodromus* should have a view of anything except in so far that the word itself immediately evokes the Plinian context. I would argue that the verbal echo is sufficiently strong that if one were to prepare an edition of Pliny's letters, Sidonius' allusion would merit inclusion in the *apparatus* as evidence that his manuscript must have read *hypodromi*, provided one accepts this reading.[18] This, in turn, would reduce the already limited number of original Graecisms in Sidonius by one. Of course, all of this also applies if one chooses to retain *hippodromus*, the passages in Pliny and Sidonius remain linked. Hindermann's text thus represents an advance over the old editions of Lütjohann, Anderson, and Loyen, but it does not completely obviate the need for a new edition with a positive apparatus and a systematic discussion of the implications of the changes to the text.

3 The commentary

The commentary section (pp. 55–398) undoubtedly constitutes the main contribution of the book. The commentaries on individual letters begin with brief introductions, typically one to four pages, in which the identity of the addressee, dating, and major themes are briefly explained. Then follows a lemmatized commentary on the letter. Although the commentary is divided according to the traditional chapters or "sections", the *lemmata* are almost invariably clauses as opposed to periods or words and phrases, which gives the commentary a curious mid-level focus. In my view, this represents a step

Sirmond (note 14) *loc. cit.* argues that *hypodromi* is the correct reading in Pliny as well and is followed in this by A. Forcellini: Lexicon totius Latinitatis. [...] nunc demum [...] auctius, emendatius melioremque in formam redactum curante F. Corradini. Padua 1940, s.v. *hypodromus*, albeit the latter notes that this is controversial.

18 I am, to be clear, not arguing that *hypodromus* is the correct reading in Pliny, only that the corruption occurred early.

backwards relative to van Waarden's commentaries on Book 7,[19] which are divided into section, clause, and phrasal levels. Sidonius' arguments and the themes are typically developed in a semi-periodic style. Consequently, Hindermann must often refer to the note on the neighbouring page for the deployment of a *topos* that strictly pertains to the period or section as a whole. That the division into sections, which would allow for broad strokes outlines of the *ductus* of the letter, was implemented but not utilized seems like a missed opportunity. The only place where such higher-level notes are employed for broader discussions is in the commentary on the nested poems in 2.8.3 and 2.10.4, where "General remarks" appear on vv. 1–4, 5–11, 12–15 and vv. 11–15, 22–30 respectively (pp. 237–238, 239, 243, 317–319 and 325–326).

At the opposite end of the scale, the lack of subdivisions and lexical or phrasal *lemmata* can also cause difficulty for the reader. There will often be quite a lot on which to comment within a clause – vocabulary, grammar, realia, interpretation, intertext, textual criticism, and secondary literature – and to her credit Hindermann touches on all these aspects. A *lemma* can easily have something approaching two pages of commentary without so much as a line break or bolding to indicate a change in topic.[20] The note on epist. 2.10.3 *huius igitur aedis extimis rogatu praefati antistitis tulmultuarium carmen inscripsi trochaeis triplicibus adhuc mihi iamque tibi perfamiliaribus*, for example, starts with a reference to a note four pages earlier on the *topos* of literature by request, followed by a gloss on *aedis extimis* as "the apse"; a note that *praefatus* is frequently used as an adjective/noun in late antique writers; a gloss on *antistes* as "high church official, especially bishop" with parallels in Sidonius; a slightly *non-sequitur* remark that there were three ranks of priests, presumably prompted by *antistes*; a note for parallels for the use of *tumultuarius* for anything written in haste leading into some general remarks on the *topos* of speedy composition and the pose of authorial modesty with parallels in Pliny the Younger; a gloss on *inscribere* referring to the carving of the text into the church wall with some internal parallels and synonyms; a gloss on *trochaeis triplicibus* as meaning Phalaecian hendecasyllables and the significance of this verse choice; a note on the use of multiplicative numerals with plural nouns

19 See note 4.

20 A rare exception is the note on 2.8.3 v. 6 *prudens*, *casta*, *decens*, *severa*, *dulcis*, which stretches over three pages and is afforded three paragraph breaks.

in late Latin; a remark that Ulrike Egelhaaf-Gaiser has misinterpreted *adhuc mihi* in this passage as referring to Sidonius' rejection of lyrical poetry after assuming his episcopate, only relevant to those who have read Egelhaaf-Gaiser; and a note that the word *perfamiliaris* is classical but rare (pp. 304–305).

Read sequentially, this appears disorienting. Hindermann's approach, however, is entirely conventional and systematic; it simply follows the word order of the Latin sentence – a fact only slightly obscured by starting with the *topos* of requested literature, a line level note undistinguished from the rest. Thus, a high-level remark on the broad *topos* of hasty composition appears in the middle of the note, surrounded by two trivial glosses on *antistes* and *inscribo* because that is where the word *tumultuarius* appears. Following the word order of the underlying text has been the established method of classical commentaries at least since Servius. Why, then, not follow that tried-and-true model and use small, phrasal *lemmata*? Doing so would make the commentary considerably easier to navigate.

There have been more recent experiments in the form of the commentary on ancient texts. Gerhard Binder, for example, recently published a three-volume commentary on the *Aeneid*,[21] which provides a model for the commentary intended for students and educators. The commentary on individual parts of the poem is subdivided into four sections: A, a glossary; B, realia; C, literary remarks and intertext; D, literature and artistic representations. This is immensely helpful for students and instructors alike, making it very easy to find exactly the information one needs. The first volume is devoted to "*Zentrale Themen*" in which recurrent features were assigned a "Z-number", allowing Binder to refer to it every time a hyperbaton or a reference to Rome's future greatness appeared. This allows for a nuanced high-level discussion of e.g. *prolepsis* in one place, while the specifics of the individual case were in the "*Einzelkommentare*". While I am not advocating that Hindermann should have published a separate volume, some common features and *topoi*, e.g. onomastic puns or epistolary colloquialism, might have benefitted from a more in depth discussion in the introduction or as an appendix. The eighteen page introduction would certainly allow for expansion.

21 G. Binder: P. Vergilius Maro, Aeneis. Ein Kommentar. 3 vols. Trier 2019. (Bochumer Altertumswissenschaftliches Colloquium 104–106).

Scholarly commentaries on ancient epistolography also offer a variety of models. I have already mentioned van Waarden's approach with ample prefaces and several layers of lemmatization. More experimentally, Christof Müller and Christian Tornau have established a grid for the commentary that they aim to produce for Augustine's correspondence.[22] Since this is a loose collaborative effort, involving dozens of scholars from different universities, the notes are divided into eleven kinds, ranging from "Dating" to "Philosophy", to ensure comprehensiveness and a certain level of uniformity in what questions are being posed to the text. In writing my own commentary, I found a modified version of this grid to be helpful as a heuristic tool, even if some of the distinctions ultimately proved irrelevant for Sidonius and the divisions often had to be elided in practice. While Hindermann may have had good reasons to opt for the model of commentary she ultimately did – Binder is clearly a didactic aid, van Waarden can be prolix, Müller/Tornau disjointed – it was somewhat disappointing not to see at least some discussion of methodological considerations, the developments of the genre, and the target audience, especially since these new approaches are attempts at solving the problems of structure and consistency from which Hindermann's volume suffers.

On a purely typographical note, the difficulty in skimming the page to find the part of a note that one needs is further increased by the choice, possibly on the part of an editor or the press rather than the author, to have all the bibliographical references in-line in the commentary rather than in footnotes. This means that several lines can be taken up with parallel passages and their translation or with references to secondary literature with all the italics, parentheses, and quotation marks that implies. This also puts an upper limit on how many parallel passages can be adduced with a full quotation. If commentaries are to be monographs, printed separately from the text, one might as well take the consequence of that development and relegate to the notes any elements that mar the *Textbild* and encumber rather than enrich the reading experience. Having the references in line with the commentary made sense when the commentary itself consisted of notes confined to the bottom or margin of the page, which for the most part is no longer the case.

22 C. Müller/C. Tornau: Text – Subtext – Context: On the Way to a Comprehensive Commentary of the Augustinian Letters. Introduction. In: REAug 62, 2016, pp. 59–65.

4 References and citations

Sometimes the relevance of the references is not clear, and they can be sloppy, especially when the text is merely mentioned and not quoted. In epist. 2.1, for example, Sidonius plays around with the name of Seronatus – 'late-born' – who, in Sidonius' opinion, was if anything born too early. Hindermann informs us that "According to ancient rhetoric, one can deduce a person's or thing's nature from its name; see Cic. *Topic.* 35, *De Inv.* 1.34, Varro *Ling.*, [*sic*!] Curtius (1948) 488–92" (pp. 62–63). Neither top. 35 nor inv. 1.34 say anything of the sort. In *De Inventione*, Cicero merely states that a name is one of the attributes of a person that should be included in a character portrait,[23] while all he says in *Topica* is that many arguments are based on the proper definition and true meaning of words, the *vis nominis*, a type of argument he calls *notatio*.[24] As emerges from the subsequent example of *postliminium*,[25] Cicero is here talking about a form of etymological pedantry familiar to all who have had to engage in discussions about the letter of the law, not some metaphysical connection between signifier and signified. In fairness, both references are taken directly from Ernst Robert Curtius' excursus 14, "*Etymologie als Denkform*",[26] where they are also twisted to imply something much grander than they really do. But in extracting and highlighting just these two from Curtius' excursus, Hindermann takes ownership of them and implies that they are particularly relevant to the understanding of Sidonius. Varro discusses etymologies *passim* and it is thus difficult to determine to which passage specifically Hindermann is alluding – Curtius is of no help here – but none springs to mind in which Varro states that a person's name inherently bears any relation to his or her nature; a quick "Library of Latin Texts" search on *nomen* and *nomin** in Varro yielded several results but

23 Inv. 1.34 *Ac personis has res adtributas putamus*: *nomen*, *naturam*, *victum*, *fortunam*, *habitum*, *affectionem*, *studia*, *consilia*, *facta*, *casus*, *orationes*. *Nomen est*, *quod uni cuique personae datur*, *quo suo quaeque proprio et certo vocabulo appellatur*. This is a definition of a *proprium* so trivial that the temptation to overinterpret is perhaps entirely understandable.

24 Top. 35 *Multa etiam ex notatione sumuntur. Ea est autem*, *cum ex vi nominis argumentum elicitur*; *quam Graeci* ἐτυμολογίαν *appellant*, *id est verbum ex verbo veriloquium*; *nos autem novitatem verbi non satis apti fugientes genus hoc notationem appellamus*, *quia sunt verba rerum notae. Itaque hoc quidem Aristoteles* σύμβολον *appellat*, *quod Latine est nota. Sed cum intellegitur quid significetur*, *minus laborandum est de nomine.*

25 Ibid. 36–37.

26 E. R. Curtius: Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter. Bern 1948, pp. 488–492.

none of them obviously pertinent. Not cited by Hindermann is Quintilian, who explains that names are necessary but only really relevant to the argument if they are acquired *cognomina* such as Sapiens, Magnus, or Pius or there is some other special significance attached to the name.[27] It is thus far from clear that the discipline of 'ancient rhetoric' as a whole thought that names were an indication of character.

It is then briefly stated that ancient poets often took an interest in names, citing Verg. Aen. 1.267–268, which mentions the two names of Iulus/Ascanius,[28] and Ovid fast. 1.317–334 with its considerations of the etymology of the *dies agonalis*,[29] both passages of dubious relevance. The long poetic tradition of *nomina loquentia* or 'speaking names', going back to Homer and Hesiod and adopted with gusto by Roman comedians and satirists,[30] receives no mention, although this is arguably much more to the point than the rhetoricians. Also unmentioned is the classic *nomen-omen* pun, seen e.g., in Plaut. Persa 624–625, Cic. Phil. 7.11, or Macr. Sat. 1.3.13. It is a missed opportunity, doubly so considering that Sidonius states that *praescia futurorum Fortuna* gave Seronatus his name, quite possibly alluding to that commonplace *paronomasia* without simply and flatly regurgitating it.

This could easily have led into an interesting discussion of the use of names in invective specifically, as is tantalisingly suggested by the mention of the parallels of Lepidus in Rutilius Namatianus 1.309–312, which, incidentally,

27 Inst. 5.10.30 *Ponunt in persona et nomen: quod quidem accidere ei necesse est, sed in argumentum raro cadit, nisi cum aut ex causa datum est, ut Sapiens, Magnus, Pius, aut et ipsum alicuius cogitationis attulit causam, ut Lentulo coniurationis, quod libris Sibyllinis haruspicumque responsis dominatio dari tribus Corneliis dicebatur, seque eum tertium esse credebat post Sullam Cinnamque quia et ipse Cornelius erat.*

28 *At puer Ascanius, cui nunc cognomen Iulo | additur, – Ilus erat, dum res stetit Ilia regno.*

29 The relevant verses are 1.319–334: *nominis esse potest succinctus causa minister, | hostia caelitibus quo feriente cadit, | qui calido strictos tincturus sanguine cultros | semper agatne rogat nec nisi iussus agit. | Pars, quia non veniant pecudes, sed agantur, ab actu | nomen Agonalem credit habere diem. | Pars putat hoc festum priscis Agnalia dictum, | una sit ut proprio littera dempta loco. | An, quia praevisos in aqua timet hostia cultros, | a pecoris lux est ipsa notata metu? | Fas etiam fieri solitis aetate priorum | nomina de ludis Graeca tulisse diem. | Et pecus antiquus dicebat agonia sermo; | veraque iudicio est ultima causa meo. Utque ea non certa est, ita rex placare sacrorum | numina lanigerae coniuge debet ovis.*

30 The exchange in Plaut. Mil. 435–438 *Pa: Eho! | Quis igitur vocare? Ph. Diceae nomen est. Sc. Iniuria's, | falsum nomen possidere, Philocomasium, postulas | ἄδικος es tu, non δικαία, et meo ero facis iniuriam* immediately springs to mind as explicitly employing the same antiphrastic device, but it is a feature *passim*.

provides much better evidence of a name-character link than any other text cited,[31] and Vigilantius "Dormitantius" in Jerome c. Vigil. 1.6,[32] neither of which is quoted or expanded upon beyond noting the existence of the parallel. Instead, the note segues into the broad observation that Sidonius often puns on names, with a general assertion that the quasi-synonymous names of Constantius and Firminus, the first and last addressee, going from constancy to firmness, are meant as a contrast imitation of Pliny's epistolary collection's journey from Clarus to the antonymous Fuscus, from light to darkness, which theory is not attributed to Roy Gibson,[33] as it properly should be whether one accepts it or not. What started promisingly thus ultimately *desinit in piscem*.

5 Concluding remarks

I have spent so long on a handful of notes because I believe them to be symptomatic of the whole. The notes are comprehensive and broad but lacking in structure and depth. Many lines are devoted to definitions and explanations of words taken from the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* or even the "Oxford Latin Dictionary", most of which are unproblematic and uncontroversial. Topics are suggested rather than explored. Parallels are adduced but their ultimate contribution to the interpretation of the present passage is not made clear. The commentary is a quarry of interesting quotations, observations, and ideas, but few of them have been given the time and space they really needed to shine. It is, in short, an excellent resource for undergraduates and newcomers to Sidonius, but it has less to offer the specialist.

As a book, the volume is professionally produced, pleasant to handle and to read, with clear print, margins large enough to allow for annotation, and a good index [*Index Locorum*, pp. 426–463; "Index of Personal Names (Antiquity)", pp. 464–468]. Notwithstanding the occasional missing or incomplete

31 *Nominibus certos credam decurrere mores? | Moribus an potius nomina certa dari? | Quidquid id est, mirus Latiis annalibus ordo, | quod Lepidum totiens reccidit ense malum.*

32 *Exortus est subito Vigilantius Dormitantius, qui immundo spiritu pugnet contra Christi Spiritum et martyrum neget sepulcra ueneranda, damnandas dicat esse uigilias et numquam nisi in Pascha alleluia cantandum, continentiam haeresim, pudicitiam libidinis seminarium.*

33 R. Gibson: Reading the Letters of Sidonius by the Book. In: J. A. van Waarden/G. Kelly (eds.): New Approaches to Sidonius Apollinaris. Leuven/Paris/Walpole, MA 2013 (Late Antique History and Religion 7), pp. 195–219, p. 218.

reference, citations are usually ample, specific, and accurate, making them easy to follow up on. The English prose is clear and broadly idiomatic, although it might have benefitted from being proofread once more. On p. XI, for example, we read the sentence "Furthermore, Sidonius continues his reverence for Pliny by thematising the assumption of his consulship in Book 3, analogous to Pliny's assumption of the consulship in his Book 3." Not only is that sentence a bit clunky – "continues his reverence" is strained and "thematises" for 'addresses' or 'explores the subject of' is an unmistakable Teutonism, *thematisieren*[34] – but Sidonius' "consulship" should clearly have been 'episcopacy'. This is merely a *Flüchtigkeitsfehler*, a slight mental prolepsis that I am sure Hindermann would have caught during proofreading, but it does give the reader pause. One is, however, seldom left in doubt as to what Hindermann means, and such clarity is an admirable quality in a commentary.

34 Another recurrent Germanism is "reflect on", something that in English implies contemplation and above all introspection, in the much weaker sense of 'take an interest in', 'pay attention to', *reflektieren über*.

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Empfohlene Zitierweise

Willum Westenholz: Rezension zu: Judith Hindermann: Sidonius Apollinaris' Letters, Book 2. Text, Translation and Commentary. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2022 (Edinburgh Studies in Later Latin Literature). In: Plekos 25, 2023, S. 313–325 (URL: https://www.plekos.uni-muenchen.de/2023/r-hindermann.pdf).