

The Dating and Authorship of the *Centio Vergilianus de laudibus Christi*: A Case Study on the Birth Account

The *Centio Vergilianus*, dated to the late fourth century CE, is one of the earliest examples of Christian writing by a woman, composed of verses pulled from the Vergilian corpus rearranged to retell select Biblical stories. Scholars differ on its exact dating and authorship, as Schenkl (1888) identifies Faltonia Betitia Proba as its author based on manuscript tradition, while Shanzer (1986, 1994), looking to epigraphic evidence (Barnes 2006), argues that it was instead her granddaughter, Anicia Faltonia Proba. This project explores this matter further not by looking again to sources outside of the text, but within the text *Centio* itself alongside the fourth century translations of Christian scripture it retells. By examining the cultural connotations of word choices and themes present in the narrative of the *Centio* in comparison to the Greek *Septuagint*, the *Vetus Latina*, and Jerome's *Vulgate*, this project argues that Proba is more likely to have drawn on the *Septuagint* as a model for her retelling, based on the similarities of the birth and temptation accounts present between it and the *Centio*. This suggests that Proba composed her *Centio* closer to the mid-fourth century, corroborating Schenkl's (1888) assertion that Faltonia Betitia Proba is the author. The poster will focus on the birth account, providing background on Proba and her *Centio*, and directly comparing its language and narrative structure to that of the *Septuagint*, *Vetus Latina*, and *Vulgate*, pointing out significant similarities and differences between the works and explaining their relevance to the question of dating and authorship.

Bibliography

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