

Allusion and Translation: Translating Poetry and Poets in Claudian's Panegyric for  
Probinus and Olybrius

Claudian's panegyric for Probinus and Olybrius (hereafter *Prob.*) has often been discussed as crucial for the interpretation of the poet's career. For Cameron, it stood apart from the poet's other laudatory poetry and marked the distinction between panegyric and propaganda (1970: 30-35, esp. 35; on the controversy over this notion, see Wheeler 2007: 98-99). For Wheeler (2007), and most recently Ware (2012), the poem has provided evidence for Claudian's engagement with the Roman epic tradition from the beginning of his career. This paper demonstrates that the poem is essential for understanding the poet's self-conception as a bilingual epicist, capable of moving between the increasingly separated worlds of the Greek East and Latin West. As Hinds has recently observed, Claudian's assumption of both a Greek and Roman identity evidences a mastery of cultural competencies, and I suggest that translation and allusion – or translations *as* allusions – function in order to reinforce this aspect of the poet's image (Hinds 2013: 173-174).

The most interesting example of this is perhaps the multiple allusions to the *Iliad* at *Prob.* 55-72 (cf. Wheeler 2007: 102). I discuss these allusive moments as an attempt to comment on the polyphonic nature of the literary tradition, and as a moment of Claudianic reflection on the transition from the Greek East to the Latin West. I proceed to discuss the final lines of this section as a translation of *Iliad* 1.8 as well as how such a translation may have been received by a Late Roman audience. My analysis of these lines reveals how translation can function as part of more expansive strategies of allusion and self-presentation. My paper speaks, therefore, not only to the act of translation, but to the encounters that late antique Latin speakers may have had with the Greek language and the poets who represented Greek culture.

## Bibliography

- Cameron, Alan. 1970. *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius*. Oxford, Clarendon.
- Hinds, Stephen. 2013. "Claudianism in the *De Raptu Proserpinae*." In *Generic Interfaces in Latin Literature*, edited by T.D. Papanghelis, S.J. Harrison, and S. Frangoulidis, 169-92. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Ware, Catherine. 2012. *Claudian and the Roman Epic Tradition*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wheeler, Stephen. 2007. "More Roman than the Romans of Rome: Virgilian (Self-) Fashioning in Claudian's *Panegyric for the Consuls Olybrius and Probinus*." In *Texts and Culture in Late Antiquity: Inheritance, Authority, and Change*, edited by J. H. D. Scourfield. Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 97-133.