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THE PROSERPINEAN METAMYTH: CLAUDIAN'S *DE RAPTU PROSERPINAE* AND ALAN OF LILLE'S *ANTICLAUDIANUS*

Terry Duffey

The following discussion introduces a new structure derived from the interaction and interrelationship of several works of literature. Such a structure derives from a comparative or analytic insight present long before the appearance of either literary product. This superstructure exploited by poets of the classical period and the Middle Ages suggests an evolutionary development of myth. For this reason the superstructure is called a "metamyth."

Metamyth finds its origin in myth that is extrapolated and refined by tradition to produce an altogether new entity. This new creation possesses an intellectual substance, vitality, and validity independent of those of its parent, the original myth complex: its substance consists of a conceptual field or perspective superstructure; its vitality and validity are separate from that of its original parent system; and its ability to convince man of its truth, its rightness as an explication of reality, is unrelated to the appeal of the mythological roots from which it sprang. Furthermore, during the Middle Ages the credibility of classical myth was challenged by Christianity. However, this metamyth, viewed as an intellectual/philosophical kernel of truth embedded in mythological matter, was yet regarded as a valid insight into the construct of the natural order. Thus, it offers an important philosophical support for the significance of myth.

The "Proserpinean metamyth" serves as a more or less arbitrary title for the metamyth, for its substance has been associated with other mythological figures such as Zeus and Venus, as it is with Proserpine.[1] However, this metamyth has no plot, no themes of its own. In order to express the dialectic which it defines in a very specific manner, the superstructure borrows themes, figures, and plots from the parent system, organizing these into a product uniquely its own. It cannot be called a form of early cultural anthropology because it offers no explanation of the contradictions between its construct of a myth and another, earlier construct of the same myth. It is, by definition and in direct contrast to other myth traditions, a fairly stable entity, a conceptual dialectic transmitting a split perspective on the world that may be enlarged upon by later writers. Actually, it exists as an ideological development of the original myth complex; it is used to organize mythic plots and themes along lines consistent only with its own vision of the universal order. Most probably inspired by myth, metamyth offers a directed version of its parents, one that has been organized by logic and the contact of both imagination and reason with the real world. It expresses the macro-/microcosmological tensions between the two numina -- here called "Amor" and "Mors" -- which animate the universe.

These two perspectives associated with the two numina, Mors and Amor, also suggest two universes of discourse, two distinct, frequently opposed matrices or contexts within the metamyth. Their dimensions are such that in different works certain concepts can be assigned to either side of the dialectic, terms such as chaos or creation, light or dark, life or death, materialism, courage, aspiration. Also, mythic figures such as Dionysius, Pluto, Venus, with multivalent myth complexes may be assigned to either side of the dialectic. Therefore, it is the context that defines a term's assignment to one side or the other within the dialectic. It is a difficult task to define two perspectives on the real world or two opposing, contextual fields in which the terms used in one text or work to explicate one side of the natural order may reappear in another work or text to explicate the opposing side as well; however, the context in which the single term appears will subtly alter the meaning of the term itself. This discussion of metamyth begins with Claudian and ends with Alan of Lille (Alanus de Insulis), in order to establish two concrete, historical reference points connecting the fourth and the twelfth century. The influence of the poet of late Antiquity upon one of the twelfth-century Renaissance is readily

admitted by Alan in the title to his second allegorical epic, the *Anti-claudianus de Antirufino*. However, the substance of this influence goes beyond Claudian's *In Rufinum*, extending more importantly to the *De Raptu Proserpinae*, the most ambitiously conceived work of the earlier poet.

The Proserpinean metamyth expresses a conscious construct of the secular poet who participated in an "allusive dialogue"[2] that spanned the centuries connecting the classical and mediaeval periods. The macrocosmological numina which Claudian describes in the *De Raptu* myth reappear in the instinctual or psychic tensions of the microcosmos that Alan explicates in the allegory of the *Anticlaudianus*. Within the mediaeval viewpoint the macrocosmological numina that compete within the sublunar dimension (forces apparent in all sublunar beings), also represent an external referent to an internal dialectic. Any dialectic limited to culture, mind, and language omits the ancient consciousness of the corporate unity of external and internal realities.

In the early years of the fifth century A.D. the poet Claudian composed his own version of the myth of Proserpine's rape. As poet he embarked upon an ambitious project that is compared to the first mariner who attempted to cross the open seas. The preface describes the courage of this early sailor as he abandons the sight of shore. Similarly, the narrator's courage grows throughout his invocation to Phoebus and the deities of the underworld until he breaks forth into the narration. Claudian's narrator implies that his courage, like that of the early mariner, derives from a daring new venture which he undertakes with this work. A close study of the *De Raptu* suggests that this new venture involves his juxtaposition of certain themes to create an overarching thematic tension pushing towards its own implicit resolution.

The narrative begins with the description of the three camps of the gods after the overthrow of Saturn and the suppressed rebellion of the Titans. The first camp is that of the new winter order under the rule of Saturn's first-born son, Jupiter. All the Olympian deities, including the goddess of love, Venus, belong to this group; the second camp of a winter cohort is located in the underworld of Dis; only Ceres and her daughter, Proserpine, along with the nymphs and Sirens (before they turn to man's destruction) occupy the terrestrial level: they have resettled on Sicily. Blessed by the presence of these goddesses, Sicily alone is spared the ravages of endless winter that has dominated the earth since Jupiter's

possession of the throne. Hence, Sicily holds the last members maintaining allegiance to Saturn's original fecund summer order.

The plot of the *De Raptu* revolves around Jove's resolution of two problems rising from his new winter order. The first involves a threatened revolt by his brother, Dis, whose underworld prison denies him the comfort of a worthy spouse (no goddess is willing to share such an estate). The second complaint comes from an allegorical figure, Natura, who has pointed out to Jupiter that year-long winter provokes man to no new endeavours, but only oppresses him with hunger and cold. According to Natura, Jupiter's influence has not inspired man to look to the stars; instead, it has bent him in half in a constant effort to forage for the acorns that are the only available food. Saturn's overly generous natural order produced luxuriousness, while his son's order begets incessant want and worry.

The narrator has already described a world divided into two camps, the Mors dominant world of Olympus and Dis pitted against a small band of Amor preferent rebels led by the corn goddess. With one violent confrontation of the two camps, Claudian allows Zeus to resolve all three of his problems, that is, the two listed above as well as the existence of that small group of passive resisters to his winter order. The original separation of the winter and summer (Mors and Amor) orders is shattered by Jupiter, whose decision occasions the violent confrontation of summer and winter representatives on the fields of Enna. The rape provides the poet with a vehicle for describing both sides of the thematic dialectic and the resolution of the tensions within this dialectic. Furthermore, the poet envisions this tension within the dialectic as cosmological because he uses the myth most commonly associated with the origin of the seasons: tradition describes the struggle for possession of Proserpine as a mythic rationale for the alternation between summer when the flower goddess is restored to her mother and winter when she returns to her husband in the underworld. Moreover, as she moves from one sphere to the next, Proserpine, together with the landscape, experiences a transformation. However, viewed as a composite archetype for both sides of the dialectic, she represents a profound resolution of natural (or sublunar) opposites. For Claudian, then, the revolving career of Proserpine expresses a higher order resolution of cosmological tensions affecting all the gods who personify the cosmos at various levels, from the celestial (Olympus) to the terrestrial (Sicily) to the chthonic (Dis) spheres.

The winter order is described by the majority of characters in Claudian's narrative -- by Jupiter and Dis, by Venus and Natura *plangens* (Natura in complaint), by Pallas Athena and Diana. Jupiter enlists the aid of Venus the deceiver to lure Proserpine into the open; the goddess of love is accompanied to Sicily by Athena and Diana, goddesses of war and hunt, who become her unwitting accomplices. Dis, together with Venus, bespeaks the negative aspects of the winter order, for he embodies the chaotic, lustful, rash, and violent urges within Mors, drives that contradict the positive impulse of Jove as logical problem-solver and decision-maker for the cosmos and all its citizens, gods and men alike. However, in order to resolve his cosmological dilemma, Jove arranges for both deceit and force to be used against his own daughter, Proserpine. He approves the use of force in order to resolve the conflict. Force, whether inspired by reason (as with Jove) or by rage (as with Dis), constitutes an essential component of the winter order, Mors, in both its positive and negative polarities. Thus we can describe some of the components of the Mors order as follows: force (both corrective and destructive winter), reason, lust, chaos, rule (hegemony), and deceit, natural sterility, and stereotypical masculinity.

On the other hand, the poet uses Ceres and her followers to describe the summer order. Ceres as corn goddess promises her island fortress, Sicily, endless summer with its resulting natural fecundity. Yet she abandons her daughter on the island to attend the orgiastic rituals of the mother goddess, Cybele, wife to Saturn. It is here, in Cybele's cave, that Ceres' dreams warn her of her daughter's downfall and, in spite of her whirlwind haste, she returns to Sicily too late to circumvent the disaster. The nymphs, Proserpine's playmates, have either disappeared or dissolved, while the Sirens have abandoned Sicily and now devote their sweet song to men's destruction. Proserpine is lost, and Ceres can get no information from the gods due to Jove's injunction of silence. Tormented, yet determined to seek her lost child, the mother leaves Sicily to search every corner of the earth for her stolen daughter. Proserpine, however, has already suffered the transformation from summer to winter goddess. While her abductor, Dis, softens immediately upon contact with the girl, consoling her with the promise of a new paradise in the underworld, Proserpine curses the flowers that lured her to the open fields. Accordingly, some of the elements of summer, or Amor, order, both positive and negative, include the following: energy or activity, summer, imagination and play, tender

sexuality (witness the child-like flower goddess plucking the very flowers that she herself personifies), a stubborn resistance to change, passive insubordination, irresponsibility (both Ceres and Proserpine abandon their duties for more pleasurable pursuits), natural fecundity, and stereotypical femininity.

Finally, Claudian views the relationship of Mors and Amor orders as a hierarchical one. The poet exposes the nature of this hierarchy with his assignment of the positive and negative polarities of each order to different cosmological levels. The positive Mors dimension finds its ultimate representative in the lord of Olympus, Jupiter, while the negative pole is represented by the lord of the dead in his chthonic domain; on the other hand, both positive and negative aspects of Amor are represented by Proserpine and Ceres equally on the terrestrial plane. In this way, the poet describes what he believes is the cosmological hierarchy within the dialectic of Mors and Amor. In the succeeding centuries, such a natural hierarchy would come to be identified with the social as well as the cosmological structure; the Mors impulses of force and reason would be adopted as defining characteristics by the socially advantaged aristocracy, while the Amor impulses of imagination and desire would be embraced by those individuals occupying an inferior position.

Claudian exploits this juxtaposition of superior/inferior social positions in his dedication for the *De Raptu*. Casting himself in the role of Orpheus, the poet describes his sponsor, Florentinus, a Roman nobleman, as Hercules. As Hercules has freed Orpheus from an impediment to his song by ridding the poet's homeland, Thrace, of the tyrant Diomedes, so Florentinus has freed Claudian from an equal impediment; hence, the *De Raptu*, product of the poet freed from constraint -- as Jove plans to free Natura from a winter constraint -- is dedicated to another Mors champion, to Florentinus, a Roman aristocrat. Claudian as poet expresses his gratitude, not as an equal, but as the socially and cosmologically inferior of the two. Incapable of remedying his own impediment, the poet must look to one superior in force and courage to act on his behalf. Only Mors virtue can correct Mors oppression. Orpheus resumes his song and Claudian dedicates his poem:

> . . . sed tu Tirynthius alter,
> Florentine, mihi: tu mea plectra moves

antraque Musarum longo torpentia somno
excutis et placidos ducis in orbe choros. (2, 49-52)
(But thou, Florentinus, art a second Hercules to me. 'Tis thou causest my quill to stir, 'tis thou disturbest the Muses' cavern long plunged in sleep and leadest their gentle bands in the dance.)[3]

In summary, Claudian's *De Raptu Proserpinae* defines a poetic dialectic which does not originate with him but rather finds in him its latest proponent. Moreover, the poet imagines in the figure of Proserpine a composite entity embracing both halves of the dialectic. The resolution of the narrative would have led, if it had been completed, to the temporary restoration of Proserpine to her mother and summer to the earth. It is Proserpine's destiny to be shared equally by mother and husband, to alternate between Amor and Mors, and with her appearance on and disappearance from the surface to prefigure both the moon in its waxing and waning as well as earth in summer and in winter. As a sublunar archetype the goddess will represent the resolution of Amor and Mors tensions by means of a complementary relationship of one order to the other. Yet within the sublunar sphere this complement requires, as the poet indicates in his dedication, the submission of Amor creativity to Mors direction and inspiration.

Moreover, Claudian's historical epics composed earlier than the *De Raptu* exhibit the same cosmological tensions of Amor and Mors orders. In the *In Rufinum* and the *In Eutropium*, he pits West against East, Rome against Constantinople, Stilicho against Rufinus and Eutropius, while his satiric arguments are rooted deep in the bedrock of a secular perspective of non-Christian origin. When his Roman audience accepts his arguments against their Eastern enemies, they participate in his perspective on the nature of the universe. For a Christian audience at that time, this might produce a dilemma: one horn formed of the theologically unresolved, quasi-pagan perspective of the poet; the other horn, of the contemporarily accepted, Christian vision of the Trinity. Not until Boethius, in the *De Consolatione*, is a Christian peace of sorts made with the threat of a competing universal ontology.

However, Boethius reaffirms the dominance of the winter or Mors order through Philosophia. Lady Philosophy, like the moon goddess Proserpine, is a composite figure embodying the balance of the two orders under the dominance of winter direction and heroic strength. In Claudian's *De Raptu*,

the flower goddess weaves a gift for her mother, a cloth depicting the poles of the universe and all that lies in between. The girl does not survive above ground to complete her project; instead her mother returns to discover the loom abandoned except for the spider who has taken it upon herself to finish the design with her own shadowy fillet. With Proserpine's rape, the simultaneous mix of the quick and the dead throughout the universe, this rent fabric depicts more accurately the coming transformation of the cosmos. From Claudian's *De Raptu* on, the female allegorical figure who represents the natural order and appears with torn garment, personates Proserpine as a composite of the universal tension of Amor and Mors. Philosophia is one of the first to appear in this guise, and Prudentia, in the *Anticlaudianus* of Alan of Lille, is yet another.

Furthermore, Boethius creates two opposing allegorical figures in the *De Consolatione*, that is, Philosophia and Fortuna. Although Philosophia speaks in Fortuna's voice, presenting Fortuna's arguments, Philosophia rejects the other's perspective and expels the Muses from the philosopher's cell; with a brief version of the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, Philosophia describes the vitiating effects of a perspective whose emphasis opposes her own. Fortuna, the fickle allegorical figure, embodies yet another type of Proserpine; in her favourable and hostile positions she realizes the two dispositions of Proserpine: before and after the rape, benign flower goddess and stern queen of the dead. Of course, Fortuna's perspective betrays her man, whether Boethius' persona or Orpheus, with the loss of that benign aspect of her nature; misfortune brings despair because of the inability of the individual to embrace or grasp this dimension of his personal existence. Fortuna's perspective desires Amor, seeing only disaster, failure, and misfortune in Mors which, as one of the two creative forces within the cosmos, cannot be avoided. Accordingly, Fortuna betrays her man into a miserable and self-defeating perspective on life's course. Philosophia, emphasizing the educative discipline of Mors dominance, offers her man a life superior to the common man's in that sorrow and death propose values and truths far greater than those of Amor.

Six centuries later, however, Alan of Lille chose to challenge this hierarchy of Mors over Amor. A twelfth-century humanist, Alan is generally associated with the School of Chartres. Both of his major allegorical works, *De Planctu Naturae* (ca. 1160-1170) and the *Anticlaudianus* (ca. 1182-1183) deal with the question of human mortality. Judging from the various

vernacular adaptations and the wide-ranging influence on other literary works such as the twelfth-century *Roman de la Rose*, the lyric of the thirteenth-century *Minnesänger*, Neidhart von Reuental, as well as Chaucer's *Parlement of Foules* (ca. 1380), these allegories were well received by the mediaeval reader from the twelfth century on. In the context of the twelfth-century Renaissance, this humble cleric appears singularly capable of addressing the fundamental tensions between a secular metamyth and Christian theology. Although Alan of Lille is not the first Christian writer to attempt the alignment of these two seeming exclusive systems, secular and Christian, he is the first to offer a serious challenge to the traditional dominance within the dialectic. Throughout his literary works Claudian implies the natural superiority of winter to summer, reason to imagination, Mors to Amor. Alan, on the other hand, argues for a reverse perspective on the natural order. Accordingly, he presents the Middle Ages with a unique insubordination, a challenge to winter and its human representatives.

For the purpose of this study, Alan's significance lies in his decided disagreement with Claudian's and Boethius' winter bias, challenging a tradition more than 800 years old. Alan introduces the reverse emphasis in his *Anticlaudianus de Antirufino*.[4] That the subtitle of Alan's allegorical epic (*Antirufinus*) refers to his antipathy towards the English king, Henry II, has been suggested by recent scholars. Although Alan borrows from Claudian's *In Rufinum* certain themes and ideas, the overall, largest structural and thematic unit is lifted from the *De Raptu*. Claudian's *In Rufinum*, as Cameron points out,[5] constitutes one-half of Claudian's invective; the other half is constituted by the *In Eutropium*. The first invective presents an accusation against the winter half of the dialectic, its negative excesses of force, while the second is a type of invective loaded with ridicule against the sins of the summer order. Like Claudian's *In Rufinum*, Alan's accusations of excess and the presence of evil in the sub-lunar order are aimed at the winter half of the dialectic, identified as Henry II and his sons, contemporaries of the then French king, Philip II.

The plot begins with Natura's endeavour to construct a new and perfect man to combat the effects of her enemies, the Furies, who now rule the natural order of mankind. Natura would overthrow this long-standing dominion of moral and physical infirmity. To this end she calls together a synod of her sisters, all of them virtues of the highest order. The discussion, however, is carried by three principal figures, Prudentia,

Racio, and Concordia. Prudentia cautions the group that this task will be too great for them, that only God can supply a soul equal to the creation of a man who is both divine and human. Racio agrees with Prudentia and suggests that Prudentia must serve as ambassadress to God on their behalf. Concordia agrees and convinces Prudentia that she must go. After much travel through the sphere of the Deity (also called the Thunderer), Prudentia finds access to God and presents her case. God quickly accedes to her humble request for assistance with the following words:

> "Hoc mihi iampridem Racio dictavit ut uno
> Munere respicerem terras mundumque bearem
> Numine celestis hominis, qui solus haberet
> Tot virtutis opes quot munera digna favore,
> Tot dotes anime quo saltem mundus oberrans
> Floreret, viciis aliorum marcidus, immo
> Iam defloratus in flore resurgeret uno."
> ("Reason has for long recommended this to me, that I should show regard for earth by one gift and bless the world by the godlike presence of a heavenly man . . . that at least the upright man who tends to stray may flourish and, though withered by the vices of others or rather by now deflowered, he may in this one flower have a second Spring.")[6]

Prudentia returns to her sisters on earth with a new and perfect human soul. Natura constructs the man from the best raw materials available. Thus, the perfect man is completed.

Now Rumour carries the news of the new man to the depths of the underworld, the dwelling of Allecto. Outraged, Allecto vows to combat this unassailable being, one removed from the influence of her domain. The forces of Chaos declare war against Natura and against heaven itself. Meanwhile, Mother Fortuna regrets her earlier assistance of Natura's child, the new man, on behalf of her daughter Nobility, and now throws her support totally to the side of her second offspring, Ignobility or Lowliness.

A fierce battle is waged between the forces of Natura and Allecto. The new man serves as the object of contention, the centre of the struggle. Of course, the new man wins; a new order, the rule of a pristine Natura, takes hold on earth:

> Nec iam corrigitur rastro, nec vomere campus
> Leditur, aut curvi deplorat vulnus aratri,
> Ut tellus avido, quamvis invita, colono
> Pareat, et semen multo cum fenore reddat.
> Non arbor cultrum querit, non vinea falcem,
> Sed fructus dat sponte novos et vota coloni
> Fertilitate premit.
> (No longer is the field reclaimed with the hoe or scored by the ploughshare, no longer does it bemoan the scars inflicted by the curved plough to make it, however unwilling, obey the greedy husbandman and return the seed with high interest. The tree does not need the knife nor the vineyard the pruning-hook. They bear new fruit of their own accord and surpass in their fertility the husbandman's prayers . . . .)[7]

The world returns to the Golden Age, the Age of Saturn which has existed before the reign of Jove. This is the natural order that Claudian depicts on Sicily before the abduction of Proserpine: (Ceres to Sicily:) " . . . *nullos patiere ligones/ et nullo rigidi versabere vomeris ictu./* sponte tuus florebit ager; cessante iuvenco/ ditior oblatas mirabitur incola messes" (" . . . for thou shalt suffer no hoe nor shall the cruel iron of the ploughshare know thy soil. Untilled thy fields shall bear fruit, and though thine oxen plough not, a richer husbandman shall view with wonder the self-sown harvest.").[8] Alan describes this same Amor order as a direct result of the new man's victory over those same forces of Hell which helped in the theft of Ceres' daughter.

Alan has constructed his myth along the lines that Claudian uses in his version of the rape of Proserpine. The mediaeval allegorist begins his myth after the rape, when the seasonal alternation of life and death constitutes the natural order. However, this natural order is off-balance because winter, death, and sin maintain the upper hand, squeezing spring, life, and virtue -- Natura's original scheme of things -- out of the scene altogether. Moreover, when we first meet Natura, it is as *Natura plangens*, Nature in complaint; under the oppression of winter forces she plans a revolution in the natural order which will allow her and her offspring, mankind, to return to the original harmony of the Garden of Eden before sin.

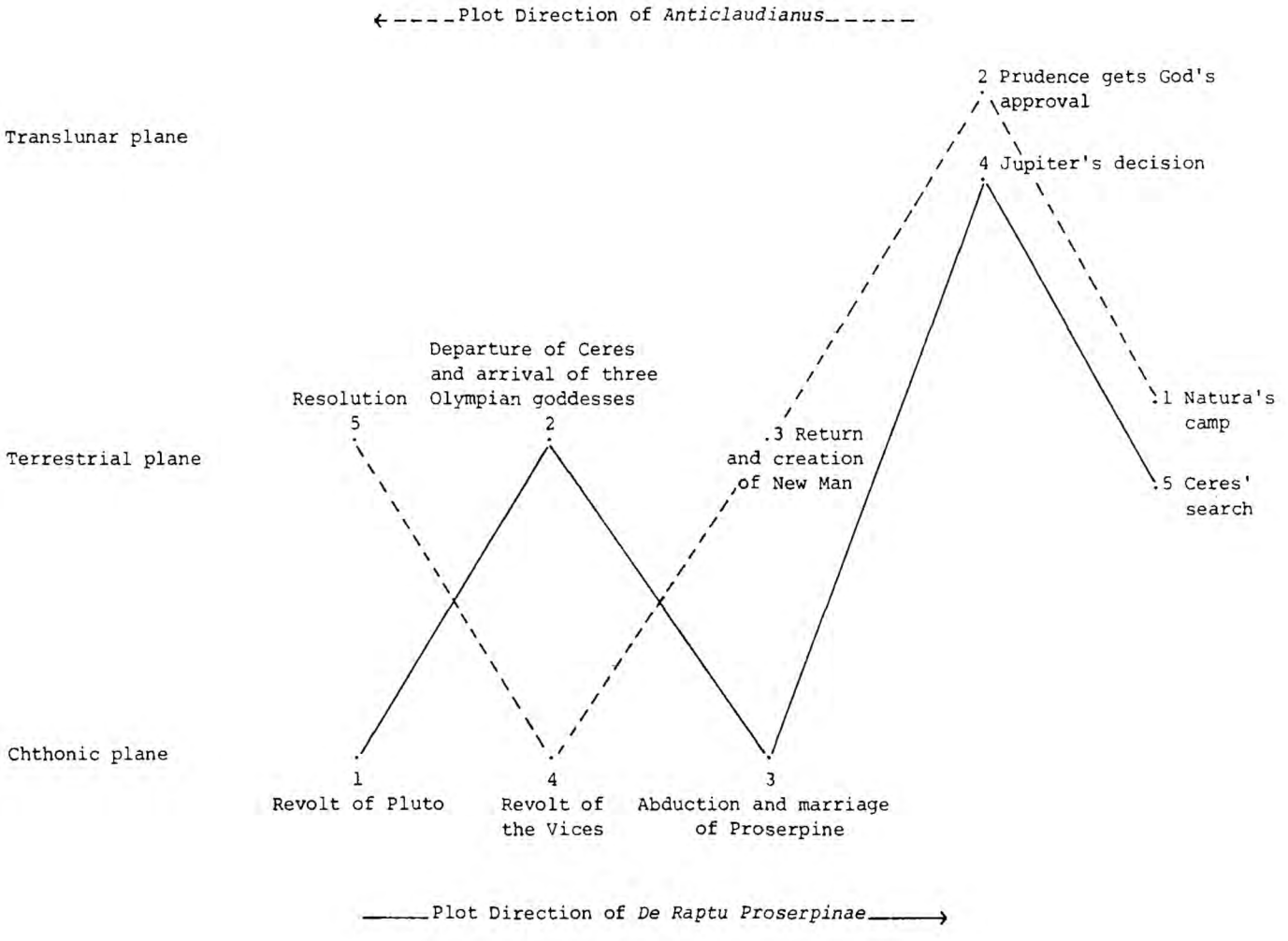
Literally each and every event in this epic allegory mirrors a similar occurrence in Claudian's *De Raptu*. In Claudian, for example, the Fates caution Dis not to rebel against Jove for the sake of a bride; they assure him that Jove will provide a fitting bride upon request. Dis accepts their counsel and sends Mercury to Olympus with his demand. Alan constructs a similar scene with the synod of the Virtues (in contrast to the inhabitants of the realm of Dis). Prudentia, Racio, and Concordia serve as the antitheses to the Furies, consultants to Dis. The Virtues counsel humble entreaty, whereas the Furies thirst for war. As Prudentia is carried to heaven in a chariot whose pieces are joined by Concordia, so Dis ascends to earth in his chariot harnassed by fierce Allecto. As Mercury returns to Dis with the agreement of Jove, so Prudentia descends to earth with God's contribution to this virtuous effort. The deity accedes to Prudentia's request, in part because Reason has prompted him(". . . mihi . . . Racio dictavit");[9] Claudian's Jove, addressing the rest of Olympus, states he was prompted by *Natura plangens* and her arguments on behalf of mankind (". . . mihi . . . instat Natura").[10] Even as Ceres exhausted her womb in the birth of her only daughter ("Hennaeae Cereri proles optata virebat/ unica . . ./ fessaque post primos haeserunt viscera partus/ infecunda quidem; sed cunctis altior extat/ matribus et numeri damnum Proserpina pensat"),[11] so has Natura exhausted her bounty in the creation of her new son ("Omnes divicias forme diffundit in illo/ Nature prelarga manus; post munera pauper/ Pene fuit Natura parens que dona decoris,/ Forme thesauros vultu deponit in uno").[12] Dis ascends to steal away Ceres' daughter; Allecto and her forces rise from hell to assault the new man. However, the order of the universe is changed by the new virtue of this man who serves as a remedy for the evil resulting from the split dispositions of Proserpine. In other words, the new man constitutes a male representative of the natural order that existed before the rape of Proserpine; he is patterned upon the figure of Proserpine before her fall, for he is "one flower" promising a "second Spring."

For Alan, Natura and Fortuna characterize the dialectic within the sublunar end of the cosmos, while the new man and Allecto typify the two poles of virtue and vice. Although Fortuna gives of her gifts to the new man for the sake of her daughter Nobility, she ultimately joins forces with Allecto against him, ostensibly for the sake of her daughter Ignobility. Alan chooses to describe Nobility as an Amor quality; in this way he

reverses Claudian's social hierarchy wherein the aristocracy represents the Mors class. The twelfth-century poet's purpose in doing this is clear when the *Anticlaudianus* is viewed as a handbook for the instruction of a young prince, in this case specifically Philip II of France. Alan hopes to convince the young man to ally himself as a true nobleman with those classes traditionally allied to Amor, the humbler members of the clergy, the peasantry, and the farmer. Thus, Alan's allegorical utopia has within it the seeds of a social as well as a cosmological revolution. Under her benign aspect she gives freely to the new man; however, when the battle between Virtue and Vice is joined, she falls in with the Mors dominant camp of the Vices. Hence, Fortuna represents Proserpine after her fall. For Alan, Fortuna's allegiance is predominantly given to her Mors aspect, for she deserts the Amor preferent camp, that is, Natura's forces, even before the battle lines form. Moreover, the division in Natura's originally pristine and simple cosmos has resulted from man's fall from grace, described in the story of Proserpine's rape. The vices oppress the natural order so completely that Natura's original principles of life and love cannot coexist with the present, morally corrupt winter order. Corruption, death, chaos, and oppression rule the human order totally.

In the context of this comparison of Claudian and Alan, the two dispositions of Proserpine, summer and winter, are repeatedly described by a series of different allegorical figures. For example, Natura and Fortuna represent the predominance of first the summer and then the winter disposition of the Proserpinean archetype. Furthermore, Fortuna typifies Proserpine, but in time, whereas her mother, Natura, represents the two dispositions in stasis, hence the errors or flaws that occasionally occur in Natura's products portrayed on the walls of her palace.

On the following page appears a diagram outlining the general direction or movement of the plot in the *De Raptu* and in the *Anticlaudianus*. Such a diagram is easy to construct because of the direction of the action. In both epics there exist three planes of activity: the chthonic or nether regions, the terrestrial, and the translunar or celestial. Both plots move dramatically and swiftly between these three spheres or planes of action. From one plane to the next, the type of behaviour varies significantly. For Claudian, the chthonic regions foster violence, lust, and bitter recrimination; the terrestrial plane alternates, like the seasons, between joy and sorrow, contentment and despair, summer and winter; the


← - - - - Plot Direction of *Anticlaudianus* - - - - -
Translunar plane
Terrestrial plane
Chthonic plane
2 Prudence gets God's approval
4 Jupiter's decision
1 Natura's camp
5 Ceres' search
Resolution
5
Departure of Ceres and arrival of three Olympian goddesses
2
.3 Return and creation of New Man
1
Revolt of Pluto
4
Revolt of the Vices
3
Abduction and marriage of Proserpine
——— Plot Direction of *De Raptu Proserpinae* ———→

Olympian heights, under Jove, express activity in terms of problem-solving, rational exercises in which a dilemma arises and a solution is discovered, acted out on a lower plane, and subsequently explained to the synod of the gods. Claudian uses the allegorical figure, Natura, to expand the dramatic tensions on the Olympic plane. Jupiter describes her complaint against his winter order, thereby admitting his failure to improve man's lot under his Mors regime. The command of silence that Jove enjoins upon the corps of major and minor deities implicates them in the coming revolution in the natural order, a revolution that will affect them as well as Jove.

Hence, Claudian exploits three types of epic action in the *De Raptu*: one of disruptive passions, a second of personal emotions, a third of articulated reason. The first erupts outwards onto the scene in large, epic, or cosmic action; the second field of activity is expressed with loss and grief, despair and the fruitless search, the curse against the gods that rule one's fate; the final plane, passionless and verbal, is the realm of thought. These three planes can be described as action, reaction, and synthesis. Moreover, it is the synthesizing dimension which encourages or promotes the direction of the action and frustrates the conservative attempts of reaction to restore the original *status quo*. The synthesizer manipulates both of the lower orders in order to create the desired effect resulting in the *nova numina rebus*.[13] In the context of these three planes the plot diagram compares the forward moving action of the *De Raptu* with the backward-moving action of the *Anticlaudianus*. Such an outline is supported by Alan's title, the *Anticlaudianus de Antirufino*. For this is surely the point Alan wishes to make, the plot structure he wishes to evolve. The *Anticlaudianus* begins with the conclusion of the *De Raptu*, that is, with Ceres' search for her lost daughter. However, Natura is placed in the position of Ceres and from that point the mythic action is reversed. From here Prudence proceeds to the Olympic heights -- this time the Empyreum of the Christian God, also called the Thunderer -- and reiterates Natura's appeal from the *De Raptu* for a change in the cosmic structure in which winter (for Alan, Vice) rules the scene. The solution to this problem involves the restoration of Proserpine and is achieved by the creation of the new man. This new man will re-establish the world in its pristine condition existing before the fall of Proserpine and will restore to Natura/Ceres her lost child.

However, in order to restore the world to its prelapsarian condition, the movement of the action cannot merely reverse the plot direction of the

De Raptu, but must contradict or invalidate the original action. Hence, after the visit to the Empyreum, Prudence with the soul of the new man returns to the terrestrial plane for his physical creation and the gift of life. This step contradicts the parallel, chthonic step of Proserpine's entrance into the underworld by juxtaposing the original act of rape and death with its counterpart, the gift of life with corporeal existence. Whereas Proserpine appears before her mother as a death spectre leveling bitter accusations, the new man is a mute, yet resplendent figure endowed with physical beauty, cultured grace, and modest virtue.

The fourth step in the *Anticlaudianus* is the revolt of the Vices under Allecto's leadership against the new man, Natura's challenge to the cosmic order under their rule. This scene counteracts the *De Raptu* scene on Ceres' island fortress, before the intrusion of Dis. Here the contradictions are even more striking. Counteracting Proserpine's betrayal by the Olympian goddesses, Venus, Diana, and Pallas Athena, the Virtues, armed, stand staunchly by the side of the new man when he is attacked by Allecto and her forces.

The final scene of the mediaeval allegory, the return of a heavenly spring to earth, opposes the first scene of the *De Raptu* myth, the threatened revolt of Dis against the reign of Jupiter. Whereas the *De Raptu* opens on a cosmos dominated by Mors with only a small cohort of Amor allies, the *Anticlaudianus* ends with a vision of a universe in which Amor is restored to its proper authority. Moreover, in order to suggest to his readers the direction and significance of the epic action, Alan bids farewell to the allegorical epic's audience in imagery that reverses the instroduction to Claudian's *De Raptu*. He writes of the arrival of a ship at port, the conclusion of a long and difficult endeavour:

> Now the ship, avoiding Scylla and the monster, Charybdis, sails on a calm sea to the harbour. Now the mariner rejoices at the sight of land; now the runner is at the winning post; the anchor is fast in the harbour. However, the mariner, after negotiating the heaving sea, trembles and fears attacks on land: he fears that, though he has been safe asea, he may be ship-wrecked and lost ashore, that spite may rage against him or slander sink her teeth in him who, as he brings his work to a fitting conclusion, has drained his energy in writing and borne the burden of the toil.[14]

These last few lines are not only an intensely personal and affective farewell to book and audience by an aging author; they are, further, the last clue the writer gives to the structure of this work. While Alan concludes his work with the fearful arrival at port, Claudian prefaces his myth with the challenge and the thrill of setting to sea:

> He who first made a ship and clave therewith the deep, troubling the waters with roughly hewn oars, who first dared trust his alderbark to the uncertain winds and who by his skill devised a way forbidden of nature, fearfully at first essayed smooth seas, hugging the shore in an unadventurous course. But soon he began to attempt the crossing of broad bays, to leave the land and spread his canvas to the gentle south wind; and, as little by little his growing courage led him on, and as his heart forgot numbing fear, sailing now at large, he burst upon the sea and, with the signs of heaven to guide him, passed triumphant through the Aegean and the Ionian main.[15]

In the *De Raptu* Dis comforts Proserpine with the promise of an underworld paradise, Elysium, and sums up the description with the offer of golden apples, an unnatural product, on a tree belonging to her alone. Thus the god of the underworld describes the cosmos at the other pole of existence from Jupiter's own Olympus:

> "amissum ne crede diem: sunt altera nobis
> sidera, sunt orbes alii, lumenque videbis
> purius Elysiumque magis mirabere solem
> cultoresque pios; illic pretiosior aetas,
> aurea progenies habitat, semperque tenemus
> quod superi meruere semel. nec mollia desunt
> prata tibi; Zephyris illic melioribus halant
> perpetui flores, quos nec tua protulit Henna.
> est etiam lucis arbor praedives opacis
> fulgentes viridi ramos curvata metallo:
> haec tibi sacra datur fortunatumque tenebis
> autumnum et fulvis semper ditabere pomis.
> parva loquor: quidquid liquidus complectitur aër,
> quidquid alit tellus, quidquid maris aequora verrunt,

quod fluvii volvunt, quod nutrivere paludes,
cuncta tuis pariter cedent animalia regnis
lunari subiecta globo, qui septimas auras
ambit et aeternis mortalia separat astris."
("Think not thou has lost the light of day; other stars are mine and other courses; a purer light shalt thou see and wonder rather at Elysium's sun and blessed habitants. There a richer age, a golden race has its home, and we possess for ever what men win but once. Soft meads shall fail thee not, and ever-blooming flowers, such as thy Henna ne'er produced, breathe to gentler zephyrs. There is, moreover, a precious tree in the leafy groves whose curving branches gleam with living ore -- a tree consecrate to thee. Thou shalt be queen of blessed autumn and ever enriched with golden fruit. Nay more; whatsoe'er the limpid air embraces, whatever earth nourishes, the salt seas sweep, the rivers roll, or the marshlands feed, all living things alike shall yield them to thy sway, all, I say, that dwell beneath the orb of the moon that is the seventh of the planets and in its ethereal journey separates things mortal from the deathless stars.")[16]

This amazing sun and different constellations constitute both a different temporal and an alien spatial order from the ones familiar to the young goddess. Here the dying sun descends below the horizon to shine upon the flowers of Elysium in the chthonic underworld, while the new constellations imply a sublunar location radically alien to the normal terrestrial perspective. In other words, this aspect of the cosmos precludes a chthonic position that would necessarily block out the heavens. The deathless flowers of Elysium and the golden apples of the Hesperides reinforce this evocation of separate spatial and temporal dimensions within Mors, for Elysium exists in the chthonic underworld, while the Hesperides are located in the same spatial order as Sicily, but differ in its temporal dimension. In the *Odyssey* Ulysses and his companions sailed up the river Ocean, to the gardens of the Hesperides. Moreover, the flower goddess herself embroidering a cloth depicting the entire layout of the cosmos, places the *sacraria Ditis*[17] (the shrines of Dis) separately from *vadis Oceanum*[18] (the streams of Ocean): the former occupy a central position on the loom and indicate

the points of descent into a chthonic underworld, while the latter are placed at the farthest edge of the tapestry and exist within the spatial dimensions described by the two-dimensional surface of the cloth. Proserpine understands the distinction between the spatial and temporal dimensions of Mors and innocently includes these two in her description of the cosmos on her loom.

Finally, Dis encourages Proserpine with the prospect of ruling the sublunar Mors world. As moon goddess, she will rule the liquid of the sublunar end of the cosmos, her captor vows. She will be the Mors queen of the lowest cosmological sphere, and as such represent the waters that are a special Mors element. Dis implies the connection of Mors and water in his account of all that she will rule as his queen. The watery element suggests the Mors milieu of the Hesperides, along the shores of Ocean, and control of this element dictates control of the sublunar world where all living beings are nourished by the liquid substance.

Within the *Anticlaudianus* Alan of Lille exploits the same metamyth used by Claudian, but at every opportunity he replaces the Mors dimensions or themes with the opposing Amor terms. Whereas Claudian describes the paradise to be ruled by Proserpine after her marriage (that is, after her Mors transformation), Alan describes an Amor paradise achieved with the victory of the Virtues and the New Man:

> In terris iam castra locant et regna merentur
> Virtutes mundumque regunt, nec iam magnis illis
> Astra placent sedesque poli quam terrenus orbis.
> Iam celo contendit humus, jam terra nitorem
> Induit ethereum, jam terram vestit Olimpus.
> Nec iam corrigitur rastro, nec vomere campus
> Leditur . . .
> . . . . Spe vincitur ubere fructu,
> Gratis poma parit arbor, vitisque racemos,
> Et sine se natas miratur pampinas uvas.
> Et tunicis egressa suis rosa purpurat ortos,
> Nec spinam matrem redolet, sed sponte creata
> Pullulat, atque novos sine semine prodit in ortus.
> Sic flores alii rident varioque colore
> Depingit terram florum primeva iuventus.

> (The Virtues now set up camp on earth, rightly acquire domain there and guide the world; the stars and the abodes at the poles are now no more pleasing to them than the earthly sphere. Now earth vies with heaven, now the world clothes itself in heavenly splendour, now the Olympians bedeck the earth. No longer is the field reclaimed with the hoe or scored by the ploughshare . . . . Hope is outdone by richness of fruit; the tree produces fruit and the vine-branch bears grape-clusters gratis: vine-shoots are amazed at grapes that have come into existence without their help. The rose, emerging from its tegument, covers the gardens with crimson. It bears no suggestion of a mother-thorn but is brought into existence and comes forth spontaneously and proceeds to new growth without seed. Thus, too, the other flowers smile and blooms in fresh youth colour the earth with various hues.)[19]

Whereas the queen of the underworld will rule the sublunar world while she exists outside of this world in a different temporo-spatial dimension, the Virtues descend from heaven to earth and rule within conventional dimensions; the hierarchical and ontological separation of the two ends of the cosmos, heaven and earth, no longer applies. Moreover, after the triumph of the Amor order of Virtue, the temporal dimension alters only with the absence of winter, for this new world knows simply the superabundance of summer and natural fertility, with no need for human cultivation. The Christian paradise that was Eden returns to claim the whole earth, not just one small segment thereof. Hence, both temporal and spatial dimensions are the ones proper to the ordinary sphere of human existence; these constitute the dimensions of Amor: space -- terrestrial, time -- cyclic. The symbol of this Amor temporo-spatial dimension is the thornless rose. Born without the protective guard necessary for a flower in a winter world where it may suffer Proserpine's fate, this new bloom can mature and bring forth new plants without seed. Hence, the cyclic process of growth and development continues in this Amor world. The stagnation that Claudian describes as a direct result of the separation of Amor and Mors prior to the abduction of Proserpine presents no problem to Alan. For enduring perfection hardly constitutes stagnation in Alan's view. Rather, it is a return to the Garden of Eden, an Amor paradise, that once flourished in ordinary temporal and spatial dimensions. Man's fall from grace, mirrored in Proserpine's

rape, had destroyed this island of paradise by allowing Mors sin and death into the garden. Accordingly, the restoration of Amor virtue and life to control of the micro-macrocosmos will produce a sublunar sphere where the rose needs no protection and new growth proceeds from unbroken ground.

As suggested earlier, Alan contrasts the actions of the Virtues with those of the three Olympian goddesses, Pallas Athena, Diana, and Venus, of the *De Raptu*. The Virtues support the new man when he comes under the attack of Allecto and her Vices while the three goddesses lure Proserpine onto the field and then passively betray her into the hands of Dis. Alan's juxtaposition of goddesses and Virtues does not end here, but begins much earlier with the three Virtues, Racio, Concordia, and Prudentia. In the *De Raptu* Claudian has fashioned the three goddesses as winter figures. Even Venus's objectives have become so distorted by the winter/Mors cosmic ambience that her persona is totally perverted from her traditional associations with procreative sexuality. George Economou's outstanding work in this area explicates the tradition of the two Venuses up to and including her appearance in Alan's earlier allegory, the *De Planctu Naturae*.[20]

Actually, the Proserpinean metamyth encourages a dual perspective on the natures and personae of certain mythological figures. Athena herself inspires such a split perspective when seen both as a protectress of Ulysses in the *Odyssey* and as a Greek war goddess in the *Iliad*. Using the metamyth, Claudian imputes Eutropius' allegiance to "that other Athena," the mythological weaver. Hence, both Athena and Venus were traditionally viewed as having two dispositions or personae, one of which expressed a Mors preference, the other, an Amor emphasis. Assuredly, Venus as proponent of sterile love among the dead typifies a Mors figure, while Athena's link to Eutropius' court as spinner and weaver presents the goddess in her Amor disposition. In the *Odyssey* Athena prefers Ulysses and protects him precisely because he is such a cultivated man.[21] Hence, Venus and Athena both have myth complexes inviting an either/or perspective, the emphasis left to the individual poet and his purposes.

For Diana, the goddess of the hunt, moreover, the same such ambivalence exists; Claudian alludes to the existence of her Amor disposition in the scene on flowering Enna. There in the *De Raptu*, the two virgin goddesses, Pallas and Diana, momentarily forget their allegiance to Jupiter, winter and Mors, to frolic playfully at Proserpine's side. This goes so far that the two actually attempt to thwart the theft of Proserpine with armed

resistance, until a thunderbolt from Jupiter arrives to remind them of their allegiance and obedience. Therefore, Claudian implies a split disposition, Amor/Mors, for Diana as well as Pallas.

Alan exploits this tradition of a bifocal perspective on the three goddesses, Pallas, Venus, and Diana, in the creation of their counterparts, Racio, Concordia, and Prudentia. Of course, the disposition of each goddess is reversed from Mors to Amor by the poet. When he renames the three, the writer reinforces this shift in perspective on the goddesses, while also dictating the Christian virtue inherent in each. It is relatively easy to grasp the similarities between Pallas and Reason or Venus and Concord. These new identities are not radical departures from traditional definitions of the two goddesses. Reason naturally bears much in common with Pallas as goddess of wisdom; while Athena carries the Medusa head as her aegis, an image reflecting an aspect of herself, Reason carries a threefold mirror into which she gazes in order to discover the truth. As goddess of war and reason, Pallas has only to direct the view to herself.

Of Claudian's three goddesses, only two are sisters, Diana and Pallas Athena; the third, Venus, is Saturn's offspring. Saturn, according to the *De Raptu*, was the original Amor progenitor and sovereign. As Pallas has sprung from Jupiter's head and become his archetypal representative or alter ego, so Venus, generated from her father's castrated genitals, embodies Saturn's archetypal characteristics. Moreover, Concord typifies Alan's vision of the virtuous or positive pole of the Amor goddess. She is the mistress of purified love. In her right hand she bears an olive branch, symbol of peace:

> An olive branch, which is usually the herald of good and the emblem of peace, matures in Concord's right hand, tressed with hair of leaves, pregnant with flowers, looking forward to fruit and seeking not the tender aid of mother-earth.[22]

Concord, like Venus, presents a refined image of natural procreation but at a remove from the sublunar moral ambiguities inherent in human sexuality. She embodies simply the virtuous aspects of Venus's summer disposition. Also, Concord convinces Prudence to represent the Virtues before God; she overcomes her fellow Virtues' obstinate resistance to the plan and, binding the Virtues together in a firm resolve, makes effective the plan that Reason has recommended. In this respect, she mimics Claudian's Venus who

also affects the plan of action, that is, the betrayal of Proserpine. Of the three goddesses, Venus alone is fully acquainted with Jupiter's plan; he requires her assistance to carry out the seduction of Proserpine onto the open fields, away from her mother's fortress. Concord provides the same spur to action as Venus in the *De Raptu*. However, Concord urges Prudence toward heaven while Venus, in her winter disposition, betrays Proserpine to Dis and hell. It must be remembered, moreover, that Claudian's three goddesses appear before Proserpine in their Mors dispositions. Although the two sister virgins are temporarily distracted by the season and the flowers, lapsing into a summer gaiety and defense of Ceres' daughter, they are quickly reminded of their original dispositions by Jupiter. On the other hand, Venus never lapses from her intended betrayal of Proserpine. Claudian's representation of Venus constitutes his vision of the winter Venus as a faithless deceiver. Alan's three Virtues are described in their summer/Amor dispositions and in their positive or virtuous aspects only. Even Reason, a distinctly Mors function or attribute, is placed in Amor's camp. Hence, only vice allies itself to Mors or shows a Mors preference. Virtue finds its true dimension under an Amor allegiance. The poet does not deny the existence of Mors virtues such as Reason and Nobility, but he does negate the Mors dominance that has prevailed since Claudian and Boethius.

This preference for Amor is expressed most perfectly in the third virtue, Prudence or Phronesis, the heroine of this epic. She is depicted as very like her sister Reason, very similar in appearance and dress. Prudence carries a scale in her right hand. She appears as a perfect, virginal beauty who yet arouses desire in the viewer. Yet, before she speaks to the synod of Virtues, they see a vision, as in a dream, of Prudence: ". . . yet she unclasps this robe to rend it apart in various places: the robe seems to mourn and bewail the insults heaped upon it."[23] This is, of course, reminiscent of Boethius' description of Philosophia in the *De Consolatione*.[24] Violent hands have torn pieces from Philosophia's robe while Prudence tears her own robe. This image is, again, one borrowed from Claudian's *De Raptu* in which the cloth depicting the arrangement of the universe is left unfinished on the loom, except for the spider's final touches. The torn fabric represents both the split composition of the cosmos and Proserpine's dual disposition. Proserpine's *personae* incorporate the natural dialectic of Amor and Mors, the two competing impulses or instincts within the natural order. The fabric that she weaves has become the robes of Philosophia and

and Prudence and symbolizes the partition of the sublunar world that occurred with the rape, the distortions in the fabric of truth caused by certain philosophers, and the fall of man through sin. Moreover, there exists a natural object to which this symbol, i.e. the archetypal female with torn robe, directly refers: she is the moon in her varying phases; her garment depicts the pieces torn from the moon's substance as it moves from full moon to new moon. Diana, like her sister Proserpine, is a moon goddess. Bernard Silvestris in the *Cosmographia* describes the goddess of the hunt as a representative of the waxing moon:

> Unum idemque numen pro diversitate potentiae et officii nunc Lucinam in lampade, nunc venatricem in pharetra, nunc reginam Tartaream sertato capite praeferebat.
> (Her [the moon's] divinity, one and the same between a variety of powers and duties, manifests itself, now as Lucina in her radiance, now as the Huntress with her quiver, and now as Hecate with garlanded head.)[25]

For Bernard, Diana represents one-half of the dialectic;[26] the Tartarean queen, the other half; while Lucina, the full moon, embodies the fullness of both sides of the cosmological dualism. Hence, Alan chooses to portray Diana as moon goddess, and fashion her as the middle term, the resolution between Amor and Mors.

Finally, Prudence (or Phronesis) symbolizes a new definition of wisdom within the mediaeval tradition originating with Boethius' Philosophia. Prudence remains a more sublime conception than her sister, Racio, because Amor and imagination, rather than Mors and reason, have the upper hand. The balance of power has shifted in the composition of the third, intermediate term of the metamyth. This we discover in God's response to Prudence's request. He replies that Reason has long since urged him to this course of action, the creation of a new man to recreate a spring among the race of men; moreover, Justice has argued for the elimination of mankind altogether by means of another flood. However, the Father takes no course of action until his daughter, for whom he expresses a special love and pride, asks him for this gift. Reason cannot elicit the soul of a new man from God nor can Justice win God's assent to her suggestion.[27] Prudence alone engenders this gift of love and mercy from the Father. Hence, Prudence reflects before God his own preference for an Amor dominant ideal. His response to

her defines both his own and her distinctive perfection, an alliance of Amor and Mors with a preference for Amor. Moreover, Racio, Prudence's sister, has been left behind at the edge of the empyreum with the chariot of the senses, clearly implying the limitations of Reason which cannot penetrate to God. Prudence serves as heroine in the epic, for she represents the perfect human ideal and the sublunar image of the Father who rules above. She is part Mors, but even more strongly Amor.

In the late 1970's, two scholars, independently of one another, discovered the historical counterpart of the new man; the youthful ruler who would restore the world to its original, spring-like perfection would be the boy-king, Philip II of France.[28] Furthermore, they also point to Henry II of England as the antithesis of Philip, both as royal archetype and as political enemy.

> . . . the work is called the Anticlaudianus not only because Claudian at the end of the fourth century has told a story of the supremely wicked man, Rufinus, who undertook a great journey (to Constantinople) to make himself lord of the world, but also because Claudian's villain was of French stock . . . . Allecto in fact plays a double role in the poem. On one side he is the exemplar of the tyrant . . . . On the other, he is an actual tyrant, the usurping Henry II, whom the young Philip August must expel from the land of France.[29]

Wilks, above, draws an interesting connection between Claudian's *In Rufinum* and Alan's *de Antirufino*. The *In Rufinum* treats of the excesses and vices of the winter order represented by Allecto's man, Rufinus; the *De Raptu*, however, attempts to describe the nature of the superstructure in an origination myth. Hence, the *De Raptu* invokes the entire dimension of the metamyth, in its two mutually exclusive orders, both positive and negative aspects, on the three planes of existence (i.e. chthonic, terrestrial and celestial), while moving toward a conclusion that would have established the third, intermediate, or ideal term.

Also, Alan's subtitle signifies his antagonism to the negative aspects of the winter order represented by Claudian's Rufinus figure. Hence, Alan will outdo Claudian in one work; he will compound history and myth in an allegorical mode. Moreover, as a Christian he will imagine the beginning of the end of ages, exploiting the traditional millenial expectations of the messianic ruler who will introduce a new age upon the earth.

> The return of the maiden Phronesis from heaven with the soul of the New Man is equated with the return of the Virgin and the birth of a boy-child -- later identified by Virgil as Augustus -- under whom "the iron blood shall first begin to fail" and the golden age of the rule of Saturn is restored . . . .[30]

Alan exploits the *In Rufinum* to outline the vices of Henry II of England and his four sons. The Plantagenets of England represent the old archetypal ruler, the lion among the sheep, the aggressive Mors overlord patterned upon the chthonic Pluto. Like Rufinus, he is a "taker," an invader and usurper of others' rights and estates. Marshall refers to Alan's contemporary, Gerald of Wales, and his contrast of the two ruling houses in terms very similar to Alan's divisions:

> Their (the Capetian rulers') device was not a wild beast, but a flower; they themselves did not behave as bears or lions but as sweet-tempered gentlemen. In fact, the picture Gerald creates of the Capetian kings emphasizes the very virtues with which Alan invests his *iuvenis* who reflects the same blend of probity, moderation, elegance, and lightness of touch that distinguishes the French king from the tyrannical, extravagant, vulgar and gloomy English king. The character of Alan's *novus homo* is in striking accord with that of the young Philip Augustus in many respects, and chiefly as it embodies all those qualities which would enable him to overcome the vices exemplified by Henry and his sons.[31]

Here we have a description of the negative aspects of the winter figure, whether Dis, Rufinus, or Allecto, in clear-cut opposition to the positive characteristics of the summer hero, Orpheus or the new man.

In his emphasis on dominant characteristics Alan constructs along similar lines, but we must not forget that the dominant characteristics do not constitute the whole but only part of the ideal, which is a careful balance between two polar tensions or instincts, Amor and Mors; that to bond the two mutually hostile parts into a composite, one half must govern the other for the good of the whole. This is a feudal conception of corporate harmony, whether the body be human, sociopolitical, or cosmological.

Therefore, Alan borrows thematically from Claudian's *In Rufinum*, as he indicates in the title, but more importantly his true focus centres on

Claudian's masterpiece, the *De Raptu*, from which plot, themes, structure, and characters are assumed in order to evoke an end-of-days that will return, must return, to the beginning. From beginning to end, time must complete its natural course and circuit, like the snake biting its tail at the entrance to Claudian's Cave of Time.[32] Just so, Alan reverses the action of the *De Raptu* for a return to the beginning and thereby concludes in the Garden of Eden. Time in the sublunar end of the cosmos requires change; the changes man provokes on earth creates history, the past remembered and repeated in various modes. For Claudian, history is the unravelling process of the cosmological dialectic, a process which can find its resting point only in the eternal synthesis which exists beyond time. This sublime synthesis constitutes a secular (i.e. non-Christian) ontology; for this undivided entity, radiating its influence down into a cosmos which could experience the sublime only in its divisions, suggests a Neoplatonic conception of the origin of the universe. Nothing in Claudian's work implies a personal or Christian aspect to this deity; instead, the One is truly indifferent to man, who is but another fractured reflection of its perfection. However, the historical processes of time -- for example the conflict between the political forces of two empires, Rome and Constantinople -- participate in the sublunar dialectic of summer and winter. Claudian subscribed to the primacy of Mors over Amor and dreamed -- as later poets, Alan and Dante, dreamed -- of a world in which this process could stabilize, could reach its own perfection under the fitting governance of the Roman state. Finally, Claudian is driven beyond the historical dimension and is forced to abandon this sphere. Hence, he looks to an ideal past, a mythological moment, in which to express the sublime conjunction of the sublunar tensions he knew so well. Moving from history to myth, he continues the historical dialectic which he sees around him. The fabulous narrative or myth offers a more accurate portrayal of the process of history than history itself, which can only offer piecemeal the process and the source from which this process springs. Myth and history are cut from the same cloth, expressing the same cosmological tensions.

Obviously Alan feels this as well, for he weds history and myth in an allegorical mode in the *Anticlaudianus*. Thus, the fabulous narrative constitutes a truer history -- that is, Christian history in terms of the end point, the Second Coming, heralded by the messianic ruler -- than any chronicler can record. Alan does not dismiss the *De Raptu* as fabulous

narrative; instead, by inverting its plot structure in order to return to the garden of Eden, he recognizes the "historical" validity of Claudian's final poetic effort, the summation of Claudian's historical and ontological beliefs, and simultaneously transposes this moment with a moment of Christian history. By incorporating the *De Raptu* into Christian history he acknowledges the similarity between two great myth complexes, the Christian and the classical. Proserpine's rape becomes the story of the fall of Eve and the first sin. Proserpine's pomegranate and Eve's apple represent the same entrapment into death, the triumph of Mors over Amor, the subjugation of woman to man and man to toil, the loss of spring/paradise and the traumatic entrance of winter/death into the world of life. For a Christian, true history is a progressive entity; the beginning, the middle, and the end constitute one long line moving from creation and the fall to salvation, to return and summation. The incarnation represents the crowning point of time: after the fall all things have anticipated the arrival of the saviour and since then human time bears the mark of his presence, etched in the liturgical year that expresses itself simultaneously as the memory of his presence and the mirror of the natural yearly cycle. Alan, working within the traditions of the liturgical calendar, extends the scope of this cycle beyond the natural circuit of the year; he bends the linearity of Christian history into the circle of pagan myth. The return of the golden age of Saturn appears as a recurring theme of classical literature, a longing for an idealized past. Whereas Christianity longs for the future, for the Apocalyptic end of days, Alan makes the two synchronous; he weds classical tradition to Christian faith in order to create a truly unique alignment of radically opposed perspectives.

In the context of classical and late classical literatures, the Middle Ages discovered a bipartite paradigm, a metamyth that could serve in the analysis of the cosmos as a single entity like the human individual, torn between two instincts and/or mutually hostile forces, Amor and Mors. Proserpine thus suggests a full and complex archetype for this natural order. As dramatic archetype, she vacillates between the two competing realms of mother and husband and her disposition likewise alters.

Claudian conceives his version of the myth as a poetic *summa* of this division within the cosmos. In narrative form he describes the constituent elements of these two cosmological/psychological forces and aspires to a definition of its sublime resolution by means of a third term, a *nova*

numina rebus, born from the consummation of the cosmic combatants, love and chaos. This third term has found expression in other works of literature since Claudian's attempt, most notably in Boethius' *De Consolatione*. In this primarily allegorical text Boethius brings forward his figure representing the perfect third term, Lady Philosophy. As a Mors dominant ideal, she is framed in specific terms of contrast to her counterpart, Fortuna, who is the Amor preferent seductress and deceiver.

The allegorical inspiration (or fundamental thesis) proceeds from Boethius' effort forward; it is primarily a method of presenting arguments in mythopoeic terms for either the existence or non-existence of this third, sublime term, the union of cosmological opposites. The question arises, what remains from such an explosive contact? For the allegorical mode, this is particularly the issue at hand. Each allegorist offers arguments on and speculations about this issue.

Paul Piehler, using a Jungian approach, has several important distinctions to make about the subject of allegory.[33] The first of Piehler's nine propositions and the one that constitutes the lynchpin of his study reads as follows:

> Medieval visionary allegory offers its readers participation in a process of psychic redemption closely resembling, though wider in scope than, modern psychotherapy. This process typically includes the phases of crisis, confession, comprehension, and transformation.[34]

Here he provides a valid and insightful analysis of the structural components of much of the allegorical tradition: crisis, confession, comprehension, and transformation. However, these structural elements are intentionally (or consciously) exploited by the mediaeval poet, by both Boethius and Alan, because rhetorically this is the most appropriate mode in which to phrase a reversal of perspective, "a conversion experience," as Piehler would call it, *vis-à-vis* the metamyth. Boethius suggests a change of perspective emphasis from summer to winter when his persona converts from Fortuna and the Muses to Lady Philosophy's stern direction. Alan, seven centuries later, phrases the conversion of perspective in the opposite direction, from Mors to Amor as the preferred order within the dialectic, in the *De Planctu* by using the same device. Moreover, the function of the *potentia* or fertility figure in these two allegories is to represent symbolically the composite

nature of this ideal union of the two orders and, more specifically, the dominant order (whether Mors or Amor) within that composite. Each figure or *potentia* serves as an ideal, the unattainable perfection or realization of a union of two mutually hostile impulses within both microcosm and macrocosm. This also explains the radical differences, as well as similarities, between Boethius' Philosophia and Alan's Natura; the one embodies the intellectual/philosophical perfection of the Mors dominance while the other forms the ideal composite with a preference for Amor. This also explains the immediate sexual attraction that Alan's persona in the *De Planctu* feels toward Natura when she appears before him; her Amor component elicits this powerful physical attraction on his part.

For Piehler allegory represents a psychic synthesis of the irrational and the rational, mythic and literary traditions. In this study we find that allegory is the genre uniquely inspired by the Proserpinean metamyth, a poetic/philosophical superstructure derived from the classical tradition. Moreover, when the poet wishes to signify a radical change in the traditional deference of one half of the dialectic to the other, he expresses it as a visionary encounter with a *potentia* resulting in a conversion experience for the persona.

Actually, Alan has created a considerable variety of allegorical figures, all partaking of aspects of Proserpine, the archetypal image of the sublunar order. As Claudian saw her, so also the Middle Ages came to view Proserpine, not merely because of Claudian's influence but because Antiquity valued this mythic analysis of the world and incorporated this dual perspective on the constitution of the sublunar order into its literary and historical works. Echoes of the Proserpinean dialectic are found in Boethius, in Lucan (*Pharsalia*), in Virgil (*Aeneid*), in Ovid and in most of the great writers of Antiquity. This metamyth with its vision of the cosmos is not a simple one, for a complex series of problems faces any poet/scholar who must imaginatively reconstitute the division of the sublunar order into two halves consistent with the general outline of the Proserpinean metamyth. Alexander assuredly deserves the title, "the Great," if only for having solved the problem of the Gordian Knot. The Proserpinean metamyth is similar to this Knot, but the problems associated with unravelling the world into two equal (or not so equal) halves cannot be solved by the sword, but by imagination alone. Many a poet of Antiquity, as well as the "dwarfs and the Middle Ages, chose to imagine this division within the fabric of the world and to reconstitute this metamyth in their poetry.

The objective of this discussion has been a preliminary explication of an essential metamyth used throughout the Middle Ages. This metamyth involves a distinctive dialectic that Claudian and other classical writers exploited in their works, while the mediaeval scholar uncovered this metamyth in the classical authors and incorporated its substance in his own works. The rape of Proserpine has been conceived as an explanation of the origin of the seasons and the introduction of agriculture. With Claudian, this tale became a version of the metamyth and, as such, an explanation of myth and the natural order, myth viewed as an attempt to explain the cosmos and man's position in it. Aware of the dimensions of the metamyth, the mediaeval scholar could study its presence in myth systems of European as well as Old Testament origin. On the other hand, a scholar/poet such as Alan could rework the Christian myth complex along lines consistent with the metamyth, using its perspective on Old Testament materials. The Christian theological analysis of the Old Testament, specifically the Book of Genesis, provides a support for the truth of the metamyth's perspective; the metamyth, however, also provides a structure upon which he could build his arguments on the natural order. Alan freely denies the age-old belief in the superiority of Winter and its cohort of virtues over the inferior substance of Summer and its vices. He reverses the virtues and vices, literally co-opting a Winter virtue (Reason) and placing her in the Amor preferent camp. This implies a radical separation from tradition, for Reason and her associated virtues constituted Rome's highest value. Moreover, this value system, one that places Reason above Imagination, became the special inheritance of the Middle Ages by means of Boethius' Philosophia. Alan chose to challenge this system and turn it on its head in the *Anticlaudianus*. For this scholar of the Chartrian Renaissance, Summer's original perfection has been flawed by man's transgression of God's will; thus, the story of Proserpine deals in mythological terms with man's fall from grace. The writer projects the reversal of this fall in an allegorical mode, reconstituting the golden age of Saturn, before the rape of Proserpine and prior to the fall of man through Eve's first taste of the apple.

What we find in Alan's *Anticlaudianus* is yet another attempt on the part of a Christian humanist to dissolve the tension between the secular Proserpinean metamyth and Christian theology. The metamyth did not die or fade from memory (as it has for the modern age) because of the undeniable and unavoidable necessity of relying on Greek and Roman tradition. At its

birth, Christianity could not negate *in toto* the culture, history and philosophy of Greek and Latin Antiquity. At the very least, it was forced to acknowledge the past from which it sprang. Any contact with the literature and philosophy of the pagan past promised to raise the issue of the metamyth in the minds of its readers. Moreover, early Christian writers -- Augustine, Jerome, and Boethius -- had their own conception of the universe infected by the metamyth. They were compelled either to reject it, as Augustine and Jerome tried to do, or to attempt a synthesis between it and the Christian view, as with Boethius. However, the conflict between secular culture and Christian world view continued in spite of Boethius' efforts. The twelfth-century Renaissance felt compelled to address the issue once again, either to expand Boethius' arguments into the upper reaches of the cosmos as Bernard Silvester does, or to reject the Mors dominant ideal, Philosophia, for the Amor preferent Prudence, as Alan does. In other words, the ideological tensions between secular metamyth and Christian theology still presented an issue, one that could be addressed only by an imagination born to an age of greater social and intellectual freedoms. The twelfth century, a period of great cultural flowering and material affluence in Europe, promised the new spring that Alan envisioned at the conclusion of the *Anticlaudianus*.

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NOTES

[1] The title indicates the influence of Claudian's *De Raptu* in understanding the classical dimensions of the metamyth.

[2] Winthrop Wetherbee, "The Literal and the Allegorical: Jean de Meun and the *De Planctu Naturae*," *Medieval Studies* 33 (1971) 264-91 and 286.

[3] Claudian, "De Raptu Proserpinae," 2, 49-52, Latin text and English trans. in *Claudian, with an English Translation* II, ed. and trans. Maurice Platnauer (New York 1922) 293-377.

[4] James Sheridan (trans., *Alan of Lille: Anticlaudianus, or the Good and Perfect Man* [Toronto 1973] 23) translates this title as "The Antithesis

of Claudian's *Against Rufinus*." However, the title of Claudian's work is *In Rufinum*. Therefore, a more appropriate translation for Alan's title would be "The Anticlaudian concerning (specifically) an Antirufinus" or "The Antithesis of Claudian concerning (specifically) an Antirufinus." The reason for challenging Sheridan's translation involves the question, which of Claudian's works is Alan reversing? Is it Claudian's larger structure, the Proserpinean metamyth, most fully developed in the *De Raptu*, with the inclusion of a counterpart to Claudian's Rufinus? Or is it, as critics have assumed, the *In Rufinum* alone with which Alan is concerned? Alan offers us a clue in his title with the use of double *anti*'s, one before each name, Claudian and Rufinus.

[5] A.D.E. Cameron, *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Oxford 1970) 255.

[6] *Alain de Lille: Anticlaudianus*, ed. R. Bossuat (Paris 1955) VI, 390-96, p. 152; trans. Sheridan 169.

[7] *Alain de Lille*, ed. Bossuat, IX, 396-402, pp. 196f.; trans. Sheridan 216.

[8] *Claudian* 1, 197-200.

[9] *Alain de Lille*, ed. Bossuat, VI, 390, p. 152

[10] *Claudian* 3, 33.

[11] *Claudian* 1, 122-26.

[12] *Alain de Lille*, ed. Bossuat, VII, 38-41, p. 158.

[13] *Claudian* 2, 371.

[14] *Alain de Lille*, ed. Bossuat, IX, 415-23, p. 197; trans. Sheridan 216f.

[15] *Claudian praef.*

[16] *Claudian* 2, 282-99.

[17] *Claudian* 1, 266.

[18] *Claudian* 1, 270.

[19] *Alain de Lille*, ed. Bossuat, IX, 391-97 and 402-409, pp. 196f.; trans. Sheridan 216.

[20] George Economou, *The Goddess Natura in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge, Mass. 1972) 85f.

[21] Or, as W.B. Stanford phrases Athene's remark, "civilized, intelligent and self-possessed" (*The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero* [Oxford 1954] 30).

[22] *Alain de Lille*, ed. Bossuat II, 205-07, p. 78; trans. Sheridan 74.

[23] *Alain de Lille*, ed. Bossuat, I, 313-15, p. 66; trans. Sheridan 58.

[24] "Prudentia, the central figure of the poem, is Boethius's Philosophia; when in the first book Alan describes the beautiful proportions of Prudentia, her elastic presence in heaven and on earth, and above all her torn garment, he wishes us to identify his heroine with Boethius's abstract teacher" (P.G. Walsh, "Alan of Lille as a Renaissance Figure" in *Renaissance and Renewal in Christian History: Papers Read at the 15th Summer Meeting and the 16th Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. Derek Baker [Oxford 1977] 117-35 and 129).

[25] *Bernardi Silvestris: De Mundi Universitate*, edd. Carl Barach and Johann Wrobel (Frankfurt-am-Main 1964) ch. 5, 221-24, p. 46; *The Cosmographia of Bernardus Silvestris*, trans. Winthrop Wetherbee (New York 1973) 104.

[26] Artemis (Diana) is traditionally a fertility goddess, like Venus, but as the goddess of human fertility in childbirth. She is also depicted with the crescent, waxing moon. Diana of Ephesus, mentioned by Paul, was a many breasted fertility figure of great fame in that region of the world. This contrasts interestingly with Alan's description of Prudence whose firm, virginal breasts are included in a description of the Virtue. He may well have been contrasting his vision of Diana/Prudence with the figure at Ephesus, in view of the fertility emphasis placed on both. Also, the Roman Diana was particularly venerated by the lower classes and was reputed to be the protectress of slaves. See Michael Stapleton, *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Mythology* (London 1978) 67.

[27] It seems that Alan defines Justice as a purely Mors attribute. On the other hand, Reason -- whose suggestion of the new man is identical to the request of Phronesis -- here represents the union of Mors and Amor, with Mors dominant.

[28] Michael Wilks, "Alan of Lille and the New Man," *Renaissance and Renewal in Christian History*, 137-57; Linda Marshall, "The Identity of the 'New Man' in the 'Anticlaudianus' of Alan of Lille," *Viator* 10 (1979) 77-94.

[29] Wilks, op. cit. 152.

[30] Wilks, op. cit. 154f.

[31] Marshall (at n. 28) 88.

[32] "Far away, all unknown, beyond the range of mortal minds, scarce to be approached by the gods, is a cavern of immense age, hoary mother of the years, her vast breast at once the cradle and the tomb of time. A serpent surrounds this cave, engulfing everything with slow but all-devouring jaws; never ceases the glint of his green scales. His mouth devours the back-

bending tail as with silent movement he traces his own beginning" ("On Stilicho's Consulship," 424-30, ed. Platnauer [at n. 3] II, p. 32).

[33] Paul Piehler, *The Visionary Landscape: A Study in Medieval Allegory* (London 1971).

[34] Piehler op. cit. 19.