

THE JUXTAPOSITION OF THE RIDICULOUS AND THE SUBLIME IN MARTIANUS CAPELLA

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Martianus Capella's *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* is a difficult work, often misunderstood.¹ One way of approaching it is by an analysis in terms of genre. From this point of view Martianus was faced with a unique problem: how to combine an educational ideal with a practical, systematic handbook of learning. Here his model may have been Varro's *Disciplinae*, an encyclopaedia of the seven liberal arts of which only fragments survive. It is far more likely, however, that his solution was a unique one, and that his "pondering of some original composition unimagined hitherto" (*nescio quid inopinum intactumque moliens*) may not be a mere topos.²

First (Books 1-2), he introduces his ideal, inspired by traditional Greek notions of *ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία* and the transcendental goals of the mystery religions, in the allegory of the marriage of Mercury and Philology. The apotheosis of the maiden Philology may represent the highest achievement that the soul of a scholarly mortal can attain: a union with the *logos* (Mercury) and hence, ultimate knowledge. At the same time, on the more prosaic level of rhetoric, this union can be interpreted as the combination of the love of and ability to reason (*philo-logia*) with rhetorical excellence, the harmonious union of *ratio* and *oratio*.³ Next, Martianus presents each of the Seven Liberal Arts in turn (Books 3-9). The framework for this section is the allegorical setting of the wedding feast

of Mercury and Philology, attended by the celestial senate of the Olympian gods and visited by the personified Arts, each of whom presents a synopsis of her discipline.

The first problem that presents itself arises from the fact that the body of learning in Books 3-9 far outweighs its allegorical framework. The second problem derives from the circumstance that a prosaic encyclopaedia, preceded by a highly serious, sustained allegory and presented in an intermittent allegorical setting of equal seriousness, would have been unbearably dull. It is at this point that Martianus introduced another genre to serve as an underlying structure intended to carry the entire work and enliven it, namely Menippean satire. Here the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius served as a model, a work which employs the formal elements of Menippean satire by alternating prose with verse.⁴ The Cupid and Psyche episode provided Martianus with the conception of the allegorical fable of Mercury and Philology, but the *Metamorphoses* may also have supplied the idea of combining allegory with Menippean satire and the notion of using this combination as an underlying framework for a work of instruction. After all, this work presents an exploration of human nature, culminated by a vision of how human nature may be overcome by a union with the divine, and the trials and tribulations of its protagonist constitute an education through experience. Similarly, Martianus is concerned with education, not through experience but through learning. Apuleius achieves his aim through a series of fictive anecdotes intended to entertain as well as to instruct; Martianus, having adopted Menippean satire as his genre, also incorporates this most characteristic feature of satire as a mode of expression, namely the combination of jest and earnest, ridicule and didacticism.⁵

Satire is probably the most flexible of all ancient literary modes, but is it appropriate to the purpose of *De Nuptiis*? Martianus was clearly aware of the problems caused by his use of satire. However, before examining the text itself, it may be useful to introduce some theoretical considerations concerning the nature of satire *vis-à-vis* allegory.

Allegory is a sublime mode, anti-ironic in character, requiring an elevated tone; satire is an ironic mode, allowing for a great range in tone, but fundamentally anti-sublime. On Frye's "sliding scale of literature"

allegory and irony are opposites.⁶ Used side-by-side in one and the same work, these two antithetical modes will undercut each other. This is precisely the effect one encounters in *De Nuptiis*, rendering the work so problematic. Juxtapositions of the ridiculous and the sublime abound.

Immediately after the sublime invocation of Hymen, the sacred, cosmic principle of harmony, in the opening hymn of Bk. 1, the poet is introduced as an old man making a fool of himself by chattering silly trifles (*ineptas nugulas*) and as a sleepy priest chanting a hymn before opening the temple doors.⁷

Comic treatment of the *persona* of the author is another recurring feature of satire. Martianus extends it to the main characters of his serious allegory. Mercury, alternately seen as the planet, as the traditional god of rhetoric (*oratio*), and as the divine logos (*ratio*), is introduced as follows:

Palaestra crebrisque discursibus exercitum corpus lacertosis
in iuvenalis roboris excellentiam toris virili quadam ampli-
tudine renidebat. Ac iam pubentes genae seminudum eum incedere
chlamidaque indutum parva invelatum cetera humerorum cacumen
obnubere sine magno risu Cypridis non sinebant. (*De Nuptiis*
1.5, ed. Dick, p. 6, ll. 10-16)

[His body, through the exercise of wrestling and constant running, glowed with masculine strength and bore the muscles of a youth perfectly developed. Already with the first beard on his cheeks he could not continue to go about half naked, clad in nothing but a short cape covering only the top of his shoulders -- such a sight caused the Cyprian great amusement.]⁸

The hearty laughter (*risus*) of Venus is followed immediately by what Le-moine characterizes as "the truly serious presentation" of Sophia, Mantice, and Psyche as prospective brides for this virile young athlete.⁹ None of these choices are attainable for Mercury, but he is advised by Virtue to consult Apollo on the matter. Phoebus suggests a fourth candidate, Philologia, prefacing his recommendation with a lofty explanation of the ways of god to man.¹⁰ At the mention of Philologia's name Virtue loses her habitual rigour and is moved to make a little dance of joy.¹¹ When Mercury,

Apollo, and Virtue ascend to heaven to ask permission for the marriage from Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, their splendid astral journey is followed by these down-to-earth considerations: Juno, the goddess of wedlock, urges that the marriage take place quickly, lest Mercury father a brother to the -- illegitimate -- Hermaphroditus,¹² and Jupiter worries "that the charms of a wife will make the Cyllenian slothful and indolent, drowsy and languid; he might regard himself as being on a honeymoon and refuse to go as a messenger at the orders of Jupiter."¹³ Juno reassures her consort as follows: "It is fitting that he should be married to the very maiden who would not tolerate his dozing off even if he wanted to rest. Is there anyone who claims he does not know the wearisome vigils of Philology, the constant pallor that comes from her study at night?"¹⁴

The possibility that some of these humorous effects are unintentional should not be excluded. If handled ineptly, the sublimity of allegory may easily descend into the ridiculous.¹⁵ However, there can be no doubt that Martianus intended to enliven his allegory with humorous notes. For example, after approval of the match by the Capitoline triad, the other mortals are invited to the wedding party, where Tyche is introduced as a school girl run amok, throwing into disorder the record books of the Fates and beating people on their heads with her knuckles, tearing at their hair, and so on.¹⁶

In Book 2 another humorous note is struck by Philologia's foster sister, Periergia ("Overelaboration"), who peeps through the chinks of the door to keep an eye on the wedding preparations and scolds a maid for impeding Philology's beauty rest.¹⁷

The juxtaposition of the ridiculous and the sublime is evident throughout Books 3-9 in the way the celestial senate of the Olympian gods is bored, irritated, impressed and even frightened by the performance of the various Arts.¹⁸ A good example is the scene created by the triumphal entry of Dame Rhetoric, rendered in mock-epic hexameters in the best satirical tradition:

Interea sonuere tubae raucusque per aethram
 cantus, et ignoto caelum clangore remugit:
 turbati expavere dii, vulgusque minorum
 caelicolum trepidat, causarum et nescia corda

haerent, et veteris renovantur crimina Phlegrae.

Tunc Amnes Faunique, Pales, Ephialta, Napeae
respectant proceres nulloque assurgere motu
cernunt attoniti vicibusque alterna profantes
mirantur placidam per pectora sacra quietem.

Tum primum posita Silvanus forte cupresso
percitus ac trepidans dextram tendebat inermem,
Deliacos poscens arcus atque Herculis arma,
Portuni trifidam suspirans flagitat hastam,
Gradivi frameam non ausus poscere, falcem
Saturni bello suetus disquirat agresti,
diffidensque sui respectat tela Tonantis.

Sed dum talibus perturbatur multa terrestrium plebs deorum,
ecce quaedam sublimissimi corporis ac fiduciae grandioris, vul-
tus etiam decore luculenta femina insignis ingreditu, cui gal-
eatus vertex ac regali caput maiestate sertatum, arma in mani-
bus, quibus se vel communire solita vel adversarios vulnerare,
fulminea quadam coruscatione renidebant. Subarmalis autem ves-
tis illi peplo quodam circa humeros involuto Latiariter tege-
batur, quod omnium figurarum lumine variatum cunctorum schemata
praeferebat, pectus autem exquisitissimis gemmarum coloribus
subbalteatum. Haec cum in progressu arma concusserat, velut
fulgoreae nubis fragore colliso bombis dissultantibus fracta
diceret crepitare tonitrua; denique creditum, quod instar Iovis
eadem posset etiam fulmina iaculari. Nam veluti potens rerum
omnium regina et impellere quo vellet et unde vellet deducere,
et in lacrimas flectere et in rabiem concitare, et in alios
etiam vultus sensusque convertere tam urbes quam exercitus proe-
liantes, quaecumque poterat agmina populorum. Haec etiam sena-
tum, rostra, iudicia domuisse in gente Romulea, Athenis vero
curiam, gymnasia theatraque pro arbitrio reflexisse ac totam
funditus Graeciam miscuisse ferebatur. (De Nuptiis 5.425-427,
ed. Dick, pp. 210, 1.6 - 212, 1.8)

[Meantime the trumpets sounded, their strident song pierced the
sky and heaven reechoed with an unfamiliar din; the gods were

frightened and confused, the host of heaven's minor inhabitants quaked; unaware of the reason, their hearts stood still, and they recalled the charges made about the battle of Phlegra long ago. Then the Rivers and the Fauns, the Pales, Ephialta, and the Valley Nymphs looked at the chief gods and with astonishment saw no movement to rise amongst them; and each in turn uttered their wonderment at the peaceful calm in the hearts of the deities. Then first Silvanus put down his cypress tree and in a tremor of fear held out his defenseless right hand, begging for the bows of the Delians, the arms of Hercules, crying with longing for Portunus' trident, not daring to ask for the spear of Gradivus (Mars); being used to rustic warfare, he was considering the scythe of Saturn and, distrusting his own strength, was eyeing the missiles of the Thunderer.

But while a great group of the earth-gods was disturbed by such thoughts, in strode a woman of the tallest stature and abounding self-confidence, a woman of outstanding beauty; she wore a helmet, and her head was wreathed with royal grandeur; in her hands the arms with which she used either to defend herself or to wound her enemies shone with the brightness of lightning. The garment under her arms was covered by a robe wound about her shoulders in the Latin fashion; this robe was adorned with the light of all kinds of devices and showed the figures of them all, while she had a belt under her breast adorned with the rarest colors of jewels. When she clashed her weapons on entering, you would say that the broken booming of thunder was rolling forth with the shattering clash of a lightning cloud; indeed it was thought that she could hurl thunderbolts like Jove. For like a queen with power over everything, she could drive any host of people where she wanted and draw them back from where she wanted; she could sway them to tears and whip them to a frenzy, and change the countenance and senses not only of cities but of armies in battle. She was said to have brought under her control, amongst the people of Romulus, the senate, the public platforms, the law courts, and in Athens had

at will swayed the legislative assembly, the schools, and the theaters and had caused the utmost confusion throughout Greece.] (Stahl, pp. 155-156)

After completing her discourse, this formidable lady exits as follows:

Sed adhuc asserenti innuit ipse Cyllenius, ut ad germanarum coetum nubentisque transiret obsequium. Quo conspecto asserta determinans ad Philologiae consessum fiducia promptiore perrexit eiusque verticem deosculata cum sonitu -- nihil enim silens ac si cuperet, faciebat -- sororum se consortio societatique permiscuit. (De Nuptiis 6.565; Dick, p. 284, ll.3-8)

[But as Rhetoric reached this point, the Cyllenian (Mercury) nodded to her to move across into the company of her sisters and the service of the bride. Seeing his signal, she concluded her address and with ready confidence went to Philology's throne, kissed her forehead noisily -- for she did nothing quietly, even if she wanted to -- and mingled with the company and fellowship of her sisters.] (Stahl, p. 213)

The preoccupation of some of the gods with matters of the flesh rather than the mind is treated with gusto. Venus in particular protests the delay of pleasure due to the orgy of learning.¹⁹ Boredom is the chief complaint of the gods as each of the Arts holds forth in turn. But even a god cannot compel the attention of his fellow divinities, as Hymen discovers when he is left standing alone singing a wedding hymn, while a large company of gods leaves the hall to receive Harmony.²⁰

Finally, in a passage that is truly burlesque, Martianus describes the effect of all this learned discourse of the Arts on Silenus:

Silenus interea, ut Evan consecutus pone vietus atque acclinis adstabat, seu marcore confectus aetatis sive anxia inter doctae vocis miracula intentione compressus, an alias poculis turgens tunc etiam nuptialis gratiae nomine prolectatus inundantis se temeti infusione proluerat, iamdudum laxatus in somnos forte repente clanculum stertens ranae sonitum desorbentis increpuit. Quo terrore et rapiduli sonitus raucitate concussi eodem se

quampures convertere divi senisque proflantis somnum atque umentis crapulae exsudatione conspecta risus circumstantium eo maxime, quo claudebatur, excussus. Tunc quoniam credita iocos nuptialis licentia non vetare, famulitium Veneris vernaculaeque Bromiales tantos cachinnos concussis admodum tulere singultibus, ut quampures alios conisos cohibere risum hoc maxime in petulantis prorruptionis sonitum effusique cachinni libentiam provocarint. Denique, ut semper impatiens atque inverecundis procax ac protervus assaultibus ad eum alacer Cupido atque hilarus accucurrit atque, ut depile rubellumque calvitium senex baculum acclinatus affixerat, palmae verbere percrepantis apploso eoque sonitu reclamanti risum velut etiam permissum paene omnibus suscitavit.

Tum vix senex reclusis
 creperum videns ocellis
 circumspicit ridentes
 icтуque suscitante
 stupidum dolens tuetur
 frictuque palmulari
 madidata tergit ora.
 Tunc motus increpante
 baculum rapit Lyaeo,
 ac dum movere gressum
 cupit vocante Lyde,
 tandem recepta luce
 superum videt senatum.
 Percellitur repente,
 silicerniumque nutans
 temptat ciere cursum;
 tunc motibus negatis
 magis involutus astat,
 cessimque formidantes
 abeunt pedes tremore
 titubansque moliensque
 haeret, redit, recurrit;

tunc victa palpitansque
 turgens cadit senectus.
 Fit maior inde risus,
 nescit modum Voluptas,
 donec iubente Baccho
 Satyrus rapit iacentem
 scapulisque dat supinum
 uvidumque hiatimembrem
 colloque complicatum
 utribus parem reportat.

(De Nuptiis 8.804-8, ed. Dick, pp. 423, 1.5-425,
 1.18)

[In the meantime wrinkled Silenus, as an attendant of Bacchus, had been standing behind, leaning for support. Perhaps the weariness of age was too much for him; then again it may have been the strain of concentrating on the remarkable discourse of the learned lady; or perhaps the occasion of the marriage ceremony had gotten the better of him -- swollen from earlier drinking bouts -- and he had drenched himself in an overdraught of wine. For some time now he had been relaxed in slumber and quietly snoring, when suddenly he belched like a croaking frog. Several of the gods, shaken by his frightening and raucous sound, turned round, and as those who were standing about noticed the profuse sweating of the old man, "breathing forth his slumber" and soaked with intoxication, they burst into laughter, the more explosive as they tried to suppress it. Then, since a marriage ceremony is not supposed to inhibit banter, the attendants of Venus and the maidservants of Bacchus served up such merriment to those who were already convulsed with hiccups that several others who were trying to suppress their laughter broke into violent and wanton ribaldry and unrestrained mirth. Finally, Cupid, unruly as ever and saucy and impudent in his affronts, nimbly and merrily ran up to Silenus and, as the old man had settled his ruddy bald head upon his staff, he gave him a resounding clap with his palm,

and the reverberating sound revived the laughter, which was more or less universal.

Then the old man, his eyes scarcely opened and his vision blurred, looked about him and saw the gods laughing at him. When someone pushed him, he was annoyed, looked around stupidly, and wiped his moist mouth with the palm of his hand. Bacchus chided him to action, and he grasped his staff. As he sought to take a step, at the encouragement of Lyde, the haze lifted and he beheld the conclave of the gods. Of a sudden he was aroused and, shaking his corpse-like body, he tried to stir it to motion. His efforts unavailing, he stood there, more baffled than before. His feet refused their office and went the wrong way in fear; reeling, struggling, he stood still, retreated, and came back. Then his bloated, quivering old body gave up, and he fell to the floor. A louder uproar than before ensued; Pleasure knew no bounds. Finally, on orders from Bacchus, Satyr raised the besotted Silenus to his shoulders and, draping his limp body like a wine sack about his neck, he brought him back.] (Stahl, pp. 804-5)

This passage is significant because it is followed immediately by a discussion of the function of humour in *De Nuptiis*, presented in the form of a dispute between Martianus and his Muse, Satira:

Hac iocularis laetitiae alacritate fervente Satura illa, quae meos semper curae habuit informare sensus "ne tu" ait "Felix, vel Capella, vel quisquis es non minus sensus quam nominis pecudalis, huius incongrui risus adiectione desipere vel dementire coepisti? An tandem non dispensas in Ioviali cachinnos te movisse concilio verendumque esse sub divum Palladiaque censura assimilare quemquam vel <ut> cerritulum garrientem? At quo etiam tempore Cupido vel Satyrus petulantis ausus procacitate dissiliunt? Nempe cum virgo siderea pulchriorque dotulium in istam venerabilem curiam ac deorum ventura conspectus! Apage sis nec postidhaec nugales ausus lege hymeneia et culpae velamine licentis obnuberis! Saltem Prieneiae ausculata nihilum

gravate sententiae et ni ὄνος λύρας, καιρὸν γινῶθι." Tam tristibus asperisque Saturae alioquin lepidulae verberibus demulcatus, cum excusamentis admissi velut procacis involutus, tandem, quae puellarum intromittenda pararetur, inquiri, ac sic illa nondum stomacho senescente, quo in me invehebatur, exorsa (De Nuptiis 8.806-7, ed. Dick, p. 425, 1.19-426, 1.15).

[While this animated mirth was at its height, Satire, who always considered it her responsibility to edify and reprove my thoughts, said: "You, Felix, or Capella, or whoever you are, with a sense to match the beast's whose name you bear, are you going out of your mind with the intrusion of this unseemly jesting? You must realize that you have brought raucous laughter into a heavenly assembly and that it is a reprobate act in the eyes of the gods, and of Pallas in particular, to represent someone prating nonsense like a madman. And on such an occasion to have Cupid and Satyr prancing about like impudent wantons, at the very time that the maiden of the sky (Astronomy), one of the more beautiful of the handmaids, is about to present herself to the august senate and the view of the gods! Enough of that, and hereafter do not try to defend your nonsense or justify your conduct as license appropriate to a wedding ceremony. At least give ready heed to the Prienian maxim, and if you are not 'an ass listening to a lyre, know the proper time.'"

Soundly cudged by such stern and fell reproaches from Satire -- a charming lady at other times -- and condemned by my own apologies for my impudent conduct, I asked her which of the girls was being prepared for introduction. Satire, the wrath that she had vented upon me not yet subsided, began as follows] (Stahl, pp. 315-6)

An analysis of the arguments presented here may be illuminating. Satira, who has a serious side to her as well, considers Martianus' jest to be inappropriate and indecorous, two criteria which are crucial in terms of the *arbitrium elegantiae*.²¹ She does not object to humour *per se*, but

to the wrong kind practised by Martianus in these circumstances. Presumably, cultured and restrained humour, such as Vergil practises at this point in his sixth Eclogue, would be allowable, indeed would enhance the suggestion of *urbanitas* on the part of the author. But to present burlesque in the company of the gods is tasteless and inept. Moreover, Satira rejects out of hand the argument that this type of humour might be justified as (Fescennine) "license appropriate to a wedding ceremony." Martianus is momentarily impressed by the severe reproaches of his *alter ego*, Satira -- "a charming lady at other times" (*Saturae alioquin lepidulae verberibus demulcatus*). The word *lepidulae* used in reference to Satira is significant: it is the diminutive of *lepidus*, meaning witty, facetious, and indicating an urbane, polished type of humour as opposed to the *incongruus risus* or unseemly jest practised by Martianus.²²

Soon the poet succumbs again to the mood to banter (*denuo me risus invasit*).²³ After Satira's accusation of inappropriate jest, Martianus accuses her in turn of inappropriate seriousness, reminding her of her own true nature as a genre characterized by its subtle contempt for the bombast and conceit of the poets.²⁴ This dispute between Martianus and Satira constitutes the basic dilemma of serious content versus limits of entertaining presentation. It is foreshadowed in an earlier "conversation" between the author and his Muse. At the beginning of Book 3 Martianus has just completed his allegorical treatment of Mercury's search for a bride, the counsel of the gods, the apotheosis of Philology and her marriage with Mercury; now he wants to continue by presenting the Seven Liberal Arts in a straightforward, literal manner. His Muse will not allow him to proceed without fictional elaboration:

At haec iocante rictu
 "nil mentiamur" inquit
 "et vestiantur Artes.
 An tu gregem sororum
 Nudum dabis iugandis,
 et sic petant Tonantis
 et caelitum senatum?"

(*De Nuptiis* 3.222, ed. Dick, p. 81, ll.16-22)

[But with a laugh she joked at this and said: "Let us tell no

lies, and yet let the Arts be clothed. Surely you will not give the band of sisters naked to the bridal couple? Surely they will not go like that before the senate of the Thunderer and the heavenly gods?"] (Stahl, p. 64)

Why does Martianus employ humour? Because his genre -- satire -- requires it, just as it requires fiction:

Rursus Camena parvo
phaleras parat libello
et vult amicta fictis
commenta ferre primum
memorans frigente vero
nil posse comere usum
vitioque dat poetae
infracta ferre certa
lasciva dans lepori
et paginam venustans
multo illitam colore. . .

(*De Nuptiis* 3.221, ed. Dick, pp. 80, 1.14-81, 1.10)

[Once again in this little book the Muse prepares her ornaments and wants to tell fabricated stories at first, remembering that utility cannot clothe the naked truth; she regards it as a weakness of the poet to make straightforward and undisguised statements, and she brings a light touch to literary style and she adds beauty to a page that is already heavily coloured.] (Stahl, p. 64)

The basic reason for the use of fiction and humour in satire is didactic, on account of the limited attention span of the audience:

Ergone figmenta dimoveam, et nihil leporis iocique permixti
taedium auscultantium recreabit? (*De Nuptiis* 8.809, ed Dick,
p. 428, ll. 3-5)

[Am I to dispense with all imaginary creatures and introduce no pleasantry or mirth to relieve the boredom of my readers?] (Stahl. p. 317)

The hendiadys *leporis iocique* in the lines above is in fact an equivocation, for Martianus mixes urbanity (*lepos*) and jest (*iocus*), much to the fury of his Muse who, faced with a subject matter of such grand import and scale and a sublime allegorical setting, desperately wanted to become respectable:

turgensque felle ac bili "multa chlamyde
prodire doctis approbanda cultibus
possemque comis utque e Martis curia"

(*De Nuptiis* 9.999, ed. Dick, p. 534, 11.4-6)

[swollen with gall and bile, she said: "I could have come forth in a grand robe, to be admired for my learning and refinement, decorous in appearance, as if just coming from the court of Mars."] (Stahl, p. 381)

Given the broad scope for humour in satire and Martianus' weakness for the burlesque, the tension between serious content and entertaining presentation inherent in the hybrid generic structure of *De Nuptiis* became an insoluble problem.

Martianus' dilemma was solved by Boethius in his *Consolation of Philosophy*. In this work, the humorous side of Menippean satire has been suppressed after Book I, and the genre has fully entered the sphere of high seriousness. The *persona* of the author is no longer a buffoon, but a serious human being, who is enlightened by a sublime allegorical figure. As for the characteristic mixture of prose and verse, Boethius mainly uses prose for the purpose of instruction, and poetry to soar to mystical insights.²⁵ It is Boethius' wholly serious conception of the genre that set the tone for subsequent use by Bernardus Silvestris and Alan of Lille.

Martianus himself was well aware of the problem. At the end of *De Nuptiis* his outraged Muse, Satira, blames the author's inspiration -- in a significant reversal of roles -- for the fact that she "has heaped learned doctrines upon unlearned, and crammed sacred matters into secular, and has had uncouth figures prating in a rustic fiction about the encyclopedic arts."²⁶ In short, Martianus accuses himself of the ultimate errors of inappropriateness, indecorousness, and ineptitude, thereby exculpating himself in an ironic, self-deprecatory manner.²⁷ In this case the supreme

irony is that the charges appear to be justified.

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NOTES

¹ See F. Lemoine, *Martianus Capella: A Literary Reevaluation*, Münchener Beiträge zur Mediävistik und Renaissance-Forschung 10 (München 1972) 1-4; W. Stahl, "To a Better Understanding of Martianus Capella," *Speculum* 40 (1965) 102-15.

² *De Nuptiis* 1.2, ed. Dick, p. 4, ll. 5-6. A new edition by Willis is in press.

³ For mediaeval interpretations of the allegorical significance of Mercury and his marriage with Philology see G. Nuchelmans, "Philologia et son mariage avec Mercure jusqu'à la fin du XIIe siècle," *Latomus* 16 (1957) 84-107; for modern interpretations see L. Lenaz, *Martiani Capellae de Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii Liber Secundus: introduzione, traduzione e commento* (Padua 1975) 101-16. Lenaz's work has been reviewed by Willis in *Gnomon* 49 (1977) 626-28.

⁴ Martianus' admiration of Apuleius is also abundantly clear from numerous verbal borrowings, some of which are hilariously inappropriate -- see Stahl, p. 10 n. 28; p. 39 n. 30; p. 48 n. 75. It is noteworthy as well that both Martianus and Apuleius treat religion as literature by using the ideas and rites of the mystery religions for thematic and narrative purposes in their literary creations.

⁵ See C.A. Van Rooy, *Studies in Classical Satire and Related Literary Theory* (Leiden 1965) 34, 90-91, 109 for the Greek origins of satire; for a survey of recent studies on Roman satire see A.G. McKay and D.M. Shepherd, *Roman Satire: Horace, Juvenal, Persius, Petronius and Seneca* (London 1976) 281-83; cf. M. Coffey, *Roman Satire* (London 1976) 164.

⁶ See N. Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton 1957) 91-92. For a critique of this view see A. Fletcher, *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode* (Ithaca, N.Y. 1964) 229-30, 340-41.

⁷ *De Nuptiis* 1.2, ed. Dick, p. 4, ll. 5-13.

⁸ This and every subsequent translation is by W.H. Stahl, R. Johnson, with E.L. Burge, in Vol. II of *Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal Arts*, entitled: *The Marriage of Philology and Mercury* (New York 1977) 6, hereafter referred to as Stahl.

⁹ *De Nuptiis* 1. 6-8, ed Dick, pp. 6-9; cf. Lemoine, *Martianus Capella*.

¹⁰ *De Nuptiis* 1. 21, ed. Dick, pp. 15, l. 19 - 16, l.7.

¹¹ *De Nuptiis* 1. 23, ed. Dick, p. 17, ll. 3-5.

¹² *De Nuptiis* 1. 34, ed. Dick, p. 22, ll. 15-17; Stahl, p. 18.

¹³ *De Nuptiis* 1. 35, ed. Dick, p. 22, ll. 17-21; Stahl, p. 18.

¹⁴ *De Nuptiis* 1. 37, ed. Dick, p. 23, ll. 11-15; Stahl, p. 19.

¹⁵ For the limits of allegory see Fletcher, (at n. 6) 304-68. The near crash landing of Athena on the brow of Jupiter may serve as an example (*De Nuptiis* 1. 39, ed. Dick, p. 24, ll. 16-18; Stahl, p. 20).

¹⁶ *De Nuptiis* 1. 88-89, ed. Dick pp. 37, l.7 - 38, l.6.

¹⁷ *De Nuptiis* 2. 111-12, ed. Dick, p. 47, ll. 4-13; Stahl, p. 39.

¹⁸ See *De Nuptiis* 3. 326; 4. 423-24; 6. 724; 8. 804-05; 9. 888; 890; 897.

¹⁹ See *De Nuptiis* 7. 727, ed. Dick, pp. 363, l.1 - 365, l. 4; Stahl, pp. 273-4; *ibid.*, 9. 888-9, ed. Dick, pp. 469, l. 8 - 471, l. 18; Stahl, pp. 345-46.

²⁰ *De Nuptiis* 9. 904, ed. Dick, p. 479, ll. 3-7; Stahl, p. 350.

²¹ On the matter of decorum and humour in ancient literary criticism see J.F. D'Alton, *Roman Literary Theory and Criticism: A Study in Tendencies* (1931; rpt. New York 1962) 114-29, esp. 128; *ibid.*, 358-66; see also G.M.A. Grube, *The Greek and Roman Critics* (Toronto 1965) 73, 97, 115-16, 141, 144-49, 187-89, 293.

²² Cf. Horace, *Ars Poetica* 273: *Scimus inurbanum lepidum seponere dicto*.

²³ *De Nuptiis* 8. 809; ed. Dick, p. 427, l. 13.

²⁴ *Ibid* ll. 16-17.

²⁵ See E. Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa vom VI Jahrhundert bis in die Zeit der Renaissance* (5th ed., Stuttgart 1958) II, 756-57. See also D. Bartonkova, "Prosimetrum V Dile Martiana Capelly De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii," *Sbornik Praci Filozoficke Fakulty Brnenske Univerzity (Studia Minora Facultatis Philosophicae Universitatis Brunensis)* 22-3 (1977-78) 205-15, with a summary in English on pp. 214-15.

²⁶ See the entire final section, *De Nuptiis* 9. 997-1000, ed. Dick, pp. 533, l. 11 - 535, l. 5.

²⁷ Cf. *De Nuptiis* l. 2: *ineptas nugulas* (Dick, p. 4, l. 8).