Rutilius Namatianus, On His Return I.43-92

Praise of Rome’s capacity to rule a universal empire

Name of the author: Rutilius Namatianus
Date: 418 CE
Place: Rome
Language: Latin

Category: Roman
Literary genre: Poetry

Reference: I.43-92

Commentary:
Rutilius Namatianus is among the last Latin poets who lived when the Western Roman Empire still existed. Rutilius Namatianus came from Gaul (see On his return I.20), probably from a family of rich landowners from the province of Narbonensis. His father, Claudius Lachanius fulfilled a long and prestigious career in Italy, both in provincial and imperial administration, at the very end of the 4th century CE (about his career, see PLRE I, Lachanius, p. 491). As was common in such aristocratic provincial milieux, Rutilius Namatianus must have been sent to Rome to complete his education. Then, he fulfilled various important offices. He was magister officiorum perhaps in 412 CE (the magister officiorum was some kind of minister in charge of the police as he was at the head of the imperial guard and in charge of the foreign affairs; he was part of the imperial council). His career ended with one of the most prestigious office at that time, the Urban Prefecture, that he fulfilled for some months in 414 CE (see PLRE II, Rutilius Claudius Namatianus, p. 770-771). In 417 CE, after having given up his political career in Italy, Rutilius went back in Gaul. This journey back is narrated in this poetic work.

Rutilius fulfilled his career and accomplished his journey back during a very troubled period. Since the death of Theodosius I in January 395 CE, the Empire had been divided between an eastern and a western part attributed to Arcadius and Honorius. Too young to rule, Honorius was placed under the protection of Stilicho, a half-Vandal half-Roman military commander who became the effective ruler in the West. During this period, the relationships between Rome and Constantinople seriously deteriorated. In the Balkans, around 395 CE, the Goths who had been settled by Theodosius I as federate stirred up. Arcadius and his entourage tried to use the Goths to weaken Stilicho’s influence. After the massacre of many Goths in 400 CE at Constantinople, Alaric decided to reach Northern Italy. Stilicho succeeded first to resist his attacks, forcing Alaric to remain in Dalmatia until 407 CE. Then, in December 405 or 406 CE many groups of Vandals, Alans and Sueves attacked Gaul. Stilicho may have not reacted immediately because he was busy in Italy with the Goths of Radagaisus (406 is the classical dating but 405 may better fit the political context, see Kulikowski, “Barbarians in Gaul”). Immediately after, Honorius and his party was confronted with various usurpations: that of Constantine III and Jovian in Gaul and Britain (407-413 CE), that of Maximus in Spain (409-411 CE) and that of Heraclian in Africa (413 CE). In 408 CE, Stilicho, accused of treason because of the alliance concluded with Alaric, was assassinated. His death was followed by the invasion of Italy by Alaric and his troops. The 24th of August 410 CE saw Gothic troops entered in Rome and plundered the city (the real impact of Alaric’s sack of Rome remains debated, see Lipps, Machado and von Rummel, The Sack of Rome). This event was traumatic for many Romans: it was the first time since Brennus’s sack of Rome in 390 BCE that foreign enemies got into the Urbs. After Alaric’s death that year, to find solutions to the perpetual issue of providing money and provisions to the Gothic troops, the new king of the Goths, Ataulf, went into Gaul in 412 CE. He quickly settled his troops in Aquitania. After a short alliance with the usurper Jovian, Ataulf decided to rally Honorius’s party to receive in return wheat supplies and to conclude a treaty with them. To put it briefly, Honorius had preferred to concentrate Rome’s military efforts on taming usurpations, rather than to prevent Rome be plundered and Gaul be ravaged. After new hostile policy from Ataulf towards the imperial party, Honorius sent his top general Constantius to Gaul. After having pushed Ataulf and his troops back in Spain where Ataulf was killed, Constantius restored some kind of order in Gaul in 417 CE. Constantius negotiated with the new king of the Visigoths, Vallia. The Visigoths were allowed to stay in Aquitania and obtained an annual wheat supply in exchange for staying quiet. In 418 CE, the Visigoths who were now led by the king Theodoric I, were settled in Aquitania II and Novempopulania. It was agreed that they could receive lands or a part of the taxes perceived (this issue is very debated), that they could remain autonomous without paying taxes, but that they had to fight for the emperor when they were asked to. Thus, among the reasons that motivated Rutilius’s return, it is probable that he...
may have been asked by the imperial power to supervise the various reorganisations in Southern Gaul due to the settlement of the Visigoths, reorganisations that must have been discussed during the diocesan council gathered at Arles in August 418 CE (see Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, p. 325-326). Rutilius must have written his work *On his return* when he was back in Gaul around 417-418 CE. At that time, the situation in favour of Honorius and his party was stabilised as they succeeded to tame the usurpations and to settle the Goths far from Italy. However, Gaul and Spain had suffered at lot of the consequences of this policy and the provincials had now to cope with new barbarian federated populations.

*On his return* was originally composed of two books of identical length. The discovery in 1973 of two fragments of the second volume of the work mentioning the second consulate of Constantius enables to date this part of the work of 417 CE. We may hypothesize that he wrote this work when he was back in Gaul around 418 CE. If, in this work, Rutilius narrates his journey from Italy to Gaul, he arranged the narrative to make it a poetic work (*Paschoud, “Une relecture poétique”*). The travel writing is just the guiding theme of the work and is thus constantly interspersed by praises, invectives or digressions of various kinds (about the nature of this work, see Soler, “Le poème de Rutilius”).

The text presented here is an excerpt from the praise of Rome that is developed throughout around a hundred of verses (I.47-164). This prayer is both a hymn addressed to the goddess Roma and a *laudatio*, that is a eulogy, of the city of Rome (see Wolff, Lancel and Soler, p. xlvii). The existence of *Dea Roma* was still meaningful for Rutilius as he was pagan and he also already fulfilled the office of Urban Prefect to whom, in the past, was entrusted the responsibility to preside over the celebrations in honour of *Dea Roma* that took place every 21st of April in the framework of the festivities organised for the anniversary of the date of Rome’s foundation (Wolff, Lancel and Soler, p. xlvii; about the pagan aura surrounding this office, see Chastagnol, *La préfecture*, p. 460). Rutilius was pagan but this did not prevent him from praising Constantius who was Christian while he vigorously condemns Stilicho for his allegedly pro-barbarian positions. The depiction that Rutilius gives of Rome is striking because of its atemporal character. The city of Rome had been besieged and probably damaged by Alaric and his troops in August 410 CE, but Rutilius repeats that Rome is eternal. He thus suggests that even if Rome has been affected by destructions or has undergone a decline, it will necessarily recover because of its extraordinary destiny. By inserting this long praise of Rome in his narrative, Rutilius uses a literary *topos* that had a long tradition – one major work entirely dedicated to that theme was *The Roman Oration* of Aelius Aristides – and still enjoyed an undeniable success at the beginning of the fifth century CE (praises of Rome appear also in *Ammianus Marcellinus, Res Gestae* XIV.6.3-6; Claudian, *On the Consulship of Stilicho* III.130-173; praises compared in Zarini, “Histoire, panégyrique”). However, the insertion of this eulogy of Rome by Rutilius in his narrative was probably not motivated by literary conventions only. The tensions and rivalries that existed between the eastern and western governments since the end of the fourth century onwards, the former sack of Rome in 410 CE and the difficulties that the western imperial government had to control the barbarians present inside the Empire, were part of the background that Rutilius must have had in mind when, in this praise, he reasserted the superiority of Rome over the whole Roman Empire.

The first element that we can notice is the way Rome is personified. Rome is the “most beautiful queen (*regina*) of a world that belongs to her” (I.47), and she is “the mother (*genetrix*) of men and the mother of gods” (I.49). First, it is important to note that the comparison of Rome with a queen is quite well attested in Latin and Greek sources written by “pagan” or Christian authors (see for instance Cassius Dio, *Roman History* LXXV.7.5; Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* I.26; *Ammianus Marcellinus, Res Gestae* XIV.6.6; Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum* I.430 in which there is also this dual association between the image of the queen and that of the mother; all the references are quoted in Dobelhofer, *R. Cl. Namatianus*, p. 41-42). More interesting is its association with the maternal comparison that enabled to insist on the protective and loving character of Rome for her subjects, but also on the benefits that she provided to them. Myles Lavan has rightly noticed that the association of Rome as a maternal figure for all the peoples of the Empire is attested much more frequently from the end of the third century CE onwards than during the first and second century CE, a period during which Rome is very often represented as a mistress, *domina* (about this point see the commentary of Claudian,*On the Consulship of Stilicho* III.130-161). For instance, in his panegyric of Stilicho composed in 400 CE, Claudian describes Rome as “nourishing all mankind like a mother, not like a mistress (*matri, non dominae ritu*)” (*Claudian, On the Consulship of Stilicho* III.151-152). In his work *On his return*, Rutilius uses various times this maternal metaphor to speak about Rome. At the end of his praise of Rome, Rutilius exclaims: “Let the world with his produce give nurture to his nurse” (I.145, *altricemque suam fertulis orbis alat*; on the assimilation of Rome to a mother see also II.60). This idea that Rome was both the nurse – in the sense of a benefactor –, and the nursing thanks to the participation of her provinces, is clearly taken from Pliny the Elder when he speaks about Italy, “a land which is both the nursling (*alumna*) and the parent (*pares*) of all other lands” (see *Pliny the Elder, Natural History* III.39). Thus, this text of Rutilius appears as representative of the shift that occurred during the third century and led to the more frequent designation of Rome as a mother. This
We can see that, from verse 55 to 62, Rutilius insists on the fact that Rome succeeded to build a universal empire. This idea is developed when Rutilius writes that Rome’s benefactions extend as far as those of the sun whose light is beneficial for all the Earth (v. 55-56). Rome is even superior to the sun as Phoebus’ chariot accomplishes his cycle for her, and Rome covers more than the solar cycle as she contains the rising and the setting of the sun (v. 57-58). The universal dimension of the Roman Empire is finally highlighted by a very common image, namely the fact that Rome’s domination extends as far as the four cardinal points here embodied by emblematic regions (v. 59-60; for a similar use of the solar cycle and of the four cardinal points to show the universal dimension of Rome’s domination, see Aelius Aristides, Roman Oration 9-10; see also Status, Silvae IV.3.123-163; in this last source Domitian rides the sun’s chariot).

Another idea developed throughout the text is that Rome merges with the world she rules. This idea appears clearly when Rutilius writes: “you have made a city of what was once a world” (I.66). Rutilius implies that Rome extends to all the earth thanks to her integrative policy regarding foreign peoples. He must refer to Ovid who used to play with the similar sounding orbis and urbs (see Ovid, Fasti II.683-684; Ovid, The Art of Love I.174; on the evolution of this theme when Martial presents Rome as the personal property of the emperor, see Martial, Liber Spectaculorum III). Rutilius Namatianus fitted in this Ovidian conception and the idea that Rome had accomplished the stoic ideal of cosmopolitism thanks to her capacity to integrate defeated peoples: “You have made from distinct nations (gentibus) a single fatherland (patriam)” (I.63) (see Wolff, Lancel and Soler, p. xlix). Once again, Rutilius may have been inspired by Pliny the Elder’s praise of Italy when the later concludes that Italy was vowed to “become the single fatherland (patria) of all peoples (gentibus) throughout the whole world” (see Pliny the Elder, Natural History III.39). As rightly recalled by Clifford Ando, Rutilius’s sentence has to be read in connection to Cicero’s text about the two patriae in which Cicero urges that Roman citizenship and loyalty to the communis patria have to prevail over the loyalty and interests of any other local collectivity (Cicero, On the Laws II.3-5; Ando, Imperial Ideology, p. 11). Closer to Rutilius’s time, Augustine expresses his regrets that, for a major part of Roman history, Rome asserted its dominion essentially through violence, but considers differently the universal granting of Roman citizenship in 212 CE that he presents as a human measure precisely because it has succeeded to reach some kind of equality between the Roman citizens and those “who belonged to the Roman empire” (ad Romanum imperium pertinentes) and who were admitted into the civilitas by becoming “Roman citizens” (Romani cives) (Augustine, The City of God V.17.1).

By using the word patria, Rutilius refers to this communis patria whose unity is made possible thanks to Rome’s generous policy concerning the grant of her citizenship and the sharing of her laws. However, this idea of unity of all the peoples living in the Empire does not fit with the context in which Rutilius was living. Actually, the examples of the Goths settled by Theodosius in 382 CE between the Danube and the Balkans or the more recent case of the Visigoths allowed to settle in a part of Aquitania in 418 CE, show that numerous barbarians - and thus non-Roman citizens - were allowed to live in the Empire (for the difficult debate of whether Roman citizenship remained a status that could be granted to peoples or persons that went into the Roman Empire after 212 CE, and if yes, in which conditions, see Latin Panegyric IV (8).21.1). There is thus an obvious discrepancy between Rutilius’s laudatory assertion that Rome has unified all the inhabitants of the Empire into a common patria and the realities of the time that Rutilius knew perfectly. Back in Gaul where he wrote this work, he was confronted and had to compose with the consequences of the new Visigothic settlement in Aquitania. However, when he wrote this laudatory development about Rome’s extraordinary integrative capacity, he spoke as a former officer of the Empire who had spent many years in aristocratic and imperial milieus in Italy and who perpetuated common leitmotifs of imperial ideology.

When Rutilius presents in a few words what is the most important and meaningful benefit that Rome brought to the peoples she conquered, he insists on the fact that she authorised them to share her laws (v. 63-66). This idea is also repeated later when Rutilius says that Rome “has embraced the world with [her] legislative triumphs (legiferis triumphis)” (v. 77). In contrast to Pliny the Elder who, in his praise of Italy, proposes a cultural definition of Roman civilisation, Rutilius defines the nature and the effects of Roman rule through a legal perspective. These words may recall the warning of Anchises to Aeneas in the Aeneid when Anchises says: “Remember, Roman, to rule peoples with imperium and to stamp habit/morality on peace, to spare the abject and war down the proud” (Virgil, Aeneid VI.851-853: … tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento (hae tibi erunt artes) pacisque imponere morem, par cere subiectis et debellare superbos; translation of these famous but debated verses taken from Lavan, “Peace and Empire,” p. 102; the connection between the two texts is made in Ando, Imperial Ideology, p. 49-50).

However, as it has been discussed, it is far from certain that in this famous sentence, Virgil, through the voice of Anchises, actually implies that peace was made possible and guaranteed by Roman laws. Rutilius’s presentation...
of the nature and the effects of Roman rule through a legal perspective directly echoes Claudian’s words, who in his *Panegyric* for Stilicho, presents Rome as the “parent of arms and of law who extends its empire to everyone, and offered the cradle of the beginnings of law” (*Claudian, On the Consulship of Stilicho* III.136-137: *armorum legumque parens quae fundit in omnes imperium primique dedit cuculaba iuris*). Nevertheless, this idea that Rome succeeded to reach oecumenical dimensions thanks to her capacity to integrate and homogenise the peoples she conquered is counterbalanced in other parts of Rutilius’s work by the idea that some barbarians (such as the Goths) or savage peoples (such as the monks of the island of Capraria or the Jews; see Rutilius Namatianus, *On His Return* I.377-398) present in the very heart of the Empire refuse to become really integrated in it. Rutilius Namatianus admits that the successes of Roman imperialism, just as the disappearance of boundaries between Roman and barbarian territories, could have had damaging consequences for Rome (see Wolff, Lancel and Soler, p. li-iv). Thus, when Rutilius praises Rome’s capacity of integration of foreigners, he mentions past episodes of the history of Republican or Imperial Rome, but not the contemporary events (see Zarini, “Histoire, panégyrique,” p. 177). As a top officer of the Western imperial government, Rutilius must have been hostile to the integration of many barbarians into the Roman army, in addition to the conclusion of agreements excessively favourable for the barbarians, especially for the Goths. That is why, in his work, he vigorously condemns Stilicho. He presents his inactivity and his allegedly pro-barbarian positions as the main causes of the plunder of Rome by Alaric’s troops and of Rome’s decadence (II.46-51). Thus, by recalling the oecumenical ambitions that Rome had in the past, Rutilius may suggest that time had changed. The barbarians Rome was now confronted with were not ready to integrate themselves; they will always challenge Rome’s power and unity to a great extent. By presenting Stilicho as the bad ruler, Rutilius reasserts also his support for the most influent men of Western government at that time, namely Constantius, whose policy consisted of restoring order in the Western Empire by taming the usurpers, in containing the ambitions and needs of the barbarians, and finally in preserving Italy from barbarian’s presence. Rutilius may have agreed this policy when he was in Italy, however when he was back in Southern Gaul around 417 CE – where he probably wrote this work – he must have measured the damages caused by the various barbarian groups, especially by the Visigoths who had been authorised to settle permanently in a part of Aquitania. The ambiguitues of Rutilius’s personal situation may explain the ambiguities of this work where a very classical and atemporal praise of Rome stands alongside descriptions of the ruined towns left after the Gothic invasion.

Another important theme of the text presented here is the way Rutilius presents Rome’s relations with Roman gods. At the beginning of the praise, Rutilius asserts that Rome is the “mother of the gods” (*genetrix deorum*). This sentence may be understood as referring to the idea that each god of the Roman Pantheon had a temple in Rome (Wolff, Lancel and Soler, p. 552, n. 28). Then, Rutilius asserts, on the contrary, that Rome has divine origins. He presents Venus and Mars as her parents: Venus being the mother of Aeneas (through his union with Anchises) and Mars the father of Romulus and Remus (through his union with Rhea Silvia) (I.67-70). These prestigious affiliations are used by Rutilius to assert the divine essence of Rome (Wolff, Lancel and Soler, p. 54, n. 36, n. 38; about the Martial origins of Rome used to justify why Rome became an extraordinary military power, see *Livy, History of Rome*, Preface 6-9). However, the use of this *topos* has to be put in perspective with the context in which Rutilius evolved in Italy. In addition, the values traditionally associated with Venus and Mars, that is care/love and strength, enable Rutilius to go further in his argument that, in his relationships with foreign peoples, Rome unites these two values. This idea is perfectly summarised in the sentence: “From this derives your noble pleasure in fighting and sparing [people]: conquering those ones you feared, loving those ones conquered” (I.71-72). This sentence clearly echoes the passage of the warning of Anchises to Aeneas in the *Aeneid* previously quoted (*Virgil, Aeneid VI.851-853*; about the two texts, Dobrhofer, *R. Cl. Namatianus*, p. 52).

Another very interesting aspect of this passage of Rome’s praise is the way Rutilius Namatianus deals with the theme of peace. To celebrate Rome for the benefits provided by the climate of peace she established is actually a *topos* of praise of Rome (see Gernentz, *Laudes Romae*, p. 141-145; Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, p. 389). The sentence: “It is you, goddess, that celebrates, in any nook he is, the Roman bearing a free neck under the yoke of peace” (*I.89-90: Te, dea, te celebrat Romanus ubique recessus, pacificoque gerit libera colla iugo*) is particularly interesting, because it associates colourful images. By mentioning the fact that this Roman worshipper of *Dea Roma* was from a “nook” (*recessus*) of the Empire, Rutilius implies that Rome succeeded to establish her dominion in the most remote parts of the Empire. Moreover, the words he uses to qualify this Roman who lives in a marginal region of the Empire echoes the vocabulary which was frequently used in Latin sources to speak about provincials who were compared to tamed animals and/or to animals shackled by a yoke (on this metaphor, see Lavan, *Slaves*, p. 83-88). In this sentence, Rutilius reuses this motif of the yoke (*iugum*) but from a different perspective so that it can fit in with his praise of Roman peace. The Roman is thus represented has having a “free neck” (*libera colla*) under the “yoke of peace” (*pacificum iugum*). First, it is important to recall that the same expression *libera colla iugo* appears in a short poem of Claudian dealing with Gallic mules, precisely to speak about their capacity to obey...
without the yoke (see Claudian, Shorter poems XVIII (LI).6; quoted in Dobloher, R. Cl. Namatianus, p. 55).

Second, we can appreciate the image of the “yoke of peace” which contains a double paradox. The first one comes from the fact that the worshipper of Dea Roma is presented as free, while still being submitted to a yoke. As noted by Philip Hardie, this paradoxical expression used by Rutilius fits in the topoi of the ‘easy yoke,’ which appears for instance in Virgil, Georgic III (Hardie, “Political Education,” p. 96-97). In this passage, Virgil deals with the dressage of warrior-class young horses. He mentions that in their very young age this kind of horse “offers his mouth to the flexible halter” (det mollibus ora capistris, Virgil, Georgic III.188). Then, in his fourth year, the horse will learn how to make volte and run faster than ever, as if “he is freed from the reins” (ceu liber habenis, Virgil, Georgic III.194). If the idea that defeated peoples could accept the yoke imposed by Rome is well documented (idea represented here by the first equestrian example; see the examples quoted in Lavan, Slaves, p. 84-85), the contrast that appears in Rutilius’s sentence between the “free neck” and the yoke seems to fit in the second equestrian example. The reasoning which is behind this paradoxical image is as follows: after the period of conquest, the peoples were still subjects of Rome, but, if they were obedient, the prosperity and benefits brought by Rome would be so great that they would not feel their subjection to Rome.

The second paradox appears in the expression pacificum iugum: the yoke being a shackle, it is often used to symbolize subjection through violence or oppression. It is thus striking to find it associated here with the idea of peace. Through the adjective pacificus, Rutilius implies that Rome’s rule over provincials, even those living in the remote parts of the Empire, was devoid of aggressiveness, precisely because these Romans recognised and submitted themselves to her power. It is interesting to note that an association of the notions of pax and iugum appears also in one epigram of Martial when he writes: “Caesar most mild, Palma rules our Iberians and, in this remote province, Peace enjoys her gentle yoke” (Martial, Epigrams XII.9.1-2: Palma regit nostros, mitissime Caesar, Hiberos, / et placido fruitur Pax peregrina iugo). By using the expression pacificum iugum Rutilius fits in with this tradition which consisted in assimilating peace and domination, a tradition that reflects how these Roman authors were aware of the tensions existing between the end (Pax) and the means (iugum) of Roman imperialism (see Zarini, “Histoire, panégyrique,” p. 171). Rutilius finally comes back to the theme of peace when, in verse 89, he recalls that Rome became “illustrious by just wars and by a peace without arrogance (nec pace superba).” In this verse, Rutilius associates the concept of “just war” which was very often used in Roman propaganda to present any military interventions as being legal and necessary for Rome’s safety, interests and/or allies, with the idea that Roman peace is a benefaction provided by Rome (about the manipulation of the concept of just war to serve Rome’s interests see Caesar, The Gallic War I.45). The peace which is not arrogant (superba) appears as the opposite of the proud (superbos) who are tamed by Rome in Anchises’s prophecy in Aeneid VI.853. Finally, it is also important that when he wrote the verses 79-80 of his praise of Rome, Rutilius was clearly influenced by the other praise of Rome composed by Claudian in his panegyric of Stilicho. Actually in the verses 154-157, Claudian also refers to the “peaceful customs” (pacificis moribus) of Rome and associates it with the idea that every “nook” (recessus) of the Empire, even the most dangerous ones, are now accessible for all its inhabitants. Once again, Rutilius’s praise of Rome appears as an arrangement of various literary references or topoi that he organises to highlight what he thought to be the main virtues and ideals of Rome. In that perspective, the fact that, as Claudian, he stresses on Rome’s pacific ruling, through the image of the “peaceful yoke,” is an element particularly interesting as it does not appear for instance in another praise of Rome of nearly the same period, that is of Ammianus Marcellinus in Res Gestae XIV.6.3-6.

Whereas the status and the city of Rome had been considerably challenged at the end of the third century and in the 400’s CE both by the multiplication of imperial residences and by the barbarian invasions, it is precisely at that time that various authors composed vibrant praises of Rome (see Zarini, “Histoire, panégyrique,” p. 167; Ammianus Marcellinus, Res Gestae XIV.6.3-6; Claudian, On the Consulship of Stilicho III.130-161). Rutilius Namatianus is one of them. In this extract of his praise of Rome, we have seen how Rutilius develops common motifs of the genre, even if these motifs sometimes touch on the difficulties of the time in which the poem was written. Rutilius constantly recalls that Rome is eternal and that it will and has already recovered from the “affront” (inuria) and the “sinister misfortune” (tristem casum) (v. 119) that was represented by the sack of the City by the Gothic troops in 410 CE. In his praise of Rome, Rutilius insists on the universal dimension of the Roman Empire and on Rome’s capacity to have, in the past, assimilated so many foreigners into her now universal patria, but he does not say a word about the frequent intrusions and settlements of so many barbarian groups, and so of non-Roman citizens, inside the empire, barbarian groups that he however mentions in other parts of the poem (see v. 40). Another interesting point of the text presented here is also the way Rutilius praises the Pax Romana. Following Virgilian tradition, Rome is exalted for her capacity, on the one hand, to wage war and to tame the dangerous peoples and, on the other hand, to provide peace and benefactions to the peoples who submitted themselves. The “yoke of peace” which is exalted by Rutilius bears in itself the ambiguities that constantly pervade the Roman language of peace. Rutilius’s praise of Rome appears thus as full of literary references, that could be classical such as Virgil or Ovid, or more recent, such as Claudian (we have actually proven that Rutilius knew
Claudian’s praise of Rome and that he had be inspired by it). It is obvious that, thanks to these literary echoes, Rutilius must have wanted to please his well-read audience. Thus, the necessities of the literary exercise lead Rutilius to compose a praise of Rome which respond to classical motifs of the genre and which is mainly animated by a global reflection on the universal role and mission of Rome. This state of fact can give the impression that this praise of Rome “floats” above the contemporary realities. As stated by Vincent Zarini, one strategy found by Rutilius in order to compose a praise of Rome in the context of the 410’s, was to elevate Rome to the status of myth (see Zarini, “Histoire, panégyrique,” p. 179).

Keywords in the original language:

- bellum
- caelum
- clementia
- collum
- consortium
- dea
- deus
- dominans
- equus
- genertrix
- gens
- gloria
- homo
- imperium
- iugum
- ius
- laus
- legifer
- liber
- Libye
- Mars
- mos
- mundus
- munus
- Natura
- Oceanus
- orpis
- pacificus
- patria
- pax
- Phoebus
- regina
- Roma
- sidus
- sol
- superbos
- templum
- terr
- triumphus
- urbs
- Ursa
- Venus
- vis

Thematic keywords in English:
- Aeneas
- Assyrians
- clemency
- fatherland
- foreigner
- Macedonians
- Mars
- maternal care
- Medes
- mother
- Parthians
- peace
- queen
- Roma (goddess)
- Roman citizenship
- Roman domination
- Roman empire
- Roman law
- Roman peace
- Rome (city)
- Romulus
- strength
- submission
- translatio imperii
- universal empire
- Venus
- war
- yoke

Gernentz, Rudolf, *Laudes Romae* (Rostock: Adler, 1918)
Kulikowski, Michael, "Barbarians in Gaul, Usurpers in Britain", Britannia 31 (2000) : 325-345

Other sources connected with this document: Text

**Virgil, Aeneid VI.756-853**
Anchises shows Aeneas his descendants – the future Romans

- Read more about Virgil, Aeneid VI.756-853

Text

Pliny the Elder, Natural History III.38-39
Praise of Italy.

- Read more about Pliny the Elder, Natural History III.38-39

Text

Claudian, On the Consulship of Stilicho III.130-161
Praise of Rome

- Read more about Claudian, On the Consulship of Stilicho III.130-161

Text

Rutilius Namatianus, On His Return I.377-398
Invective against Jews.

- Read more about Rutilius Namatianus, On His Return I.377-398

Text

Ammianus Marcellinus, Res Gestae XIV.6.3-6
Praise of Rome and reflection about the old age of the Roman people.

- Read more about Ammianus Marcellinus, Res Gestae XIV.6.3-6

Text

Cicero, On the Laws II.3-5
On the two patriae

- Read more about Cicero, On the Laws II.3-5

Text
Prudentius, Against Symmachus I.408-418, 427-432

Rome’s God-given superiority over the rest of the world, and why she should not debase herself

- Read more about Prudentius, Against Symmachus I.408-418, 427-432

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