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Facultatea de Istorie • Centrul de Studii Clasice și Creștine

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CENTRUL DE STUDII CLASICE ȘI CREȘTINE

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Atti del XIII Convegno romeno-italiano *Tradizione e innovazione tra antichità classica e medioevo: forme, strumenti e modelli di comunicazione letteraria e artistica*
(Iași, 26-28 settembre 2023)

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SUMAR / INDICE / CONTENTS

SIGLE ȘI ABREVIERI – SIGLE E ABBREVIAZIONI / 361

Atti del XIII Convegno romeno-italiano *Tradizione e innovazione tra antichità classica e medioevo: forme, strumenti e modelli di comunicazione letteraria e artistica*

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Programma del Convegno / 363

Maria AMBROSETTI, Forme della narrazione drammatica in Ammiano Marcellino [Forms of dramatic narrative in Ammianus Marcellinus] / 369

Florica BOHÎLȚEA-MIHUȚ, Classical authors in Sidonius Apollinaris' letters / 387

Antonella BRUZZONE, Paradosso, metamorfosi, spettacolo. Suggestioni ovidiane nella *Gigantomachia* latina di Claudiano [Paradox, metamorphosis, spectacle. Ovidian suggestions in Claudian's Latin *Gigantomachy*] / 401

Federica CALABRESE, San Barbato di Benevento, "l'apostolo del Sannio", uccisore di vipere d'oro ed estirpatore di alberi sacri [St. Barbato of Benevento, "the Apostle of Sannio", golden snakes' killer and holy trees eradicator] / 431

Emanuel GROȘU, Da *refrigerium* al suo contrario. Alcune sfumature del concetto nelle *visiones animarum* medievali [From *refrigerium* to its opposite. Some nuances of the concept in occidental *visiones animarum*] / 447

Simona NICOLAE, Quand l'amour chrétien revêt le péplos d'Aphrodite (*Anthologia Palatina, liber V*) [When Christian love puts on the peplos of Aphrodite (*Palatine Anthology, Book V*)] / 463

Daniel NIȚĂ-DANIELESCU, The *Prefaces* of Metropolitan Veniamin Costachi – role and significance in the age of “national regeneration” and “European sentiment” / 477

Dan RUSCU, The Paternus Plate and its Symbolism / 495

Nelu ZUGRAVU, Continuità lessicali, continuità e discontinuità semantiche e simboliche nelle *Historiae abbreviatae* di Aurelio Vittore [Lexical continuities, semantic and symbolic continuities and discontinuities in the *Historiae abbreviatae* of Aurelius Victor] / 511

STUDII – STUDI / 531

Maria Carolina CAMPONE, *Aeternitas imperii*. L’Arco di Costantino, la *mens imperiale* e l’*evocatio* cristiana [Aeternitas imperii. *The Arch of Constantine, the imperial mens and the Cristian evocatio*] / 531

Juan Ramón CARBÓ GARCÍA, The Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Elagabalus and the triad of Emesa: Azizos and Monimos, companions of Sol Invictus Elagabal / 565

Elisa DELLA CALCE, Defending Sulla... to condemn the Catilinarians once again? Some moral and political concepts from Cicero’s *Pro Sulla* / 581

Valentino D’URSO, *Fabula mendax*. Religiosità e concezione del mito nel *Bellum civile* di Lucano [Fabula mendax. *Myth and religiosity in Lucan’s Bellum civile*] / 609

M.^a Pilar GONZÁLEZ-CONDE PUENTE, La présence épigraphique d’*Elagabalus* en Hispanie [Epigraphic evidences from the reign of *Elagabalus* in Hispania] / 639

Martijn ICKS, The crimes and vices of Elagabalus. Building blocks for a character assassination / 659

Carmela LAUDANI, La tomba di Decio Magio (Sil. 11, 377-384) [The tomb of Decius Magius (Sil. 11, 377-384)] / 677

- Marcello MARIN, Leggere i testi cristiani oggi: ragioni, metodi e finalità [Reading Christian texts today: reasons, methods and purposes] / 693
- Lucrețiu MIHAILESCU-BÎRLIBA, Le dossier épigraphique du règne d'Héliogabale en Mésie Inférieure [The epigraphic file of Heliogabalus' reign in Moesia Inferior] / 707
- Eleonora S. MURONI, Persistenze e suggestioni: *Sol Invictus* nell'età di Costantino [Persistence and suggestions: *Sol Invictus* in the Constantinian age] / 713
- Eduard NEMETH, Dacia during the reign of emperor Elagabalus / 753
- Miguel P. SANCHO GÓMEZ, Los *primani* y la batalla de Estrasburgo (357): algunas consideraciones sobre la infantería pesada tardía y el generalato del César Juliano [The *Primani* and the battle of Strasbourg (357): some considerations on the Late Roman heavy infantry and the generalship of the Caesar Julian] / 757
- Semíramis Corsi SILVA, The emperor and the historian: an analysis of Elagabalus' image considering Cassius Dio's trajectory and point of view / 789
- Francesca SIVO, Donne fragili come brocche. Lezioni di didattica spirituale e sociale nel Medioevo [Fragile women as pitchers. Lessons of spiritual and social didactics in the Middle Ages] / 813

SIGLE ȘI ABREVIERI / SIGLE E ABBREVIAZIONI*

ACO	<i>Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum</i> , ed. E. Schwartz, Berlin, 1914 sqq.
ANRW	<i>Ausstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> , II, <i>Prinzipat</i> , Berlin-New York.
BOR	<i>Biserica Ortodoxă Română</i> , București.
CCL	<i>Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina</i> , Turnhout, 1953 sqq.
CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> , Vienna-Leipzig, 1860 sqq.
EAC	A. Di Berardino (ed.), <i>Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity</i> , vols. 1-3, Downers Grove, 2014.
LCI	E. Kirschbaum (ed.), <i>Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie</i> , vols. 1-4, Rome-Freiburg-Basel-Vienna, 1994.
LIMC	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i> , I-VIII, Zürich-München-Düsseldorf, 1981-1997.
MMS	<i>Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei</i> , Iași.
PG	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Graeca</i> , Paris.
PL	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina</i> , Paris.
PLRE, I	<i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , I, A. D. 260-395, by A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, J. Morris, Cambridge, 1981.
RIC	<i>Roman Imperial Coinage</i> .
RE	<i>Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> (Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll), Stuttgart-München.
RGZM	<i>Römische Militärdiplome und Entlassungsurkunden in der Sammlung des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums</i> , Mainz.
RLBK	K. Wessel (ed.), <i>Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst</i> , Bd. I, Stuttgart, 1966 sqq.
SC	<i>Sources Chrésiennes</i> , Paris-Lyon.
ThLL (ThLL)	<i>Thesaurus linguae Latinae</i> .

* Cu excepția celor din *L'Année Philologique* și *L'Année Épigraphique* / Escluse quelle segnalate da *L'Année Philologique* e *L'Année Épigraphique*.



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**XIII CONVEGNO ROMENO-ITALIANO
Tradizione e innovazione tra antichità classica e
medioevo: forme, strumenti e modelli di comunicazione
letteraria e artistica**

**AL XIII-LEA COLOCVIU ROMÂNŌ-ITALIAN
Tradiție și inovație între antichitatea clasică și Evul Mediu:
forme, instrumente și modele de comunicare
literară și artistică**

**Iași, 26-28 settembre / septembrie 2023
Sala H1 (Facoltă di Storia / Facultatea de Istorie)**



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PROGRAMMA / PROGRAM

Martedì / Marți, 26 settembre / septembrie 2023

8.00-13.00

Arrivo degli ospiti / Sosirea invitaților

16.30-19.00

Moderatore / Moderator:

Nelu ZUGRAVU

16.30-16.45: Apertura del convegno; saluti istituzionali / Deschiderea colocluiului; salutul organizatorilor

16.45-17.15: Relazione inaugurale / Comunicare inaugurală: Mela ALBANA (Università degli Studi di Catania), ***Cultura e potere nell'età di Valentiniano I***

17.15-17.30: Discussione / Discuții

17.30-17.45: Pausa / Pauză

17.45-18.30: *Presentazione libri*

Iulian-Gabriel HRUȘCĂ (Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași) presenta: M. TULLI CICERONIS *Actionis secundae in C. Verrem: Liber V*, Luigi Piacente recognovit, adnotationes criticas et indices adiecit, Claudia Tărnăuceanu Dacoromanice uertit, notis atque commentariis instruxit, Luigi Piacente et Claudia Tărnăuceanu praefationem composuerunt = M. TULLIUS CICERO, *A doua acțiune împotriva lui Verres: Cartea a V-a*, restabilirea textului latin, apparatus criticus, indici de Luigi Piacente, traducere în limba română, note și comentarii de Claudia Tărnăuceanu, introducere de Luigi Piacente și Claudia Tărnăuceanu, Editura Universității din București, 2023

Luigi PIACENTE (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro) presenta: Federica CALABRESE, *Il sito di Glastonbory. Fonti letterarie e indagini archeologiche sul 'primo' contesto cristiano di Britannia*, Aracne, Roma, 2022

18.30-19.00: Discussione / Discuții

19.30: Cena / Cina

Mercoledì / Miercuri, 27 settembre / septembrie 2023

9.00-10.15

Moderatore / Moderator:

Dan RUSCU

9.00-9.30: Nelu ZUGRAVU (Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași), ***Continuità lessicali – continuità e discontinuità semantiche e simboliche nelle Historiae abbreviatae di Aurelio Vittore***

9.30-10.00: Ecaterina Gabriela LUNG (Universitatea din București), ***Geography and ideology in Late Antiquity***

10.00-10.15: Discussione / Discuții

10.15-10.30: Pausa caffè / Pauză de cafea

10.30-12.30

Moderatore / Moderator:
Alessandro LAGIOIA

10.30-11.00: Maria AMBROSETTI (Università degli Studi di Sassari), *Forme della narrazione drammatica in Ammiano Marcellino*

11.00-11.30: Antonella BRUZZONE (Università degli Studi di Sassari), *Paradosso, metamorfosi, spettacolo. Suggestioni ovidiane nella Gigantomachia latina di Claudiano*

11.30-12.00: Florica BOHÎLȚEA-MIHUȚ (Universitatea din București), *Classical authors in Sidonius Apollinaris' library*

12.00-12.30: Discussione / Discuții

12.30-15.00: Pausa pranzo / Pauză de prânz

15.00-17.00

Moderatore / Moderator:
Antonella BRUZZONE

15.00-15.30: Emanuel GROSU (Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași), *Da refrigerium al suo contrario. Alcune sfumature del concetto nelle visiones animarum medievali*

15.30-16.00: Simona NICOLAE (Universitatea din București/ Institutul de Studii Sud-Est Europene), *L'hellénisme païen des épigrammes chrétiens (Anthologie Palatine)*

16.00-16.30: Alessandro LAGIOIA (Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro), *“O misera domus Herculea”: un contributo inedito alla fortuna del mito di Ercole nel primo umanesimo*

16.30-17.00: Discussione / Discuții

17.00-17.15: Pausa / Pauză

17.15-18.30

Moderatore / Moderator:
Luigi PIACENTE

17.15-17.45: Federica CALABRESE (Ministero della Cultura, Italia), *San Barbato di Benevento. Passaggio dal paganesimo al cristianesimo in terra campana*

17.45-18.15: Dan RUSCU (Universitatea „Babeș-Bolyai” din Cluj-Napoca), *La patena del vescovo Paternus di Tomi e il suo simbolismo*

18.15-18.30: Discussione / Discuții

19.00: Cena / Cina

Giovedì / Joi, 28 settembre / septembrie 2023

8.30-10.30

Moderatore / Moderator:
Simona NICOLAE

8.30-9.00: Claudia TĂRNĂUCEANU, Ana-Maria GÎNSAC (Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași), *Innovation et nouveauté dans la traduction biblique du*

latin au roumain. Les Psaumes de la Bible de Blaj (1760-1761) versus des versions antérieures [Travail réalisé dans le cadre du projet de recherche roPsalt – CNCS-UEFISCDI, code PN-III-P4-ID-PCE-2020-2939]

9.00-9.30: Daniel NIȚĂ-DANIELESCU (Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași), ***Metropolitan Veniamin Costachi’s Forewords – their role and importance in the age of “national renewal” and “European sentiment”***

9.30-10.00: Ioan-Augustin GURIȚĂ (Universitatea „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași), ***The source(s) of one Romanian 18th century version of The history of the fall of Constantinople***

10.00-10.30: Discussiune / Discuții

10.30-11.00: Nelu ZUGRAVU, ***Conclusioni***



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CLASSICAL AUTHORS IN SIDONIUS APOLLINARIS' LETTERS

Florica BOHÎLȚEA-MIHUȚ*
(University of Bucharest)

Keywords: *Sidonius Apollinaris, colour, rhetoric, classical literature, cultural interpretation, Late Antiquity.*

Abstract: *This article aims to highlight how Sidonius Apollinaris, a member of the 5th century Gallic and Christian aristocracy, employs vocabulary of colours to depict the physical and psychological portraits of his contemporaries, as discussed in his letters. By skilfully utilizing literary techniques and adopting models from classical authors he studied extensively, Sidonius demonstrates not only his robust education but also the continuity of the “color”’s semantic pluralism: “color” in its literal sense, “color” as a means of emphasizing human character, and “color” as a rhetorical concept.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *Sidonius Apollinaris, culoare, retorică, literatura clasică, interpretare culturală, antichitatea târzie.*

Rezumat: *Acest articol urmărește să pună în evidență modul în care Sidonius Apollinaris, membru al aristocrației gallice și creștine din veacul al V-lea, folosește vocabularul dedicat culorilor pentru a creiona portrete fizice și psihice ale unor personaje contemporane cu el, despre care vorbește în scrisorile sale. Printr-o admirabilă valorizare a procedeele literare și preluând modele întâlnite în autorii clasici pe care i-a studiat cu profunzime, Sidonius demonstrează nu doar solida sa educație, ci și continuitatea pluralismului semantic al conceptului de color, și anume: culoare în sens propriu, culoarea ca mijloc evidențiere a caracterului oamenilor și culoarea în calitate de concept retoric.*

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Argument

Gaius Sollius Modestus Apollinarius Sidonius¹ (c.430-480s) was born in Lyon, in a distinguished aristocratic family, in Roman Gallia much tried by barbarian invasions in the 5th century. Attaining a high education, Sidonius made himself noticed by Roman emperors who succeeded in power during his life. Our author reached high levels of the political and religious career – the prefecture of the city of Rome in 468, and the episcopate in the fortress of the Arverni around the year 470 – and also excelled on the literary field,² composing a series of panegyrics, poems, and 9 books of epistles published according to the model of Pliny the Younger (with whom he is frequently associated³).

Our paper is inscribed in a current topic of the contemporary historiography on Sidonius, which is the influences of classical authors on his writings.⁴ However, we have sought to examine it from a less

¹ Sidonius became a consistently researched author by scholars all over the world, from Europe (Ágnes Horváth, Sigrid Mratschek, Joop van Waarden, Gavin Kelly, Isabella Gualandri, Stefania Santelia, Luigi Piacente) and United States (Ralph Mathinsen) to Australia (Michael P. Hanaghan). For more details and further bibliography, see the substantial book on Sidonius' activity and life edited by Gavin Kelly and Joop van Waarden, *The Edinburgh Companion to Sidonius Apollinaris*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2020. Ian Wood recently added an interesting analysis of the Sidonius's diplomatic and legal activity among the Barbarians, Ian Wood, *The Silence of Sidonius*, in Alessandro Campus, Anna Chahoud, Gianfrancesco Lusini, Simona Marchesini (eds.), *Tempus Tacendi. Quando il silenzio comunica*, Verona, Alteritas, 2023, 213-228.

² Sidonius' entire work was edited at the end of the 19th century (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*) and then translated in other languages. For this paper, we used the English translation of Sidonius' epistles edited by professor W. A. Anderson of the University of Manchester in the Loeb Classical Library, in 1963.

³ For an interesting comparative analysis between Sidonius' books of letters and Pliny's nine books of epistles, see Roy Gibson, *Reading the Letters of Sidonius by the Book*, in Johannes A. van Waarden and Gavin Kelly (eds.), *New Approaches to Sidonius Apollinaris*, Leuven-Paris-Walpole, MA, Peeters, 2013, 195-219. See also Sigrid Mratschek, *The Letters Collection of Sidonius Apollinaris*, in Cristiana Sogno, Bradley K. Störin, Edward J. Watts (eds.), *Late Antique Letter Collections. A Critical Introduction and Reference Guide*, Oakland, University of California Press, 2016 (1st ed.), 309-336; Michael P. Hanaghan, *Reading Sidonius' Epistles*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019.

⁴ An overview of the classical and Christians influences on Sidonius' writing is exposed in the article written by Ágnes T. Horváth, *The education of Sidonius Apollinaris in the light of his citations*, *ACD*, 36, 2000, 151-162. In the same respect,

conventional perspective, focusing on how he employs colours and related terminology to craft the personalities of the individuals he portrayed in his letters. In the examined examples we have explored how colours or various shades (especially *rubor* and *pallor*, including their chromatic derivatives) are linked to the physiological, psychological, social and potentially ethnic traits of individuals. Recognizing of these associations and their cultural content in previous Latin works directed us to the classical influences of Sidonian writings.

We left aside the architectural and geographical descriptions, in which the matter itself substitutes for the colour – e.g., grass for green, rocks for sombre colours, marble for various hues. However, in our author's letters there are also associations between colour and matter (for example, the union of water or sky with blue colour – *caeruleus* – encompassing all its shades, strongly inspired by the works of his predecessors, especially Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historiae* and Seneca's *Quaestiones naturales*).

The Romans inherited from the Greeks a consistent philosophical reflexion about colours⁵ descending from pre-Socratics (especially

and regarding the intertextuality of Sidonius' writings, see Isabella Gualandri, *Sidonius' intertextuality*, in Gavin Kelly and Joop van Waarden, *op. cit.*, 279-316, especially 285-286 and notes 36 and 37. Concerning the cultural context and literary sources of influences in Sidonius' writings, see also André Loyen, *Sidoine Apollinaire et l'esprit précieux en Gaule aux derniers jours de l'empire*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1943; Isabella Gualandri, *Furtiva lectio: Studi su Sidonio Apollinare*, Milan, Cisalpino-Goliardica, 1979; Robert E. Colton, *Echoes of Juvenal in Sidonius Apollinaris*, *RPL*, 5, 1982, 59-74; Robert Thouvenel, *Sidoine Apollinaire et son temps: un poète dans la tourmente à la chute de l'Empire romain*, Cournon-d'Auvergne, Éd. Orionis, 1989; Jozef Veremans, *La présence de Virgile dans l'œuvre de Sidoine Apollinaire, évêque de Clermont-Ferrand*, *Aevum inter utrumque. Mélanges offerts à G. Sanders*, Steen Brugge (*Instrumenta Patristica* 23), 1991, 491-502; Jill Harries, *Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome, AD 407-485*, Oxford-New York, Oxford University Press, 1994; Frank M. Kaufmann, *Studien zu Sidonius Apollinaris*, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 1995; Robert E. Colton, *Some Literary Influences on Sidonius Apollinaris*, Amsterdam, Hakkert, 2000; Jean Le Guillou, *Sidoine Apollinaire: l'Auvergne et son temps*, Aurillac, Gerbert, 2002.

⁵ For a wider perspectives of research concerning the importance of the colour in the ancient Mediterranean world see Lisa Cleland, Karen Stears, and Glenys Davies (eds.), *Colours in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, BAR Publishing 2016 (*BAR International Series* 1267, 2004, publishing the proceedings of the international conference on *Colours in Antiquity* which took place in September 2001 at Edinburgh University); see also, Agnès Rouveret, Sandrine Dubel, Valérie Naas,

Empedocles). Plato expanded on this by examining two key concepts: the subjective context, rooted in human perception through sensory organs, and the cultural context, shaped by societal conventions. Aristotle added the possibility of knowledge due to the visibility generated by colours, and his pupil, Theophrastus, exploited the role of the light both as vector that conveys colours to the human eye and as principal cause of the perceived chromatic diversity. Building on these philosophical concerns about the understanding of nature and the human capacity for knowledge, the Stoic and Epicurean interpretation increased the subjective content of colour analysis, while the Academic sceptics developed the differences in colour perception depending on context and necessities.

In addition, the concept of colour, already used in the public speeches of the classical Athens having the *sense of complexion put on an argument, sometimes referring to the speaker's character, behaviour, or demeanour*, gained new substance, as rhetorical tool,⁶ which was latter much more intensively exploited by the Romans. Cicero often stressed in his works (*Tusculane Disputationes* or into the second *Academica* entitled *Lucullus*) the differences between perceiving, grasping and appearing. He also highlighted that the real *iudex* of a person is their soul, which evaluates what the mind transmits to it, regardless of the information collected throughout the sense organs which he defined as windows of the soul – *fenestrae animi*. What the *color* might convey is not only the state of nature but also the state of mind, at some point or in a particular context, which does not exclude the dynamic of the entire process of observation and comprehension. Immersed into rhetorical debates, *color* arrives to designate someone's moral vigour⁷ and even the moral substance of the state.⁸

Simultaneously a technical concept and a metaphorical category, *color* became integral to Roman literary style. It was used to describe

Couleurs et matières dans l'Antiquité, textes, techniques et pratiques, Paris, Éditions Rue d'Ulm, 2006. Particularly for the meanings of the colours in Ancient Rome and the adoption of the Greek interpretations on colours, with further bibliography, see Mark Bradley, *Colour and Meaning in Ancient Rome*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

⁶ *Ibidem*, 112-127.

⁷ Cic., *Fam.*, 1, 9, 15, speaking about his regrets that, after his return of exile, the Roman people did not observe the colour of his soul – in term of strength.

⁸ Cic., *Ad Att.*, 4, 18, referring to the Roman Republic after Gabinius' acquittal.

natural colour and the appropriateness of physical appearance, while the meanings of the artificial colour and excessiveness were reserved for the terms connected to the verb *fucō-fucare*. By the Early Empire, the concept of *color* had attained the status of an institutionalised rhetorical concept, abundantly present in Seneca the Elder's and Quintilian's works. Rezonning to this evolution of intellectual reflexion on colour, the linguistic apparatus (verbs, substantives, adjectives, or more complex literary constructions) equally covered the aesthetic, social, political, and religious fields. Sidonius' vocabulary represents not an exception, especially as he embraced writing in the ornate style.⁹

Colours and persons in Sidonius' Epistles¹⁰

Sidonius masterfully exploits various literary instruments (abundantly using epithets, comparisons, metaphors) to describe his subjects in context, whether they are individuals or social groups. Although Sidonius declared that he didn't want to make history, he often connected his descriptions to the historical events. Being a highly educated aristocrat, he incorporates the Greco-Roman culture, thoroughly acquired in school, into masterfully crafted and often elegantly refined literary expressions. A few examples that relate to *the evocative power of the colour in depicting someone* (in terms of physical or psychological portrait) could be suggestive for our demonstration.

The Visigoth king Theodoric the Second, for instance, has a chin, throat and neck suggesting "non-fat but fullness", he has a milk-white

⁹ For an in-depth analysis of the literary apparatus see Étienne Wolff, *Sidonius' vocabulary, syntax and style*, in Gavin Kelly and Joop van Waarden, *op. cit.*, 395-417. Analysing the numerous literary instruments used in Sidonius' writings, Etienne Wolf concludes: "Sidonius incorporates words and turns of phrase from late Latin, but his language remains close to the classical language. Yet he breathes new life into this language through the richness of his vocabulary and through stylistic devices. In lexical terms, one is struck by the colourfulness and variety of Sidonius' vocabulary, where archaisms coexist with neologisms, Greek words, poetic words, and abstract words. Sidonius does not hesitate to blend the most disparate elements (such as poetic words and prose words) in the same passage, or from accumulating unusual words (such as Greek terms). Within the individual sentence, great attention is given to the organisation of words and the balance of word groups (*cola*). The sentence must be lucid, abundant (with numerous adjectives), harmonious, and ornate" (*op. cit.*, 415).

¹⁰ We used the English version of these discussed epistles, edited by W. A. Anderson.

skin (*lactea cutis*) that “if closely looked at it takes on a youthful blush, for this tint is frequently produced in his case by modesty, not by ill-temper.”¹¹ The backdrop against which Theodoric’s image and his modesty are portrayed includes the political meeting hall, where the measure of the word and the wisdom of the act of leadership reign supreme, as well as the banquet hall where good taste is shown by quality tableware and abundance, but not excessiveness, of food – as Sidonius concludes, at the dinner of this king we encounter “Greek elegance, Gallic plenty, Italian briskness”.

Similarly, Flavius Nicetius Astyrius modestly blushed when he pronounced his speech at the beginning of his consulship in 449 at Arles: “All eyes turned at once towards Nicetius, the first men present were the first to look his way; the assembly called upon him not by a voice here or there, but by general acclamation; he *reddened*, and cast down his eyes, giving us such an earnest of *his modest nature* as gained him hardly fewer bravos than the eloquence he subsequently displayed (*cum quodam prologo pudoris uinum demissus inrubit*).”¹² And Sidonius continues, revealing that Nicetius “spoke with method, with gravity, with fire; if his ardour was great, his fluency was yet greater, and his science greatest of all; his coloured and golden language (*picta*

¹¹ Sidon., *Ep.*, I, 2, 3: *menti, gutturis, colli, non obesi sed succulenti, lactea cutis, quae propius inspecta iuuenali rubore suffunditur; namque hunc illi crebro colorem non ira sed uerecundia facit.*

¹² Sid., *Ep.*, VIII, 6, 6.

*oratio*¹³) seemed to enhance the splendour of the consul's palm-embroidered robe, steeped though it was in Sarranian dyes and rich with applied strips that rustled at every movement of the wearer".¹⁴

Sidonius also used this meaning of blushing for himself in the letter sent to bishop Lupus (in A.D: 478), containing the defence against Lupus' criticisms generated by the fact that Sidonius has firstly shared his work with others and not with Lupus.¹⁵ He also mentioned the manifestation of this genuine modesty (*uerecundia*) in the name of others¹⁶ – revealing the sense of honour which his friend Riothamus possessed.

This interesting association of the red-colour with *uerecundia* and *ira* mirrors a continuity of significance, recurrently exploited by the Roman writers at the end of the Republic and in the Early Empire, when a blushing countenance was interpreted as the proper signal that an individual possess a sense of shame (*pudor*).¹⁷ In his 11th epistle

¹³ The significance of *colour in speech* is evident in many of Sidonius' letters. E.g., in the 8th letter of the 5th book, written around 477, Sidonius encourages his friend Secundus to persist in his intellectual training, to perfect the skill of a *colourful satire*, which could enable Secundus to analyse more effectively both the tyrants of his time and his fellow citizens of Gallia: *tu tamen nihilo segnius operam saltim facetus satirarum coloribus intrepidus impende, nam tua scripta nostrorum uitii proficientibus tyrranopolitarum locupletabuntur* (*Ep.*, VIII, 5, 3). The theme of a colourful oratorical speech goes down to the end of the republic. In his treatise *De Oratore*, Cicero echoed Marcus Antonius' view that *a good orator could paint his audience* who, after listening, are *coloured* (*De orat.*, 2, 60). According to the same source (*De Orat.*, 3, 96-100), Crassus argued that every emotion – *motus animi* – has its own face, sound, and gesture (*uultus, sonus, and gestus*); therefore, a good orator should be concerned with embellishing and strengthening his rhetoric style with colour and substance, while avoiding the excessiveness in the make-up, clothing or his words (*oratio fuscata*), which may offend the public.

¹⁴ Sidon., *Ep.*, VIII, 6, 6: *atque ob hoc illi maximum Sophos non eloquentia prius quam uerecundia dedit, dixit disposite grauiter ardentem, magna acrimonia, maiore facundia, maxima disciplina, et illam Sarranis ebriam sucis inter crepitan-tia segmenta palmatam palus plus picta oratione, plus aurea conuenustauit.*

¹⁵ Sidon., *Ep.*, IX, 11.

¹⁶ Sidon., *Ep.*, III, 9.

¹⁷ See also Mark Bradley, *The Colour «blush» in Ancient Rome*, in Lisa Cleland, Karen Stears, and Glenys Davies (eds.), *Colours in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, BAR Publishing, 2016 (*BAR International Series* 1267, 2004), 117-121. For an interpretation of facial colour (blush versus paleness) as exploited in the ancient literature, especially prose fiction, see Donald Lateiner, *Blushes and pallor in ancient fictions*, *Helios*, 25/2, 1998, 163-189. It remains important for understanding facial appearances and expressions to refer to Elisabeth C. Evans' seminal study,

(which is assumed to be the earliest analysis on this topic), Seneca states that blushing is often an involuntary act arising from a physiological manifestation of the human body (regardless of age), and considers it a vice, *uitium*, which no life experience can remove.¹⁸ Praising the modesty (*uerecundia*) shown by the philosopher Papirius Fabianus, who was blushing whenever he was called to the Senate,¹⁹ Seneca nevertheless distinguishes this innocent shyness from violence of Sylla, which surfaced whenever he blushed.

Cicero also interpreted blushing as indicative of negative moral characteristics, reflecting the ill-temper, fury and violence of the soul, as well as envy, or criminal acts. The orator from Arpinum was convinced that a face turning red is the guilty look of a criminal during a trial.²⁰ The change in colour from white or livid to red – known as *mutatio coloris* – represented a visible chromatic variation in a criminal's face after committing a crime, offering a way of understanding their *persona* in a particular context.

Sidonius values this latter Ciceronian conviction in his 11th letter of his 1st Books, dated to the perilous year 459. At that time, an anonymous pamphlet against Majorian was put in circulation. In the pursuit of identifying the author(s) of the pamphlet's, various manoeuvres were undertaken and Sidonius himself, being in Gaul along with Catullinus, his friend from Rome, became a prime target for the accusers. Emperor Majorian had even journeyed to Gaul to placate unrest among the Gallo-Roman nobility and organized a *conuiuium* attended by the local elite, including Sidonius. Suspicions arose during the convivial conversation, fueled by the intriguing Paeonius (whom Sidonius labelled a *contionator*). At the emperor's prompting, Sidonius quickly composed satirical verses, delighting him and regaining his confidence (thereby achieving a *recussatio*). Paeonius refrains from persisting in the accusations and the new turn of atmosphere causes him a double *mutatio coloris*. Sidonius confesses that “the face of my demagogue, in which gloom had so recently taken the place of anger, began to pale;

Physiognomics in Ancient Worlds, in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 59/5, 1969, 1-101.

¹⁸ Sen., *Ep. ad Lucil.*, 11, 1-3 and 6-7.

¹⁹ Sen., *Ep. ad Lucil.*, 4.

²⁰ Cic., *Pro Cluent.*, 53.

indeed, it almost froze, as if the order had been given him to stretch out his neck to the drawn sword of the executioner".²¹

Concerning this livid colour, Sidonius also seems to operate with its previous cultural content. Many occurrences in the poems composed by Horace, Propertius and Ovid use *pallor* to signify the feeling or state of mind or soul in relation to someone whose innocence is destroyed, to an unhelpful person, or to someone touched by lovesickness. Usually, the adjectival forms of *pallor* (*pallidus*, *-a*, *-um*) are related to the sense of chromatic diminution, lack of splendour in human actions or speeches, terminal illness or death. Sidonius exploits this latter meaning in an epistle sent to his brother, Volusianus,²² detailing the end of the abbot Abraham's life. In another letter, he explores the connection between *pallor* and illness, writing about the nuances of chromatically imprinted lividness on the human body because of the deficiencies of a life affected by misfortunes. In this desperate situation, the population of Gaul is systematically plundered by the Visigoths and then left prey to a treaty in 475 that fragments the province, ceding parts to the barbarians. Sidonius describes²³ the lack of nutrition and vigour among the starving Arverni, evident in their livid, almost green hands, a hue associated with the colour of famine that also mirrors the rough face of the truth (*asperitas ueritatis*).

But we find *pallor* as more than just a lack of splendour in human activity when we read the 13th epistle of the 3rd book, sent to Sidonius' son, Apollinaris, in 469. The advice to avoid the company of a particular type of man, touched by immorality – to keep away of this *contubernia impudicorum* – represents the principal topic of this letter, with Gnatho as the main character. The latter is described as a real monster, seditious, miserly and furious, Sidonius says: "His whole face is as pale as if it were ever dolorous with infesting shades – *tota denique est miseri facies et pallida ueluti per horas umbris maestificata larualibus*". His entire physical appearance is downright repulsive and his body spreads a miasma around him that surpasses the sordid odour of the Ampsanctus cave (which was described by Vergil in his *Aeneid*, VII, 563-571). Sidonius claims that Gnatho smells like a goat

²¹ Sidon., *Ep.*, I, 11, 15: *contionatoris mei coeperunt ora pallere, in quae paulo ante post iram tristitia successerat; nec satis defuit quin gelarent tamquam ad exsertum praebere ceruices iussa mucronem.*

²² Sidon., *Ep.*, VII, 17.

²³ Sidon., *Ep.*, VII, 7, 3-4.

– *hircosus*. This unpleasant odour is a recurring theme in Ovid's works,²⁴ where cleanness of the body and teeth is advised to prevent such goat-like stench from clinging to humans. Gnatho's face – who as a distinctive character, seems directly inspired by Terence's work *Eunuchus* – hides, says Sidonius, nothing good. Although Gnatho is a *homo elegans et peruenustus*, he is dirtier and more deformed than a half-burnt corpse (*sordidior atque deformior est cadauere ... semi-combusto*). And Sidonius conclude: "his tongue is more detestable still than his other members. He keeps it busy in the service of the vilest prurience; but it is most dangerous of all to patrons with anything to hide. For those in luck he belauds, but those who are unfortunate he betrays; let a tempting moment but urge to disclosure of a friend's secret, and instantly this Spartacus will break all bars and open every seal."²⁵

Other occurrences demonstrate how Sidonius, through various poetic methods, brings older literary motifs related to colour to relevance in his time, whether discussing a single hue or a broader chromatic range.

Purpura, as an aesthetic category, has been connected since ancient times with the religious domain and funeral rituals.²⁶ Later, it became associated with the eastern geographical spaces (often substituted with *conchylium* or with other literary structures using the adjective *conchyliatus*, *-a*, *-um*). Julius Caesar and Augustus restricted the wearing of purple garments to ceremonies due to their symbolic value. However, during the early empire, *purpura* became a sign of social status ascent (as evidenced by Martial's *Epigrams*²⁷). This latter meaning appears recurrently in Sidonius' letters and is sometimes contextually particularized, as is the case of the Roman emperor Petronius Maximus. Although this emperor exchanged plebeian clothes for the purple of Tyr and Tarentum, the lack of dignified behaviour and the exaggerated luxury of his table justify Sidonius in associating Petronius with Sardanapallus²⁸.

Variety of colours (*uarietas*, *uersicolor*) is magnificently introduced through chromatic contrasts (arranged in an almost scenographic

²⁴ Ovid, *Ars Amat.*, III, 193-204.

²⁵ Sidon., *Ep.*, III, 13, 9-10.

²⁶ Polyb., VI, 53.

²⁷ Mart., *Ep.*, X, 5 and 10.

²⁸ Sidon., *Ep.*, II, 13.

manner), suggesting social, even ethnic, differences. The 20th letter of the 4th book vividly depicts the wealth of a barbaric prince and the splendour of his attire. The young prince Sigismer is placed in the middle of a *pompa* organised according to a tribal fashion, having the gifts for his father-in-law's domestic group carried both in front of him and behind his royal suite. Sigismer walks on foot, exhibiting a charming modesty and elegance enhanced by the chromatic harmony between the colours of his body (skin and hair) and the nuances of his clothes. Sidonius describes Sigismer's appearance (*cultus*) as follows: "flame-red mantle, with much glint of ruddy gold, and gleam of snowy silken tunic"; "his fair hair, red cheeks and white skin" harmoniously resonate with the three hues of his equipment". In contrast to this "warm" and delightful image of the prince, his companions inspire respect and even fear. "Their feet were laced in boots of bristly hide reaching to the heels; ankles and legs were exposed: they wore high tight tunics of varied colour hardly descending to their bare knees, the sleeves covering only the upper arm. Green mantles they had with crimson borders; baldrics supported swords hung from their shoulders, and pressed on sides covered with cloaks of skin secured by brooches. No small part of their adornment consisted of their arms; in their hands they grasped barbed spears and missile axes; their left sides were guarded by shields, which flashed with tawny golden bosses and snowy silver borders, betraying at once their wealth and their good taste. Though the business in hand was wedlock, Mars was no whit less prominent in all this pomp than Venus."²⁹ By drawing attention to these chromatic aspects (including the qualities of the colours), Sidonius skilfully communicates

²⁹ Sidon., *Ep.*, IV, 2-3: *Regulorum autem, sociorumque comitantum forma et in pace terribilis: quorum pedes primi perone setoso talos adusque uinciebantur; genua, crurra, suraeque sine tegmine. Praeter hoc uestis alta, stricta, uersicolor, uix appropinquans poplitibus exsertis, manicae sola brachiorum principia uelantes, uiridia saga limbis marginata puniceis: penduli ex humero gladii balteis supercurrentibus strinxerant clausa bullatis latera rhenonibus. Eo quo comebantur ornatu, muniebantur: lanceis uncatas, securibusque missilibus dextrae refertae, Clypeis laeuam partem adumbrantibus, quorum lux in orbibus niuea, fulua in umbronibus, ita census prodebat, ut stadium. Cuncta prorsus huiusmodi, ut in actione thalamorum non appareret minor Martis pompa quam Veneris.*

the distinctions in age, status, and intention of the members of this barbarian group, echoing the literary innovation of Lucretius,³⁰ who viewed the theatre as a symbolic canvas where colours reflected the hierarchy of social statuses.

This theme of the chromatic variety of clothes has a long tradition in Latin literature, reflecting the Romans' perspective on luxury, and especially women's luxury. Despite facing heavy criticism in traditionalist discourses during the Late Republic, legal measures aimed at stopping the luxury proved to be ineffective.³¹ Nevertheless, during the early days of the Empire, Ovid³² incorporated the rich diversity of clothing into the components of civilization (encompassing both *ciuilitas* and *urbanitas*). In Sidonius' letters, the use of chromatic variety to illustrate the level of *ciuilitas* seems intended culturally bridging the gap between the barbarian world and the Roman one.

Conclusions

The way Sidonius employs colour-related vocabulary to enhance the characters depicted within his letters, intertwining exquisite poetic imagery with rhetorical conventions, serves as evidence not only of the refinement of his writing, at time challenging even to his contemporaries, but also his profound knowledge and understanding of classical culture.

Sidonius' letters continue to follow patterns of correlating colours with human behaviours that can be traced back to classical authors, giving preference to cultural interpretations from the early days of the Roman Empire (notably authors such as Ovid, Seneca the rhetorician and philosopher, Quintilian, or the satirical poets), although Sidonius's work is also significantly enriched by the literature from the

³⁰ Lucr., *De Rerum Nat.*, 4, 72-89.

³¹ See also, with further bibliography, Fl. (Bohîlțea) MiHuț, *Modele sociale în Roma republicană, între luxus și austeritas – pragmatism sau clișeu?*, in A. Ciupa-lă, L. Constantiniu (eds.), *Orizonturi și reflecții în cunoașterea istorică*, Editura Universității, București, 2009, 373-413; for an enlarged perspective on Roman *luxus* see also Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008; Kenneth D. S. Lapatin, *Luxus. The Sumptuous Arts of Greece and Rome*, Los Angeles, The Paul Getty Museum, 2015.

³² Ovid, *Ars Amat.*, III, 109-124; see also the meaning of the *color urbanitatis* in Cic., *Brut.*, 170-172.

last republican centuries (especially the works of Terence, Plautus, Virgil, Horace and Catullus).

In Sidonius' letters, the negative psychological traits and alterity – once conveyed through diverse and striking colour combinations as well as by the dark colours –, no longer automatically imply a devaluation of distinction related to ethnic group (such as *atratis* connected with Africa and Africans) or gender (the adjective *uersicolor* once linked with the *luxus* and *luxuria feminarum*). Feminine characters are, however, extremely little present in the epistles. Nevertheless, echoes of the earlier interpretations, expressed by orators at the end of the Republic (as is Marcus Antonius, the orator, quoted by Cicero), still resonate in Sidonius' epistles. These interpretations suggested that while a colourful rhetorical style (referred to as *picta oratio*) might be more effective, excessive ornamentations was associated with the feminine realm, therefore, should be avoided. As for non-Roman individuals (i.e. the Barbarians), they are no longer automatically subjected to negative stereotypes.³³ Late Antiquity witnessed significant demographic changes, and the cohabitation of Romans with barbarians, even collaboration with them (as mentioned by other authors, such as Salvianus), imbues Sidonius' descriptions of people with vividness and contemporary perspective.

³³ Sidonius employs not only literary constructions featuring chromatic vocabulary but also other methods to depict people from the barbarian environment. For instance, enhancing cultural communication and diplomatic dialogue can be more effective if Roman delegations or Gallic aristocracy make efforts to converse in the barbarians' own language, as mentioned in the 5th letter of the 5th book, addressed to his friend, Syagrius. Furthermore, Sidonius also highlights the cultural refinement of these barbarians. As previously mentioned, he describes the splendid yet refined royal court of the king Theodoric II. Additionally, he references a silver plate inscribed with Latin verses intended for the Visigothic queen Ragnahilda, as noted in the 8th epistle of the 4th book.

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