THE DATE OF AMBROSE'S 'DE VIRGINITATE'[1]

Two dates have so far been proposed for Ambrose's 'De virginitate'; it has not been possible to adduce decisive evidence in favour of either. The first date to be put forward was 377-378. This hypothesis was based on the apparent references in the work to Ambrose's 'De virginibus'[2] and 'De viduis'[3]. Since both these treatises belong to 377[4], it was assumed that the 'De virginitate' had been written shortly after them[5]. However a second date of 388-390 was then posited by Wilbrand[6]. His case was founded on alleged echoes of the 'Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam' and on the extensive use of 'Song of Songs', which is also characteristic of the 'Expositio de psalmo CXVIII'; he placed both these works in the late eighties. These arguments were rejected by Palanque[7], who pointed out that 'Song of Songs' had already been utilized in 'De virginibus' and that the parallels with the commentary on Luke are due simply to a common source in the bible. Wilbrand's date has however been accepted by Dassmann[8]. Of late there would seem in fact to be a tendency to

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[1]   Citation of Latin works follows the method of *Thesaurus linguae Latinae: Index Librorum Scriptorum Inscriptionum,* Leipzig ²1990. For Latin Fathers the editions used are those given in H.J. Frede, Kirchenschriftsteller: Verzeichnis und Sigel, Freiburg/Br. 1981 (*Vetus Latina* 1/1), and in the same author's 'Kirchenschriftsteller: Aktualisierungsheft, Freiburg/Br. 1984' (*Vetus Latina* 1/1A) and 'Kirchenschriftsteller: Aktualisierungsheft, Freiburg/Br. 1988' (*Vetus Latina* 1/1B). Greek patristic works are cited according to the conventions adopted in G.W.H. Lampe, A Patristic Greek Lexicon, Oxford 1961-8, xi-xlv; the editions used are those given in M. Geerard and F. Glorie, Clavis Patrum Graecorum, I-V, Turnhout 1974-1987.

[2]   *Virginit.* 5,24-26.

[3]   *Virginit.* 8,46.

[4]   Cf. (e.g.) R. Gryson, Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise, Louvain 1968, 37 („Chronologie des œuvres d'Ambroise: Dernier état de la question").

[5]   So G. Rauschen, Jahrbücher der christlichen Kirche unter dem Kaiser Theodosius dem Grossen, Freiburg/Br. 1897, 565 and n. 2 („378"); M. von Schanz, Geschichte der römischen Literatur bis zum Gesetzgebungswerk des Kaisers Justinian, IV 1, Munich ²1914, 343 („nicht lange nach *De virginibus*").

[6]   W. Wilbrand, Zur Chronologie einiger Schriften des hl. Ambrosius, in: Historisches Jahrbuch 41, 1921, 1-7.

[7]   J.-R. Palanque, Saint Ambroise et l'empire romain, Paris 1933, 494-495.

[8]   E. Dassmann, Die Frömmigkeit des Kirchenvaters Ambrosius von Mailand, Münster 1965 (Münst. Beitr. z. Theol. 29), 137, n. 6. A date of 388-390 is also given by Gryson, op. cit. (n. 4), 37. He preferred 378 in 'La typologie sacerdotale de saint Ambroise et ses sources', diss. Louvain 1966, LVII.

take a date of 388-390 for granted[9]. It is the purpose of the present article to adduce some fresh evidence which points to a date of 377-378 for the 'De virginitate'.

Jerome produced his own 'Libellus de virginitate servanda' (epist. 22) in the spring of 384[10]. The work is a cento of striking formulations that have been borrowed from other people[11]. Tertullian in particular has been laid under heavy contribution[12]. However Jerome has also appropriated phraseology from Ambrose[13]. Evidence will be adduced below to demonstrate that Jerome has borrowed from the 'De virginitate' as well. This treatise must accordingly be earlier than Jerome's 'Libellus'. Wilbrand's date of 388-390 cannot therefore be right.

However Jerome has not merely appropriated a number of impressive phrases from the 'De virginitate' after his fashion. It would also seem that he has delibera-

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[9] While a date „um 377" had been given by Frede, op. cit. (n. 1; 1981), 69, the same author expresses a preference for „388/90" in op. cit. (n. 1; 1984), 22. The 'De virginitate' is said to have been „composto nel 390 circa" by F.E. Consolino, *Veni huc a Libano*: La *Sponsa* del Cantico dei Cantici come modello per le vergini negli scritti esortatori di Ambrogio, in: Athenaeum n.s. 62, 1984, 410. F. Gori, Sant'Ambrogio: Opere morali II/I. Verginità e vedovanza, Milan–Rome 1989 (S. Ambr. Episc. Med. Op. 14/1), 69-70, also inclines toward the later dating. On the other hand M.G. Mara, Ambrose of Milan, Ambrosiaster and Nicetas, in: Patrology, IV, ed. A. di Berardino, Westminster, Md. 1986 (updated Engl. transl. of the Italian ed., Turin 1978), 168, favours a date „around 378". Most recently the new TLL index (op. cit. [n. 1]), 8, withholds judgment on the question of the work's date.

[10] Cf. F. Cavallera, Saint Jérôme: Sa vie et son œuvre, I 2, Louvain–Paris 1922 (Spic. Sacr. Lovan. 2), 24-25.

[11] Cf. the present writer, Some Features of Jerome's Compositional Technique in the *Libellus de virginitate servanda* (epist. 22), in: Philologus 136, 1992, 234-255. Owing to his magpie mind, his phenomenal memory and the extreme derivativeness of his compositional method Jerome displays an astonishing propensity to remember and reproduce impressive phrases from the works of others.

[12] Cf. the present writer, *Istae sunt, quae solent dicere*: Three Roman Vignettes in Jerome's *Libellus de virginitate servanda* (Epist. 22), in: MusHelv. 49, 1992, 131-140; id., Tertullian's *De idololatria* and Jerome, forthcoming in: Augustinianum 33, 1993; id., Tertullian's *De ieiunio* and Jerome's *Libellus de virginitate servanda* (Epist. 22), forthcoming in WS. A number of borrowings had already been identified by P. Petitmengin, Saint Jérôme et Tertullien, in: Jérôme entre l'Occident et l'Orient: XVIᵉ centenaire du départ de saint Jérôme de Rome et de son installation à Bethléem, ed. Y.-M. Duval, Paris 1988, 43-59. Petitmengin attributed them to a „spiritual affinity" between the two men (pp. 55-56). They are in fact due to Tertullian's unique flair as a coiner of striking phrases; cf. Jerome's judgment at epist. 58,10,1 (*Tertullianus creber est in sententiis*).

[13] Some examples of borrowing from the *De virginibus* are registered by Y.-M. Duval, L'originalité du *De virginibus* dans le mouvement ascétique occidental: Ambroise, Cyprien, Athanase, in: Ambroise de Milan: XVIᵉ centenaire de son élection épiscopale, ed. Y.-M. Duval, Paris 1974, 64-65, n. 271. Jerome borrows less heavily from Ambrose than from Tertullian. It is again Jerome's „spiritual affinity" with the latter which is invoked to explain this disparity by G. Nauroy, Jérôme, lecteur et censeur de l'exégèse d'Ambroise, in: Duval, op. cit. (n. 12), 179. A more likely reason is Ambrose's relative lack of interest in the sort of striking formulation at which Tertullian excelled; cf. Jerome's comment at Didym. spir. praef. p. 104^A (*nihil ibi dialecticum, nihil virile atque districtum … sed totum flaccidum, molle, nitidum atque formosum*).

tely taken upon himself to outdo this work. There is reason to believe that already in 384 Jerome was ill-disposed towards Ambrose[14]. Twice within the same decade Jerome attempted to eclipse works by Ambrose: his translation of Didymus' treatise on the Holy Spirit was intended to upstage Ambrose's work on the same topic, while his sole reason for translating Origen's homilies on Luke was to supersede the Ambrosian commentary on the same gospel[15]. There was accordingly every reason for Jerome to try to outmatch the 'De virginitate'.

Much of the 'De virginitate' consists of what amounts to a commentary on 'Song of Songs'. Such an extensive treatment naturally invited emulation: it would seem that Jerome has taken up the challenge. While Ambrose had quoted twenty-three verses of the Song, Jerome cites sixteen. However in Ambrose these texts had occupied more than half of the treatise; Jerome on the other hand compresses his sixteen citations into a little over two chapters (24,6-26,4). The striking density and succinctness which mark Jerome's treatment create an impressive contrast with Ambrose's long-windedness. Jerome evidently intends the reader to notice the difference.

Many of the verses from 'Song of Songs' which Jerome quotes are the same ones that had also been cited by Ambrose[16]. At the same time there is a notable contrast between the abstractness of Ambrose's allegorical interpretation and Jerome's vivid and concrete approach. Ambrose repeatedly applies the texts to the divine Word[17]; Jerome on the contrary speaks very graphically of the virgin's spouse. A specific example may be adduced. Ambrose refers on a number of occasions to 'Song of Songs' 5,7: *invenerunt me custodes qui circumeunt civitatem; percusserunt et vulneraverunt me et tulerunt pallium meum custodes murorum.* At 8,48 of the 'De virginitate' the garment which the watchmen take away is an *amictus prud-*

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[14] It is customary to suppose that Jerome's relations with Ambrose remained amicable until 385; cf. A. Paredi, S. Gerolamo e s. Ambrogio, in: Mélanges Eugène Tisserant, V 2, Vatican City 1964 (Studi e Testi 235), 183-198. Jerome does in fact mention Ambrose's 'De virginibus' in the 'Libellus': the reader is referred to its treatment of *molestiae nuptiarum*. Here the work is described in the following terms: *in quibus tanto se fudit eloquio, ut, quidquid ad laudem virginum pertinet, exquisierit, ordinarit, expresserit* (22,3). These words are generally seen as an expression of unqualified praise; cf. most recently J. Fontaine, L'esthétique littéraire de la prose de Jérôme jusqu'à son second départ en Orient, in: Duval, op. cit. (n. 12), 332 („admiration chaleureuse"). On the other hand P. Nautin, L'activité littéraire de Jérôme de 387 à 392, in: Rev. Théol. et Philos. 115, 1983, 258, has argued that the words *exquisierit, ordinarit, expresserit* show that Jerome regarded Ambrose as a mere plagiarist. It has also been argued by the present writer, Athanasius' Letter to virgins and Jerome's *Libellus de virginitate servanda* (Epist. 22), forthcoming in RivFil, that here Jerome has specifically in mind Ambrose's substantial debt to Athanasius. Criticism of the 'De virginibus' is also detected in ch. 2 of the 'Libellus' by Duval, art. cit. (n. 13), 64, n. 270.

[15] It is well-known that Ambrose on the other hand studiously ignores Jerome.

[16] Viz. Cant. 3,2; 3,4; 4,12; 5,2; 5,3; 5,4; 5,6; 5,7. A number of the verses that are cited here by Jerome do not recur elsewhere in his œuvre.

[17] Cf. (e.g.) 13,79; 13,80; 13,81; 13,84; 14,91; 14,92; 15,95; 16,98.

entiae. At 12,76 these watchmen are *intelligibiles custodes*, while at 14,92 they remove the garment of *actus corporalis*. Jerome's treatment of the same verse is by contrast characteristically down to earth. He introduces it as follows: *vulneraberis, nudaberis et gemebunda narrabis* ... (25,3). In *nudaberis* we have a prurient addition: removal of the *pallium* has been converted into a scene of total feminine nakedness[18].

At one point in the 'De virginitate' Ambrose had briefly combined the two themes of 'windows' and 'doors' (13,79-81). Jerome would appear to have taken his cue from this passage in order to turn the whole of chapter twenty-six of the 'Libellus' into a mosaic of biblical citation and allusion that is grouped very picturesquely around the twin *Stichwörter* 'door' and 'window'[19]. This scriptural cento is further enhanced by two second-hand conceits. One is the following: *Danihel in cenaculo suo – neque enim manere poterat in humili – fenestras ad Hierusalem apertas habuit* (26,4)[20]. The other conceit would appear to have come from the 'De virginitate'.

Here Jerome asks: *quid enim necesse est, ut cordis tui ostia clausa sint sponso?* (26,3). At 12,72 of the 'De virginitate' Ambrose had urged the virgin *fores tui cordis aperire*. In the same paragraph Ambrose refers to 'Song of Songs' 5,3; Jerome cites this verse just three lines earlier[21]. The phrase 'doors of your heart' is not common[22]. It would accordingly seem that Jerome has borrowed this striking for-

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[18] A similarly salacious expansion occurs at 25,1, where Jerome cites 'Song of Songs' 5,4: *misit manum suam per foramen* ... Ambrose quoted the verse at 11,60 and 13,79, where it was spiritualized. Jerome however adds his own lubricious climax by making Christ fondle the virgin's belly: in the LXX there is no physical contact.

[19] Cf. p. 181,4; 7; 9; 10; 12; 16; 17; p. 182,1; 5; 6; 8; 9 of I. Hilberg's text (CSEL 54, Vienna–Leipzig 1910). One of the texts besides 'Song of Songs' which Jerome employs here (26,4) is Jeremiah 9,21; it had already occurred in the corresponding passage of 'De virginitate' (13,81).

[20] The parenthesis *neque enim manere poterat in humili* is not strictly relevant to Jerome's argument here. He has taken the conceit from elsewhere. Origen had maintained that in the bible 'upper room' signifies the lofty and exalted mind (hom. in Jer. 19,13). A similar idea had occurred in Gregory of Nyssa, Spir. p. 697^C (on Acts 1,13 „they went up into an upper room"): τὰ ἄνω φρονοῦσι ... τοῦ ὑπερῴου τῆς ὑψηλῆς πολιτείας ὄντες οἰκήτορες; cf. also Gregory Nazianzen, or. 41,12. These two works belong to 375 and 379 respectively; cf. J. Daniélou, La chronologie des œuvres de Grégoire de Nysse, in: Stud. Patr. 7 (= TU 92), 1966, 162; J. Bernardi, La prédication des pères cappadociens: Le prédicateur et son auditoire, Paris 1968 (Publ. de la Fac. des Lettr. et Sc. Hum. de l'Univ. de Montpellier 30), 157. Jerome refers again to Daniel's worship at In Ezech. 8,15 ll. 339-341, but without the conceit.

[21] Shortly beforehand (12,70) Ambrose had quoted 'Song of Songs' 5,2; it is cited by Jerome five lines earlier. Ambrose had also referred to 'Song of Songs' 5,6 shortly afterwards (12,75); Jerome does so in the same line as the phrase currently under consideration.

[22] TLL VI 1, coll. 1057,13-1065,62 (s.v. *foris*), provides no other example of the combination of *fores* with *cor*. At TLL IX 2, col. 1156,53-56 (s.v. *ostium*), three further instances are given of the collocation *ostium cordis*.

mulation from the present passage of the 'De virginitate'[23]. He then proceeds to elaborate the conceit in the next sentence: *aperiantur Christo, claudantur diabolo secundum illud: 'si spiritus potestatem habentis ascenderit super te, locum ne dederis ei'*. Here the opening antithesis has been appropriated from Cyprian's 'De dominica oratione': *cludatur contra adversarium pectus et soli deo pateat* (ch. 31)[24]. Such multiple use of sources is characteristic of the 'Libellus'[25].

There would appear to be one other phrase in chapter twenty-six of Jerome's 'Libellus' which has been taken from the 'De virginitate'. In the middle of the chapter Jerome introduces a pair of arresting imperatives: *surge et aperi* (26,3). Exactly the same injunction had been employed in the 'De virginitate': *surge, aperi* (11,60). Ambrose continues the sentence with a reference to Revelation 3,20. The same text is quoted by Jerome only four lines earlier.

The preceding chapter of Jerome's treatise also contains two formulations that have evidently been inspired by Ambrose's 'De virginitate'. The first occurs in conjunction with 'Song of Songs' 3,2, which runs: *surgam et circumibo in civitate, in foro et in plateis et quaeram, quem dilexit anima mea*. Jerome glosses this text with the following pronouncement: *sponsus in plateis non potest inveniri* (25,3). Ambrose had also quoted 'Song of Songs' 3,2. In connection with it he too had employed the same statement: *non in plateis Christus reperitur* (8,46)[26]. The second formulation to be considered in this chapter of the 'Libellus' occurs five lines later: *si autem hoc exiens patitur illa, quae dixerat ...*[27], *quid de nobis fiet?* (25,4). Precisely the same *a fortiori* argument had been used by Ambrose: *cum hoc Petro dicitur, quid de nobis censetur?* (10,57). Ambrose employs it in conjunction with 'Song of Songs' 5,3. Jerome cites this text shortly afterwards at 26,2[28].

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[23] Jerome changes *fores* to *ostia* because he has employed the latter term throughout the chapter.

[24] The borrowing is not registered by S. Deléani, Présence de Cyprien dans les œuvres de Jérôme sur la virginité, in: Duval, op. cit. (n. 12), 61-82. Typically Jerome has streamlined his source. The scriptural citation in the second half of the sentence is a fusion of 'Ecclesiastes' 10,4 and 'Ephesians' 4,27; Jerome would seem to have borrowed this combination of texts from Origen, who had employed it at Hom. in Num. 27,12 and Comm. in Eph. 20.

[25] Cf. the present writer, *Oras: loqueris ad sponsum; legis: ille tibi loquitur* (Jerome, epist. 22,25,1), in: Vig. Christ. 46, 1992, 149-150, n. 44.

[26] Ambrose had then proceeded to develop this theme with a lengthy series of rather flaccid antitheses. Jerome on the other hand characteristically appends a striking pun on *plateae* by quoting Matthew 7,14: *arta et angusta via est, quae ducit ad vitam*. Again this piece of cleverness has come from elsewhere. Origen's commentary on Luke 10,10 (εἰς ἣν δ' ἂν πόλιν εἰσέλθητε, καὶ μὴ δέχωνται ὑμᾶς, ἐξελθόντες εἰς τὰς πλατείας αὐτῆς ...) had contained the following gloss (fr. in Lc. 161 [a]): αἱ μὴ παραδεχόμεναι τοὺς ἀποστόλους ... πόλεις ἔχουσι πλατείας ἀνάλογον τῷ 'πλατεῖα ἡ πύλη καὶ εὐρύχωρος ἡ ὁδὸς ἡ ἄγουσα εἰς τὴν ἀπώλειαν' (Mt. 7,13).

[27] Here Jerome quotes 'Song of Songs' 5,2 and 1,13.

[28] Jerome follows his rhetorical question with further citation of scripture: *quid de nobis fiet, quae adhuc adulescentulae sumus, quae sponsa intrante cum sponso remanemus extrinsecus?* Here 'Song of Songs' 6,7 has been linked to a paraphrase of Matthew 25,10-12.

It would seem possible to identify two further instances in Jerome's 'Libellus' of striking phraseology which has been borrowed from the 'De virginitate'. Both of them occur in chapter thirty-nine; they accordingly stand well outside the section of the 'Libellus' in which Jerome is attempting to outdo Ambrose in his treatment of 'Song of Songs'. Chapter thirty-nine is however highly derivative. Within the space of half a dozen lines for example Jerome borrows no fewer than three arresting phrases from Tertullian[29]. It would therefore be no surprise to find that here too Jerome had appropriated wording from the 'De virginitate'.

Jerome begins the chapter by describing the ascetic who loves Christ and repudiates the world. Part of this description is the following striking statement: *qui conmortuus est domino suo et conresurrexit* (39,1). Here Hilberg's *apparatus fontium* refers to two passages of scripture[30]. The first is II Timothy 2,11: *nam si conmortui sumus, et convivemus*. The second is Colossians 3,1: *igitur si conresurrexistis Christo, quae sursum sunt quaerite*. However neither of these texts comes at all close to what Jerome actually says. A passage of Ambrose's 'De virginitate' on the other hand provides an exact parallel: *commoriare cum Christo et cum Christo resurgas* (13,82). The formulation is made especially memorable by the very striking chiastic anadiplosis[31]. The context is the same as in Jerome: here Ambrose is referring to love of Christ and hatred of the world[32]. Moreover the Ambrosian passage occurs immediately after the play on the *Stichwörter* 'door' and 'window' which has evidently inspired Jerome's twenty-sixth chapter. It would seem therefore that Jerome is also indebted to the 'De virginitate' for his arresting formulation in the present passage.

Jerome has characteristically enhanced Ambrose's phrasing. While omitting the rather mannered anadiplosis, he inserts a discreet assonance (*con- ... con-*). Jerome also uses the same formulation again several years later in his translation of

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Jerome has taken this combination of texts from his translation of Origen, Hom. in cant. 1,5 p. 35,1-2: *tale quiddam et adulescentulae sustinent; introeunte sponso forinsecus remanent.* He has also appropriated the actual wording of the second clause.

[29] *In utero, ut nascatur, expectat* (39,2) comes from 'De patientia' 3,2 (*nasci se deus patitur: in utero matris expectat*); cf. Deléani, art. cit. (n. 24), 77. *Blanditiis deridetur* (39,2) has been lifted verbatim from 'De carne Christi' 4 1. 13. *Taceo, quod ... crucifigitur* (39,3) is suggested by 'De patientia' 3,9: *taceo quod figitur.*

[30] Op. cit. (n. 19), 205.

[31] For this rhetorical figure cf. H. Lausberg, Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik: Eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft, Munich 1960, 315.

[32] Ambrose cites Colossians 2,20 (*quid adhuc velut viventes de hoc mundo decernitis?*) and ends the paragraph with *cum Christum quaeritis* ... Jerome opens with *qui ... amat Christum* and refers to Philippians 3,8 (*omnia detrimentum feci et arbitror ut stercora*) and Ecclesiastes 1,14 (*vidi quae fiunt cuncta sub sole et ecce universa vanitas*); for the identification of these scriptural allusions cf. E. Klostermann's review of Hilberg, in: GGA 173, 1911, 194.

Origen's homilies on Luke: *commortui sumus tunc illo moriente et conresurreximus resurgenti* (Hom. Orig. in Luc. 14 p. 83,15-17)[33]. Here Jerome has enhanced the wording still further: to the assonance he has appended a twofold *derivatio* (*commortui ... moriente*; *conresurreximus resurgenti*)[34]. Jerome has significantly added this very striking formulation to his original: Origen had made no mention at all of 'resurrection' and had simply said συναπεθάνομεν αὐτῷ ἀποθνήσκοντι τότε.

The final item of phraseology which Jerome has appropriated from the 'De virginitate' occurs later in the same chapter of the 'Libellus'; there Jerome is arguing that death is the only fit recompense for Christ's suffering on our behalf. He expresses himself as follows: *haec est sola digna retributio, cum sanguis sanguine conpensatur et redempti cruore Christi pro redemptore libenter obcumbimus* (39,3). The impressive phrase *sanguis sanguine conpensatur* has evidently been inspired by the similar formulation in the 'De virginitate': *sanguinem solvit, sanguinem debes* (19,127). Again the Ambrosian context is the same as in Jerome: Ambrose too is referring to Christ's sacrifice and our reciprocation.

Once again Jerome has made a number of stylistic improvements. While Ambrose's formulation is undoubtedly striking, the strict parallelism renders it syntactically rather monotonous. By way of relief Jerome introduces an arresting polyptoton: *sanguis sanguine*. He also restates the point with a second clause which follows Behaghel's law and contains an elegant *derivatio* (*redempti* / *redemptore*). By a characteristic piece of self-imitation Jerome then reproduces this impressive sentence at a later date in one of his Tractates on the Psalms: *haec est sola retributio digna, pro sanguine sanguinem retribuere, ut liberati a salvatore pro salvatore libenter sanguinem fundamus* (I p. 243 ll. 91-93). Again the wording of this passage marks an improvement even over that of the 'Libellus'. Here the second clause is characterized by an elaborately chiastic paronomasia: *liberati a salvatore pro salvatore libenter*[35].

Borrowing from a work does not of course prevent Jerome from attacking it[36]. There would seem in fact to be one such attack on Ambrose's 'De virginitate' at the

[33] The translation was published „non post 392"; cf. TLL index (op. cit. [n. 1]), 115.

[34] For the figure cf. Lausberg, op. cit. (n. 31), 328-329.

[35] It has been maintained that these Tractates are in fact a translation from Origen; cf. V. Peri, Omelie origeniane sui salmi: Contributo all' identificazione del testo latino, Vatican City 1980 (Studi e Testi 289). Even if this were so, the words currently under consideration will still be Jerome's own: Origen was notoriously indifferent to stylistic ornament. Jerome on the other hand was regularly in the habit of enhancing the style of the material he was translating; cf. E. Klostermann, Die Überlieferung der Jeremiahomilien des Origenes, Leipzig 1897 (TU N.F. 1,3), 23-26. An example of this propensity from his translation of Origen's homilies on Luke was noted above. However Peri's thesis has recently been subjected to a convincing rebuttal by P. Jay, Jérôme à Bethléem: les *Tractatus in Psalmos*, in: Duval, op. cit. (n. 12), 367-80. It would seem therefore that we are dealing with an original work of Jerome after all.

[36] One might compare the way in which Jerome borrows heavily from Tertullian's 'De ieiunio'; cf. art. cit. (n. 12). The work is violently anti-Catholic.

start of the 'Libellus'. Here Jerome concludes his introduction with the assurance to
the virgin that in his own work there will be no *rhetorici pompa sermonis, quae te
iam inter angelos statuat et beatitudine virginitatis exposita mundum subiciat pedi-
bus tuis* (2,2). The phrase *mundum subiciat pedibus tuis* would seem to be aimed
specifically at the 'De virginitate'. Towards the end of the treatise Ambrose had as-
serted that the virgin and everything pertaining to her were *supra mundum.* The
point had been driven home by no less than a thirteenfold repetition of this phrase
(17,108-110). Such an anaphoric extravaganza cannot have failed to impress itself
on Jerome's mind.

It would seem to be evident from the foregoing that in his 'Libellus de virgini-
tate servanda' Jerome has made reference to and borrowed from Ambrose's 'De
virginitate' on a number of occasions. The Libellus was published in 384.
Wilbrand's contention that the Ambrosian treatise is to be dated to 388-390 would
there fore appear to be untenable. Those scholars must accordingly be correct who
assign to the 'De virginitate' a date of 377-378.

University of Nebraska at Lincoln   Neil Adkin