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***RELATIONES* 10–12 OF QUINTUS AURELIUS SYMMACHUS AS AN *ELOGIUM* TO COMMEMORATE VETTIUS AGORIUS PRAETEXTATUS**

ABSTRACT: *Relationes* 10–12 stand out from Q.A. Symmachus' reports written to give an account of his activities at the position of the prefect of Rome (*praefectus urbis Romae*). These three *relationes* were written and sent by Symmachus to Roman emperors to inform them of the death of V.A. Praetextatus, who was a famous and influential Roman dignitary as well as Symmachus' close friend. *Rel.* 10–12 are not only thematically related, but also – unlike the rest of the reports – clearly marked with personal and laudatory accents and thus their nature significantly differs from the formal documents sent to emperors from the chancellery of an imperial administrative dignitary. In this paper, we aim at presenting *Rel.* 10–12 as an *elogium*, in which in three separate reports Symmachus included a coherent eulogy of Praetextatus and presented his idealized portrait tinged with his own personal feelings, underpinned by the aspects of conservative ideology cultivated then within the circles of the Roman senatorial aristocracy.

KEYWORDS: Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, Roman political prose of the 4th century AD, *relationes*

In the summer of 384 AD, Quintus Aurelius Symmachus¹ took up the position of prefect of Rome (*praefectus urbis Romae*),² succeeding Auxentius.³ Although Symmachus' prefecture lasted only a few months (until January/February 385 AD),⁴ he considers it (in his private correspondence) a burden (Symm. *Ep.* III 28) that is difficult to be satisfied with, even if the successor's mistakes allow for a pinch of satisfaction (Symm. *Ep.* II 55, 2). Symmachus gave an account of his daily activities⁵ as the prefect of Rome in forty nine *relationes*⁶ that he wrote and addressed to Valentinianus II, Theodosius and Arcadius, the three Roman emperors of his day. Nevertheless, *Rel.* 10–12 written and sent by Symmachus to the emperors after the death of V.A. Praetextatus⁷ (November/early December 384 AD), who was *consul designatus* at that time, stand out from the other formal ones by their different nature and tone. These three reports, formally addressed to the emperors but also tinged with the author's personal feelings and marked with laudatory accents and recommendations, seem to constitute a kind of a mournful triptych dedicated to Praetextatus, this renowned and influential Roman dignitary and Symmachus' close friend.⁸ In this article, we aim to present *Rel.* 10–12 as a coherent *elogium*, and also to point out the personal and laudatory accents, stylistic figures and references to the old Roman tradition, as well as to the ideology of conservative senatorial aristocracy of the day. We also aim

¹ Quintus Aurelius Symmachus – *PLRE* I, Symmachus 4.

² Cf. Symm. *Rel.* 25, 3: *sub ipso aestatis exordio* (at the beginning of summer of 384 AD). Symmachus seems to have taken up the position of the prefect of Rome probably on 29 July 384 AD as we may conclude from the date given by Symmachus at the very end of *Rel.* 23: *ss IIII Kl. Aug.*

³ Cf. *PLRE* I, Auxentius 5.

⁴ Symmachus' successor, Pinianus, took over the prefecture of Rome on 24 February 385 AD – cf. *PLRE* I, Pinianus 1.

⁵ Cf. Vera 1981; Olszaniec 2014: 236–239.

⁶ *Relatio* is a formal report addressed to an emperor – cf. Haverling 1988: 62–63 (and n. 1).

⁷ Cf. *PLRE* I, Vettius Agorius Praetextatus 1. Cf. also Kahlos 2002. Symmachus also mentions Praetextatus' death in *Rel.* 24. Symmachus, broken by this misfortune, asks the emperors for permission to resign from the post of prefect (*Rel.* 10, 2–3) – cf. Sogno 2006: 55.

⁸ Cf. Olszaniec 2014: 236, 241–242; Sogno 2006: 41, 68; Symm. *Ep.* I 46, 1 (*honor amicitiae*); 50, 1 (*ego securus amicitiae tuae*); 55 (*Tibi pro nostra amicitia satis gratulor*).

to show that skilfully combined, all these literary devices enable Symmachus to create not so much a formal report addressed to emperors, but rather a posthumous eulogy of his close friend tinged with his own feelings, as well as an idealized portrait of Praetextatus who is presented as a representative figure of the conservative Roman senatorial aristocracy of the time.

The *elogium* begins with *Rel.* 10⁹ and *Rel.* 11¹⁰ that constitute a two-part introduction (*prooemium*) to the third main part of the eulogy developed in *Rel.* 12. At the very beginning of *Rel.* 10 and *Rel.* 11, Symmachus says that being under the obligation of his official duties (*officii publici necessitate cogente* – *Rel.* 11) he becomes a harbinger of sad news (*ratio officii publici necessitatem mihi nuntii tristis imposuit* – *Rel.* 10, 1). Later in *Rel.* 10, 1 Symmachus briefly¹¹ points out how important a role his dead friend played in all areas of public life. So, in a political aspect, Praetextatus, distinguished by his honesty, was a noble advocate of the Roman senatorial aristocracy (*bonorum antiquae probitatis assertor*¹² – *Rel.* 10, 1) who cultivated the old moral tradition; in a social aspect, he was a diligent and reliable dignitary who cared for the needs of the Roman people (*inclitorum principum beneficia sustulisset* – *Rel.* 10, 2) and, in a moral aspect, he was a man endowed with all virtues (*vir omnium domi forisque virtutum* – *Rel.* 10, 1), was equal in virtue to the ancestors (*veteribus par virtutum omnium vir* – *Rel.* 11) and for that reason deserving fame (*cui decus insigne praestabat* – *Rel.* 11). Symmachus praises Praetextatus as “a noble man of a glorious past” endowed with all the virtues by which the noble ancestors were distinguished (Sogno 2006: 41–42; Cameron 2011: 372, 388) – so, for Symmachus, Praetextatus is a moral model and personification of the old Roman virtues (*virtus, mos maiorum*). It is worth pointing out that ancestral morality is

⁹ *Rel.* 10 is addressed to the emperor Theodosius and the emperor Arcadius: *DDNN. Theodosio et Arcadio semper Augg. Symmachus v.c. praefectus urbis.*

¹⁰ *Rel.* 11 is addressed to the emperor Valentinianus II: *DN. Valentiniano semper Aug. Symmachus v.c. praefectus urbis.*

¹¹ Brevity (*brevitas loquendi*) is a characteristic feature of Symmachus’ style of writing – cf. Styka 2008: 112–113; Abram 1998: 23–35.

¹² Cf. *Codex Theodosianus* I 6, 6 (*illustris sinceritas*).

clearly the moral norm¹³ for Symmachus (*veteribus par*), against which he evaluates his friend's virtues (*probitas antiqua*). Praetextatus' attitude is worthy of great praise because it is consistent with the moral norm set by the ancestors (thanks to his virtues he was *veteribus par*). The eulogy presented above shows that Symmachus regards the former morality as the moral norm in his day, and relates his own system of moral values, as well as his friend's behaviour, to *mores maiorum* (this tendency was deeply rooted in the consciousness of the Romans – cf. Beck 2007: 256). So, for Symmachus, ancestral virtues are the criterion by which Praetextatus' behaviour is measured for its value. Due to his attitude consistent with *mores maiorum* (cf. Lind 1979: 51; Mleczek 2018: 53), Praetextatus was an irreplaceable man in public life, so it is very difficult even for emperors who always make the best choice¹⁴ (*vestrae aeternitati, quae optimos novit eligere* – *Rel.* 10, 1) to nominate someone to his place who could equal him in virtue (*Rel.* 10, 1): *in cuius locum vestrae quoque aeternitati, quae optimos novit eligere, nimis arduum est similem subrogare* (cf. Sogno 2006: 55). It is worth pointing out that these *laudationes* (mentioned above in *Rel.* 10, 1) were presented by the author in a concise enumeration (*enumeratio*). By means of this stylistic figure, Symmachus strengthens the meaning and solemnity of the praise; moreover, by putting the second phrase of this enumeration at the end of the sentence (instead of just after the first phrase), he adds sublimity to this concise praise (*Rel.* 10, 1): *Praetextatus bonorum antiquae probitatis assertor invida sorte subtractus est, vir omnium domi forisque virtutum*.¹⁵ As Sogno points out (2006: 55, 41), this concise and laudatory moral portrait of Praetextatus as presented by Symmachus in *Rel.* 10, 1

¹³ Cf. also e.g. Symm. *Rel.* 3, 2: *contra morem parentum intellegitis nil licere*; *Rel.* 3, 8: *et sequendi sunt nobis parentes, qui secuti sunt feliciter suos*; *Or.* III 7: *agnosco in te [...] veterum signa virtutum*. Cf. also similar attitude in Roman historiography, e.g.: Amm. Marc. XIV 6, 10; Tac. *Ann.* III 55, 5; Sall. *Cat.* 7, 4–7; 9, 1–9.

¹⁴ This way of thinking was typical for the conservative senatorial aristocracy in Symmachus' day: a good emperor distinguished by his virtues is the only person able to evaluate all candidates and choose the best of them who could be entrusted with an appropriate post – cf. Miozga 2008: 63.

¹⁵ “Praetextatus, the champion of every good thing, of old fashioned integrity, has been removed from us by a jealous fate – a man possessed of every high quality at home and abroad” (Barrow 1973: 73, 75).

is consistent with the one shown in both contemporary literary¹⁶ and epigraphic sources.

Next, in *Rel.* 11 Symmachus refers to Praetextatus' activity in the public forum: *cuius ego laudes et iusta praeconia animi consternatione praetereo*.¹⁷ In this sentence, instead of a detailed description of Praetextatus' deeds we find only concise generalizations, that is, *laudes* (merits and glorious deeds)¹⁸ and *iusta praeconia* (well-deserved praises) – they are only briefly enumerated without being developed, so – in consequence – their essence and content (*res*) are omitted. Let us pay attention to the fact that despite the *brevitas loquendi* that is visible in this sentence, Symmachus, however, emphasizes the significance of his statement. Detractive figures of thought¹⁹ that are frequently used in his prose serve this purpose – these are *percursio* that is visible in a short enumeration of generalizations not discussed in detail (*laudes et iusta praeconia*) and *praeteritio*²⁰ (omission: *animi consternatione praetereo*) which consists in deliberate concealment and omission of the merits and glorious deeds mentioned in *percursio*. By means of these detractive figures, that is, by deliberately omitting the entirety of Praetextatus' activity and actually not presenting it in detail, Symmachus enhances the strength and intensity of his statement: he seems to stimulate its sublimity. Therefore he concludes this lapidary praise by saying that because of the great importance of his friend's glorious deeds “they have no place in any written or oral testimony”²¹ (*neque enim locus est cuiusquam testimonio*) and their glory is confirmed only by the favourable opinion of the emperors (*vitae eius gloriam clementiae vestrae iudicia testentur*). In Symmachus' opinion, *iudicium principis* is the highest distinction, because – according to

¹⁶ Cf. e.g. Amm. Marc.: *praeclarae indolis gravitatisque priscae senator* (XXII 7, 6); *integritatis multiplices actus et probitatis* (XXVII 9, 8); Macr. *Sat.* I 24, 1. Similar opinions are shared by later authors, e.g.: Zos. *NH* IV 3, 3.

¹⁷ “Words of praise and the panegyric proper to him I must leave unsaid, for I am shocked at heart” (Vera 1981: 101–102).

¹⁸ Cf. e.g.: Kahlos 1995: 39–47. Praetextatus' career is well documented in epigraphy – cf. Sogno 2006: 110, n. 50.

¹⁹ Cf. Lausberg 2002: 368; Styka 2008: 113; Haverling 1988; Cameron 2011: 738 (stylistic *novitas*).

²⁰ *Praeteritio* and *percursio* – cf. Lausberg 2002: 475; Styka 2008: 113; Haverling 1988.

²¹ Cf. also Vera 1981: 101–102: “indeed no room is left anyone's witness for him”.

the belief of the noble conservatists of his day – only a virtuous emperor can correctly evaluate each noble man who belonged to the circles of the senatorial aristocracy (cf. Miozga 2008: 63; Brodka 1998: 41). It is also worth adding that the *percursio* and *praeteritio* used in *Rel.* 11 accentuate the personal tone in the author's statement. By means of these stylistic figures Symmachus reveals his feelings, that is, his *consternatio* (deep emotion and strong shock) and *dolor crudus* (fresh pain over the death of his friend). Thus the correlation between the personal tone of the statement (*consternatio*, *dolor crudus*) and the stylistic solution used in it (*praeteritio*, *percursio*) becomes apparent: deep emotion and fresh pain make the author omit his friend's merits and deeds, because it is difficult to discuss them immediately after his death; anyway, such a discussion is even unnecessary because the emperor's favourable opinion is a measure of the greatness of these glorious deeds.

This concise presentation of Praetextus' moral conduct and merits is followed by a description of the atmosphere of sorrow within the state caused by his death (*Rel.* 10, 2): ***summum sui in re publica desiderium magnumque civibus gratis reliquit dolorem***.²² It is worth pointing out that the atmosphere presented by Symmachus is exaggerated (the adjectives *summus* and *magnus* that underline the greatness and depth of sorrow serve this purpose). So we can read about **the deepest** longing for Praetextatus and **the greatest** emptiness in the state (*summum desiderium*), **a poignant** sob of the motherland (*summus patriae gemitus* – *Rel.* 11) and the **great** grief of grateful²³ citizens (*magnus dolor*). Symmachus achieves the effect of mournful and tearful wailing (*gemitus*) by means of the hyperbaton²⁴ (highlighted in the sentence quoted above – *Rel.* 10, 2) that he uses in this sentence instead of the standard ordering of its parts: *summum sui desiderium in re publica magnumque dolorem civibus gratis reliquit*. What is more, this hyperbaton expresses not only

²² “In public life, he has left behind him a deep longing for himself, and a bitter grief in the hearts of grateful citizens” (Barrow 1973: 73, 75).

²³ Cf. e.g. Ammianus Marcellinus also mentions the gratitude of the Roman people to Praetextatus (*omnia tamen grata viderentur esse, quae factitabat* – XXVII 9, 10) and even love for him on the part of Roman citizens (*amorem non perderet civium* – XXVII 9, 8).

²⁴ Cf. Quint. *Inst.* VIII 2, 14.

the wailing of the motherland and citizens but also Symmachus' poignant personal grief (*tantus dolor* – *Rel.* 10, 2).

As regards the reaction of the people of Rome to Praetextatus' death, Symmachus says that they were so shocked, angry and overwhelmed by pain (*populi Romani inusitatus dolor* – *Rel.* 12, 2) that they refused the pleasures of the theatre and paid homage to his memory by acclamation; they were hard put to bear the malice of fate that had deprived them of this excellent man, a favourite of theirs (*Rel.* 10, 2): *nam ubi primum Romae amarus de eo rumor increpuit, recusavit populus sollemnes theatri voluptates memoriamque eius inlustrem multa acclamatione testatus graviter egit cum livore fortunae, quod sibi inclytorum principum beneficia sustulisset*.²⁵ It should be pointed out that Symmachus' picture of the behaviour of the people of Rome (*recusavit populus sollemnes theatri voluptates*) presented in this scene is far from casual. Considering the Roman commoners' liking²⁶ for the pleasures of the theatre, their behaviour presented in *Rel.* 10, 2 is unusual and rather striking (cf. Sogno 2006: 55). So, the refusal of entertainment and paying homage to

²⁵ Cf. Tac. *Ann.* II 82, 3 (a similar picture of reaction of the Roman people to Germanicus' death): *hos vulgi sermones audita mors adeo incendit, ut ante edictum magistratum, ante senatus consultum sumpto iustitio desererentur fora, clauderentur domus. passim silentia et gemitus, nihil compositum in ostentationem; et quamquam neque insignibus lumentium abstinerent, altius animis maerebant*. Symm. *Rel.* 10, 2 (cf. Barrow 1973: 73, 75): "When first the painful rumour about him spread abroad in Rome, the people refused the usual pleasures of the theatre; with loud shouts it testified to his glorious memory and was angry at the malice of fortune which had robbed it of blessings given by renowned emperors". Both Symmachus and Tacitus present a similar picture of reaction on behalf of the Roman people, which is quite different from their usual vulgar (common) behaviour: the Romans give up their daily activities (*desererentur fora, clauderentur domus* – Tac.), refuse to participate in entertainment in the theatre (*recusavit sollemnes theatri voluptates* – Symm.); there is silence in the city and only groans (*silentia et gemitus* – Tac.) while the unanimous acclamation (*multa acclamatio* – Symm.) of people full of sorrow and genuine pain can be heard (*graviter egit cum livore fortunae* – Symm.; *nihil compositum in ostentationem, neque insignibus lumentium abstinerent, altius animis maerebant* – Tac.). Cameron (2011: 416) points out the clear reminiscences of Tacitus' *Annales* and *Historiae* in Symmachus' works. Cf. also Cameron 2004: 327–354 (culture and literature in late antiquity).

²⁶ Cf. Amm. Marc. XIV 6, 25; XXVIII 4, 32–33 (a grotesque picture of this "exaggerated liking for the pleasures of the theatre" as the leading feature of the people of Rome).

Praetextatus' memory with the more dignified custom of acclamations instead of confused shouts²⁷ that were usually heard in the theatre during performances watched by Roman commoners, are – according to Symmachus' intention – to emphasize the depth of sorrow and the power of poignant pain: even the common masses overwhelmed by these feelings lose their typical crude features, undergo a temporary transformation and behave in a dignified manner (let us add that this is an idealized picture of the commoners' reactions and behaviour). What is more, the acclamations in the mouths of the masses are for Symmachus the measure of Praetextatus' fame and success as Roman senator and an outstanding figure in the political life in his days (cf. Sogno 2006: 55). Let us note that Symmachus neither in *Rel.* 10 nor in *Rel.* 11 uses the unpleasant in its content and the literal verb *mortuus est* in order to inform the emperors²⁸ of his friend's death, but he replaces this verb with euphemisms. So he says that Praetextatus “was taken by an envious fate” (*invida sorte subtractus est* – *Rel.* 10, 1), “passed away according to the law of nature” (*functus est lege naturae* – *Rel.* 10, 2) and “was carried away by a cruel fate” (*fata rapuerunt* – *Rel.* 11). Paradoxically, the use of these descriptive phrases (euphemisms) that are milder than the verb *mori* enables Symmachus to strengthen (and not to weaken) the importance of this painful fact (although he does not label it clearly as death) and give a tint of his personal feelings to his reports, that is, to reveal his own powerlessness against the loss caused by a merciless fate. It is the immense pain (*tantus dolor*),²⁹ as Symmachus underlines, that makes him resign from his prestigious post as the prefect of Rome in order to restore his

²⁷ Cf. Amm. Marc. XXVIII 4, 32–33.

²⁸ In manuscripts *Rel.* 10 is addressed to two emperors, Theodosius and Arcadius, who remained in Constantinople, whereas *Rel.* 11 (a much shorter version of this report with a similar content) is addressed to Valentinianus II, who remained in Milan. However, due to the fact that in *Rel.* 10 Symmachus informs the emperors of his resignation from the prestigious post of the prefect of Rome and that the emperor of the West appointed candidates for this post (or accepted resignation from it), one should assume that *Rel.* 10 is addressed to Valentinianus II in Milan and *Rel.* 11 to Theodosius and Arcadius in Constantinople – cf. Sogno 2006: 115, n. 128.

²⁹ This was not the only reason for Symmachus to resign from the prestigious post of *praefectus urbis Romae* – however, he does not mention the other reasons: *sileo cetera, quae me non sinunt praefecturam ferre patienter* (*Rel.* 10, 3).

well-being (*Rel.* 10, 2–3): *nos*³⁰ *vero socios animi sui vestrique iudicii tanto dolore confudit, ut otii remedium postulemus. [...] vel haec una consortis amissio iusta est ad impetrandam vacationem.*³¹ However, as Sogno (2006: 56, 41) points out, the death of an old friend is for Symmachus not only a personal shock, but also the loss of a powerful and influential political supporter. So motivating and justifying the resignation due to personal misfortune and the need to restore his well-being seems to be unconvincing and insufficient on Symmachus' part both for the importance he attached to his activity as a prefect (cf. e.g.: *Rel.* 2, 3: *ego nitar, ut potero, ne clementiam vestram fefellisse de me prior fama videatur*) and for quite a difficult situation for him in the public forum caused by the actions of his political opponents (cf. Matthews 1986: 163–175). These arguments allow us to conclude that this contrasting juxtaposition of a purely personal motivation (*dolor, remedium otii*) and the decision of state importance (*vacatio, refundere magistratum*) caused by it is almost elusive for the recipients of the report and the fine line separating the personal and political reasons behind Symmachus' decision (cf. Sogno 2006: 56) which most likely contributed to his resignation from his prestigious position.

Rel. 12³² (the third part of the *elogium*) begins with the rhetorical sentence: *Licet Vettius Praetextatus naturae lege resolutus sit, vivit tamen in memoria et amore cunctorum, felicior civium lacrimis quam quisquam gaudiis suis.*³³ Symmachus opens this report with an oxymoron *licet resolutus sit, vivit tamen*, and at the same time instead of the verb *mortuus sit* he uses the milder verb *resolutus sit*, so the phrase *natu-*

³⁰ Synecdoche (a frequent stylistic figure in Symmachus' prose) – *pluralis* instead of *singularis*; here used as *pluralis modestiae* in Symmachus' request addressed to the emperors.

³¹ “His death has so shaken us for sheer grief that we ask of the consolation which a private life may bring, [...]; even by itself the loss of a close associate would justify asking and obtaining release” (Barrow 1973: 73, 75). Cf. also Olszaniec 2014: 235.

³² *Rel.* 12 is addressed to three emperors, Valentinianus II, Theodosius and Arcadius. However, according to imperial chancellery style requirements, Valentinianus II, mentioned as the first of these emperors, is the chief recipient of this report: *DDDDNNN. Valentiniano Theodosio et Arcadio semper Auggg. Symmachus v.c. praefectus urbis.*

³³ “Vettius Agorius Praetextatus in accordance with nature's law has been parted from life, but he leaves in affectionate memory of all, happier in the tears of his fellow citizens than another man of his own pleasures” (Barrow 1973: 79).

rae lege resolutus sit (“he passed away according to the law of nature”) is an euphemism (just like similar phrases in *Rel. 10* and *Rel. 11*). By means of this oxymoron, Symmachus emphasizes that memory and sincere love on the part of the whole Roman community (*memoria et amor cunctorum*) enables one to break (*vivit*) the strict and inevitable law of nature (*lex naturae*) – this is a kind of compensation for the acute loss, poignant grief and pain already referred to earlier in this *elogium*, that is, in *Rel. 10* and *Rel. 11*. A similar function is performed by the second oxymoron *felicior civium lacrimis quam quisquam gaudiis suis* that is used in a comparison in the next part of this sentence: the tears of the citizens make Praetextatus happier than anyone because they testify to their memory and attachment which allow him continue to live contrary to the hard law of nature. So, paradoxically, the happiness obtained thanks to the regretful tears of the whole Roman community is more valuable and more durable than those given to others by their own pleasures that bring only short-term joy. Therefore, the sentence discussed, in which (which is worth pointing out) we find an idealized and exaggerated picture of emotions of the Roman community, brings relief and at the same time closes the lamentation included in *Rel. 10* and *Rel. 11*.

Rel. 12, 2–3 is the culmination of the whole *elogium*. In *Rel. 12, 2*, Symmachus, in his request to the emperors, presents a particular way of paying homage to Praetextatus and commemorating him that was proposed by the Roman senate and is in accordance with the old Roman tradition: *etiam senatus impertiens dispendii sui solatium de honore virtutis vestrum numem precatur, ut virum nostra aetate mirabilem statuarum diuturnitas tradat oculis posterorum*.³⁴ So, according to the old Roman custom, statues erected in recognition of Praetextatus’ merits and impeccable moral attitude³⁵ (*solatium de honore virtutis*) are to show the posterity, commemorate and immortalize (*statuarum diuturnitas*) this outstanding man (*vir mirabilis*) of the imperial period. Let us pay attention to two main reasons, by which – according to Symmachus – the

³⁴ “But also the senate intolerant of its loss seeks to derive some consolation for itself from paying honour to his high qualities. It entreats your Divinities that statues should perpetuate the image of a man remarkable in our age and hand it on to the gaze of posterity” (Barrow 1973: 79).

³⁵ Cf. Tac. *Ann.* II 83, 2 (similar honours enacted by the Roman senate for Germanicus): *statuarum locorumve, in quis coleretur, haud facile quis numerum inierit*.

senate was guided while making the decision over this special distinction (*Rel.* 12, 2): *quia ornamentis bonorum incitatur imitatio et virtus aemula alitur exemplo honoris alieni*. Symmachus defines these reasons briefly: they are the imitation of good moral attitudes (*bonorum imitatio*) and competition in virtue (*virtus aemula*); both *imitatio* and *aemulatio* are stimulated by the example that someone's distinction gives to one's contemporaries and posterity (*exemplum honoris alieni*). It is worth noting that the moral attitudes pointed out by Symmachus in *Rel.* 12, 2 (sc. *bonorum imitatio* and *virtus aemula*) are not his innovation but have their origins in an earlier moralistic tradition. Both *imitatio bonorum* and *virtus aemula* in Symmachus are Tacitean motifs (*laudis et artium imitanda; certamina ex honesto*:³⁶ imitation of good moral attitudes and competition in virtue with one's ancestors, moral improvement) that can be found in Tacitus' *Annales* III 55, 5: *nostra quoque aetas multa laudis et artium imitanda posteris tulit. verum haec nobis in maiores certamina ex honesto maneant*. Symmachus points out (*Rel.* 12, 2) that according to the old Roman custom³⁷ that dates back to times "full of simplicity and modesty" (that is, to the republican period: *rusticis adhuc saeculis*), statues erected to commemorate remarkable men (*honor alienus*) were mainly to stimulate both an imitation of the good moral attitudes of ancestors (*bonorum incitatur imitatio*) and competition with them in virtue (*virtus aemula alitur*): *hinc factum est, ut rusticis adhuc saeculis optimi quique civium manu et arte formati in longam memoriam mitterentur*. Symmachus, referring in his argumentation to the old Roman tradition, points out that statues erected to commemorate Praetextatus are to fulfil in the imperial period a similar task. So they are not expected to be "earthly rewards" (in fact, this excellent man never desired them: *non quod ille praemia terrena desideret* – *Rel.* 12, 2) that will make him

³⁶ Cf. Ammianus Marcellinus: the use of this motif (XVI, 1, 4) and its travesty (XXI, 16, 8) – Mleczek 2018: 168–169.

³⁷ In his *relationes* (even in those concerned with strictly legal or administrative matters) Symmachus presents his erudition and shows his respect for the past of Rome and the old Roman tradition (*vetustas*) – exempla taken from Roman history and tradition serve this purpose, so, as a result, his relations are never simple reports (cf. Sogno 2006: 32). Cameron (2011: 360–361) points out that Symmachus, due to his erudition, was regarded as the "Pliny of his day" by educated aristocrats that belonged to the circles of his friends ("the Circle of Symmachus").

famous, but they are supposed to make his virtues³⁸ known among his contemporaries and for posterity (*Rel. 12, 3*): *dignum est igitur, ut, qui in pectoribus omnium manet, sit in ore populorum*. Symmachus underlines here that statues are not only precious sculptures shaped by the skilful hands of an artist (*manu et arte formati*) but, first and foremost, they are long-lasting testimonies to the virtues and achievements of an outstanding Roman citizen³⁹ as well as material proofs of the memory of his merits and virtuous moral attitude (*longa memoria cuiusque optimi civium*).

Next, in *Rel. 12, 3* (which is the main part of the entire *elogium*) Symmachus emphasizes the rightness of the senate's decision (see above) and presents a concise list of Praetextatus' virtues – in this short catalogue the author develops phrases that referred to his friend's excellent moral attitude at the very beginning of the *elogium* (*Rel. 10, 1: vir omnium domi forisque virtutum* and *Rel. 11: veteribus par virtutum omnium vir*): *ille semper magistratibus suis celsior, in alios temperatus, in se severus, sine contemptu facilis, sine terrore reverendus; cui si quod commodum successionis evenit, ad testatoris proximos mox revertit; qui nullius prosperis fractus est, nullius risit adversa, indecorae nescius largitatis; ille, quem semper invitum secutus est honor, cuius aequitati conterminus quisque limites suos creditit*. Let us pay attention to the fact that Symmachus does not explicitly name Praetextatus' virtues as presented in the list, but he enumerates them (*enumeratio*) in short asyndetically arranged phrases (*asyndeton*⁴⁰) that aptly describe the essence of these virtues. So, in the phrase *ille semper magistratibus suis celsior* ("he was always better than his offices"⁴¹), Symmachus refers to Praetextatus' *dignitas*⁴² (sc. to his dignity, morality and merits) that was based on the fact that he due to his good morals, not only added splendour to his public positions but also far exceeded their dignity (because he was not *par* but *celsior magistratibus*). Symmachus here emphasizes

³⁸ Ammianus Marcellinus (XIV 6, 8), Symmachus' contemporary, mentions a distortion of the old custom of erecting statues in the circle of senatorial aristocracy in his day – cf. Mleczek 2018: 284–285.

³⁹ Cf. Amm. Marc. XIV 6, 8.

⁴⁰ A detractive figure of language – cf. Lausberg 2002: 368.

⁴¹ Here and below Symm. *Rel. 12, 3–4* is translated by the author of this article.

⁴² Since the republican period, *dignitas* had always been a virtue appropriate only to *ordo senatorius* – cf. Korpanty 1976: 25; Mleczek 2018: 16 n. 25; 296.

that Praetextatus' *dignitas* and *virtutes* were much greater than his public offices (*magistratibus celsior*). So the prestigious posts awarded to him were not as perfect as his dignity was and, in some measure, they were disproportionate to his virtues. It is worth pointing out that in this statement Symmachus reveals the important aspect of the ideological conservatism⁴³ of the senatorial aristocracy (*nobilitas*) of his day – the essence of this aspect can be defined as *magistratus – praemium imperfectum*. This conservative aspect was based on an apparent depreciation of official authority: so, according to the old Roman tradition, a prestigious office given by the official authority continued to be regarded as *praemium virtutis* (an award for virtues) but, at the same time, this reward seemed to be imperfect in comparison with the virtues of an outstanding individual and inadequate for his merits (*magistratibus celsior*;⁴⁴ cf. Miozga 2008: 64) that – as Symmachus says – far exceeded the dignities conferred on him. According to this statement, *magistratus* and *honores* that were awarded to Praetextatus during his lifetime (*iusta praeconia – Rel. 11*) were not able to meet his individual merits (*laudes – Rel. 11*) and impeccable moral attitude (*vir omnium domi forisque virtutum – Rel. 10, 1*). As regards Praetextatus' virtues, in the phrase *in alios temperatus* (“moderate towards others”) Symmachus indicates moderation (*temperantia*) and in the next one *in se severus* (“austere towards himself”) he underlines austere morals and an austere way of living (*austeritas*) in accordance with the old Roman moral tradition (*mos maiorum: veteribus par virtutum omnium vir – Rel. 11*). Regarding the other virtues, these are the politeness and accessibility (*facilitas*) that he showed towards others with dignity but without showing contempt for them at the same time – Symmachus refers to these important virtues

⁴³ Sogno (2006: 32) says that in his *relationes* Symmachus not only informs the emperors of legal and administrative matters but also reveals his adherence to and his respect for the old Roman tradition as well as the pride proper to a Roman noble – let us add that *Rel. 3* (written in the defence of the altar of goddess Victoria) is representative of this tendency.

⁴⁴ Cf. Symm. *Ep.* IV 23, 2: *Nam etsi secundum mores ac natales tuos honorum culmen indeptus es, necdum tamen perfectum praemium debitamque mercedem tibi fortuna restituit, quae etsi in te magna contulerit, numquam tamen aequabit meritum tuum.*

in the phrase *sine contemptu facilis*⁴⁵ (“polite and accessible without contempt for others”). Symmachus draws this first part of his enumeration to a close by the phrase *sine terrore reverendus*⁴⁶ (“worth being respected without arousing fear in others”). The author refers in it to the next virtue, that is, to the prestige (*auctoritas*) that Praetextatus enjoyed due to his dignity (*dignitas*), moderation (*temperantia*), austere morals (*austeritas*) and politeness towards others (*facilitas*). By means of the prepositional phrase *sine terrore* Symmachus underlines that true prestige is the one that is achieved (like Praetextatus’ *auctoritas*) thanks to an impeccable moral attitude⁴⁷ and not through cruelty and arousing fear in others. One may suppose that in such a definition of the essence of *auctoritas* Symmachus alludes to the moral attitudes of many contemporary officials. *Auctoritas*, understood and realized in the way discussed, places Praetextatus above the crowd of degenerated imperial dignitaries who frequently sought publicity and achieved influential positions and prestigious posts through evil practices and cruelty.⁴⁸ So Praetextatus’ *auctoritas* is entirely different from the decadent moral attitudes that could be often seen within the circles of imperial dignitaries in Symmachus’ day. It is worth paying attention to the anaphors (*anaphora*) used in the first part of the enumeration discussed above (*ille semper ... sine terrore reverendus* – *Rel.* 12, 3) – they can be found at the beginning of the second and third phrases (*in alios temperatus*, *in se severus*) in asyndetic combinations (asyndeton) *in...*, *in...* and in the next two asyndetic combinations (asyndeton) *sine...*, *sine...* (*sine contemptu facilis*, *sine terrore reverendus*). Symmachus uses these anaphors for expressive purposes – they are to express a clear assessment and a suggestive presentation of his friend’s impeccable moral attitude as well as to tinge this

⁴⁵ Cf. Amm. Marc. (a similar virtue in emperor Julianus the Apostate’s behaviour) XXV 4, 7: *civilitati admodum studens, tantum sibi arrogans, quantum a contemptu et insolentia distare existimabat.*

⁴⁶ Cf. Amm. Marc. (similar virtue in emperor Julianus the Apostate’s behaviour) XXV 4, 12: *auctoritas adeo valuit, ut dilectus artissime, dum timetur.*

⁴⁷ Cf. Amm. Marc. (a similar aspect of the emperor Julianus the Apostate’s *auctoritas*): XXV 4, 12.

⁴⁸ Symmachus mentions these facts in *Ep.* X 2, 3 where he refers to the cruelty of Maximinus, who was an influential dignitary at the court of the emperor Valentinianus I. Ammianus Marcellinus, Symmachus’ contemporary, also points out Maximinus’ cruelty and his evil practices (e.g.: XXVIII 1, 5–56). Cf. also Mleczek 2018: 234–357.

presentation with an emotional tone. So, as a result of the accumulation of stylistic figures (*asyndeton*, *enumeratio*, *anaphora*), the formal style of *relatio* is here broken – in consequence, the report takes on a personal (not a formal) character and reveals Symmachus’ personal attitude not only towards Praetextatus but also towards the senatus’ proposal presented to the emperors to erect statues to commemorate his old friend.

In the subsequent part of the list of virtues, Symmachus contrives an apt formulation, in which he refers to the nature of Praetextatus’ activity at the judicial forum (*Rel.* 12, 3): *cui si quod commodum successionis evenit, ad testatoris proximos mox revertit* (“if he had any benefit from the inheritance, he immediately addressed the testator’s closest relatives”). Symmachus here presents those important virtues which dignitaries in his day were often deprived of – these being freedom from greed (*aviditate carens*) and honesty (*probitas*) in fulfilling duties at the judicial forum (its essence was the good of the client and not the benefit of the dignitary who was in charge of the case – *probitas sine aviditate*). Therefore, it seems that the phrase presented above not only defines the essence of Praetextatus’ honesty at the judicial forum, but also hides a fairly clear allusion. Considering the moral degeneration which was widespread in Symmachus’ day, far-reaching corruption⁴⁹ and the greed of imperial dignitaries based on extorting inheritance and seizing property through court fraud, one may conclude that Symmachus alludes in this sentence to a deep crisis of proper moral attitudes that was clearly visible at various levels of public administration. But it is worth noting how the author here covers up and does not reveal the moral degeneration of the then imperial dignitaries, although he presents this positive trait⁵⁰ in his friend’s behaviour, which contrasts sharply with such decadent attitudes.

In the next part of the list of *virtutes*, in concise and asyndetically combined phrases (*asyndeton*), Symmachus defines other virtues (*Rel.* 12, 3): *qui nullius prosperis fractus est, nullius risit adversa, indecorae nescius largitatis* (“he neither destroyed nor infringed upon anyone’s

⁴⁹ The moral degeneration of imperial dignitaries at the judicial forum is widely described by Ammianus Marcellinus, Symmachus’ contemporary – cf. Amm. Marc. XXVIII 1, 35; XXIX 2, 3. Cf. also Mleczek 2018: 261–263.

⁵⁰ Symmachus underlines that he (like Praetextatus) belonged to the circle of *magistratus boni* – cf. e.g.: *Rel.* 1, 2; 2, 3; 4, 3; 10, 3; 19, 10; 33, 1; 34, 1.

happiness; he did not laugh at anyone's failures, he did not know [sc. was free from] improper extravagance"). In the first and second negative sentences Symmachus, in presenting actions that were never taken by Praetextatus (*nullius, nullius*), defines the essence of his friend's *humanitas* – the author understands it here as the nobility of morals as well as the human and friendly attitude towards other people by which contemporary aristocrats⁵¹ were rarely characterized. In the third phrase, Symmachus mentions freedom of extravagance (*nescius largitatis*) as well as underlines Praetextatus' thrift and restraint in spending money (*parsimonia*). In this phrase (as the ones discussed above) the author reveals an important virtue that makes a sharp contrast to the behaviour of many contemporary aristocrats who were characterized by extravagance manifested in excessive luxury.⁵² Symmachus emphasizes, however, that *largitas* is inappropriate (*indecora*) for a dignitary who respects the old Roman tradition because extravagance does not belong (and did not belong) to the *ethos* of the Roman nobile (*largitas indecora*) who is free (*nescius*) from this *vitium* and acts according to good old morals (cf. *Rel.* 10, 1; 11). It is worth pointing out that this attitude of Symmachus is representative for a typical Roman way of thinking based on the old tradition (*virtus, mos maiorum*), according to which thrift (*parsimonia*)⁵³ was an important virtue of Roman aristocrats. As one may conclude, Symmachus sees this virtue as restraint in spending money and cutting oneself off from wasting one's property on excessive luxuries. This virtue enables a Roman aristocrat to live in proper abundance and not in excessive and unnecessary luxury that was quite alien (*nescius largitatis*) to the nature of a noble and conservative man who respected the old tradition of his ancestors (*Rel.* 10, 1; 11).

Symmachus ends the list of Praetextatus' virtues with two concise adjectival clauses (*Rel.* 12, 3): *ille, quem semper invitum secutus est honor, cuius aequitati conterminus quisque limites suos credidit* ("the one who has always had an honourable office against his will and under whose righteous care every neighbour has entrusted the borders of his

⁵¹ Cf. *Amm. Marc.* XIV 6, 12–13; XXVIII 4, 10; 23. Cf. also Mleczek 2018: 308–311; 331–337.

⁵² Cf. *Amm. Marc.* XIV 6, 9; 16–17; XXVIII 4, 12–13. Cf. also Mleczek 2018: 289–296.

⁵³ Cf. Mleczek 2018: 20, n. 46.

fields”). In the first clause that refers (like the first phrase opening the list: *magistratibus suis celsior*) to Praetextatus’ behaviour in the public forum, Symmachus underlines that he never applied for dignities. They were entrusted to him against his will (*invitum*), that is – as one may conclude – according to the emperor’s will (*Rel.* 10, 1; 12, 4; cf. Brodka 1998: 37) so under the influence of external circumstances and not as a result of his personal efforts, because Praetextatus was free from the desire for honours (*desiderio honoris carens*; cf. Miozga 2008: 72, 75). Therefore the important virtue presented in this clause is freedom from the lust for dignities (*ambitio*) as well as from deception and tricks (*ambitus*) in achieving high state positions – this kind of freedom was called modesty (*verecundia*)⁵⁴ that was an important aspect of honesty (*probitas*) in public life. So according to Symmachus’ statement (*invitum secutus est honor*) the essence of *verecundia* can be defined here as *honor sine ambitione ambituque*. Let us point out that Symmachus deliberately accentuates this important trait in Praetextatus’ behaviour. He intends to say that *verecundia* (modesty), which was based on unwillingly accepting dignities, made Praetextatus a proper candidate for being entrusted with a prestigious post and for taking office. It was so because emperors, as Sogno points out (2006: 54), in selecting candidates for state positions and in assessing their suitability and predispositions, followed a simple and well-known principle that assumed that official power should be entrusted only to those people who were willing to accept it reluctantly, that is, to those ones who neither desired nor sought it for their own free will and who could even resign from it⁵⁵ (*recusatio* vs *ambitio*; cf. *Symm. Rel.* 10, 2–3) voluntarily – these people were expected to be free from *ambitio* (that was disastrous for the state and also for the emperors themselves

⁵⁴ *Verecundia* (modesty) was one of the virtues of a Roman citizen and one of the proper attitudes of a Roman aristocrat (external or public virtue) in the public forum. However, this kind of *verecundia* often had nothing in common with the individual inborn modesty (internal virtue) of Roman aristocrats – these two kinds of *verecundia* were usually two separate virtues. In *Rel.* 12, 3 Symmachus emphasizes Praetextatus’ modesty in the public forum (and not his individual inborn modesty): therefore his *verecundia* is tantamount to his proper and modest behaviour in his public activity.

⁵⁵ The inborn modesty of a candidate frequently had nothing in common with *recusatio* that usually resulted from the public (external) *verecundia* of a candidate, that is, from his proper and modest behaviour in the public forum.

and their circles). Let us add that this behaviour of Praetextatus (*invitum secutus est honor*), so clearly pointed out by Symmachus, resulted from the ideological conservatism of the Roman senatorial aristocracy of the day (both Symmachus and Praetextatus belonged to this noble circle). These conservative aristocrats considered an emperor “an instrument in the hands of the old ancestral tradition” (Miozga 2008: 56; Symm. *Ep.* V 38) thus excluding any personal involvement of a candidate in the procedure of awarding dignities that were entrusted to him only *ex iudicio et gratia principis* (Symm. *Rel.* 1, 1; 2, 1–3; 10, 3). Therefore, noble men undertake their offices on an external order (cf. Miozga 2008: 72; Symm. *Rel.* 1, 1; 2, 2; 10, 1; 12, 4; 34, 1) and not because of their *ambitio* (*desiderium honoris*). So we can conclude that in the phrase *invitum secutus est honor* Symmachus also underlines (in addition to *verecundia*) Praetextatus’ respect (and indirectly his own respect) for the old ancestral tradition (*mos maiorum*), upon which the ideological conservatism of the *nobilitas* of that time was based. It is worth pointing out that Symmachus’ references here to the old Roman tradition (cf. Alföldi A., Alföldi E. 1999: 477–505) that reflect his conservative way of thinking and are visible in the presentation of Praetextatus’ virtues, constitute a kind of *topos* in the funeral eulogy. As Trout (2001: 175–176) explains when discussing the epitaphs⁵⁶ of pagan senators written at the time of Symmachus, the common feature of these epitaphs is “ideological and cultural conservatism” visible in the continuation of the aristocratic *ethos* expressed in epitaphs from the Roman republican period. Perhaps Symmachus presents Praetextatus’ *verecundia* and his respect for *mos maiorum* (like some of his virtues discussed earlier in this paper) in sharp contrast to the decadent attitudes common in his day that were completely inconsistent with the attitudes of conservative aristocrats who were strongly attached to the old tradition. Those bad moral attitudes that were contrary to the *ethos* of a Roman aristocrat who respected the old tradition could be often seen in Symmachus’ day within the circles of imperial dignitaries⁵⁷ who were greedy for honours (*ambitio, desiderium honoris*) and did not hesitate to use deceit and even deceive the emperors to achieve prestigious posts

⁵⁶ It is therefore a kind of mournful eulogy like in Symmachus.

⁵⁷ Cf. Amm. Marc. XXVIII 1, 8–56; XXIX 1, 11–13; 2, 23–24; Mleczek 2018: 234–262.

by tricks (*ambitus*) instead of being modest and honest in their public life. However, it should be pointed out that the ideology of the conservative aristocrats in the time of Symmachus presented an idealized image of the moral attitudes and mentality of the senatorial aristocracy: it lives according to the customs of ancestors, is free from *ambitio* and *ambitus* (so *verecundia*), the senate is the elite and “the better part of mankind” (Symm. *Ep.* I, 52; Brodka 1998: 42), whose members are the centre of all civic virtues that surpass positions and honours awarded to the senators for their *virtutes* and merits only by the will of the emperor (hence *magistratus – praemium imperfectum*). Let us add that such a conservative ideology based on such principles did not allow for any awareness of degeneration and deviations from its moral norm (based on the old ancestral tradition). Therefore, this ideology often covered up a moral decline of a large group of the then aristocracy (Amm. Marc. XIV 6, 7–24; XXVIII 4, 7–27; Mleczek 2018: 281–354), a lack of qualifications and predispositions of candidates to take up state offices and all the symptoms of corruption at the levels of the then administrative and bureaucratic machinery (Miozga 2008: 64, 69–80; Mleczek 2018: 203–279). Symmachus ends the list of his friend’s virtues with a concise reference (in the second clause quoted above: *cuius aequitati conterminus quisque limites suos credit*) to his private life (*otium: conterminus quisque, limites*), in which he enjoyed the trust (*fides*) of people close to him because in every area of his life he was distinguished by a sense of justice (*aequitas*).

Rel. 12, 4 constitutes the closing part of Symmachus’ mournful eulogy: *ergo ut probitatis patroni bona temporum vestrorum futuris quoque visenda proponite. certe ille est Praetextatus, quem iure consulem feceratis, ut fasti memores celebre nomen extenderent*. Let us pay attention to the fact that in the closing part of this *elogium*, Symmachus – as at the very beginning (*Rel.* 10, 1: *antiquae probitatis assertor*) – emphasizes Praetextatus’ honesty (*probitatis bona*) once again. With this ending, *elogium* is coherent, for both the beginning (*antiquae probitatis assertor*) and the end (*probitatis patroni bona*) relate to the same virtue of honesty (*probitas*) – it binds together all moral references contained in the three separate *relationes* (that is, in *Rel.* 10, 11, 12). With such a concept, Symmachus emphasizes that it was *probitas antiqua* (ancient honesty) that was the leading virtue and the binder of all the other virtues mentioned in the *elogium* (sc. in *Rel.* 10–12) that constituted

all the wealth of honesty (*probitatis bona*). Therefore, in *Rel.* 10–12 Praetextatus is shown as a contemporary personification of ancient virtues, as an ideal figure and representative for the entire conservative senatorial elite that was – according to its ideology – *pars melior humani generis* (Symm. *Ep.* I 52). Such an excellent moral attitude makes Praetextatus a model to follow for future generations (*Rel.* 12, 4: *probitatis bona visenda proponite*) and is the reason for the right decision of the emperor to reward Praetextatus the dignities of a consul (*Rel.* 12, 4: *quem iure consulem feceratis*). Symmachus makes it clear here that a high state position (*honor: consul*) was for Praetextatus a reward granted by the emperor for his impeccable demeanour (*probitatis bona*) and honourable achievements (*laudes* – *Rel.* 11). Let us point out that such a belief was in accordance with the conservative ideology of *praemia virtutum* (based on the old Roman tradition followed by the ancestors and passed down from them to the next generations) that is visible in Symmachus' writings. This ideology assumed that offices and prestigious state positions (*honores*) are not accorded to every aristocrat merely because he is a member of the *ordo senatorius*, but they are first and foremost a reward for outstanding individuals for their virtues shown in the public forum (Miozga 2008: 56; Sogno 2006: 54; Mleczek 2018: 17, n. 31; Symm. *Ep.* I 20; 43; II 64). In such an ideology there is no place for chance, incompetence or a lack of moral predispositions – according to its principles, state positions are awarded solely as rewards for virtues and merits (*praemia virtutum*) by the emperor: he is the only one who can properly evaluate and, after proper reflection (*deliberatio*), carefully select the right candidates (*ne temere electus* – Symm. *Rel.* 1, 2; *imperatores nihil temere praestantes* – Symm. *Rel.* 2, 1; cf. Miozga 2008: 56). However, it should be pointed out here that such ideological principles often differed from the real situation in the political forum, concealing the lack of correlation between the competences and moral attitude of dignitaries and their state positions that, in fact, were undeservedly awarded to them by the emperors (cf. Miozga 2008: 63–64; Mleczek 2018: 234–265).⁵⁸ Symmachus, however, faithful to the principles of his ideology says that a moral attitude based on *bona probitatis* ensures not only an award rightly and judiciously granted by the emperor (*honor = praemium virtutis*), but also a good reputation that

⁵⁸ Ammianus Marcellinus describes such cases: XV 3, 3–5; XXVIII 1, 10–13; 33; 41; 51; XXIX 1, 10–11; 2, 23.

cannot be destroyed even by death (*Rel. 12, 4: iudicium post hominem perseveret*); impeccable moral attitude is also an indestructible value, the loss of which becomes a common misfortune (*Rel. 12, 4: illud multis commune, quod perdidit*).

Symmachus ends (*Rel. 12, 4*) his *elogium* with a sentence that corresponds in terms of mood and content with the one that opened up the whole triptych (*Rel. 10, 2*). So at the very beginning of the *elogium*, that is, in the first *relatio*, we can read about a very strong longing, a great emptiness in the state and the poignant sadness of its citizens (*Rel. 10, 2: summum sui in re publica desiderium magnumque civibus gratis reliquit dolorem*) while at the end of his mournful eulogy (that is, in the third report), likewise, Symmachus mentions a common misfortune and irretrievable commonly felt loss, which is the death of a noble man (*Rel. 12, 4: nam quod meruit a civibus, singulare est: illud multis commune, quod perdidit*). Thanks to such a composition the *elogium* is kept in a uniform tone.

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As we have pointed out above, *Rel. 10–12* can be seen as an *elogium* consistent in terms of mood and content, although formally divided into three separate reports. These three *relationes*, which, by definition, should have been only formal reports addressed to the emperors, were clearly marked by Symmachus with personal and laudatory accents. While informing the emperors of his friend's death, Symmachus first and foremost focuses on the presentation of an idealized image of Praetextatus, who becomes a personification of old virtues constituting *mos maiorum* and a representative figure containing all the virtues of the entire group of the then conservative senatorial aristocracy. In the reports discussed, Symmachus also presents an exaggerated image of the common sadness of citizens and the homeland (*Rel. 10, 2; 12, 4*) as well as reveals his own pain caused by the loss of his close friend (*Rel. 10, 2; 11*). He explains his resignation from the post of prefect through personal misfortune, although, in fact, it was probably due to political reasons as well, which were deliberately omitted by the author (*Rel. 10, 3*). So *Rel. 10–12* show Symmachus not only as a reliable dignitary and aristocrat faithful to the principles of his conservative ideology, but also as a broken man powerless against the severe law of nature. Such an approach to the subject causes that the formal style of a report is frequently broken, being

clearly marked with rhetorical figures and revealing the personal feelings of the author: euphemisms (*Rel.* 10, 1; 2; 11; 12, 1), an oxymoron (*Rel.* 12, 1), asyndetons (*dissolutio*: *Rel.* 12, 3), the listing of enumerations (*enumeratio*, including percursion: *percursio* – *Rel.* 11), anaphors (*anaphora*: *Rel.* 12, 3), omissions (*praeteritio*: *Rel.* 11) and hyperbaton (*Rel.* 10, 2) serve this purpose. Symmachus' ideological conservatism (*magistratus* – *praemium imperfectum*, *verecundia*), whose assumptions very often covered up the moral decline of the aristocracy as well as the symptoms of the corruption of the late antique bureaucracy and administrative machine, comes to the fore in the presentation of Praetextatus' virtues (e.g.: *celsior magistratibus*, *invitum secutus est honor*). While justifying the senate's decision to erect the statues, Symmachus presents a concise catalogue of his friend's virtues (*Rel.* 12, 3), which include *dignitas*, *temperantia*, *austeritas*, *facilitas*, *auctoritas*, *verecundia* (*invitum secutus est honor*), *humanitas*, *parsimonia* (sc. *indecorae nescius largitatis*), *fides* and *aequitas*. These virtues are not named directly, but they are indicated by concise definitions that reveal the essence of each of them. The catalogue of virtues has neither a specific plan nor a division (e.g.: into internal and external⁵⁹ virtues), and Praetextatus' virtues outlined in concise definitions are neither exemplified nor discussed in more detail later in the text. The virtues included in the catalogue vary in their historical and literary tradition. Therefore, the catalogue contains virtues belonging to the old Roman moral tradition⁶⁰ (*dignitas*, *probitas antiqua*, *fides*, *verecundia*, *parsimonia*, *austeritas*) as well as virtues often indicated by the authors in panegyrics⁶¹ of emperors (*temperantia*, *facilitas*, *iustitia* or *aequitas*, *auctoritas* and *humanitas*). The formal tone of *Rel.* 10–12 is served basically by the phrases used in the hitherto style of the imperial chancellery, such as headlines with the clearly indicated

⁵⁹ Cf. e.g.: Ammianus Marcellinus who at the very beginning of the *elogium* of the emperor Julianus the Apostate (XXV 4, 1) divides his virtues into internal (inborn: *temperantia*, *prudencia*, *iustitia*, *fortitudo*) and external (*scientia rei militaris*, *auctoritas*, *felicitas*, *liberalitas*) and then discusses and exemplifies each of the virtues (XXV 4, 2–15) according to the order given in XXV 4, 1.

⁶⁰ Cf. Mleczek 2018: 16, nn. 25, 26.

⁶¹ E.g.: Plin. *Paneg.* 2; 10; 78; Pacat. *Or.* 40, 3–4; 6, 2; 7, 1; Amm. Marc. XXV 4, 1, 4–6; 7; 8; 12 (*elogium* of Julianus the Apostate: *temperantia*, *iustitia*, *auctoritas*, *facilitas*): Gärtner 1968: 499–529; Mleczek 2018: 64; Omissi, Ross 2020.

names of the emperors and references to them later in the text (*domini imperatores* – *Rel.* 10, 1; *domine imperator* and *clementia vestra* – *Rel.* 11; 12, 4; *domini imperatores inclyti victores ac triumphatores semper Auggg.* – *Rel.* 12, 1) or verbs in the second person plural that Symmachus uses while addressing the emperors. However, it should be emphasized that *Rel.* 10–12 are not only an eulogy of a close friend presenting his idealized image, or a lamentation of a conservative attached to the old Roman tradition who realizes that the old virtues have passed away with Praetextatus, but they are also the lamentation of an aristocrat fully aware that the senatorial aristocracy has lost an influential political advocate, one deeply involved in striving for its strong position and interests in the public forum.

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