POETIC THEORY AND SENSE PERCEPTION IN JODOCUS BADIUS ASCENSIUS’S STULTIFERAЕ NAUES (1500 O.S.): FROM SUBITUS CALOR TO VITUPERATIO

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Introduction

In 1497, the erudite humanist, productive printer, thorough commentator, dedicated pedagogue, and able poet, Jodocus Badius Ascensius (1462-1535), received a career-enhancing commission from Geoffroy de Marnef, a notable representative of one of the most reputable printer dynasties of late-fifteenth century Paris: to write a Latin contribution to the proliferating corpus of ‘fool literature’ based on Sebastian Brant’s (1457-1521) immensely popular if prophetically somber speculum of the failings of humankind, the Narrenschiff (‘The Ship of Fools’, 1494), which this printer had successfully launched in France. Badius responded promptly to the invitation by penning an occasional poem, which he attractively re-baptized Stultiferae naues (‘The Ships of Foolish Maidens’), asking De Marnef to have it translated into French. However, Badius did not adopt Brant’s view according to which folly represented a socially acquired and thus potentially correctible vice, which underlies the Narrenschiff. Rather, inspired by the Christian piety of the devotio moderna,

1 To the present time, the most comprehensive study of Badius’s personal and professional life remains Renouard’s monumental work, Bibliographie des impressions et des œuvres de Josse Badius Ascensius, imprimeur et humaniste (1462-1535).
2 For an updated bibliography of the Narrenschiff, including the translations and adaptations which stemmed from it, see Metzger-Rambach, pp. 21-36.
3 Badius Ascensius, Stultiferae naues (Paris, 1500 O.S.). The editio princeps was printed by Thielmann Kerver for Angelbert de Marnef (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés. m Yc 308). This shelf mark has been subject to interpretation due to the poor legibility of its original, handwritten version which appears in the editio princeps preserved at the BnF, on which the subsequent printed transcriptions are based. While the BnF Catalogue général gives Rés. m.Yc. 308, the editors of the Middle and modern French translations of the Stultiferae naues provide Rés. m Ye 308, and Rés. M. Ye 308, respectively. All quotations are drawn from this copy. Capital letters and punctuation marks have been added to facilitate reading. For the subsequent editions of this text see Duhl, La Nef des folies, pp. 83-84.
to which he was highly indebted, he associated the folly of mankind with the original sin, arguing that the fall from paradise was the consequence of Eve’s natural impulse to favor her senses rather than her intellect when she was approached by the serpent.

Moreover, whereas Brant’s first translator, Jacob Locher, undertook to identify the heavily sententious Narrenschiff as a Roman satire (‘Quam non inepte Satyram appellare possumus’), seeking to heighten the aesthetic appeal of Brant’s vernacular tongue, Badius, for his part, opted for an Aesopian apologue as the genre of the Stultiferae naues. He explained his choice by using Horace’s proverbial precept recommending that the poet blend usefulness and attractiveness together (‘Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci’), offering thus a poetic argument as the basis of his didactic enterprise. Indeed, having previously expressed his intention to educate the French youth by ‘selling’ them works by famous authors, especially those that were filled with the best maxims, Badius endeavored to please his readers by appealing to their senses, while also explicitly banning all forms of verbal vehemence from his text. As he himself put it, the genre of the apologue allowed him to expose Eve’s folly and the ensuing fall of humanity in a pleasant fashion, by praising the cognitive and creative power of the senses through the individual voice of an inspired poet, rather than that of a didactic preacher, which had been Brant’s own choice.

It is thus intriguing that in the closing chapter of the Stultiferae naues, Badius moves away from his euphemizing pedagogy enhanced by the aesthetics of the apologue, and turns to a blunt vituperatio in which he declares his final verdict on the folly of the senses. By so doing, he searched to authorize his own rhetoric of blame in the eyes of the same audience that he had conspicuously shielded from the deleterious effect of verbal vehemence intrinsic to such rhetoric.

Rather than an inconsistency in Badius’s line of argumentation, the shift from the praise to the blame of folly can be read in the light of the change of focus, which occurs in the Stultiferae naues, from the object of verbal vehemence to its production, providing valuable insight not

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4 Hyma, pp. 265-266.
5 Locher, Stultifera Nauis, fol. a VIII’.
6 Horace, Epistle to the Pisones (‘Ars poetica’). This text was printed in 1500 in Paris by Thielmann Kerver for Jean Petit and the De Marnef brothers, with Badius’s preface (Renouard, I, p. 148).
7 Sylvae morales, in Badius, Préfaces, p. 211.
only into a longstanding debate surrounding the problematic nature of the rhetoric of blame, and notably the genre of satire, but also into the rising self-consciousness of an erudite poet who, seeking to reach out to an audience presumably uninitiated in humanist matters, is ready to take the ethically precarious stand of the satirist. After a brief account of Badius's interpretation of the genre of the apologue, we will turn our attention to his use of the poetic theory of calor subitus and the related metaphor of the sea voyage as examples of his euphemizing strategies. We will then consider Badius's arguments which were meant to explain his intention to rid his text of all forms of verbal vehemence, leading us to an analysis of the poet's theoretical reevaluation of the meaning and form of satire as illustrated by his own composition included in the Stultiferae naues.

The Stultiferae naues as an Apologue

The art of allusion and light humor grafted on short fictional narratives, which had been identified as the hallmark of the apologies or fables of Aesop (c. 6th century BC), rediscovered in the beginning of the Quattrocento, proved to be an aesthetically and rhetorically superior alternative to the moralized exempla which saturated late medieval didactic literature, including the original Narrenschiff. According to Badius, Aesop's interest consisted precisely in his ability to introduce serious moral precepts into the spirit and the heart of his audience targeting their ears, rather than their intellect. In other words, Aesop is praised for his ability to make his audience receptive to his didactic message by engaging one of the five senses, rather than the higher mental faculties, which would have been, as Badius put it, the authoritative modus operandi of the philosophers:

Si Aesopus ille e Phrygia (ut Aulus Gellius inquit) fabulator, haud immerito sapiens aestimatus est, quoniam quae utilia monitu suasuque essent, non imperiose praecepit et censuit, ut philosophis mos est, sed festius delectabilesque apologos commentus, res salubriter ac prospicienter animaduersas, in mentes animosque hominum, cum audiendi quadam illecebra induit. (Stultiferae naues, Praefatio, fol. a 11v) 10

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9 Fables françaises, pp. 17-27.
10 All translations from Latin are my own unless otherwise noted.
If Aesop, the fabulist from Phrygia (as Aulus Gellius says), is justly con­sidered wise, it is not because he taught and prescribed profitable admoni­ments and advice in a commanding way, as it is the custom of philosophers, but because he imagined entertaining and delightful apolo­gues, and brought on the spirit and the heart of men salutary and prudent observations, with a certain seductiveness of hearing.

As this passage suggests, Badius aimed to demonstrate the suitability of the non pretentious genre of the apologue created by Aesop as a vehicle for his pedagogical ideals, such as choosing between right and wrong, and exercising moderation, using a poetic-rhetorical argument based on and appealing to the senses, rather than the rules of logic.

The Poetic Theory of Calor Subitus

The second half of the Quattrocento witnessed a keen interest in the con­nection between poetic expression and sense perception. This developed as a result of a new epistemological trend which found a strong impetus in Lorenzo Valla’s (c. 1407-1457) audacious attempt to rehabilitate the senses, which was captured by his famous line describing ‘voluptas’ (material and spiritual pleasure) as the only good (‘solum bonum’) known from his controversial dialogue, De Voluptate (1431). It should be noted that the five senses were considered, following the biblical tradi­tion, during most of the Middle Ages inferior to the intellect. Politian’s (1454-1494) commentaries on Statius’s Silvae, a collection of occasional, seemingly improvised poems, which remained in manuscript form, as well as his own Latin hexameters bearing this title, further contributed to promote a more contingent poetic voice, which conveyed this new interest in sense perception. It was indeed thanks to this Roman poet that a creative model known as calor subitus (‘sudden ardor’) became available to humanists. Specifically, Statius conceived of calor as a pleasant dispo­sition favorable to a style of writing based on speedy improvisation, not far from Quintilian’s own theory of improvised speech (Inst., X, 3, 7,

11 Valla, ‘Proemium’, p. 50. Badius was the only early printer who published Book III of the original version of this dialogue, deeming the first two morally unworthy. See Renouard, III, pp. 346-347.

12 Poliziano, Silvae. In 1512, Badius was the first to publish Politian’s collected works, followed in 1519 by his Silvae. See Renouard, III, pp. 186-189.
17-18), describing the works resulting from such a disposition as 'libelllos, qui mihi subito calore et quadam festinandi voluptate fluxerunt'. In philosophical terms, calor can be explained as a concept evoking a physical state prompted by the imagination and the senses, independently from the abstractive power of the intellect, which is consistent with the intuition-based cognitive models developed in the later Middle Ages by John Duns Scotus and William Ockham. To the writers of the Quattrocento, calor provided a human alternative to the sparingly dispensed divine furor as the source of a type of poetic expression, in which individual emotions combined with consciously applied technique, rather than divine inspiration, took center stage.

Similarly to his predecessor, Statius, and his contemporary, Politian, whose occasional Silvae clearly inspired his own Sylvae morales (Lyon, 1492), Badius brought together the notion of calor with improvised writing, varietas, as well as the 'nautical voyage' metaphor indicative of this style. In his Stultiferae naues, this metaphor received further attention providing a poetic alternative to the traditional, Scriptural interpretation of the sea adventure as a source of moral danger (Acts, 27, 27-32), which underlies the Narrenschiff, as Badius conspicuously stated:

Haec sunt quae ad nauim stultiferam accedere posse putauin, quaeque subito calore ex variis collegi. (Stultiferae naues, fol. [c V'])

Here are those things that I thought could be added to [Brant's] ship of fools, and which I collected by a sudden ardor from a variety of material.

The Navigation Metaphor and the Praise of the Senses

Explicitly evoked in his Sylvae morales to designate a creative process which derived from calor, the navigation metaphor received however an original treatment in the Stultiferae naues. In this text, the five senses

13 ‘Little works, which flowed from me in the sudden ardor and in a certain joy of hurrying’, Stat., Silv., 1, praef. For the concept of calor, see Newmyer, p. 9, and Galand-Hallyn – Hallyn – Lecointe, pp. 129-136.
14 Boler, passim.
15 Badius, Préfaces, pp. 210-216; Renouard, I, pp. 143-145.
16 Curtius, pp. 128-129; White has recently drawn attention to Badius’s indebtedness to the calor subitus topos and the improvised, compiled character of the Stultiferae naues, in which he also identified a striking number of lines borrowed from Beroaldo the Elder (‘Foolish Pleasures’, p. 83).
17 Sylvae morales, in Badius, Préfaces, p. 211.
are personified as five female ships with Eve as their captain,\textsuperscript{18} who eagerly set the sails while exhorting the reader to join them in a sense-stimulating maritime adventure.\textsuperscript{19} Introduced in a traditional order inherited from Aristotle,\textsuperscript{20} ranging from the higher senses of sight and hearing, through the lower smell, to the lowest, taste, and touch, the ships relentlessly sing the praises of their respective sensory domains. They all insist however on the cognitive function attributed to the senses by the poet, praising themselves as conquerors of space and time, both real and poetic. This cognitive function is illustrated by a skillfully assembled mosaic of classical references drawn from Virgil, Horace, and Ovid, with several lines borrowed from Beroaldo the Elder, which are blended together thanks to Badius’s keen sense of disposition and rhythm.\textsuperscript{21} Emphasis is placed on the incantatory power of the personified ships’ voices, including their ability to induce and nurture one’s desire for perpetual \textit{voluptas}, in consonance with the previously outlined aesthetics of the apologue, while also reminding the audience of the seductive voices of the Sirens. As shown in the following lines which are included, hardly accidentally, in a poem devoted to hearing, this is conveyed by the rhythmic melody created by the anaphora \textit{cedat} (‘let...yield’), one of the stylistic procedures used in the ‘panegyrical \textit{topos} of outdoing’, which was equally known from Statius.\textsuperscript{22} The \textit{varietas} stemming from this \textit{topos} represents the source of an ear-enthralling polyphonic song, which aptly reveals its power to immortalize, like the disincarnated voices of Parthenope, one of the Sirens, the dying swan, and the sorrowful Philomela (Philomena in Badius’s text),\textsuperscript{23} the fleeting moment during which life turns into death:

\begin{quote}
18 In the ‘Prologue’ to the \textit{Stultiferae naues}, Badius also provides a traditional allegorical commentary on the five senses (never to be revisited again in the body of the text), using the biblical parable of the five foolish virgins (Matthew 25, 1-13), which might have been inspired to him by the woodcut accompanying Chapter 106 of the \textit{Stultiferae nautis} (Pinson, p. 79): just as the five foolish maidens representing the external senses, a recurrent theme in medieval mystery plays, who, having forgotten to put oil in their lamps — meaning having wavered in their faith —, found the doors of heaven shut, those who were guided by their five senses were doomed to be eternally exposed to the mortal dangers of the world.

19 For a detailed discussion of the allegorical representation of the senses in the \textit{Stultiferae naues}, see Duhl, passim.


22 Curtius, p. 162.

23 The story of Parthenope who threw herself into the waves for not being able to seduce Ulysses with her sweet voice is known from Servius’s \textit{Commentary on Virgil},
\end{quote}
Cedat Thraicius natiuis cantibus Orpheus
Pindaricaeque lyrae
Cedat et Amphion Dirceaus, cedat Olimpus
Cedat et ipse Linus [...] 
Nam canit hic toto mundo gaudente Silenus
Parthenopeque noua.
Cantat et ipse sua Triton sub littore concha
Aeolidae interitum
Hic moribundus holor querulaeque canunt Philomenae
Discipulasque docent
Hic immortalem perducunt gaudia vitam
Consona carminibus.

(Stultiferae naues, fol. b IV'-b V')

Let Orpheus\textsuperscript{24} of Thrace with his original songs, and the Pindaric lyre\textsuperscript{[s]} yield, let Amphion\textsuperscript{25} from Thebes yield, let Olympus yield, let Linus\textsuperscript{26} himself yield [...]. For in this place Silenus sings [while] the whole world is in joy, and a new [Siren] Parthenope [Badius referring to his own poem] [sings]. Triton also sings on the shore in his conch-shell horn the demise of Aeolus's son [Misenus].\textsuperscript{27} Here sings the swan while dying, and nightingales like Philomena sing while moaning, and teach disciples. Here the joys lead an immortal life in harmony with the songs.

The therapeutic qualities of music and its sister art, poetry, including their ability to transcend death is further underscored by a detailed discussion of the myths of Orpheus, Amphion, and Arion, the famous champions of music and poetry, which were drawn from Horace's \textit{Ars poetica} and Aulus Gellius's \textit{Noctes Atticae}, and presented in a prose section following the poem on hearing.\textsuperscript{28} But the emphasis subtly shifts from the praise of the power of music to triumph of death to a seemingly impartial description of its capacity to generate death. This is embedded in a long didactic passage devoted to the story of the half-bird, half-maiden Sirens, prefigured by the previously mentioned Parthenope, and their fatal songs, as described by generations of poets, from Homer to Virgil to the latter's fourth-century commentator, Servius.\textsuperscript{29} Born from the poet's sudden ardent

\textsuperscript{24} Ov., \textit{Met.}, 10, 1-85; 11, 1-84; Verg., \textit{Georg.}, 4, 453-527.
\textsuperscript{25} Verg., \textit{Ecl.}, 2, 24.
\textsuperscript{26} Verg., \textit{Ecl.}, 4, 56-57.
\textsuperscript{27} Verg., \textit{Aen.}, 6, 162-174.
\textsuperscript{28} Stultiferae naues, fol. b II'-b III'.
\textsuperscript{29} Stultiferae naues, fol. b III'-b IV'.

among other sources. The dying swan's melody was believed to indicate the happy liberation from life's dangers (Kinghorn, passim). Philomena was Procne's sister who was raped by her brother-in-law, Tereus. He cut out her tongue to prevent her from telling the truth. After performing a gruesome revenge together with her sister, Philomela found herself transformed by the gods into a nightingale (Ov., \textit{Met.}, 6, 424-674).
which he claims to be the source of contradictory but coexisting creative impulses, the songs of the ships are presented accordingly as both enchantingly healing, like the swan’s or Philomela’s own, and fatally deceiving, like those of the Sirens.

Hearing and the Rhetoric of Blame

The ambiguous representation of hearing as a sense that possesses healing and yet lethal powers, however, was scarcely Badius’s invention. During the medieval period, hearing was not only celebrated as the source of music and poetry, following the Classical tradition as well as one of conversion in Christian rhetoric (St. Augustine), but also feared as a death-inducing vehicle, as found, for instance, in Bernard of Clairvaux. The latter meaning was suggestively conveyed by the metaphor janua mortis (‘the door of death’), which was used by the Cistercian to describe the ear in reference to the original sin.30 Having portrayed the Sirens as meretrices (‘prostitutes’),31 not far from Servius’s description as found in his commentary on Virgil,32 Badius operated an allegorical translatio studii from the classical to the Christian tradition, linking the Sirens to Eve and the original sin. He then provided his own version of Genesis 3:6, by insisting on the primary role played by the ear in the fall from paradise: it was through hearing, Badius holds, that Eve fell prey to the words of the serpent bringing about the boundless miseries of the human condition. This was a departure from Scripture in which the fall of mankind developed as a consequence of Eve’s sight-induced desire to taste the forbidden fruit.33

However, while explicitly shifting his focus from hearing as a source of pleasure to hearing as a source of death, holding Eve responsible for her failure — caused by her alleged cognitive impairment — to recognize the deceptive nature of the serpent’s seductive rhetoric, in other words her inability to make a distinction between pathos and ethos, Badius, as a devout Christian pedagogue, was equally interested in the status and

30 Fritz, pp. 37-38.
31 Stultiferae naues, fol. b IIIv.
32 Servianorum in Vergilii Carmina Commentariorum, Aen., 5, 864.
33 ‘Vidit igitur mulier quod bonum esset lignum ad vescendum, et pulchrum oculis, aspectuque delectabile: et tulit de fructu illius, et comedit: deditque viro suo, qui comedit’ (Genesis, 3, 6).
form of unauthorized speech. Calling this ‘illicit’, he provided an original reflection on the ethos of the producer of this type of speech:

Alterum [genus] eorum qui aut illicita aut licita illicite audiunt, alterum eorum qui quod audire debeat aut negligent aut contemnunt. Neque minus insaniunt qui non audienda dicunt, aut ut dicantur scribunt. In utroque genere sunt protoplasti, qui salutiferam domini vocem audire nolentes pestifera serpentis sibila audiere. In utroque praeterea aut saltem altero sunt omnes qui verba carnalia, scurrilia qui scommata. Dicteria. detractiones et blasphemias. Mendacia. peritura et huiusmodi alia aut proferunt aut libenter audiunt. Innumerati autem sunt qui musices instrumenti, aut vocis lenocinio aut amatorii canticiis in scaphas stultorum stultarumque peruecti ad inferna deducti sunt. (Stultiferae naues, fol. b IV)

Some listen to illicit things or listen in a forbidden fashion to that which is allowed, some neglect or despise that to which they should listen. And those are not less foolish who utter words that shouldn’t be heard, or write them so that they be said. To these two categories belong the first human creatures who, not wanting to listen to the redemptive voice of the Lord, listened to the pestiferous hissing of the serpent. To each of those categories, or at least to one of them, belong furthermore all those who utter or like to listen to carnal words, buffooneries, gibes, taunts, detractions, and blasphemous speech, lies, perjuries, and others words of this kind. On the other hand, numberless are those who, drawn to the ship of fools and foolish women by musical instruments, the artifices of voice or love songs, are directed to hell.

Having assembled this compelling list of examples of ‘illicit’ speech, among which we can find some of the most notorious sins of the tongue — detraction, blasphemy, lying, perjury —, as categorized and described in the monastic tradition of the 13th century, 34 Badius urges the reader that verbal violence be avoided at all cost, even if it were to target such vile pleasures as those provided by touch, which was considered, as we have seen, the lowest of the five senses:

Facile cuiuis promptumque est stultarum sensationum illecebras verbis (ut Satyricus inquit) Herculis inuadere, inque turpes mores acrius despuere, ac voluptatem beluinam detestari, quippe quae nihil honore dignum habent, sed nescio quae sit hucus pestis inescatio, quae etiam detestantes in fraudem illicere illectosque irretire solet. (Stultiferae naues, fol. c IV)

It is easy and at the disposal of anyone to attack the enticements of foolish sensations with words of Hercules (as the satiric poet [Juv., 2, 19-20] says), to spit with particular bitterness on shamefull morals, and to detest bestial voluptuousness, because they contain nothing that deserves to be called

34 Casagrande – Vecchio, pp. 173-180, 189-212, 239-252.
honorable. But I don’t know what trap carries this plague, which usually
draws to sin even those who detest it and, when it has drawn them, keeps
them in its net.

In this passage, Badius makes a provocative comparison between the
harm caused by the listed words of blame and the physical, potentially
contagious act of despuere ('spitting'), as well as the deadly disease of
pestis ('plague'), contractable through touch, which belongs to the arse­
nal of invective.35 This is an accurate description avant la lettre of the
perlocutionary function of this type of verbal abuse,36 offering a percep­
tive insight into the vaguely defined but highly effective vituperatio,37
which includes not only corrective devices but also ‘illicit’ speech. But what
were the means by which the poet was able to legitimize a discourse
which threatened to spread like a deadly disease?

Badius on Satire

Having entrusted Eve with a repentant self-blame and a touching invoca­
tion addressed to Mary, who is represented in her symbolic gesture of
killing the serpent (passage inspired by Genesis 3:15), before giving birth
to the only true Word,38 BADIUS contemplated a more pacifist answer to
the previously formulated question, by drawing devices both from clas­
sical and Christian rhetoric. On the one hand, he argued, in the spirit of the
devotio moderna, that verbal vehemence could not be cured without
some equally powerful non-verbal counter venom, such as God’s grace
and hard work.39 On the other hand, BADIUS, the poet, could not hide his
fascination with Classical satire as a well-qualified weapon against lust,
turning to no one other than Juvenal, the fiercest of all satirists, and more
exactly to the latter’s acerbic sixth satire, Against Women, to exemplify
this role. How to reconcile thus BADIUS’s interest in satire with his previ­
ously outlined rejection of this genre as incompatible with the aesthetics
of the apologue? The answer is provided by BADIUS’s own theoretical
reflections on satire, which were published almost simultaneously with the
Stultiferae naues.

35 Postel, pp. 371-373, 486.
36 Beaumatin, p. 21.
37 Rhetorica ad Herennium, 3, 10-15, 4, 62.
38 Stultiferae naues, fol. a IVr-a Vr.
39 Stultiferae naues, fol. c IVr-v.
Badius was thoroughly familiar with the works of Juvenal, along with those of Persius and Horace, of which he published commented editions subsequently included in his famous *Praenotamenta* (1502). This familiarity made him well aware of the traditionally precarious position that the satirist occupied in the eyes of the Church and the State, or those of various social and gender groups, especially women. He knew, indeed, that as an indignant individual, the satirist was vulnerable to accusations of personal anger, envy, and misogyny, sins and vices that a pedagogue addressing a Christian community was supposed to combat rather than exhibit. Indeed, while 'illicit' speech seemed permissible in the case of a pagan poet, such as Juvenal, who turned specifically to satire as an outlet for his anger stirred by the spectacle of Rome's decadence, the same type of speech would have been ethically objectionable when uttered by a Christian poet engaged in the pursuit of a pedagogical mission, such as Badius. Thus, while drawing from Juvenal, Badius placed his discourse of vehemence under the authority and legitimacy of a Christian homily.

In his pedagogical prefaces to the works of Juvenal, Persius, and Horace, Badius specifically argued that satire should not offend good morals, a position to which the continuing popularity of Juvenal in the 1490s certainly attested. Following Politian, who for his part drew on the grammar of Diomedes to elaborate his own theory of satire, Badius linked the genre to the name of Lucilius, whom he considered the inventor of

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40 The first editions of the Latin satirists were published in Italy: Persius in Rome around 1469, Juvenal in Venice in 1470, and Horace somewhere in Italy around 1470 (Trtnik-Rossetini, pp. 10-14). In December 1498, and in January 1499, the satires of Juvenal and Persius were published with Badius's commentaries, excerpts of which had been included in the 1492 edition of his *Sylvae morales*. In 1506, Badius revised his commentaries on Juvenal, in order to make them more accessible, and printed them for three booksellers in Ghent. The same year he published a small edition of this satirist. See also Renouard, I, p. 147.

41 After his 1492 Lyon edition of the *Sylvae morales*, which included his first *Praenotamenta*, in 1493 Badius published his first edition of Terentius. But his commentaries, entitled *Jodoci Badii Ascensii familiaria in Terentium praenotamenta*, in which he addressed the three dramatic genres, as well as satire, were included for the first time in a 1502 edition printed in Lyon by François Fradin, with a preface to Hervé Basin. This text was revised by Badius and reprinted in 1504 for three London booksellers. The *Praenotamenta* became very successful especially among professors and students, as suggested by the considerable number of editions (49) published until 1555 in Paris, Lyon, Venice, Rouen, Caen, Milano, Toscolano, and Cologne (Renouard, I, pp. 145-146, and III, p. 283).


43 Trtnik-Rossetini, pp. 36-37.
the new Roman satire. He argued that the condemnation of vices stemming from a personal view, as it appeared in Lucilius’s satire, could be poetically justifiable if it were turned into the mold of the noble hexameter, the formal support of the epic. But most importantly, Badius recommended that the satirist adopt the enunciation strategies of a Christian preacher. Not only did this position legitimize verbal vehemence, which was frequently exhibited by contemporary preachers, but it also conveyed universal appeal to a discourse which was a priori contingent, like that of the individual satirist. In fact, since Thomas Aquinas, the rhetoric of blame had been recommended as an effective persuasive device in moral theology. Thus conceived as an elevated Christian discourse, verbal vehemence, although metaphorically linked, as we have seen, to the lowest of the five senses, touch, became, paradoxically, a vehicle for salvation, as illustrated by Badius’s own composition entitled Dehortatio, the closing poem of the Stultiferae nauæ.

Satire and the Dehortatio

Following closely the thematic and rhetorical pattern of a Christian homily, Badius sets out to illustrate the link between sensory excess and death by bringing into play the previously mentioned metaphor of hearing as janua mortis. Specifically, he seeks to stir fear in his audience, adopting a strategy frequently used in homilies, associating the Last Judgment, a theme of the Apocalypse, to earthly pleasures as destructive, death-provoking forces. In other words, Badius skillfully combines two traditional topoi associated with death and the renouncement of the world, the memento mori and the contemptus mundi, leaving paradoxically the hope of redemption only to those who let themselves be literally touched by his vituperatio. In addition to using the common techniques of conversion, such as the apostrophe, interrogation, rhetorical questions, anaphora, repetition, the appeal to a second audience, mythological anti-exempla, and periphrasis, some of which, known from Classical rhetoric (i.e., Quintilian, Inst. IX, 4, 7-8), were meant to increase pathos, Badius places emphasis on those poetic techniques that potentially increased the

44 Badius, Préfaces, pp. 84-89.
45 Von Moos, pp. 67-82.
46 Zimmermann, p. 54, n. 20.
47 Martin, p. 574.
sensory power of his discourse, the *movere*. He achieves this by creating a tension between the gravity of the hexameter and the harshness of the incongruous sound combinations on which he based his own versions of this meter, some of which could have been inspired by Persius’s famous *canina litera*.48

The forbidden pleasures deriving from sensory excess are denounced as sources of deception and distress, as suggested by the unpleasant effect created by the accumulation of alternating, not particularly euphonic, sibilant ‘s’, ‘x’, and ‘i’ sounds, included in the first two lines of the *dehortatio*, which may have reminded the audience/readers of the deceptive words of the serpent:

\[
\text{Discite mortales aegri, quibus anxia cordi est} \\
\text{Vita, sedetque malis multis innixa voluptas. (Stultiferae naues, fol. c V')}
\]

Learn, ill mortals, who are attached to a life of misery and for whom pleasure comes with lots of evil.

Moreover, in contrast to the praise poems, in which the senses are poet-icized and extolled, as we have seen, for their exploratory and recuperative power, in the *dehortatio*, they are represented as metonymies of fragmented bodies, which are turned into vivid metaphors of the most reprehensible sins, *gula* and *luxuria*:

\[
\text{Heu fatuas linguas, dementia pectora, stultas} \\
\text{Delirasque manus, quae propter pauca caduci} \\
\text{Tentamenta boni, caelestem perditis aulam} \\
\text{Aeternoque bono praefertis dulcia vitae. (Stultiferae naues, fol. c V')}
\]

Alas, ill-advised tongues, demented hearts, foolish and rambling hands, which for a few temptations of evanescent happiness loose the eternal kingdom and prefer the pleasures of life to the eternal good.

Consistent with the *topoi* of Christian homily, Badius expands, as the previous quotation shows, the semantic field of folly (*fatuas, dementia, stultas, deliras*) to blame first the tongue, as both the organ of eating, representation of gluttony, and the organ of ‘illicit’ speech, then the heart, which was considered the site of ill intentions and desires, and, finally the hands, the vehicles of lust.49 Moreover, while the moralizing tone remains somber, the cacophonic effect created by such word pairings as *pauca caduci* aptly underscores the pedestrian nature of the type

49 Martin, p. 340.
of happiness that one can derive, according to the poet, from earthly pleasures.

Sound incongruity also serves to expose the deceptive and useless artificiaility of sense-based perception, which was considered a source of corruption of the soul:

O curuae in terras animae, et caelestium inanes
Quid iuuat illecebris mentes inuoluere carnis
Quid fugitium iuuant fallacis gaudia sensus
Quid fucatus honos, quid adultera forma, quid auro
Intertexta chlamys, quid cyclas choa, quid aulae
Conditio Attalicae \[?] \(50\) (Stultiferae naues, fol. c \(V\))

Oh you, souls, bent to the earth and deprived of celestial goods, what does it serve to get your minds involved with the allurements of the flesh, what does serve the fleeing happiness of the deceptive senses, what does serve an artificial honor, a factitious beauty, a cape interwoven with gold, a dress from Cos, the wealth of the court of Attalus?

The combined effect of repetition conveyed by the anaphora quid and the accumulation of guttural sounds, chla-quad-cyc-cho-quid, aptly reveal, by the very dissonance that they produce, the vulgarity of artificial beauty.

Equally harsh is the punishment awaiting those sinners who engage in poetic and musical pursuits, as suggested by the repetition of the raucous canina litera:

Quid citharæ crepitus, quid mollis risus, et oris
Carmina lasciui, quid verba salesque iuuabunt
Qui strepitu horrifico sub Tartara dira trahentur \[?\]
(Stultiferae naues, fol. c \(V^\prime\))

What will serve of the sound of the cithara, what the sensuous laughs and the songs of a lascivious mouth, what will serve the witty words to those who will be taken down in a horrible rumble to the dreadful Tartarus?

Finally, the repetition of the ‘i’ sound combined with the cacophonic effect of the guttural quo-que-cre-cre reproduced in the verse, ‘Quosque cremat iugis flammis crepitantibus ignis?’, alliteratively imitates the outburst of the flames of hell that are about to touch Vcnu’s’s slaves, as revealed by the following quotation:

Quid Veneris plausus, lasciva quid oscula prosunt
Quos eterna premunt diris tormenta flagellis
Quosque cremat iugis flammis crepitantibus ignis \[?\]
(Stultiferae naues, fol. c \(V\))

\(50\) Cf. Horace, Odes, 1, 1, 12.
What does it serve to applaud the pleasures of Venus, what serve the lascivious kisses to those whom the eternal tortures harass with their frightening whips, and to those whom perpetual fire burns with its crackling flames?

This symbolic purification comes to closure by the introduction of a biblical sentence, ‘nimis id verum est non posse ad gaudia quemquam / Per iocunda vehi’ (‘it is but very true that nobody can be taken to happiness through pleasure’), which is a paraphrase of Luke 13, 24, marking the beginning of Badius’s own account of Christ’s Passion:

Ah nimis id verum est non posse ad gaudia quemquam
Per iocunda vehi. Stricta est quae ducit ad aulam
Semita caelestem, quo nos perducere cunctos
Dignetur, proprio qui callem sanguine primus
Imbuist, et regni patefecit clausa paterni
Atria, praesancta natus de virgine Christus.  (Stultiferae naues, fol. c V°)

Oh, it is but very true that nobody can be taken to happiness through pleasure: narrow is the path that leads to the celestial palace. May he deign to take us all there, he who was the first one to mark with his own blood this path and opened the halls of the kingdom of his father, which were closed to us, the son of the Most Holy Virgin, Christ.

The allusion to the passion of Christ, which is meant to reveal the insignificance of earthly death, serves to heighten the discourse of satire to an eschatological level opening the perspective of redemption, and making thus the fall of mankind not only a tragedy but also a necessary and happy sin, echoing the theological doctrine of the necessarium peccatum or felix culpa.51

Conclusion

Badius’s didactico-poetic project, which consists of teaching about the folly of the senses using the medium of the apologue, proves to be an argumentative impasse, insofar as it lacks a legitimate voice which does not bear the potential stigma of one of the most feared sins of the tongue, the weapon of the serpent, deception. Neither does the rhetoric of blame, the harshness of which is masked by the apologue, provide a legitimate tool to a Christian poet embarked on a civilizing mission. It is by changing his enunciative strategy, and specifically by usurping the voice of

51 According to the liturgy of the Easter night (Exultet, vv. 51-54), inspired by Ambrose, the original sin was not only the tragedy of humankind but also a necessary and happy event, which made it possible for the redemption of Christ to occur (O’Malley, p. 139).
a representative of doctrine such as the preacher, which integrates blame to its verbal arsenal, that Badius succeeded in turning the symbolism of the ear from its representation as the door of death into a vehicle for joy, providing a relevant example of Christian Epicureanism: if the fall from paradise was contingent upon *voluptas*, redemption was contingent upon verbal vehemence.

However, even though the theological argument took prevalence over the poetic one, the doctrine of the *necessarium peccatum* over the aesthetic of the apologue, it was precisely by appealing to the senses that Badius was able to make his point. His subtle use of poetic devices moreover, helped to elevate the discourse to a stylistically higher level than the satires of Horace, which never sought to rise above the conversational mode, closer indeed to those of Lucilius who aimed, as we have seen, not only to castigate the most powerful but also to bring the genre into the orbit of the epic by using the hexameter as its formal support. However, while a follower of Lucilius, like Erasmus whose *Praise of Folly* is also highly indebted to the *Stultiferae naues*, develops a rhetoric of irony and paradox, which keeps the discourse of satire within the comic sphere (with the exception, perhaps, of the peroration), Badius adopts Juvenal’s somber tone, prefiguring, on the French soil at least, the solemnly prophetic vehemence of Agrippa d’Aubigné’s *Les Tragiques*, which engages the reader in an upward cathartic movement leading from the satirical to the tragic realm. But ultimately, as exemplified by Badius, in the early 1500s, the satirist did not receive an independent, individual voice, satire did not develop into a high genre, but remained attached, in order to reach its desired effect, to the dominant discourse which it helped to reinforce rather than to undermine.

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