1. Dangerous Doctrine

In several places Fulgentius stresses his unwillingness to deal in dangerous or blameworthy doctrine: in his first sentence he may mean that his own age is censorious of the past; in Virgil he will avoid "those things which might invite risk of blame rather than praise"; he will not risk "instruction which goes beyond the limitation of the age" (par. 2); he prefers sweet to sour (2, 3, 23), and the "slighter things" of the classroom to "weightier bundles" more suitable for Romans who can handle them with safety but for which his own age feels distrust (3-6). In a conventional pretense of not mentioning themes beyond his powers (compare Virgil himself in Georg. 3.3 ff., 4.148), he details the mystical matters to be found in Virgil's Eclogues and Georgics: prophecy, priestly matters, Stoic physiology, what seem to be the forces of botany and interpretative aspects of music, magic, divination, astrology, and soothsaying. He ends by warning his master to be cautious: there may be thistles in what he has written (30).

In part this can be explained as typical early Christian distrust of pagan learning and mysticism, of which the gold must be extracted from the "Gentile" dross (21). A more precise echo of current controversies seems to be heard, however, when Fulgentius goes on to give a substantial list of classical authorities who have dealt with the matters he prefers to avoid (2, 3). The list seems to be concocted from current Christian apologetics, particularly the writings of Tertullian (died 230), and contains opposition to pagan writers on the occult; it need not be taken as proving Fulgentius's direct acquaintance with the works of the authors he mentions. Its details have not been fully elucidated, hence the following attempt. Some comment is provided by V. Ciaffi, Università di Torino, Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia 14.2 (1963): 81.

Pythagoras on "harmonies" or "scales" (modulos) in relation to musical appreciation had been discussed by Fulgentius himself in the Mythologies
3.9 and 10, ending with a distant echo of Plato's *Republic* 3 and 7. Macrobius's *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* 2, is another place where Pythagorean numerology in its combined astrological and musical aspects is discussed at length. The "fires" (*ignes*) of Heraclitus "the Obscure" are also in the *Mythologies* 1.3: Jove there represents the element of fire "because by vital fire all things may be said to be animated, as Heraclitus asserts," the traditional notion of Heraclitus repeated, for instance, by Servius on *Aen.* 2.186; Macrobius, *Commentary* 1.20.3; Lactantius *Divine Institutes* 2.9 (*Heraclitus ex igne nata omnia dixit*); Vitruvius *On Architecture* 2.2. The ideas or ideal forms of Plato are most explicitly found in the *Republic*, again 7, and are mentioned in Tertullian's *De anima* 18.3, 32.4. One "star" of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the occult writings associated with Hermes Trismegistus, is mentioned in the *Mythologies* 1.18, with reference to the wanderings of Hermes-Mercury, and similarly Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.9. The "numbers" (*numeros*) of Chrysippus the Stoic are mentioned, along with Euclid, Pythagoras, and Plato, by Sidonius Apollinaris (*Epist.* 4.3, 5); Tertullian (*De anima* 5.4) names Plato, Aristotle, and Chrysippus together, and, dealing with reincarnation in section 30, disapproves of Pythagoras's notion that the number of human souls remains constant. The *endelechias* of Aristotle, in the sense "fulfillment, completion" (see *Metaphysics*, Theta 8), are not the *Analytics* misspelled but are glossed in two Fulgentius manuscripts as *intima aetas*, *anima scilicet*, "the inner state, *i.e.* the soul." They are mentioned by Macrobius (*Commentary* 1.14, 19) and by Martianus Capella (*De nuptiis* 2: *Aristoteles per caeli culmina entelechiam scrupulosius requirebat*)—works Fulgentius almost certainly knew, the particular passage from Capella also being cited by Bernard Sylvestris, Fulgentius's 12th-century imitator, in his *De universitate mundi*, ed. C. S. Barach and J. Wrobel (Innsbruck, 1876), p.13.168; and they occur in Tertullian's *De anima* 32.4, in a context especially close to ours: *numeros Pythagorae et ideas Platonis et entelechias Aristotelis*. For another probable recollection of the *De anima*, see *Mythologies* 1.14, 15.

The remaining allusions seem to be to writers on spirits and magic. Dardanus "on powers" (*in dinameris*) is the legendary ancestor of the Dardani or Trojans, to whom the invention of magic was commonly ascribed, also named by Apulcius, *Apologia* (or *De magia*) 90; Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Greeks* 2; Busebius, *Praeparatio evangeliorum* 2; Pliny, *Natural History* 30.2; and once again Tertullian, *De anima* 57.1—see the edition of the latter, with commentary in English, by J. H. Wazink (Amster-
2. The Rules for Praise

In paragraphs 6, 8, and 10, Fulgentius, through the mouth of Virgil, sets out an elaborate and curious justification, logically evolved, for the order in the opening line of the Aeneid being "arms," then "man," then "the first," and for the relevance of this to his theory that the Aeneid is a chronological allegory of human life. The dialectics, tortuous and glaringly post hoc but not inconsistent, might serve as a prime example of sophistic persuasion. One can, however, scarcely doubt that, for Fulgentius and his age, they made a perfectly legitimate contribution to the allegorical method.

The sequence of the argument is as follows. The order (1) "arms" and (2) "man" is explained first, (3) "the first" being reserved for a later consideration. The logical order (secundum dialecticam disciplinam) normal to an expository work would be to have (1) "man," the person and his essential quality or substance, then (2) "arms" as his attribute, outward show or accidence. It is premised, however, that "arms" stands for manliness (virtus) and "man" for wisdom (sapientia), and that, though logical argument is being offered, the "rules for praise" (laudis materia) are to be followed, in which (1) the good and praiseworthy quality, i.e., manliness, precedes (2)
the person who possesses it, i.e., man, the embodiment of wisdom. Two analogies are offered: in letter-writing it is conventional to give (1) the person's title, then (2) his actual name; and according to Aen. 1.2, 4, the hero is compelled on his course by fate and the power of the gods, i.e., the blame lies with external circumstances and does not reflect on his own praiseworthiness, which, since fortune favors the brave and man's spirit is his god, emerges all the better from these circumstances. Then a second point is made: manliness precedes wisdom because it is assisted by wisdom, as paralleled from Homer's Iliad, the opening line of which puts anger before Achilles, and 1.197 which shows Achilles aided by Minerva, the goddess of wisdom. The third point brings in "the first," the third of Virgil's key words. The natural course of human life is tripartite, (1) possession of life and innate ability, including the quality of manliness, (2) control and discipline of life through the power of the mind and its wisdom, and (3) "ornament" or perfecting of life through experience and judgment until the man develops into a leader or "first"; each stage leads naturally to the next. This is the order of the Aeneid, and we are then ready to be shown each stage in detail by a book-by-book exposition.

The argument is self-consistent, but not complete unless we take into consideration, what Fulgentius takes for granted, that the Aeneid is an epic, and so falls into the traditional category of epideictic writing to which "rules for praise" may logically apply. Given this, the argument is easily completed: Virgil's epic relates the deeds of the hero Aeneas; these are praiseworthy deeds and must contain truths and precepts valid for all men of worth, i.e., a moral philosophy; therefore, these truths are to be sought for. The means used, the gross manipulation of Virgil's method of beginning in medias res into a strict chronology of growing up and the grotesque etymologizing, may subsequently have lost their reliability, but the end purpose is not unreasonable. If each deed of Aeneas is virtuous, it illustrates a virtue, and the door to allegory is wide open. Fulgentius's distinction is that he happened to be the first to allegorize a pagan work in this thoroughgoing way. The achievement is not unimpressive: he justifies the suitability of the Aeneid for Christian readers; he turns the narrative into the outline of both a Bildungsroman, a panegyrical biography of Aeneas, and a psychomachia or battle for the soul of Everyman; from the details of his allegory he manages to produce a full parade of virtues and vices; and all these represent themes and attitudes of abiding popularity in succeeding ages.

Yet with both theory and practice Fulgentius is essentially traditional.
His implied subordination of literature to moral philosophy is something already adumbrated in Aristotle's division of the human sciences and still regularly taken for granted in Aristotelian thought through the Renaissance, while the notion of poetry as having as its primary function instruction in virtue is in direct line from Plato. From antiquity also comes the view of literature in terms of praise and blame. Plato (Laws 2, 7, Protagoras) favored primitive choric songs of praise to gods, demigods, and heroes, because they edified by stirring youth to emulation and conferred fame on the deserving. Aristotle and his commentators added heroic poetry and epic to the category of praise; after Aristotle, rhetoricians tended to set aside an epideictic or demonstrative category for encomia of personal renown, and to consider praise as having a didactic effect. In the late classical period Menander, in his Peri epideiktikon, provided an elaborate codification by types. On Fulgentius a likely direct influence is the Interpretationes Virgilianae of Tiberius Donatus (4th century), a trained rhetorician who begins by establishing that the Aeneid follows epideictic form (artis genus laudationis), and uses Fulgentius's term, materia, for the epideictic category of rhetoric.

For early stages in the theory of praise in literature and literary criticism, see the study by T. C. Burgess, Epideictic Literature (1902); a full account of medieval and Renaissance developments is provided by O. B. Hardison, The Enduring Monument (1962); both works are listed in full in the bibliographical note, above.

3. Stoic and Epicurean

Fulgentius seems to have nothing against the Stoics: Virgil's Eclogue 6 is described, without comment, as in part "a physiology based on the teachings of the Stoics" (para. 1); and in para. 24 he has Virgil say lightheartedly, "I would not be a pagan if I did not leaven so many Stoic truths with a pinch of Epicurean foolishness." This remark is occasioned by Virgil's treatment of the meeting between Anchises and his son Aeneas in the Elysian fields, par. 22: Anchises becomes a God-like figure as he describes the ordering of creation (Aen. 6.720 ff.), makes clear the future, and "teaches the secret mysteries of nature and shows how men's spirits are brought back again from life" (perhaps better "to life," see the note). The persona of
the Christian Fulgentius objects to this hint of the metempsychosis of souls as a piece of folly ill becoming a poet who had, in Eclogue 4, foretold the coming of the Messiah in Christian-like terms: "Is not your mind dozing off when you snore out something smacking of the Academy and say . . . that exalted souls once more return to their sluggish bodies?" (par. 23). Epicurean and Academic seem to be loosely equated here. In the Mythologies 2.1 identifying Venus with the voluptuary life Fulgentius adds: "They wish her to be called Venus, a good thing according to the Epicureans, a vain one according to the Stoics, for the Epicureans praise pleasure but the Stoics condemn it, the former cultivate license but the latter shun it." There is some contrast here with the views of Fulgentius's contemporary, Boethius, made apparent in the first pages of the Consolation (1, prose 3), that both Stoics, with their serious principle of accepting fate, and Epicureans, with their frivolous principle of pleasure, are, by comparison with Plato and the Academy, no more, as Boethius says, than "inept" tearers of the Lady Philosophy's gown.

The main problem in paragraphs 23, 24, is how accurate and precise Fulgentius is with his allusions. The ideas, merits, and limitations of the three schools or systems—in the order, Epicurean, Stoic, Academic—were available at length in Cicero's five books of dialogues (with himself one of the speakers) known as the De finibus bonorum et malorum ("On the extremes of good and evil"), and his three books De natura deorum ("On the nature of the gods"). With his references, especially if one compares his treatment of authors in par. 3 considered in note 1 above, Fulgentius may well be making a mere parade of learning based on only a superficial acquaintance. They do reflect to some degree, however, what was popularly known of Virgil's interests and what we may surmise of those of Fulgentius. In real life Virgil had studied under an Epicurean, Siron, and much admired the Epicurean poet Lucretius; in later life, to judge by the eschatology of Aeneid 6, Virgil seems to have abandoned the school. Among Christians, Epicureanism, with its stress on the materialistic, had a worse name than Stoicism, with its lofty ideas of the divine power; and one imagines Fulgentius quite partial to the traditional interest of the Stoics in grammar and writing, as well as to their fondness for startling statements and ingenious dialectic. In speaking of Virgil's pinch of Epicurean foolishness, Fulgentius may have had in mind particularly the arguments of Lucretius (De rerum natura 3) on the mortality of the soul. But when he calls Virgil's ideas Epicurean as well as Academic, that is, basically Platonic but perhaps
more nearly Ciceronian, he may after all be doing no more than reflecting
the confusion natural for his age and the secondhand sources available to
him.

Among these may well have been Cicero's *De natura deorum*, which
would have introduced Fulgentius to the views of Carneades, Pythagoras,
and Chrysippus, provided him with numerous specimens of Stoic etymology
for mythological names (2.23–28), and at one place (1.26, transl. H. M.
Poteat [Chicago, 1950], p. 204) perhaps even given the hint, with "Why,you
Epicureans merely repeat like schoolboys the preposterous nonsense your
master babbled between his yawns," for Fulgentius's phrase about "dozing"
and "snoring" in par. 23.

1. Latin *leuitta*, regularly "deacon." One manuscript (Helm's E) reads, "Here
begins the booklet (libellus) of Fabius Fulgentius on the allegory of Virgil's writings
addressed to Calcidius the grammarian"; several copies of the *Mythologies* are dedi­
cated to a Catus (var. Cantia), priest of Carthage.

2. The author is unworthy of the task assigned because of old age and bad
memory, a personal reference in the style of conventional humility. It seems possible,
alternatively, to read into this involved opening a more general regret for the con­
temporary distrust of pagan learning, and to translate: "The spirit of our age . . .
has imposed a broad censorship of silence, that the mind should both cease to reveal
its learning and must pursue this forgetfulness of itself because its concern is only
with what is contemporary," compare the opening of the *Mythologies* and *Ages of
the World*.

3. Christianity, the spirit of the New Testament.

4. Latin *contemptus*, better translated "despising" (of the pagan past) if the
opening reference is general; see note 2. An echo of I Cor. 13:4 "Charity suffereth
long, and is kind" seems likely.

5. Explained in *Mythologies* 2.1, "contemplative, active, voluptuary," where
Fulgentius goes on to equate Minerva, Juno, and Venus, respectively, with the three
lives. There may be a distant echo of Aristotle's basic divisions of the sciences into
*theoria, praxis, poiesis*, "contemplation, action, making," and a closer one of the
schema imposed by the commentator Aelius Donatus (4th century) on the major
works of Virgil: "It is to be recognized that Virgil wrote his three works in considera­
tion of the three-part life, showing in the *Eclogues* the contemplative life, in the
*Georgics* the life of enjoyment, and in the *Aeneid* the active life."

6. Latin *apotelesmaticen musicorum*, and of *Georg.* 4 at the end of the para.,
*musicus cum sua apotelesmaticus*, explained in *Mythologies* 3.10.


8. *Ecl.* 1.17, not 9 as the text states.
10. Of the *Aeneid* 2.45-6.

2

1. Latin *mediocritatem temporis*, taken in the same sense of a human being's individual age as seems likely with the first sentence of par. 1, but "our age" is preferable if that sentence is taken to bear general reference; "your age" is a further possibility, that is, the youth of the deacon first addressed in contrast with the advanced age of the author.

2. Latin *repperiat capitis*, that is, run into trouble. Since schoolmasterly attitudes figure largely in this work, one may recall the saintly schoolmaster-martyr Cassian, whose pupils broke their writing tablets over his head (Prudentius, *Peristephanon* 9).

3. Eurystheus, king of Mycenae, imposed on Hercules (Alcides, son of Alcmene and grandson of Alceus) his twelve labors. This sentence is closely echoed in the opening prologue of the *Ages of the World*.

4. For Chrysippus, see supplementary note 1, above.

5. The invocation consists of five alliterative hexameters. In the opening prologue to the *Mythologies*, the shade of Calliope appears before the author in response to his verses and takes on the same role as Virgil is to have here; her being specifically named here, as well as her appropriateness for an epic such as the *Aeneid*, may be an oblique way of referring to the *Mythologies*, which according to par. 22 below was written before this work. The mingling of verse and prose, the so-called Menippean tradition, is exemplified in the near-contemporary *Marriage of Mercury and Philology*, by Martianus Capella, known to Fulgentius (see the *Explanation of Obsolete Words* 45), and Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, the appearance of the lady Rhetoric in the *Marriage* and of the lady Philosophy in the *Consolation* is another similarity. Famous resemblances in the method of invocation would include Spenser, *Faerie Queene* 1.2, perhaps also addressed to Calliope ("Help thou, O holy virgin, chief of nine Thy meeker novice to perform thy will"), and Dante, *Inferno*, 2.7, where also the call is to the Muses then immediately to his own mind and memory. Hexameter 3, *Mains opus moueo*, Fulgentius takes from Virgil, *Aen.* 7.45.

6. Latin *saturior*, compare *bractea*, "gold leaf," though from the allusion to the fountain some term meaning "draught" is expected, and in his *Ages of the World* 9 (Helm, p. 162), Fulgentius uses a verb, *bractatur mero*, of Holofernes, where the context strongly suggests the sense "to drink." Asca stood near Mount Helicon, the home of the Muses, hence "snowy plectrum," and it was the birthplace of the poet Hesiod, *Asceus pastor in Mythologies* 1, prologue.

3

1. On the allusions and significance of this passage, see supplementary note 1, above.

4

1. Latin *Putabam . . . vell te homuncule creperum alignid desipere, in cuius cordis siccum meam onerosiores expositisena sarcinula*, only tentatively translated.
above. At this point the work has become a dialogue of the *magister-discipulus*
type, Virgil the master and Fulgentius the pupil; hence *homuncule*, "little man,"
that is, boy, the same term as is used by Calliope in the opening of the *Mythologies*.
It is possible, if less likely, that *cordis* is not "(of the) heart, essentials," but for
*chord-is*, "(with) cords, strings," compare *cordas* for "lyre strings" in the last line of
the verse invocation, par. 2 above. The sentence might then mean: "In the conveying
of which I might have broken down my weightier bundles by means of strings"—
that is, simplified the abstruse by breaking it into manageable packages.

5

8:44) of the woman with an issue of blood who said of Christ, "If I may touch but the
hem of his garment I shall be whole." The replies or interjections of Fulgentius's
persons are mostly concerned with Biblical correspondences to Virgil's views and ex­
planations.

6

1. Latin *temporis formido periculosa*, with the same doubt as before (see note 2
to par. 2 above) whether *tempus* means "your (individual) age" or "your times, the
age in which you live."

2. The traditional characterization of eloquence as a river or spring; see E. R.
Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, W. R. Trask, transl. (New
thou then that Virgil and that fountain which pours forth so rich a stream of
speech?"

3. Latin *quae tibi crapulae plenitudine navium mouere non possit*, the author
deliberately descending to colloquialism. Aside from the anticlimax, compare what
Augustine says in the *Confessions* 1.16 (transl. R. S. Pine-Coffin [Baltimore, 1961],
p. 37): "[In an immoral scene from Terence] the words themselves are not to blame.
They are like choice and costly glasses, but they contain the wine of error, which
had already gone to the heads of the teachers, who poured it out for us to drink."

4. Latin *vacias fac sodas tuorum aurium*, "empty the spaces of your ears." The
phrase has a classroom air, and is also used by Calliope to Fulgentius in the opening
prologue to the *Mythologies*.

5. Latin *tertium (sc. digitum) pollicem comprimens*, taken here to be for *pol­
lice*, for to press the third finger with the thumb is easier than the other way round.
Since pagan and Christian ideas are to be involved in the exposition, it is an ingeni­
uous touch to have Virgil, the expounder, first take up the traditional pose of both a
pagan sage and a Christian bishop or teacher.

6. Latin *virtutem*, and so throughout the exposition. This is "virtue" in the
traditional Roman sense, the qualities that become the *vir*, the mature, responsible,
and well-rounded man; but "manliness" has been preferred because it preserves the
association with "man." The quotation is, of course, *Aeneid* 1.1.

7

1. "God's law," *divina lex*, is similarly used for the Bible in *Mythologies* 1.15.
The reference here is to I Cor. 1:24, "Christ the power (Lat. *virtus*) of God, and the
wisdom (sapientia) of God," one of several Biblical passages from which the ancient association of virtus or fortitudo, sapientia, and sometimes pietas, might be illustrated; compare also Ps. 146 (147):5, Prov. 8:14, Job 12:13, Dan. 2:20. The formula was a commonplace through classical times (compare Horace, Epist. 2.1.50, of Ennius, sapient et foris et alter Homerus) and the Middle Ages; see further Curtius, as above, pp. 174–79; R. E. Kaske, "Sapiencia et Fortitudo as the Controlling Theme of Beowulf," Studies in Philology 55 (1958): 423–57, repr. in L. E. Nicholson, ed., An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism (Notre Dame, 1963), pp.269–310; S. Batbaglia, "Fortitudo et Sapientia," La Coscienza Letteraria del Medioevo (Naples, 1965), pp.102–7.

1. For the implications of the argument here, see supplementary note 2, above.


3. The sentiment is Platonic, but the most specific statement of it seems to be, not Plato, but the later Greek Corpus Hermeticum named for Hermes Trismegistus (see supplementary note 1), section 12, ed. and transl. A. D. Nock, A.-J. Festugière (Paris, 1945), 1:175–76, especially 12.1: "The intellect (sōφία) is taken from the very substance of God. . . . In men this intellect is God"; and 12.2, where the link between intellect, soul, and life is emphasized.

4. The quotation, like the one before it given first in Greek, then in Latin, seems to be from a lost (or invented) work. Carneades was the head of the New Academy after Plato, but his writings have not survived. Cicero, De natura deorum, used a treatise by Clitomachus, τριπτελίον, something like the title Fulgentius gives. The same kind of channel may have led from Carneades to the reference here. Compare Mythologies, opening prologue: "The elebore of Carneades, the golden eloquence of Plato, and the syllogistic brevity of Aristotle," in part an echo of Tertullian, De anima 6.

5. Iliad 1.1.

6. Iliad 1.197, of Athene.

1. Ps. 1:1, also cited in Mythologies 2.1.

10


2. Sallust, Conspiracy of Catiline 1.2.

3. For gold or silver improved by beating, compare Tertullian, De anima 37.6–7.

4. Once again the precise statement has not been traced in Plato. Helm (p. 90) cites Tertullian, De pudicitia 1: "For every good quality of the mind is either in-born or taught or disciplined"; the influence of such apologist writers as Tertullian is evident elsewhere in this work (see supplementary note 1).

5. Latin arcaicis auribus, glossed in three manuscripts asininis, emended by
earlier editors to *arcadici*, that is "chose of a country simpleton." "Aged" would serve for *arcadici* were not a boy *discipulus* being addressed; "empty," compare *area*, "chest," is another possibility, but "ignorant, foolish" seems the likeliest meaning in view of *Mythologies*, opening prologue, *arcinis atque arcadici sensibus*, and 3.9, *asininis asinibus*.

11

1. That is, Aeneas, but he is never named, except once in par. 22, presumably because he stands allegorically for Everyman.

2. The scenes of the Trojan war depicted in the temple of Juno.

12


2. Fulgentius's transliteration is presumably for *eonolus* (*aiōn*, "world, age," and *διυς*, "destructive"), since he goes on *id est saeculi interitus*, i.e., perdition. If, alternatively, *eon(h)olus* were meant (*aiōn* and *διυς*, "whole"), one might emend *interitus* to something like *integritas*, "fulness, completion," such as is associated with Aeolus's vision later in the paragraph, *perfectionis publica . . . visio*. However, the 12th-century Virgil commentary of Bernard Sylvestris, which leans heavily on Fulgentius, also has *Eolus quasi eonolus, id est seculi interitus*, ed. G. Riedel (Grieswald, 1924), p. 5.

3. *Iliad* 1.2.

4. *Demos*, for *διυς*, "public," and perhaps *iōpa* for *δια*, "opening."

5. Of the world, that is, public hazards.

6. Public vision, that is, open.

13

1. This comment of the Fulgentian persona seems to be meant as thinly veiled sarcasm, a riposte to Virgil's previous condescension: Fulgentius is also an author, but will not indulge in the same "devious course" to which Virgil has admitted. The book on physiology and numerology has not survived. For classical and medieval number theory, see V. F. Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism* (New York, 1958); C. Butler, *Number Symbolism* (New York, 1970); A. Fowler, ed., *Silent Poetry, Essays in Numerological Analysis* (New York, 1970).

14

1. *Aconetes*, for *άχος*, "grief," and *θος*, "custom." For the arbitrary nature of these etymologies, compare Bernard Sylvestris's commentary, as above, ed. Riedel, p.32, were Achates is *a-cherē-ethis* (*χαιρη*, "destitute"), *τριστις consuetudo*, "joyless habit."

2. Euripides' *Orestes* 1-3, Electra speaking.

3. *Siopas*, for *σιωπή*, "silence."

2. *Aen.* for ἄχος, "grief"; κίκλος, for κύκλος, "circle, wheel"; and παῖς, for παῖς, "boy."


16

1. Latin *venatu progreditur et amore torretur*, compare Spenser, *Faerie Queene* 1.6.22: "And follows other game and venery," with a likely play of words on hunting (*vena*us) and sexual activity (*Venus*).

2. Compare *Mythologies* 1.18, where Mercury is associated with business affairs.

3. Helm (p. 94) assumes a lacuna and supplies *libido*, "lust," as a subject for the verb *expellitur*, "is driven." More likely the subject of the previous sentence, *amor contemptus*, is to be understood, though the general sense is not much affected.

17

1. Compare Greek ἄντελλω, "command," and ἄρμιν, "cudgel." For the Latin equivalents used, *imperare...cede*, "winning" and "losing" would suit Virgil's context, where Entellus badly defeats Dares, in which case the rest of the sentence would refer to the cut and thrust of academic argument. But "disciplining" for *imperare* and "beating" for *cede* as a form of *caedere*, "strike," may give a more realistic glimpse of late classical schoolmastering, and relate to what was said of gold in paragraph 10, that it is improved by being hammered.

2. Iris in disguise.

18

1. Explained by *Mythologies* 1.15, where Apollo becomes the tenth Muse.

2. *Planonorus*, compare πλάνη, "wandering, error," and ὅραω, "see." The sense "delusion, hallucination," advocated by Comparetti, fits with the "illusion of vain praise" mentioned a little later, but "wandering sight," Latin *errabunda uisio*, for the roving eye of lust, better suits the immediate context.


5. That is, Aeneas taken as Everyman.

6. Helm (p. 96) emends to *orreo* where most manuscripts read *obruo* from Latin *obruere*, "swamp, destroy," echoed in *obrueris (laudis pompam)*, "you have destroyed the illusion of vain praise," in the next sentence, and equating sufficiently well with *miscio* in its Latin value. The basis for his emendation given for Messapus in paragraph 27 below, *quasi misonepos quod nos Latine orrens sermonem dicimus*, that is, defying speech, the first element presumably *μίσος*. 
"hatred." In our context, _eros_ is clearly Greek (_allos_, "praise"), and one would expect the rest of the etymology to be; if _orreo_ is to be read, it is less likely to be connected with Latin _orrens_ than with a Greek word (_xwuevo_, "give way, separate")?


8. A name for Athene-Minerva: see further _Mythologies_ 3.9.

1. Ps. 50:19 (51:17).

2. Corynaeus is Carineus in the manuscripts, better suiting the etymology: _carin_, for _xapos_, "favor," and _eon_, for _alou_, "time."

3. The laurel bough, the attribute of Apollo in _Mythologies_ 1.14.

4. The Greek _p&fidos_, "wand, bough," is not mentioned, but an etymology of it is being attempted; compare _paipuSLa_, "recital, discourse." The choice appears to lie between Dionysius of Halicarnassus (died 7 B.C.), who wrote _On Literary Composition_ ("On the Arrangement of Words") (ed. and transl. W. Rhys Roberts [London, 1910]), and Dionysius Thrax, who flourished in the 1st century B.C. and was the compiler of a short _Art of Grammar_, which had great vogue through the Middle Ages. In neither work has the precise phrase used by Fulgentius been found.

5. Latin _in libro de Socratis_, Helm inserting _deo_ after _de_. If Tiberianus wrote such a work, it is lost; see E. Baehrens, _Poetae Latini minores_ (Leipzig, 1881), 3: 269; J. W. and A. M. Duff, _Minor Latin Poets_, Loeb Classics (1936), p.566, where Fulgentius's one-sentence anecdote is edited and translated as Tiberianus's fragment 4.

6. That is, Aeneas as Everyman.
majesty: but they made the images of their abomination and of their detestable things therein." Virgil wisely ignores the equation that follows between this abomination and his own pagan ("Gentile") words!

1. The list is based on Aen. 6.273–81 (compare the later treatment by Spenser, Faerie Queene 2.21–23), though the order is different. Virgil in personifying the evils may well have led Fulgentius and Spenser to the next step, their allegorization.

2. Latin *inertis somni* ventosa delusio et sanctitatis propinquior ad mortem vicinia, an inflation of Virgil's 6.278, consanguineus Lati Sopor.

3. Possibly Fulgentius's association of Acheron with the transition to greater knowledge owes something to a famous passage in Virgil's Georgics 2.490–92: *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas Atque meas omnis et inexorabile fatum Subjecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis avari. Ceron* is for καῦρος, "time." Charon's father Polydegmon, that is, Pluto, for παλις deprima, "much proof," is not in fact brought into the Aenid.

4. Strictly speaking, Cerberus is drugged by the Sybil, or vates (Aen. 6.419), accompanying Aneas.

5. Though Virgil is nominally the speaker, Fulgentius's own Mythologies is meant, 1.6.

6. Latin in Euscion, with variant readings euscio and eustion. As a quotation from a lost work by the Petronius Arbiter who flourished in the first century A.D. and wrote the Saturae ("Satyricon"), the sentence Fulgentius gives has been variously known as fragment 8, as in F. Buecheler's ed. (Berlin, 1862), and 9, as in A. Ernout's (Paris, 1950) and by J. Sullivan, transl., Petronius: The Satyricon and the Fragments (Baltimore, 1965), p. 168. In preferring a personal name, "about Euscios," to a book title, "On Euscion," Sullivan comments, p. 180: "A vague character . . . literally in Greek, 'pleasantly shadowy.' " Petronius is a favorite of Fulgentius, several times quoted in the Mythologies and the Explanation (instances collected by Sullivan, pp. 167 ff.).

7. Compare the lament of Tacitus, Dialogus de oratoribus 1, that the golden age of oratory and long pleadings is past and has been replaced by *altercatio*, judicial sparring and short sharp exchanges; similar complaints begin Quintilian's Institutes and Petronius's Satyricon.

8. Dimojobus, for δειμα, "panic," and φόβος, "fear"; deomojobus, for δημιος, "people," and φόβος again.

9. Menelau, for μεσα-λαός, "valor of people."

10. Aen. 6.552–54.

11. Greek *adaimartivos*, both "steely" and "invincible."

12. A stock symbol of pride, compare the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:3–4) and Spenser's House of Pride, "mounted full high" (Faerie Queene 1.4), based on the city of Alcina in Ariosto's Orlando Furioso 6.59.

13. Tisiphone, for τίμια, "vengeance," and φωνή, "sound." A different etymology is used in Mythologies 1.7.


15. Aen. 6.577–78.
16. Optatianus Porfyrius, Epigram 30, ed. E. Kluge (Leipzig, 1926), p. 37, Fulgentius being the only source. Porfyrius flourished in the 4th century, and joins Tiberianus and Petronius as examples of Fulgentius’s anachronism or, more charitably, of his indulgence of Virgil’s shade in the ability to transcend the centuries. In the third line, “I really think you stink,” the play on words imitates the original, puteum puto te quoque.

17. Latin fruendi usu, apparently echoing Cicero’s use of the legal term usus-fructus, “use and enjoyment of property not one’s own.” Tantalus is given a section in Mythologies 2.15, but not etymologized. Here, teantelon is presumably for ta ant (th)elon, τε, άντα “against,” and (θ)ελω, “desire.” Fulgentius’s reading of the name is taken up by Boccaccio, Comment on Dante’s Commedia, ed. G. Milanese (Florence, 1863), 1:94: “Explained according to Fulgentius, that is, covetous vision, because misers want nothing for their treasure which cannot be seen.”


19. Dedicated to learning, as explained a few lines below.

20. Is there confusion between ἔλευσις, “arrival,” and some word like ἐλευθερία, “release, freedom”? 

21. Latin proserpens, “creeping forward,” in allusion to Proserpine, whether as an etymology or as wordplay; similarly in Mythologies 1.10.

22. Latin elisis . . . montibus, echoing the Greek form already used to explain Elysian fields.

23. Helm (p. 102) refers to Cicero, De oratore 1.5; but all Cicero in that work appears to say on the subject of memory is to call it “the treasure-house of all learning” (1.18, cited by Tertullian, De anima 24.3) and to give a passing reference (17.54, ed. H. M. Hubbell, Loeb Classics [1939], p. 346) that, though memory is one of the five faculties required of the orator, he will not discuss it at length because it is something common to many arts, quae communis est multarum artium. These, of course, may be all the hints Fulgentius needed.

24. Ano scenon, for ἄνω σκηνῶν, “living on one’s own land” or more closely “dwelling on high,” equivalent to the Latin in excelsis which comes in the following sentence.

25. Virgil appears to be lacing the Nicene Creed with Gnosticism, and the persona of Fulgentius is soon roused by the satiric blending of Christian truths and what seems to be Pythagorean metempsychosis. The affinities between these notions and those of the Stoics may help explain what follows; see further supplementary note 3. For the interest of Plato (see par. 23) in the transmigration of souls, see, for instance, Phaedo 70–72; for Christian opposition to the doctrine, see Tertullian, De anima 34, 35.


27. Latin de uita, for which Helm (p. 102) suggests the emendation de(noceri ad) uita(m), “to be recalled to life,” thus reversing the meaning, though to something nearer what Virgil says in the Aeneid.
Fulgentius’s retort uses terms which seem to be deliberately drawn from legal usage, for instance *aut(h)enta*, “mouthpiece, spokesman”; *defensio*, “defense”; and *perse­cutus*, “pleaded, prosecuted.” The reference to the (Athenian) Academy implies something Platonic, or perhaps more likely Ciceronian, for Cicero is “our Academic orator” in the opening prologue to the *Mythologiarum*. Compare the outburst against the Academy by Tertullian, *De praescriptionibus adversus heresicos* 7.10: “What in common have Athens and Jerusalem? The Academy and the Church? Heretics and Christians? Let them see to it who teach a Stoic and Platonic and dialectic Christianity!” The significance of the allusions here to Academic, Stoic, Epicurean, and Christian ideas is further considered in supplementary note 3, above.


4. Latin *mora*, “blackberries” or “mulberries,” but possibly for *morra*, “pickle,” with more obvious reference to sourness. In his fragment 33 (trans!. Sullivan, as above, p. 175), Petronius, a favorite of Fulgentius, contrasts golden apples with “shaggy chestnuts” and “crab-apples.” In addition, to judge by Virgil’s reply in our context, Fulgentius may be intending a pun on *mwpia*, “folly.”

24

1. Latin *paganus*, but the older senses of the word, “countryman, layman,” may also be implied.

2. Latin *Quid tu amicam times ne te manuleo caiet*, with *manuleus* literally “(the long) sleeve (of a tunic).” Plautus’s *Cistellaria* (“The Casket Comedy”) is imperfectly preserved, and Fulgentius alone preserves a full line here, in what is called fragment 3, lines 252–53, ed. G. Goetz, F. Schoell, *Plauti comoediae* (Leipzig, 1895) 3:16: *Quid tu ergo timebas nam . . . te manuleo . . . ne amica ne te caiet*, P. Nixon, ed. and transl., *Plautus*, Loeb Classics (1917), 3:138, has only *Quid tu ergo . . . te manuleo*, “Well, what are you . . . you with her sleeve.” Fulgentius’s close acquaintance with the plays of Plautus, which comes out strongly in his discussion of difficult words, the Explanation below, may help explain some of the dramatic conflict and comic element in his dialogue with Virgil.


4. *Apo tu aixenin, for év và aðégwiv*, “of increase.”

5. In Virgil, *Aen.* 7.42 ff., Latinus is the son of Faunus, and several manuscripts of Fulgentius read the name thus, but the etymology which follows belongs to the ghost-name Caunus.

6. Another error: strictly speaking, Diana is the moon-goddess and Latona her mother.


8. *Merica*, compare *µηripa*, “care”?

9. *Iliad* 1.189.

25

1. *Euandros*, for *εὐανδρος*, “good man.”

2. Latin *caecus*, “blind,” can mean “morally blinded,” but the Greek *kaicos*, “bad, evil,” is more obviously intended; compare *Mythologiarum* 2.3: *Cacen enim Graec malum dicimus*.

26

1. Turosnus, for θυρός, "furious," and νοῦς, "mind."
2. Iliad 5.35.

27

1. That is, Mezentius, standing for blasphemy, the spirit or embodiment of scorn for what is good.
2. Misonepos, for μισός, "hatred," and εἰρος, "speech."
3. Euripides, Orestes 1 (also quoted in para. 14 above).

28

1. In Virgil, Aeneas as a trophy to Mars distributes the armor of the slain Messapus on an oak beam set in the earth, so that it hangs equally balanced on each side; then he proclaims, "Here is Messapus in my hands," and points to the effigy he has made.

29

1. Latin pernicies, "destruction," although the role assigned to Juturna in some ways better suits the meaning "obstinacy" (so Comparetti), which might suggest confusion between pernicies and pertinacia.
2. Metiscos, for μεθόνια, "get drunk."
3. The locus classicus for the turning wheel of Fortune is Boethius, Consolation 2, prose 1 and poem 1, though the idea is ancient and Boethius's work is perhaps too exactly contemporaneous with Fulgentius for there to be any likelihood he knew it; see further H. R. Parch, The Goddess Fortuna in Mediaeval Literature (Cambridge, Mass., 1927; repr., New York, 1970).

30

1. Latin mōi tribulō pectoris cautius lege, exploiting the double meaning of legere, "collect, pick," and "read." There may be an intentional reminiscence of Virgil Ec. 3.92-93: "Lads, who gather (legitis) flowers, and strawberries growing in the earth, Fly hence, a cold snake lurks in the grass." With tribulus (ῥιβοῖς), "thorny plant, thistle," that is, something of little worth and suspect, to be handled with care, Fulgentius returns to the pose of humility with which he began. We can scarcely assume that by "master" (domine) he still means Virgil: the invention has faded, the mechanics of disposing of Virgil's shade are dispensed with, and we are returned abruptly to the reality of the "most saintly of deacons" addressed in par. 1.