

THE ACADEMIC CAREER OF AUSONIUS

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AUSONIUS' LIFE spanned most of the fourth century. Educated at Bordeaux and Toulouse, and perhaps Auch, he taught in his native Bordeaux from the mid 330s to the mid 360s, when he was summoned to court to tutor Gratian. He was honoured with the title *comes*, the office of *quaestor sacri palatii* and praetorian prefect, and finally the consulship. These main facts are clearly attested and undisputed. But Ausonius' earlier career is more obscure, and, overshadowed by his later successes, it has received little attention. The present study will therefore concentrate upon the period before his summons to court; the aim is to increase knowledge not only about Ausonius but about professorial careers in general and schooling in the later Empire.

Ausonius studied *grammaticae* at Bordeaux (*Prof.* 8.9–12, 10.11–13;¹ see below 340, 341) and began his study of rhetoric there (*Prof.* 3.1; see below, 337). He records too a debt to his uncle Arborius for his formation (*Par.* 3.7–10):

*tu frater genetricis et unanims genitori,
et mihi qui fueris, quod pater et genetrix:
qui me lactantem, puerum iuuenemque uirumque
artibus ornasti, quas didicisse iuuat.*

Since *lactantem, puerum iuuenemque* marks the progression in *grammaticae* and rhetoric signalled at *Protr.* 67–76 (see below, 332), it seems clear that Arborius, born ca 298,² assisted the younger Ausonius between the ages of seven and eighteen;³ *uirumque* shows that he gave further assistance to Ausonius after the normal age for the completion of schooling. Now Arborius had gained a chair of rhetoric at Toulouse which Ausonius describes as *altrix nostri* (*Ordo* 18.1). So the latter apparently followed his uncle thither either before, or upon, completion of the regular course in rhetoric. Since Ausonius was born ca 310,⁴ he will have been at Toulouse in the later 320s.

¹All references are to the edition of S. Prete (Leipzig 1978).

²See *Phoenix* 32 (1978) 244–248.

³Boys entered the *schola grammatices* at the age of six or seven and progressed to the rhetor about the age of fifteen, where the normal course lasted for three years; cf. *Florilegium* 1 (1979) 1–14; *Phoenix* 33 (1979) 347, 351 n. 18.

⁴The accepted date of Ausonius' birth, established as follows. Ausonius' father Julius died between the ages of eighty-eight (*Par.* 1.4) and ninety (*Epic.* 61 f.) after 8 July 377 and before 1 January 379 (*Epic.* 45 f., *Cod. Iust.* 11.66.3). His birth may therefore be dated ca 289. Now Ausonius emphasizes that he was born from a young father (*Epist.* 17.13–32); so his birth could not be placed much after 310. Since Julius was of obscure

Arburius was doubtless directing Ausonius towards an academic career, and he was well qualified to advise. Ausonius reports his success thus (*Par.* 3.11–16):

*te sibi Palladiae antetulit toga docta Tolosae,
te Narbonensis Gallia praeposuit,
ornasti cuius Latio sermone tribunal
et fora Hiberorum quaeque Nouem populis.
hinc tenus Europam fama crescente petito
Constantinopolis rhetore te uiguit.*

R. P. H. Green⁵ observes that line 12 does not prove that Arburius was governor of Narbonensis, as some scholars have thought; he points out that the expression *tribunal ornare* describes better the activities of an advocate, and draws support for this interpretation from the subsequent line. The idea of a governorship should certainly be dismissed, for Ausonius could scarcely have passed such a distinction by in silence in *Prof.* 16. The sense of lines 11 f. now calls for clarification. *Toga docta* describes the decurions of Toulouse, the body responsible for the election and firing of professors.⁶ Among its members would be found those sufficiently educated to hold chairs. But it preferred Arburius to one of its own; Libanius (*Or.* 1.49) prides himself on his summons to Nicomedia although a citizen sophist was already installed there. *Te Narbonensis Gallia praeposuit* does not then refer to Arburius' election as *praeses*, but to his acquisition—in Ausonius' opinion, at any rate—of the most prestigious chair of rhetoric in that province.⁷ So it may be assumed that he was appointed chief rhetor at Toulouse; in fact that city probably had just one chair of rhetoric, its holder directing a staff of assistant rhetors (see below, 334–339). And Ausonius was to have an opportunity to succeed his uncle in that prestigious position.

At Toulouse Arburius befriended Flavius Dalmatius and Julius Constantius, the half-brothers of Constantine, who were there in some sort of

provenance (M. K. Hopkins, *CQ* n.s. 11 [1961] 239–243), his career presumably showed promise before his advantageous marriage to Aemilia Aetia. That the groom had already been appointed municipal doctor seems then to be a reasonable assumption; thus the dowry will have been protected from curial exactions (cf. *Cod. Theod.* 13.3.3, *Cod. Iust.* 10.53.5). Medical training might begin about the age of fourteen (M. L. Clarke, *Higher Education in the Ancient World* [London 1971] 111); Ausonius' brother Avitianus was learning medicine at that age (*Par.* 13.5–7, *Epic.* 1.39 f.). But it seems unlikely that Julius could have gained the position of municipal doctor before he was aged about twenty. So Julius' marriage could not reasonably be placed before ca 309. Since Ausonius, the second-born, arrived a year after a sister who died in infancy (*Epic.* 39–42, *Par.* 29), his birth could not then be placed easily before ca 310.

⁵*BICS* 25 (1978) 20.

⁶*Cod. Iust.* 10.53.2, schol. vat. on *Cod. Theod.* 13.3.5

⁷With *praeposuit* cf. *praefectus* in Jer. *Epist.* 66.9 and *praesideant* in *Cod. Theod.* 13.3.11 (cited below, 334).

confinement,⁸ caused apparently by Helena (Lib. Or. 14.30). Their return to favour, which began probably after her death in the fall of 327,⁹ had certainly been effected by 333 when Dalmatius was consul. And it was evidently through the influence of the half-brothers that Arborius was called to teach in Constantinople (*Prof.* 16.13–16, *Par.* 3.15 f.). This summons may be dated ca 330, when the rhetor Exuperius, not the aspiring Ausonius, acquired the vacated chair at Toulouse.

Exuperius taught rhetoric to the sons of Dalmatius at Narbonne after he had been rhetor at Toulouse (*Prof.* 17.9–11):

*Palladiae primum toga te uenerata Tolosae
mox pepulit leuitate pari. Narbo inde recepit.
illic Dalmatio genitos, fatalia regum
nomina, tum pueros, grandi mercede docendi
formasti rhetor metam prope puberis aevi.*

Since the boys were aged about fifteen,¹⁰ they will have begun their study of rhetoric under Exuperius. If Dalmatius was *μικρός* in 306, as the *Chronicon Paschale* states, his sons should not have reached this age before ca 330. Had they done so, Arborius would surely have taught them rhetoric. They were presumably at Constantinople by 333 when their father was consul. So Exuperius ought to have taught them at the start of the 330s. His brief tenure of the chair at Toulouse may then be dated ca 330. Indeed Arborius can scarcely have vacated this position much before that date since he taught Ausonius, born ca 310, *iuuenemque uirumque*.

Ausonius was about twenty years old when his uncle left for the East. Now Luciolus (see below, 337) and Alethius Minervius Filius (see below, 337) were about that age when they acceded to the chair of rhetoric at Bordeaux. So it is reasonable to assume that Ausonius presented himself as a candidate for Arborius' chair but lost it to Exuperius. This assumption explains Ausonius' spiteful tone in his address to Exuperius. The competition for the chair will surely have involved a public display of rhetorical talent;¹¹ hence Ausonius' vitriol (1–6), strange in view of his

⁸*Prof.* 16.11 f.: *dum Constantini fratres opulenta Tolosa/exilii specie sepositos cohibet*. Although *exilii* may be suspect (D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *AJP* 97 [1976] 252; J. B. Hall, *CQ* n.s. 19 [1979] 227), *sepositos cohibet* leaves no doubt that their movement was restrained.

⁹For this date see T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass. 1981) 221.

¹⁰Since Herculanius (*Prof.* 11) had completed his schooling and was a *grammaticus* when he died, *in tempore puberis aevi* (*Par.* 17.9) may look to his early twenties. But at *Par.* 13.6 f. (cf. *Epic.* 40) *aeuique supra puberis/exire metas* clearly means "to pass through puberty." At *Prof.* 17.10 f. the use of *pueros* would seem to indicate that *metam* is the turning-point marked by puberty's advent.

¹¹Cf. J. W. H. Walden, *The Universities of Ancient Greece* (London 1909) 218–264; H. I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* (Paris 1977) 440 f.

own *Gratiarum actio*, against Exuperius' oratory which had been preferred to his own. Again, the respect which Ausonius accords the curia of Toulouse over Arborius' appointment is contrastingly lacking in the case of Exuperius': the latter, he contends, it elected in a giddy fit and dismissed with equal nonchalance (*Prof.* 17.7 f.). Ausonius would scarcely approve of an appointment which selected another over himself, and his malice would even disguise the fact that Exuperius' move to Narbonne involved a promotion.

Rebuffed at Toulouse, Ausonius returned to Bordeaux, but not, perhaps, directly. At *Praef.* 1.23–26 he reveals that he was called to tutor Gratian after thirty years as a teacher at Bordeaux. Since he was summoned to court probably in 366,¹² he ought to have begun teaching in his *patria* about 336. So some half-dozen years may have elapsed between Arborius' departure for Constantinople and Ausonius' return to Bordeaux. Now the rhetor Staphylius, who seems to have taught at Auch, exercised some formative influence upon Ausonius (*Prof.* 20). So it is possible that the latter went thither to pursue his studies and perhaps to seek a post before coming home.¹³ But it was at Bordeaux, apparently, that Ausonius finally made his entry into the academic profession.

At *Protr.* 66–76 Ausonius offers this account of his teaching career:

*nec rudis haec auus admoneo, set mille docendo
ingenia expertus. multos lactantibus annis
ipse alui gremioque fouens et murmura soluens
eripui tenerum blandis nutricibus aeuum.
mox pueros molli monitu et formidine leni
pellexi, ut mites peterent per acerba profectus,
capturi dulcem fructum radicis amarae.
idem uesticipes motu iam puberis aevi
ad mores artesque bonas fandique uigorem
produxi, quamquam imperium ceruice negarent
ferre nec insertis praeberent ora lupatis.*

¹²Ausonius describes thus the distinctions granted after his arrival at court (*Grat. act.* 11): *tot gradus nomine comitis propter tua incrementa congesti: ex tuo merito te ac patre principibus quaestura communis et tui tantum praefectura beneficii, quae et ipsa non uult uice simplici gratulari, liberalius diuisa quam iuncta: cum teneamus duo integrum, neuter desiderat separatum.* Evidently the *comitatus* was not a *commune beneficium*; whence it follows that Gratian granted his tutor this title on his elevation to Augustus in August 367. If the plural *incrementa* (for the sense, *Phoenix* 32 [1978] 248) is meant to comprise Gratian's consulship as well, it may indicate that Ausonius was already at court in 366. His arrival there should not postdate that year: since children began their studies no later than the age of seven (*Florilegium* 1 [1979] 7), Gratian, born in spring 359, should have been studying before 367. Indeed, had he been a private citizen, a solicitous parent would have enrolled him in a *schola grammatices* no later than the start of the fall term in 366. Less care is unlikely to have been displayed towards an imperial heir. So it was probably in 366 that Ausonius was summoned to the court at Reims.

¹³Those in search of academic positions did prolong their studies; P. Petit, *Les étudiants de Libanius* (Paris 1957) 65 f., 88 f.

Lines 73–76 clearly describe his duties as rhetor. Lines 70–72 refer to his task as *grammaticus*, preparing boys to pluck the fruit of rhetoric (cf. Paul. Pell. *Euchar.* 118). Thus appear the two stages of his career met at *Prof.* 24.6. Lines 66–69 might seem to denote other responsibilities of Ausonius as *grammaticus*.¹⁴ The progressive pointers *mox* and *idem*, however, suggest that Ausonius here marks a distinct stage in his career.¹⁵ Now in a *schola grammatices* beginners would be placed under the care of a *subdoctor* (cf. *Corp. Gloss. Lat.* 3.121 f., 646);¹⁶ this was presumably the task of Victorius (*Prof.* 22) who worked under Ausonius. So in lines 67–69 Ausonius may well recall a period as a *subdoctor* to a *grammaticus*.

It may appear surprising that one who had aspired to a chair of rhetoric should be content to begin his career in this undistinguished way. On the positive side, however, by the 330s Ausonius' sister Julia was probably betrothed to Pomponius Maximus, the actual or future leader of the curia at Bordeaux (*Par.* 17);¹⁷ that connexion would augur well for the eventual acquisition of a chair. Again, as we shall see, in the period from 315 to the end of the 330s *grammatici* had been leaving Bordeaux after short spells of teaching there. So, if Ausonius assumed the lowly position of a *subdoctor* to a *grammaticus*, he surely had prospects for prompt promotion to a chair of *grammatices*. Yet, it may be objected, *grammatici* were not so esteemed as rhetors; even as *grammaticus* would Ausonius have settled for second best? A factor not to be forgotten, however, is the limited availability of municipal chairs: Bordeaux itself had fewer than has been claimed,¹⁸ and exploration of this point will place us in a better position to understand and to assess Ausonius' career.

¹⁴An interpretation which I held previously: *Florilegium* 1 (1979) 6.

¹⁵It will not be believed with C. Jullian, *Ausone et Bordeaux* (Bordeaux 1893) 89 = *Revue internationale de l'enseignement* 25 (1893) 43, that at Bordeaux the same teacher accompanied his pupils through all stages of their education. Nor will it be thought that Ausonius refers to experience in the private tutoring of individuals, a practice which could co-exist with tenure of a municipal chair (*Cod. Theod.* 14.9.3). The subsequent description of his difficulties as a rhetor (77–81), then his summons to court (82–84), and the sequence of his elevation assure that he recounts the stages in his rise through the ranks of the teaching profession from the 330s to the 360s, thus providing his grandson with a full *curriculum vitae*.

¹⁶Cf. *Florilegium* 1 (1979) 8 f.

¹⁷From *Epic.* 39–44 (cf. *Par.* 12.12) it may be inferred that Julia, who lived to the age of sixty (*Par.* 12.11), survived her father. Her birth therefore cannot be placed before ca 318 and her marriage before the 330s. (The identification of Arborius, prefect of Rome in 380, with her son, urged now by Green [above, n. 5] 21 f., is difficult in view of Ambrose's description of the prefect as a *senex* [*De off.* 3.48]. Julia's son cannot have been much past his mid forties in 380.)

¹⁸Few would follow E. Everat, *De Ausonii operibus et genere dicendi* (Paris 1885) 5, in positing thirty concurrent professorships. Jullian (above, n. 15) *Ausone* 66 f. = *RIE* 31, estimated six chairs of *grammatices* and four of rhetoric; so too T. J. Haarhoff, *Schools of Gaul* (Oxford 1920) 115 and R. R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries*

In fourth-century Athens and Constantinople there were three official chairs of Greek rhetoric.¹⁹ Bordeaux is unlikely to have had so many for Latin rhetoric. When Constantius sent Eumenius to replace the chief rhetor of Autun, who had died, and to head the school there, the latter summoned only one other teacher to assist him, Glaucus, evidently a *rhetor Graecus*.²⁰ Since Eumenius is at pains to stress that his new position involves no demotion from his former office of *magister memoriae*, he would doubtless have mentioned his direction of a large staff at Autun, had such existed. It may be that there were municipal chairs of *grammaticae* which he felt were unworthy of note, but that there were but two chairs of rhetoric, one for Latin and one for Greek, seems certain. Of course, in 298 when Eumenius delivered his speech the school at Autun was scarcely at its height. But from Gratian's edict of 376 (*Cod. Theod.* 13.3.11) it appears that no more than three municipal chairs, one for rhetoric (Latin), and two for *grammaticae* (one for Greek and one for Latin) might be expected in any Gallic city:

*Per omnem dioecesim commissam magnificentiae tuae frequentissimis in civitatibus, quae pollent et eminenti claritudine, praeceptorum optimi quique erudiendae praesideant iuventuti: rhetores loquimur et grammaticos Atticae Romanaeque doctrinae. Quorum oratoribus viginti quattuor annonarum e fisco emolumenta donentur, grammaticis Latino vel Graeco duodecim annonarum.*²¹ *Deductior paulo numerus ex more praestetur, ut singulis urbibus, quae metropoles nuncupantur, nobilium professorum electio celebretur nec vero iudicemus, liberum ut sit cuique civitati suos doctores et magistros placito sibi iuvare compendio. Trevirorum vel clarissimae civitati uberius aliquid putavimus deferendum, rhetori ut triginta, item viginti grammatico Latino, Graeco etiam, si qui dignus repperiri potuerit, duodecim praebeantur annonae.*

Bonner thinks that the final sentence may refer to the appointment of more than one professor in each category. But *si qui dignus repperiri*

(Cambridge 1954) 33. R. Etienne, *Bordeaux antique* (Bordeaux 1962) 239 f., calculates that there were five chairs of rhetoric and eight chairs of *grammaticae*.

¹⁹For Athens, Lib. Or. 1.16, 25; for Constantinople, *ibid.* 38 f. (τὸ σοφιστὰ plus Bemarchius).

²⁰*Pan. Lat.* 5(9).17.3 f. *quamvis enim ante ingressum pueritiae meae intermissa fuerit eorum exercendis studiis frequentatio, tamen illic auum quondam meum docuisse audio, hominem Athenis ortum, Romae diu celebrem, mox in ista urbe perspecto et probato hominum amore doctrinae atque huius ipsius operis ueneratione detentum. Cuius ego locum, in quo, ut referunt, maior octogenario docuit, si ab isto uenerabili sene (te, Glauce, appello, praesentem quem uidemus, non ciuitate Atticum, sed eloquio) recolui ornarique perfecero, ipsum mihi uidebor ad uitam tali professionis suae successione reuocasse.* Galletier (113, 135 n. 4) correctly rejects the idea that Glaucus is an architect; he is evidently a *rhetor Graecus*. Galletier cites the final phrase as "une formule obscure qui défie la traduction" (119); he translates: "j'aurai l'impression d'avoir rappelé mon aïeul à la vie, en lui succédant ainsi dans sa chaire." *Tali . . . successione*, however, refers not to Eumenius' succession to the grandfather's chair but to Glaucus'.

²¹For the punctuation *annonarum. Deductior* see S. F. Bonner, *AJP* 86 (1965) 119. It seems unnecessary, however, to change *iudicemus* to *iudicamus* (*ibid.* 128); Gratian allows a certain minimal deduction, but does not permit cities to trim the salaries at will.

posset assures that only one *grammaticus Graecus* is meant. In turn it appears certain that only one rhetor and *grammaticus Latinus* are to be appointed. The other cities in question will not be expected to possess more official chairs. And since the expression *grammaticis Latino vel Graeco* appears to look to two teachers, to assume that it is a matter of one rhetor per city seems justified. As Bonner points out, *per omnem dioecesim* signals the northern diocese, but cities in the southern diocese, Bordeaux included, need not be expected to have possessed a greater number of chairs.

That there was just one chair of rhetoric at Bordeaux is confirmed by Ausonius' address to Tiberius Victor Minervius (*Prof.* 1.1–12):

*Primus Burdigalae columen dicere, Minerui,
alter rhetoricae Quintiliane togae.
inlustres quondam quo praeceptore fuerunt
Constantinopolis, Roma, dehinc patria,
non equidem certans cum maiestate duarum,
solo set potior nomine, quod patria.
adserat usque licet Fabium Calagurris alumnum,
non sit Burdigalae dum cathedra inferior.
mille foro dedit hic iuuenes; bis mille senatus
adiecit numero purpureisque togis;
me quoque: set quoniam multa est praetexta, silebo
teque canam de te, non ab honore meo.*

If in lines 7 f. Ausonius asserts that Bordeaux has produced rhetors so notable as Quintilian, then *Burdigalae . . . cathedra* means not "a chair at Bordeaux" but "the chair at Bordeaux." Another interpretation is, however, possible and perhaps preferable. The introduction of Minervius as the second Quintilian, who had glorified by his teaching Constantinople, Rome, and then Bordeaux, seems to anticipate a comparison between the chair of rhetoric which was established at Rome by Vespasian and held by Quintilian²² and *Burdigalae . . . cathedra*. Ausonius may then mean that the latter, through its tenure by Minervius, the *Burdigalae columen*, has achieved equality with the chair once held by Quintilian at Rome. But with this interpretation *Burdigalae . . . cathedra* should again signal "the chair at Bordeaux."²³ So, either way, Bordeaux appears to have had

²²Vespasian instituted one chair for Greek and one for Latin; the latter seems later to have been called the *prima cathedra*, the foremost chair of Latin in the Empire; see Marrou (above, n. 11) 611 n. 9. It is not clear whether Rome in the fourth century possessed more official chairs than these two. F. Schemmel, *WKP* 36 (1919) 93, infers from the entries in Jerome's *Chronicle* under 353 and 354 that Victorinus and Tib. Minervius Victor were official rhetors at the same time. But it is possible that one succeeded the other in the *prima cathedra*, thus becoming in turn the *rhetor praefectus* in the Athenaeum; cf. Jer. *Epist.* 66.9. On Quintilian's tenure of the chair see M. L. Clarke, *G&R* 14 (1967) 30 f.

²³With this interpretation, it might be conjectured from lines 11 f. that Ausonius had once been Minervius' pupil; see *Phoenix* 32 (1978) 247 n. 37. This inference would be

just one chair of rhetoric. And the evidence cited above suggests that this situation was to have been anticipated. Yet it will be well to examine the careers of all the rhetors commemorated by Ausonius as active at Bordeaux to determine that no more than one chair need have existed.

If just one chair of rhetoric existed in a city, it does not follow that only one rhetor taught there at a time. An individual might open a private school in competition with the municipally appointed rhetor.²⁴ Another might operate as a private tutor. Again, the rhetor of the city might have a staff of assistants also called rhetors. At Antioch Libanius had four such teachers under him,²⁵ and Jerome reveals a similar arrangement at Rome; for he records that he attended a *praefectus orator* in the Athenaeum (*Epist.* 66.9), presumably the *rhetor urbis Romae* (see n. 22 above), and that he graduated from the *schola rhetorum* (*In Abdiam Prol.*). So if Bordeaux had only one chair of rhetoric, its holder probably had some assistant rhetors under his direction. Yet Ausonius commemorates only eight rhetors, including himself, who were active in fourth-century Bordeaux. It is a reasonable assumption therefore that he has recalled only holders of the chair.²⁶ And a single line of succession is not difficult to reconstruct.

unavoidable if *multa* . . . *praetexta* described Minervius' students. (For the various interpretations of the expression see H. de la Ville de Mirmont, *Le manuscrit de l'Ile Barbe* . . . [Bordeaux-Paris 1917-1919] 2.131; A. Pastorino, *Opere di Decimo Magno Ausonio* [Turin 1971] 437.) At *Prof.* 18.7 *auditor multus praetextaque pubes* does describe the large class of a *grammaticus*. But students progressed to rhetoric, a study which normally took three years, at about the age of fifteen, when they had donned, or would soon don, the *toga virilis* (*Phoenix* 33 [1979] 347, 351 n. 18). So while *praetextus* is a suitable adjective for boys studying *grammaticae*, it is less apt for youths studying rhetoric. Again, if *multa praetexta* did describe the students of Minervius, then Ausonius would seem to envisage a throng of adolescents attending a deceased rhetor. The alternative and preferred interpretation of *praetexta* as magistracies is surely correct. Now two considerations argue against Ausonius' having been Minervius' pupil. The latter died ca 360 at the age of sixty or so (*Phoenix* 32 [1978] 239-242 and below, 337). So, had he taught Ausonius, he would have done so in the latter half of the 320s or at the start of the 330s, having begun then his career at Bordeaux. But in the address under study Ausonius could scarcely have failed to note that Minervius both began and ended his career at Bordeaux, had this been the case. Again, in lines 9 f. Ausonius has in view those who began official careers on graduation from rhetoric (cf. *Pan. Lat.* 5[9].5.4; 7[6].23.2); whereas any instruction which he had received from Minervius in his adolescence would be contrastingly remote from his elevation to office, which occurred late in his life and apparently after Minervius' death. So a more direct influence by Minervius upon Ausonius' advancement may be sought. And one such appears readily if by *me quoque* Ausonius, the successor to Minervius (see below, 338), attributes his selection as imperial tutor to renown reflected from Minervius' tenure of Bordeaux's chair of rhetoric.

²⁴Lib. *Or.* 1.37, 101 f.; Aug. *Conf.* 5.12 f.

²⁵Petit (above, n. 13) 90-93.

²⁶Since assistant rhetors were lowly figures, who might be accounted failures (cf. Lib. *Or.* 55.9 f.), it need not surprise that Ausonius has not bothered to include any such in

Ausonius summarizes thus the career of Luciolus (*Prof.* 3.1 f.): *Rhetora Luciolum, condiscipulum atque magistrum/collegamque dehinc*. Whence it appears that Luciolus taught the slightly younger Ausonius rhetoric ca 325 and was still a rhetor at Bordeaux in the 330s when the latter began his teaching career there.

Ausonius consigns Attius Patera to the generation before his own (*Prof.* 4.2 f.): . . . *aeuo floruisti proximo/iuuenisque te uidi senem*. His tenure of the chair should not then have extended beyond 340. Now Jerome places Patera's *floruit* at Rome under 336 (*Chron.*). So Patera may have returned to Bordeaux to succeed Luciolus ca 337.

Patera was succeeded by Alethius Minervius (*Prof.* 6.18–22):

*postque Pateram
tu Burdigalae
laetus patriae
clara cohortis
uexilla regens.*

He was the son of Tib. Minervius Victor,²⁷ and preceded his father in the chair at Bordeaux. Jerome places the father's *floruit* at Rome in 353 (*Chron.*). Since Jerome probably began his schooling there in 354,²⁸ this date may be trusted. Since Minervius *pater* died about the age of sixty after service at Bordeaux (*Prof.* 1.37), his death could not much antedate 360 nor his birth 300. In turn his son Alethius could not have been born much before 320. He was young when he gained the chair, but this acquisition cannot antedate by far 340.²⁹ So it appears that Luciolus held the chair until ca 337,³⁰ then Patera from ca 337–340, and next Alethius Minervius from ca 340.

Since Ausonius emphasizes the premature death of Alethius (*Prof.* 6.28–32, 42–48), he may have died and been succeeded by Latinus Alcimus Alethius (*Prof.* 2) before 350. Jerome assigns the latter's *floruit*

a work whose professed purpose is to glorify Bordeaux (*Prof. Praef.* 2, 25.10). Note that it is only by special dispensation that the *subdoctor* Victorius is included (*Prof.* 22). Again, private teachers were lower in esteem than municipal appointees (above, n. 24). So it is not surprising that Ausonius, whose memory could scarcely have kept track of the former in any case, has limited himself to the latter. The subject of *Prof.* 14 probably did not hold the chair at Bordeaux: see *Phoenix* 32 (1978) 243 f.

²⁷See *Phoenix* 32 (1978) 239–242.

²⁸See *Phoenix* 33 (1979) 352 f.

²⁹Students regularly completed the course in rhetoric about the age of eighteen (above, n. 2) and those intending a professorial career might prolong their studies for a few years more (above, n. 13). So Alethius may have been aged about twenty when he acquired the chair at Bordeaux.

³⁰From *Prof.* 3.1 f. it may be deduced that Luciolus was slightly older than Ausonius. If he died ca 337, he will have been aged about thirty. Ausonius' lament over his untimely departure (5) fits, but need not attest (cf. below, 338), a death at that early age.

to 355 (*Chron.*): *Alcimus et Delfidius rhetores in Aquitanica florentissime docent*. Alcimus apparently delivered a panegyric on the consulship of Julian and Sallustius (*Prof.* 2.19–24).³¹ Since, however, this duty could fall to retired rhetors (*Pan. Lat.* 4[8].1), his teaching activity at Bordeaux need not have extended to 363. So Tib. Minervius Victor may have succeeded him ca 356. The chair may then have passed to Ausonius on Minervius' death which, as shown above, occurred ca 360.

At first glance the address to Acilius Glabrio (*Prof.* 24) might seem to present an impediment to this dating of Ausonius' tenure:

*Doctrinae uitaeque pari breuitate caducum,
Glabrio, te maestis commemorabo elegis, . . .
tu quondam puero conpar mihi, discipulus mox,³²
meque dehinc facto rhetore grammaticus, . . .
tam decus omne tuis quam mox dolor, omnia acerbo
funere praereptus, Glabrio, destituis.*

If Acilius was the same age as Ausonius and the latter was made rhetor ca 360, then Acilius ought to have been touching his fifties when he died. Since he was survived by both parents (13), it is improbable that he was much older at death. If, however, it is allowed that he may have been a few years younger than Ausonius and died soon after becoming *grammaticus*, he will have been aged at least forty-five at his death. A decease between the ages of forty-five and fifty might seem to jar with Ausonius' exploitation of the *mors immatura* motif. But it will be remembered that rhetors and presumably *grammatici* too did not mature until their mid fifties.³³ And if Ausonius can lament as untimely a death at the age of sixty (*Prof.* 1.36 f.), he could well do so in the case of a death about the age of fifty. So the lines under consideration offer no insurmountable obstacle against placing Ausonius' promotion to rhetor about 360.

Ausonius' intimacy with Nepotianus (*Prof.* 15) assures that he taught at Bordeaux. The title addresses him as *grammaticus* and rhetor. It is unlikely that he exercised both functions simultaneously; such a combination is found rarely and the evidence of Ausonius otherwise attests a clear distinction.³⁴ So it may be assumed that Nepotianus taught first as a *grammaticus*, then as a rhetor, as did Ausonius himself. It is clear that his teaching activity at Bordeaux coincided partially at least with Ausonius' own. And it may be that he succeeded Ausonius in the chair of rhetoric.

If Nepotianus became rhetor of Bordeaux after Ausonius, then he was

³¹For *libri* used of panegyrics see *Prof.* 1.13, *Lib. Or.* 1.113.

³²If Acilius was about the same age as Ausonius and the latter began teaching boys under the age of fifteen at Bordeaux ca 336, then it is difficult to accept that Acilius could ever have been a pupil of Ausonius. Whence cause to adopt Scaliger's *discipulo*.

³³See *Phoenix* 32 (1978) 240 n. 19.

³⁴See *Hermes* 106 (1978) 121 n. 19.

presumably succeeded by Delphidius (*Prof.* 5).³⁵ The latter had gone east to promote his political career under Procopius between September 365 and May 366. Attacked in the purge which followed the usurper's fall, he returned to Bordeaux where he became a rhetor. Since he did not live to see his family involved with Priscillian, his death may be placed before 381, and probably shortly before that date, since Ausonius seems to represent him as *felix opportunitate mortis*. He may then have held the chair for most of the 370s. In this case Nepotianus' tenure may be dated ca 366–369.³⁶

The succession of the chair of rhetoric at Bordeaux may now be reconstructed tentatively as follows:

Luciolus (<i>Prof.</i> 3)	ca 325–ca 337
Attius Patera (<i>Prof.</i> 4)	ca 337–ca 340
Alethius Minervius (<i>Prof.</i> 6)	ca 340–ca 348
Latinus Alcimus Alethius (<i>Prof.</i> 2)	ca 348–ca 356
Tiberius Minervius Victor (<i>Prof.</i> 1)	ca 356–ca 360
Ausonius	ca 360–ca 366
Nepotianus (<i>Prof.</i> 15)	ca 366–ca 369
Attius Tiro Delphidius (<i>Prof.</i> 5)	ca 369–ca 378

The tentative nature of this reconstruction is greatly reduced by the consideration that six of these rhetors would be expected to have held the chair. Attius Patera, who had returned to Bordeaux after holding the chair at Rome, would scarcely have assumed any lesser position. It is clear that his successor in the chair was Alethius Minervius (*Prof.* 6.18). Even if it did not emerge from Ausonius' address that Tib. Minervius Victor held the chair, a rhetor famed in both capitals would scarcely have returned to any other position. And it is surely from the chair of rhetoric that Ausonius was summoned to court. Delphidius, an orator of repute and magistrate of notoriety, would hardly have taken a teaching-post other than the chair. Finally it may be inferred that Luciolus held the chair: since Ausonius will have recalled all chair holders from his student

³⁵It might be inferred from Jerome's entry in the *Chronicle* under 355 that Delphidius was teaching at Bordeaux then. Yet it is a ready inference from Ausonius' address that he did not assume the position of rhetor of Bordeaux until after the termination of his political career, that is, after 366 (*Prof.* 5.33). It may be that Delphidius began his career as an assistant rhetor at Bordeaux, a position incommensurate with his abilities, which Ausonius does not mention specifically. Again, it is possible that Delphidius taught elsewhere in Aquitaine in the 350s or that *docent* has been applied carelessly to him by Jerome: see *Phoenix* 32 (1978) 237 f. For the details of Delphidius' career mentioned below in the text see *id.* 236–239.

³⁶This dating does not affect the tentative identification of Nepotianus with the *comes et praeses Tripolitanae* proposed by G. Caputo, *REA* 53 (1951) 234–247.

days at Bordeaux,³⁷ he ought to have commemorated the predecessor to Attius Patera; the only candidate is Luciolus.

If there was only one chair for rhetoric, it may be expected, after Gratian's edict, that only one chair for *grammaticae Latinae* and one for *grammaticae Graecae* existed at Bordeaux. Nothing in the *Commemoratio* controverts this assumption; indeed that Ausonius mentions only one *grammaticus* (*Prof.* 12) who taught before his school-years lends it support. Moreover, the references at 7.10, 10.20, and 22.17 may be taken readily to refer to the Latin chair; and no force is needed to reconstruct a line of succession to a single chair, although this reconstruction must be even more tentative than that of the succession of rhetors.

If Ausonius was born ca 310, Thalassus (*Prof.* 12) must have moved from Bordeaux by 315. The fact that he is remembered at all presumably means that he held the municipal chair. Ausonius no doubt attended the municipal school; for *grammaticae Latinae* he first (*principio* 10.12) enjoyed Macrinus. It may be assumed that all the *grammatici* commemorated in *Prof.* 10, like Macrinus and the *grammatici Graeci* of *Prof.* 8, were those active in Ausonius' early years. Indeed the *senex* Phoebicius (22–30), the father of Attius Patera, who was himself a *senex* by the late 330s (see above, 337), can scarcely have held the chair later than the early 320s. It is tempting to infer from Ausonius' order that he succeeded to the chair on its vacation by Concordius (18–21), who had succeeded Sucuro, who himself had held the chair after Macrinus ca 317. Then the tenures of the *grammaticus* addressed in lines 35–41 and Anastasius (41–53) will complete the succession up to the 330s. Leontius (*Prof.* 7) and then his brother Iucundus (*Prof.* 9) may have held the chair in the 330s. Ausonius politely condemns the appointment of the latter (9.1 f.): *Et te, quem cathedram temere usurpasse locuntur/nomen grammatici nec meruisse putant*. It may be that Ausonius began his career as *subdoctor*

³⁷There is no reason to think that academic conditions at Bordeaux at the end of the third century were worse than at Autun, where Eumenius (*Pan. Lat.* 5[9].5.3, 9.2, 14.1–3) shows that students were being schooled and professors appointed before his arrival in 298. So it is probably through choice or limitations of memory that Ausonius celebrates only professors active in his lifetime (cf. *Prof.* 8.7). The scope of the *Commemoratio* may prompt too readily the assumption that higher schooling was instituted or revitalized at Bordeaux at the start of the fourth century. Thus Jullian (above, n. 15) *Ausone* 63 = *RIE* 29, and Haarhoff (above, n. 18) 47 f. think that only elementary schooling existed before the "university" was established by the tetrarchs. Etienne (above, n. 18) 235–237 would date the foundation of the "university" to 286. But Pliny *Epist.* 4.13.6 and Strabo 4.1.5 allow the safe inference that the emporium of Bordeaux was already appointing professors, *grammatici* and rhetors, in the first three centuries. The number involved does not seem to have increased in the fourth century, if the calculations offered in the text are valid. Marrou, (above, n. 11) 429, warns that the survival of Ausonius' poetry may lead to an overestimation of the scholastic importance of Bordeaux.

under Iucundus with a view to replacing him rather promptly. If so, Ausonius' accession to the chair of *grammaticae* may be dated ca 339. Ausonius, it has been seen, held this chair until ca 360. Three persons held it while he was rhetor: Nepotianus, who may have succeeded Ausonius in the chair of rhetoric; Herculanus, a *grammaticus* who almost succeeded Ausonius in the chair of rhetoric (*Prof.* 11); and Acilius Glabrio (*Prof.* 24.6). So Glabrio will have held the chair briefly after Ausonius, perhaps from ca 360 to 361. Then followed an equally brief tenure by Herculanus (ca 361–362). Next came Nepotianus (ca 362–366).

To leave aside for the moment Crispus and Urbicus (*Prof.* 21), the succession to the chair of *grammaticae Latinae* may be reconstructed tentatively as follows:

Thalassus	before 315
Macrinus	from before 315 to ca 316
Sucuro	ca 316–ca 319
Concordius	ca 319–ca 321
Phoebicius	ca 321–ca 324
Unknown (see <i>Phoenix</i> 32 [1978] 243)	ca 324–ca 326
Anastasius	ca 326–ca 330
Leontius	ca 330–ca 335
Iucundus	ca 335–ca 339
Ausonius	ca 339–ca 360
Acilius Glabrio	ca 360–ca 361
Herculanus	ca 361–ca 362
Nepotianus	ca 362–ca 366

If there was one chair for Latin rhetoric and one for *grammaticae Latinae*, just one will have existed for *grammaticae Graeca*. In *Prof.* 8 Ausonius records that he was taught this subject by Corinthius and Spherceus.³⁸ One presumably succeeded the other after 315. The chair next passed to Menestheus, who is mentioned in this same address, and later to Citarius (*Prof.* 13). The title to *Prof.* 21 makes Crispus and Urbicus *grammatici Graeci et Latini*. Since the *grammaticus Latinus* and the *grammaticus Graecus* appear as distinct teachers in Ausonius and other sources,³⁹ it may be doubted that these teachers functioned in both capacities simultaneously. Nothing, however, would prevent a *grammaticus Graecus* from assuming a Latin chair provided he were competent. This sequence rather than its opposite is envisaged since the Latin chair surely enjoyed more repute than the Greek at Bordeaux. Since the suc-

³⁸Romulus (*Prof.* 8.1) should not be taken for a professor; see *Phoenix* 32 (1978) 242 f.; cf. Green (above, n. 5) 23.

³⁹Cf. Marrou, (above, n. 11) 382–385; S. F. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome* (London 1977) 57.

cession to the Latin chair has not been traced past 366, it may reasonably be supposed that Crispus (to follow Ausonius' order) held the Greek chair after Citarius and succeeded Nepotianus in the Latin ca 366. At that date Urbicus assumed the Greek chair and later succeeded to the Latin.

If Bordeaux (and other cities) had only three municipal chairs, of which Ausonius was eligible for two, the chair of *grammaticae Latinae* and the chair of rhetoric, it can scarcely be held to his discredit that he did not gain a chair until he was in his late twenties.⁴⁰ The mobility of the professors whom he commemorates is noteworthy, but his decision to return to his *patria* was wise for there he had surely prospects of appointment to a municipal chair of *grammaticae*. However disparaging his comments from his later pre-eminence, that position was doubtless a satisfying achievement for a man of his provenance.⁴¹

Apart from Nepotianus, Ausonius appears to be the only *grammaticus* at Bordeaux to have become a rhetor. It seems that normally the aspiring professor entered and remained in one profession or the other. So Ausonius' transition to the chair of rhetoric at the age of fifty or so should be counted rather as a further achievement than as a belated step forward. Nor need it be regarded as a prize offered a professor in the twilight of his career: since rhetors were thought not to mature until their sixties (see n. 33 above), Ausonius still had his rhetorical prime ahead of him.

Ausonius doubtless welcomed his enhanced stature as rhetor. But it need not be imagined that he suffered from frustrated ambition and discontentment for a quarter of a century until he gained it. He does speak slightly (*Par.* 15.7 f.) of Victorinus, who headed the curia after Pomponius Maximus, perhaps because Victorinus worked against Ausonius' acquiring the chair of rhetoric. But towards the rhetors who held this chair

⁴⁰Note how Libanius congratulates the fortune that led him from the large academic centre where he had attempted to begin his career (*Or.* 1.27, trans. Norman): "If news of the sale had reached me in Athens, I would certainly be there now, making no use at all of my acquired learning, a fate that has befallen many students, who, unable to get one of the professorial chairs there, reach old age with no chance of showing their eloquence." At that time Libanius was in his mid twenties. And if Augustine's quest for fame as a rhetor at Rome was rewarded by a chair at Milan, many others who attempted to promote a professorial career thus must have been disappointed. Of course the competition in one of the famous centres will have been greater than in Gallic cities. Yet Ausonius' course was wise in view of the limited openings, and, as noted below, he might have moved elsewhere to a chair of rhetoric during his long spell as *grammaticus*, had that position displeased him.

⁴¹At *Epist.* 7.27–32 Ausonius sportingly attributes to himself the traditional poverty of professors: see *EMC* 20 (1976) 5 f., 8. But the application of *exilis* and *sterilis* to the chair of *grammaticae Latinae* at Bordeaux (*Prof.* 7.10, 10.20 f., 22.17) should be taken as raillery rather than spiteful recrimination. The *grammaticus* may only have received two thirds the salary of the rhetor (cf. Gratian's edict, above, 334) and Ausonius may play with a nickname for his chair. Note by contrast *nomen tam nobile* (*Prof.* 9.4).

while he was *grammaticus* Ausonius displays none of the spiteful jealousy that would be expected from a professor who saw another in a position which he himself coveted. And having served for a score of years as *grammaticus* at Bordeaux, Ausonius had evidently encouraged his nephew to succeed him in that position (*Prof.* 11.1–3), which does not imply dissatisfaction. Moreover, since Ausonius was chosen as imperial tutor, his performance as rhetor cannot have been disastrous, which would suggest that within twenty years he could have gained a chair of rhetoric elsewhere, had he ardently desired the position of rhetor. So it may be accepted that he was content with his lot as *grammaticus*.⁴² Ausonius' selection as imperial tutor was a signal honour, but one for which he could not have aimed throughout his career.⁴³ When he assumed that chair of rhetoric, he probably reckoned that he had reached the acme of his career, which he may have begun in the mid 330s as a *subdoctor*. If he did not enjoy the meteoric success of an Alethius Minervius (*Prof.* 6), or embark upon the peripatetic adventures of a Libanius, he was certainly no failure at Bordeaux in his chosen profession of teacher.⁴⁴

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⁴²Ausonius reprehends driving ambition for office and urges that political entanglements be shunned; *Ephem.* 8.4, *Par.* 18.3, *Prof.* 5.15–30, *Epic.* 17–22, 51 f. Whence it has been inferred that, as a teacher, he had no thirst for office: e.g., R. Pichon, *Les derniers écrivains profanes* (Paris 1906) 187; N. K. Chadwick, *Life and Letters in Early Christian Gaul* (London 1955) 59. Yet his recommendations on equanimity and indifference stem from the period after his retirement from court when he had held the highest offices. A man who had so succeeded and was then *nobilis* in the strict sense of the word (cf. T. D. Barnes, *Phoenix* 18 [1974] 444–449) might well adopt an attitude of complacency and laud *otium*. Indeed these sentiments, redolent of the commonplace (cf. W. Speyer, *Naucellius und sein Kreis* [Munich 1959]), are scarcely sound evidence from which to deduce life-long convictions. What accords more certainty to the assertion that Ausonius did not aspire to office is the fact that he was a *grammaticus* for some twenty years. It will be noticed that the Bordeaux professors who acquired office were all rhetors. A swift perusal of *PLRE* has revealed few *grammatici* who acceded to office. It is not certain that Tetradius (Aus. *Epist.* 9; *PLRE* 1.885) was a *grammaticus* rather than a rhetor, nor is his identification as the *vir proconsularis* Taetradius certain. Eugenius 6 (*PLRE* 1.293) was probably a rhetor and it may be doubted that Flavius Simplicius was ever a *grammaticus* (*Florilegium* 3 [1981] 11, 20 n. 55). Dorotheus 5 (*PLRE* 1.270) may not have held any office, nor need he have been a teacher either. The example of Charisius (*PLRE* 1.201) depends upon what is restored after *magister* in the title of his work.

⁴³Contrast Jullian (above, n. 15) 24 f.

⁴⁴This study, signalled in *Phoenix* 32 (1978) 235, has been completed with generous assistance from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. I thank Dr. R. Kaster of the University of Chicago for penetrating comments upon an earlier draft, which have removed many errors of detail. Dr. Kaster does not, however, agree with all hypotheses and conclusions presented, and must bear no blame for shortcomings and perversities of judgment; all these are mine.