

## EPILOGUE

### *Echoes of Carpe Diem*

What do we hear when it is all over? What do we hear when the music stops? Applause or silence, perhaps? Eventually one or the other, but before that we hear the music again reverberating, resonating, resounding, re-echoing. In this Epilogue, too, we will hear exactly this: a last echo of *carpe diem*, which sounds forth in late antiquity, succeeding the time frame under investigation in this book. Listening to this later echo, we can hear once more some of the leitmotifs of this book reflected from the page of the text. The text in question is *De aduentu ueris* of Pentadius, a poet variously dated between the third and sixth century AD (*Anthologia Latina* i.235 Riese = 227 Shackleton Bailey, whose text I print):<sup>1</sup>

Sentio, fugit hiems, Zephyrisque animantibus orbem  
iam tepet Euris aquis. sentio, fugit hiems.  
parturit omnis ager, persentit terra calores  
germinibusque nouis parturit omnis ager.  
laeta uirecta tument, foliis sese induit arbor; (5)  
uallibus apricis laeta uirecta tument.  
iam Philomela gemit modulis; Ityn impia mater  
oblatum mensis iam Philomela gemit.  
monte tumultus aquae properat per leuia saxa  
et late resonat monte tumultus aquae. (10)  
floribus innumeris pingit sola flatus Eoi  
tempeaque exhalant floribus innumeris.  
per caua saxa sonat pecudum mugitibus Echo  
uoxque repulsa iugis per caua saxa sonat.  
uitea musta tument uicinas iuncta per ulmos; (15)  
fronde maritata uitea musta tument.

<sup>1</sup> In line 9, Shackleton Bailey (1982) prints *resonat* instead of *properat*, which is printed in all other editions. As neither Shackleton Bailey's own apparatus nor the apparatus of any other edition mentions the reading *resonat* in line 9, I assume that this is a mistake rather than a conjecture, and I print *properat*. Oddly enough, Paolucci (2016) prints Riese's text but in her discussion refers to the alleged reading *resonat* in line 9 (page 23 n.85).

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nota tigilla linit iam garrula luce chelidon;  
dum recolit nidos, nota tigilla linit.  
sub platano uiridi iucunda(t) somnus in umbra  
sertaque texuntur sub platano uiridi. (20)  
nunc quoque dulce mori, nunc, fila, recurrite fusis;  
inter et amplexus nunc quoque dulce mori.

**19** iucundat Meyer : iucunda codd. **21–2** nunc Shackleton Bailey  
ter scripsit : tunc codd.

I feel winter has fled. While the Zephyrs breathe new life into the world, Eurus already grows warm on the water. I feel winter has fled. Every field is in labour. The earth feels the warmth, and with new buds every field is in labour. Grass bursts forth joyously. The tree dresses itself with leaves. In sunny valleys grass bursts forth joyously. Philomela now laments melodiously. For Itys, who was served at the table, the impious mother Philomela now laments. From the mountain the roaring water rushes through smooth stones, and widely there resounds from the mountain the roaring water. With innumerable flowers the breeze of the Eastern wind paints the ground, and the valleys are fragrant with innumerable flowers. Through hollow rocks resounds Echo with the mooring of the cattle, and the voice reverberated by the hills through hollow rocks resounds. Clusters of the vine swell that have been joined to neighbouring elm trees. As their leafage is married clusters of the vine swell. The familiar roof timber is being smeared with mud already at daybreak by the twittering swallow. As she repairs her nest, the familiar roof timber is being smeared with mud. Under the green plane-tree sleep is pleasing in the shade, and garlands are woven under the green plane-tree. Now it is also sweet to die, now threads of fate, run back on the spindles. Among embraces now it is also sweet to die.

Surely the most immediately striking feature of this poem is its repetitiveness: each elegiac couplet repeats the words of the first half of the hexameter in the second half of the pentameter. Indeed, if Pentadius is known for anything (and this is perhaps a big ‘if’), then it is this type of metre, which he uses in three out of the six poems that are attributed to him (*AL* i.234–5, i.265–8 Riese = 226–7, 259–62 Shackleton Bailey).<sup>2</sup> As the metre makes us rehear *carpe diem* again and again, I wish to show how this feature prompts us to recall the leitmotifs we have encountered in this book. The metre in

<sup>2</sup> Kenney and Clausen (1982) 694 note the metrical peculiarities and then drily remark: ‘Pentadius’ sole virtue is neatness’. *DNP* and *OCD* s.v. stress the characteristic metre, but arguably go too far in doubting Pentadius’ authorship for three poems that do not follow this scheme.

Pentadius' poem is variously called epanaleptic, serpentine, echoic, or *uersus recurrens*.<sup>3</sup> While Ovid makes occasional use of this device, Pentadius makes it the main feature of three poems, and a number of other poems of late antiquity seem to have followed him.<sup>4</sup> What needs stressing though is that in each case the peculiarly repetitive elegiacs fit the subject matter of Pentadius' poem (or, rather, one is tempted to think that Pentadius looked for any subject that might have suited the metre).<sup>5</sup> His poem on the mutability of fortune programmatically states in the first couplet that the same constantly returns as changed (i.234 Riese = 226 Shackleton Bailey): *res eadem adsidue momento uoluitur uno | atque redit dispar res eadem adsidue* ('constantly the same thing rolls around in one motion, and there *returns* in altered state constantly the same thing?'). This return of the same in changed fashion is as true for the works of fortune that the poem describes as it is for the metre of the poem, in which the same words constantly return anew. Such unity of metre and subject matter also holds true for Pentadius' poem on Narcissus, in which the words reflect and mirror themselves (i.265 Riese = 259 Shackleton Bailey).<sup>6</sup> Finally, the repetitive metre also has some connection to the subject matter in our present poem.

Pentadius' echoic elegiacs allow us to hear the soundscape of spring as a series of repetitions: as sounds that constitute repetitions, as sounds that return each year, and as sounds that are echoes of other spring poems. Now it is spring and now Philomela, the nightingale, laments for Itys (7–8):<sup>7</sup>

iam Philomela gemit modulis; Ityn impia mater  
 oblatum mensis iam Philomela gemit.

<sup>3</sup> Guaglianone (1984) 155–72, Cristóbal (1985), Wills (1996) 430–5, Paolucci (2016) 19–20.

<sup>4</sup> Paolucci (2016) 17–27 (also in Italian as Paolucci (2015a; 2015b) points to Ov. *Am.* 1.9.1–2, 3.2.27–8, *Epist.* 5.117–18, *Rem.* 71–2, *Mart.* 9.97. All of these examples and many more are naturally discussed by Wills (1996) 430–5 (page 433 n.85 notes the feature in Pentadius). In the context of *carpe diem*, the device also appears on the epitaph *CLE* 1499 = *CIL* vi 15258.5–8 (Wills (1996) 434). Pentadius' technique influenced the *Anonymi uersus serpentine* in the Salmasian anthology and Christian authors in late antiquity and the Middle Ages (Schetter (1986) 231–3, Paolucci (2016) 20 with further sources and references). On the ludic nature of such devices, see McGill (2005) 73–4.

<sup>5</sup> Arcaz Pozo (1989) 168–9 makes this important point. <sup>6</sup> Elsner (2017) 198.

<sup>7</sup> For confusion of Philomela and Procne in some Latin writers, see Arnott (2007) s.v. 'aēdwn', Thomas (2011) 229–30. See Plin. *Nat.* 10.81–5 for the musicality of the song of the nightingale.

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Philomela now laments melodiously. For Itys, who was served at the table, the impious mother Philomela now laments.

The nightingale sings melodiously in musical measures (*modulis*) and Pentadius' text strives to mimic this song through repetitive sounds. The repeated hemiepes *iam Philomela gemit* is the most obvious marker of repetition. Yet, repetition occurs also at the level of letters. Five letters in sequence make 'i' sounds, mimicking and amplifying the inherently repetitive and onomatopoeic birdsong 'Ityn Ityn' by chirping, tweeting, singing it: *modulis; Ityn impia*.<sup>8</sup> As we seem to hear the song of the nightingale and seem to perceive its presence, so the poem tells us that this is happening *now (iam)*. And yet the very term that marks the present moment, *iam*, is repeated as we are listening not only to momentary song but also to its delayed echo (and note the preceding *iam* in line 2, and then again in line 17). The word *iam* also points to a whole literary history of moments when it was *now already* spring in Greek epigrams, in Catullus' poetry, and in Horace's poetry, which all marked this time with ἤδη and *iam*, often in repetitions.<sup>9</sup> It is *always already* spring. Indeed, *iam* encapsulates the temporal quality of *carpe diem* poems, which evoke presence and lament its loss, as the counterpart of 'now' (*iam*) is 'no longer' (*non iam*);<sup>10</sup> thus, Horace begins one *carpe diem* poem set in spring time with an anaphora of *iam*, saying that *now* the spring breeze arises and that *no longer* the meadows are stiff with frost (C. 4.12.1–4).<sup>11</sup> *Iam*, then, which marks the momentary arrival of spring in Pentadius, is a convention in spring poems, and so are many other features of Pentadius' poem, such as the arrival of the west winds, the beginning of the seafaring season, the swallow, the loosening of the earth, and the new flowers.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, Pentadius'

<sup>8</sup> An echo of a nightingale from Horace? Syndikus (1972–3) ii.399 finds a similar technique employed at Hor. C. 4.12.5.

<sup>9</sup> Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) 59 pointing to AP 10.1.2 = Leonides 85.2 HE, numerous more epigrams following Leonidas' model at the beginning of AP 10, Cat. 46.1–2, 7–8, Hor. C. 1.4.5, 4.7.1, 4.12.1–4.

<sup>10</sup> I wish to thank William Fitzgerald for suggesting this to me.

<sup>11</sup> For the importance of *iam* in *carpe diem* poems, also see page 9 n.28 in the Introduction.

<sup>12</sup> For these features, see Pasquali (1964) [1920] 715–16, Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) 59, Woodman (1972) 753–5, Giovini (2005). In addition to the spring poems cited above at note 9, the following passages should perhaps also be noted: AP 9.363 (Meleager,

west winds carry a breeze of Greek poetry to the poem; they are Greek Zephyrs rather than the Roman Favonius, and as they ‘breathe new life into the world’ and ‘animate’ it (*animantibus*) they offer an etymological pun on the Greek word for wind, ἄνεμος.<sup>13</sup> The Greek spirit here underlines the recurrent quality of spring, which always comes again.<sup>14</sup>

While spring marks the return of nature, such return is not possible for humans. This is the lesson of *carpe diem*, as we have encountered it before in this book in Horace, *Odes* 4.7, a poem not less replete with words that mark return and reversal (see pages 125–31 in Chapter 3). Pentadius turns to the *carpe diem* motif at the end of his poem (21): he wishes that his youth may return and the threads of fate roll back on their spindles. The very futility of this wish brings the *carpe diem* motif to the poem: youth will never return for humans, but death will come instead. Pentadius thus says that it is sweet to die at that time. To be sure, the train of thought in the last couplet is rather less clear than in Horace’s *carpe diem* poems set in spring, but the juxtaposition of spring and death, the contrast between the return of nature, and the impossibility of such circularity for man together express the *carpe diem* motif. It is in this motif that we can hear echoes of Horace’s poetry.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, we are able to hear these echoes even more clearly if we agree with Shackleton Bailey, who thought that Pentadius followed Horace, *Odes* 1.4 and described the spring with an anaphora of *nunc* (rather than the transmitted *tunc* in lines 21–2):

nunc quoque dulce mori, nunc, fila, recurrite fuis;  
inter et amplexus nunc quoque dulce mori.

Now it is also sweet to die, now threads of fate, run back on the spindles.  
Among embraces now it is also sweet to die.

excluded in *HE*), Lucr. 5.737–47, Verg. *G.* 2.323–45, Ov. *F.* 4.125–32, the *Pervigilium Veneris*.

<sup>13</sup> Maltby (1991) s.v. ‘anima’ lists a number of late antique writers who point to the etymology with ἄνεμος: Lactantius, *De opificio dei* 17.2, Servius at Verg. *A.* 8.403, Isidorus, *Etymologiae sive Origines* 11.1.7. For a wordplay of this kind in a similar context, cf. Hor. *C.* 4.12.2 *animae* [...] *Thraciae* with Thomas (2011) *ad loc.*

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Gitner (2012) 66–7, who makes a similar point on the Greek lexical influence in the description of the west winds and spring at Hor. *C.* 4.7.9–12.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Grimal (1978) 271–2, Arcasz Pozo (1989) 167–8, Giovini (2005) 105–6.

It would be only too fitting if, at the end of this overtly repetitive poem, repetitions of *nunc* not only describe this very moment of enjoyment but also bring back moments of enjoyment from Horace. On more practical grounds, the confusion of *tunc* and *nunc* is palaeographically easy enough and the imperative *recurrere* goes well with *nunc*. Nonetheless, the conjecture will not convince everyone and some readers may suspect that this is one of the cases in which Shackleton Bailey ‘caught the authors napping rather than the scribes’.<sup>16</sup> Be that as it may, even readers who prefer the paradosis will see Horace’s poetry reflected in Pentadius’ poem, for though spring poems are common enough in ancient literature, the combination of spring and *carpe diem* is characteristic of Horace’s poetry. In fact, we do not possess any ancient poems which combined these two themes before Horace. It is tempting to assume with Nisbet and Hubbard that Greek models for such poems have been lost, and fragments of Alcaeus include indeed some tantalising references to spring, drinking, and death (*fr.* 286, 367).<sup>17</sup> Yet, once more in this book we hear in later poetry what might very well be the echoes or re-echoes of early Greek lyric, but cannot with certainty identify the source of the sound.

Perhaps appropriately to its very nature, the echo arrives with some delay at the analysis of this poem. Surely the poem’s content reflects its repetitive metre most strongly and programmatically in the description of the echo (13–14):<sup>18</sup>

per caua saxa sonat pecudum mugitibus Echo  
uoxque repulsa iugis per caua saxa sonat.

<sup>16</sup> Reeve (1985) 178 in his review of the edition, commenting on the ingenuity of some of Shackleton-Bailey’s conjectures. Indeed, in his apparatus, Shackleton Bailey says that he might also prefer *mihī* twice instead of *quoque* in the last couplet. This seems rather unlikely.

<sup>17</sup> Nisbet and Hubbard (1970) 58–61, and see page 13 and 13 n.47 as well as 19 in the Introduction. Evans (2016) 101 n.148 compares Horace’s spring poems with *AP* 9.412 = Philodemus 29 Sider, on which see page 20 n.83 in the Introduction. Davis (1991) 159 rejects the appellation ‘spring poems’ for Horace and argues that spring is merely a pretext for *carpe diem*, easily interchangeable with other seasons. The point is well taken, but this should not blind us to the influence of spring poems of Catullus and the *Greek Anthology* on such poems of Horace.

<sup>18</sup> Thus also Arcaz Pozo (1989) 168–9, Paolucci (2016) 22–3. For the technique of mimicking the sound of echo through the repetitions of half a hexameter, cf. Bion, *Epitaphius Adonis* 37–8 with Wills (1996) 346–7.

## Epilogue: Echoes of *Carpe Diem*

Through hollow rocks resounds Echo with the mooing of the cattle, and the voice reverberated by the hills through hollow rocks resounds.

The echo resounding through the hollow rocks again and again exemplifies, of course, what the poem has been about all long: a *uox repulsa*, a reverberated voice, audible already in the repetitive song of the nightingale, audible, too, in the resonating rush of water from the mountains (10: *et late resonat monte tumultus aquae*). Echoes can travel over long distances as they carry sound. The echo in Pentadius' poem in late antiquity has traversed a particularly long distance: it reflects the sounds of spring, Horace, and perhaps even a re-echo of Alcaeus, and allows us to hear, sonorously and amplified, certain issues we have encountered before in this book. The echo also allows us to revisit the concepts of textuality, performance, and evocation of present time, which have been at the heart of this book. Indeed, several studies have fruitfully linked the echo to such concepts. Thus, Michèle Lowrie has shown how an ode of Horace, which tells of echoing applause for Maecenas, is itself such an echo (*C.* 1.20): the poem does not itself offer praises, but rather repeats praises; the written page of Horace's lyric reflects events with some delay.<sup>19</sup> Lowrie also notes that 'the word chosen for echo, "imago" (image), bridges the aural and the visual, the respective domains of performativity and writing'.<sup>20</sup> Yet, repetition and delay are features of the lyric voice that precede book-lyric: through reperformance early Greek lyric can already be heard as a cascade of echoing sounds, always reflecting an original event that we cannot hear any more, as Pauline LeVen has shown.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, echoes are the oldest recording device in history, which make sounds present, as Shane Butler has argued.<sup>22</sup> This is precisely the issue for Narcissus in the well-known treatment of the myth of Echo in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (3.334–510): Narcissus does not consider

<sup>19</sup> Lowrie (2009a) 66–71. Compare and contrast Gramps (2021) 78–84 on echo and presence in the same ode. For the echo as a carrier of allusion from Milton onwards, see Hollander (1981).

<sup>20</sup> Lowrie (2009a) 70.

<sup>21</sup> LeVen (2018). For the echo as a concept for reperformance, see also Phillips (2016) 217–35 on Echo in *Pi. O.* 14.

<sup>22</sup> Butler (2015) 59–87. Cf. LeVen (2021) 107–35 on Echo and different forms of listening in Ovid (and Longus).

that his own voice is repeated with delay, but he readily believes that someone talks to him in the moment.

The double nature of the echo is crucial for Pentadius' poem in particular and *carpe diem* in general. On the one hand, the sound of the echo is always delayed, only a replication of the event; on the other hand, we are under the impression that we are listening to the event now, in the moment. Though the echo is never in the moment, it is always about the moment, replicating the moment. Pentadius' poem lets us hear the sound of the moment, the soundscape of a spring day. As half-lines are repeated again and again, the poem transcends meaning and instead produces effects of presence. That is to say, the repetitions of half-lines do not offer the reader any new information, and instead privilege the effects of prosody and repetitive sound patterns: we seem to hear melodious sounds and songs rather than meaningful words.<sup>23</sup> The echo, then, brings the delay of song as well as the presence of song.

As the echo both delays vanished sounds and makes them present, so we have seen in this book how *carpe diem* poems both stress and compensate for a perceived loss of song. Over the course of five chapters, we have seen how *carpe diem* texts are neither solely performative nor textual: they evoke present song but always with a delay.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps in the manner of Pentadius' serpentine poem, my discussion has returned to where it took off in the Introduction, when we listened to Housman's echo of Horace's spring poem, *Ode 4.7*. Other parts of this book also resonate with Pentadius' soundboard. Thus, we were able to hear the words of the legendary Assyrian king Sardanapallus in present tense, long after he had voiced them (Chapter 1). We have tasted Horace's wines, as wine storage in his poetry allows for delayed experience of the seasons: opening an old bottle of wine, one can still taste the warm weather of the year (Chapter 2). Horace's choice of words, his neologisms and archaisms, allow us to feel the atmosphere of

<sup>23</sup> For such effects of repetitions, I am drawing on Butler (2015) 59–87 and in particular on Trimble (2018) 38–40, who analyses the refrain of Catullus 64 (to which I shall return presently). 'Effects of presence' and prosody naturally refer to Gumbrecht (2004) and Culler (2015), the studies of whom I have raised in the Introduction.

<sup>24</sup> It is needless to stress again that in this regard textual exhortations of *carpe diem* take their cue from reperformances of lyric *carpe diem* songs, in which momentary enjoyment was already designed to be repeatable.



the moment long after they were coined (Chapter 3). Epigrams that write about objects such as cups, gems, and dining halls conjure up such objects and stress the medial distance to them. Again, sensory experiences are mediated as writing evokes the taste and touch of cups and the visual splendour of gems (Chapter 4). Finally, even excerpts of *carpe diem* that are inserted into the most unlikely surroundings still seem to evoke lyric song (Chapter 5).

This book, then, has proposed ways of understanding *carpe diem* that have aimed to break new ground. The outcomes are threefold. First, against the prevalence of treating the *carpe diem* motif as trite, this book has demonstrated the significance of the motif. *Carpe diem* poems have been shown to be crucial texts for questions of textuality, performance, and presence. Texts of this kind strive to transcend writing and the page of the book, so that they become truly present. How texts wrestle with this ambition, how they approach this ideal, or consciously fall short of it, is central for understanding how poetry writes *now*. This is of particular importance to lyric: a type of poetry that always looks back to an idealised notion of momentary original performance, and does so most notably in its reception of the *carpe diem* motif.

Second, readers and the activity of reading have been central for the poetics of *carpe diem*. Reading *carpe diem* has been shown to be an activity with two sides to it. On the one hand, this is an activity that puts a strong stress on the textuality of poems. Thus, readers indulge in the art of variation that comes with epigram collections, they read certain philologically marked terms as cross-references, and they cut up texts and excerpt them. On the other hand, reading *carpe diem* is an activity that attempts to go beyond reading as an interpretative act of understanding: texts seem to sing, resounding echoes seem to arise from the page, neologisms seem to scream ‘now’, some words evoke the taste of past seasons. Often, both these sides of reading *carpe diem* are in play, as texts oscillate between meaning and presence effects.

Third, this book has demonstrated throughout the value of analysing poetry alongside other forms of cultural production. The book shares this interest in the presence of things with studies in disciplines beyond Classics, and in particular with Hans Ulrich

Gumbrecht's book *In 1926: Living at the Edge of Time*.<sup>25</sup> In alphabetically ordered articles ranging from 'Airplanes' and 'Americans in Paris' to 'Telephone' and 'Wireless Communication', Gumbrecht writes curious crossings between dictionary entries, research notes, and streams of consciousness, which all describe aspects of the year 1926. By describing parts of the everyday world, such as objects, leisure activities, art forms, technologies, and ideas, Gumbrecht aims to make 1926 present, rather than to interpret events of this year. Readers are invited to feel the atmosphere of the year and to 'forget [...] that they are *not* living in 1926'.<sup>26</sup> When Horace asks for a vintage wine of a certain year, here, too, we are invited to soak up the atmosphere of the year; the calendar year with its oenological texture, its political associations, and its private memory is meant to affect our senses. And yet, I have argued that wines in Horace do more than make the atmosphere of a single year present. Rather, this book has shown that texts and things have an ability to evoke presence which goes beyond a certain historical date: the moment the wine is sealed, the moment it is opened, and the moment that the poetry book is opened all merge. Despite these differences, I share with Gumbrecht an interest in the potential of things to evoke presence, and I have attempted to cast a similarly wide net: musical notation, tombs, inscriptions, calendars, wine labels, wine cellars, cups, gems, dining halls, present tenses, imperatives, and the atmosphere of neologisms and archaisms have all been shown to evoke presence. *Carpe diem* poems attempt to transcend the page of the book, and so we have followed their lead and looked at the materials such texts evoked. As literature studies beyond Classics are concerned with the questions at the heart of this book – textuality, performance, and presence – the wider-reaching approach of this book may also offer an angle of investigation for other disciplines: Classics, which has long included the study of epigraphy, art history, or linguistics alongside philology, may point to the tools to tackle the problem of presence in literature.

Let us for a last time pick up the thread of Pentadius and return to his poem. In the final couplet, Pentadius addresses the threads of

<sup>25</sup> Gumbrecht (1997).

<sup>26</sup> Gumbrecht (1997) x. Cf. pages 31–5 in the Introduction for a discussion of Gumbrecht (2004), which also argues that interpretation should not be privileged over presence.

fate and tells them to run back on the spindles (21): *nunc, fila, recurrite fuis* ('now threads of fate, run back on the spindles'). This sentence is crucial for the poem's texture, for the way the poem weaves together text, song, and repetitions. It is clear that the phrase alludes to the well-known refrain of the song of the Fates in Catullus 64: *currite ducentes subtegmina, currite, fusi* ('run threads, drawing out the weft, run on').<sup>27</sup> As Pentadius reuses Catullus, so he notes that now the spindles are *rerun* rather than simply run (*recurrite*). The poetic echo is marked as such. Yet, the dynamics of echoing go further; when Pentadius evokes Catullus' song, a polyphony of echoes arises, since Catullus' words come with their own echoes. In Catullus 64, the repetitiveness of the refrain mimics song. It is arguably this very repetitiveness which suggested itself to Pentadius' poem that is all about repetitions evoking song. The last couplet comments on the repetitive metre of the poem: 'Re-run back on the spindles, you threads' – rerunning verses is what this poem has been doing all along, and *uersus recurrentes* describe a type of repetitive metre that is closely related to the serpentine verses in Pentadius' poem.<sup>28</sup> Another expression in this last couplet also comments on the poem's shape: *inter et amplexus*. For 'embracing' or 'surrounding' is an appropriate description of a metre in which two identical parts embrace the centre. It is indeed above all through the peculiar metre that Pentadius attempts to rerun time and bring back an ever-so-elusive present that is always in the past. And although he cannot succeed in bringing back his youth, the repetitive metre seems to make time go backwards, as the end of the pentameter brings us back to the beginning of the hexameter. The metre thus

<sup>27</sup> In Catullus 64, the line is repeated numerous times: Cat. 64.327 = 333, 337, 342, 347, 352, 356, 361, 365, 371, 375, [378], 381. On the Catullan refrain here and modes of echoing and reflection, see, above all, Trimble (2018). The Catullan line is also echoed at Verg. *Ecl.* 4.46–7, as Macrobius 6.1.41 notes. Macrobius' observation points to the interest in this line in late antiquity. Lemaire (1824) 323 notes the possible Vergilian echo in Pentadius; Arcaz Pozo (1989) 168 notes the Catullan echo.

<sup>28</sup> See Sidonius *Epist.* 8.11.5: [*sc. Lampridius faciebat*] *elegos uero nunc echoicos nunc recurrentes, nunc per anadiplosin fine principiisque conexos*. The context (here and at *Epist.* 9.14.4) makes clear that *uersus recurrentes* are palindromic verses. Sidonius' third category might describe Pentadius' serpentine verses (Wills (1996) 434). While Wills (1996) 432 calls Pentadius' serpentine metre *uersus recurrentes*, I can find no evidence that this appellation was used in antiquity.

evokes a timeless present. In this, the poem both differs and conforms with Catullus 64. Whereas the song of the Fates ran onwards to the future as it described the final fate of Achilles dying at Troy, Pentadius' song sounds forth always now. Yet, the repetitions through which Pentadius' poem evokes presence and music owe much to Catullus. Concerning the refrain of Catullus 64, Gail Trimble has recently argued that 'the pattern of sounds that the reader hears becomes more important than the meaning that the words convey'.<sup>29</sup> As Pentadius reruns his song, he makes time stand still and makes us listen to the sound of the now. Yet, as the last sound fades away, as we are urged to seize the day one last time, and as we seem to hear a song that tells us to do so here and now, we realise that while we have been searching for the present, it is only the echoes of songs that we hear reverberating through time.

<sup>29</sup> Trimble (2018) 38. Cf. the repetitive refrain of the *Pervigilium Veneris*, which like Pentadius' poem describes the arrival of spring and mimics song (Catlow (1980) 51). On refrains in Latin poetry, see Wills (1996) 96–9. Emily Gowers points out to me that William Dunbar's poem *Lament for the Makers* also uses a Latin refrain in a poem that is all about time and transience.