

Large fragments of eight orations of Symmachus are preserved in a palimpsest, codex Ambrosianus E.147, with some supplements from codex Vaticanus 5750. The editor of these orations must deal not only with the condition of the texts but with their unique transmission. The most recent editor, Angela Pabst (1989), has rejected most of the assumptions underlying Otto Seeck's edition (1883).

Seeck believed that Symmachus collected these orations for publication together some time before 388 and added marginalia frequently throughout as corrections to the originals. He argued that the extant manuscript incorporates all of the marginalia into the text and descends from the original copy with emendations, and that many of these additions are stylistic improvements while others offer a clause or phrase that is merely different if no better than the ones they are meant to replace. Redundancy is not in itself grounds for identifying a correction or gloss, as a glance at almost any page of Pliny's *Panegyricus* will demonstrate. His published oration was longer than the one he delivered, and one may argue that both intermittent redundancy and entire sections are products of this revision. Similarly, Symmachus would have improved his orations prior to circulating copies. An editor must first decide whether one can reproduce the original form of the spoken oration and will likely conclude that it is impossible in the case of any author, unless there are compelling historical or chronological improbabilities. Seeck's method is usually to consider later whatever appears to him to be better. For example, at *Or.* 5.5, "qui soleo agere gratias, qui obliterari benefacta non patior", he judges the second clause a more eloquent expression of the first and thus marks it as the correction. Passages identified as marginalia were printed in the text using smaller type font, separated from the main text between double vertical lines. The effect is to make the text deemed earlier seem preferable. Pabst printed the suspected marginalia as legitimate parts of the text.

One who can support Seeck's methodology and identify an original text has several other methods of presenting the variant readings, each of which would represent both a different sort of editorial decision and a different experience for the reader: What grounds are adequate to identify emendations? Should the orations appear in their original form, or in corrected form, or both at once? If Symmachus did indeed mean to replace parts of the original oration with emendations, which version would he have wanted circulated? The use of hypertext would preserve all the words in the manuscript while offering the user a choice, but would not necessarily solve the original question of the editor's duty to the author. There are no other orations of Symmachus independently transmitted to use as stylistic guidelines for editorial decisions; the *Relationes* are the closest thing to long formal communication and with care one may use them as standards for Symmachus' preference for sentence length, redundancy, or clausulae in his orations. An editor who is convinced that Symmachus was not emending but expanding, as I shall argue, must find parallels both in Symmachus' predecessors and in his own letters to defend the expanded version.