

On Farting: Language and Laughter in the Middle Ages

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When one is sent such an item to review one inevitably speculates why. Is one a known purveyor of hot air? Or just vulgar and unshockable?(1) Is one being set up for Max Reger's response to a music critic? 'Ich sitze in dem kleinsten Zimmer in meinem Hause. Ich habe ihre Kritik vor mir. Im nächsten Augenblick wird sie hinter mir sein.' ('I am sitting in the smallest room in my house. I have your review in front of me. In a moment it will be behind me.') This should be a gas (2), for Valerie Allen has let rip a meditation on farting in the Middle Ages. The book (subtitled 'Language and Laughter in the Middle Ages') is divided into three parts: 'The Beginning' (pp. 7–105), 'In Between,' (pp. 113–60), and 'Die *Afterwissenschaft*' (pp. 161–79). There is a ring-composition at work, for we begin with Roland the Farter's annual Christmas fee of a jump, a whistle, and a fart (p. 12) and conclude with more of Roland's 'fartprints' (pp. 161-177).(3) 'The Beginning' is primarily literary and theological, 'In Between' is linguistic and philosophical, and '*Afterwissenschaft*' tangles with history.

This reviewer amused herself by hopping about on one leg trying to envisage some systematisation worthy of the Teuton in the old joke about the international conference on the elephant.(4) *Could* one have written the kind of work that would have begun with etymologies and attestations, and with a properly anal *partitio*? (5) *Un pet à quatre volumes traduit du prussien?* Fart Greek, Fart Roman, Fart in the Early Middle Ages, Fart in the Central Middle Ages, Fart in the Later Middle Ages, The Fart in Latin Literature, The Fart in the National Literatures. Farts in Hagiography, Historiography, Drama, Satire, Apocalyptic, Philosophy, Medical and Dietetic Literature . . . Farts at Court, Professional Farters, Monastic Farts, Hot Air as Abuse, the Gendered Fart, the Queered Fart, the Nun's Fart, The Wolf's Fart, Out with a Fart, Famous Last Farts(6) ... (7)

But this is no systematic and encyclopedic work on the medieval fart. Taking its lead from the fecal product itself, unorganised, undifferentiated, Allen presents the fart in an anecdotal stream of consciousness, punctuated into fits and farts. The fart is representative of the arsy-versy world of scholarship, 'where you never know what is coming next.' Although Chaucer could joke about the division of a fart in his *Summoner's Tale* (a favorite text of Allen's), to draw any strict line between the solid product (of which the fart is the odoriferous harbinger) and the fart itself is difficult. This book thus celebrates not just the fart, but also shit, and (while we are talking wind) belching, burping, and the organs and orifices that produce said *afflatus*.⁽⁸⁾ It will take its place (GT2840 A45 2006 'Flatulence: Social aspects, History, in literature,') at the right hand of the repulsively tactile black velvet microfiber-bound D. G. Laporte, *History of Shit*. (Cambridge, Mass., 2000) (GT2835 L3613 2000 'Feces-Miscellanea').

While Allen acknowledges differences between now and the Middle Ages (pp. 11-2), she does not really outline any developments or before and afters (as opposed to Afters).⁽⁹⁾ But she does expound and anatomize many a medieval fart to us. I say 'anatomize,' for her one-woman-on-a-Bummel leisure reminds one of Burton's project, where a whole universe is tied to a single word. Kitchen-sink digressions ⁽¹⁰⁾ and medieval set pieces are incessant.⁽¹¹⁾ Allen clearly hasn't seen a pun she didn't like.⁽¹²⁾ Her writing is quaint, witty, naughty, learned, and playful. She refuses to make her ripe and odorous subject arid and dull. The language is a delight.⁽¹³⁾ Only 'osphresiolagniac' (p. 51) initially and 'tirret' (p. 57) definitively baffled.

This book fits into the New Middle Ages (Stephen Jaeger's 'diminutive Middle Ages'), not the old (now obsolete) one that argued aetherially about how many angels could dance on the head of a pin. People were short, stank, had bad hair, and worse teeth, and farted incessantly. Throughout we are reminded of just how bad the age smelled. 'My dear, the noise, the smell, the *people!*' The project reflects a postmodern interest in the low, abject, and marginal, 'hodiernal trivia,' and takes very literally the allegedly Virgilian concept of seeking gold in dung.⁽¹⁴⁾ Allen recently moderated a session 'Bodily Functions in Late Medieval Literature and Art' at the International Medieval Congress at Leeds, and her book attracted an interview in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.⁽¹⁵⁾ This unafraid scholarship takes on something small, despised, and embarrassing. The fart poses special challenges because of its (happy) evanescence and invisibility. It also involves another fashionable form of history, namely of the senses. Smell was a member of one of those important canonical sets that medievals loved to think with. It is the mediating sense (not haptic like touch and taste), but also not capable of leaping great distances or physical barriers like its higher brethren, sight and sound.

Allen's book may shock some (perhaps philosophers with its disquisition on the *meditatio mortis* and the fart (p. 70) and Judaeo-Christian believers who might prefer less information about God's *posteriora* (p. 78), Sinai 'reeking' (p. 96), the 'mighty wind' of Pentecost (p. 96), or 'a time to fart and a time to clench' (p. 125)). It is obviously a transgressive snook-cock (or should it be 'cock-snook'?), We've long used the word 'f***' in academic prose so now, as for five-year-olds, fundamental terms are the final frontier.

We begin with the paradoxical silence around the fart ⁽¹⁶⁾, the shame surrounding its emission, the silent-but-deadly fart ('vesse' Trust the Gallo-Romans to have a word for it!⁽¹⁷⁾), the Middle Ages' 'high comfort level' with the fart, Roland the Farther's feudal payment of one fart, medieval lack of privacy, proverbs about shit and defecation, the compulsion to use the scatological in elementary Latin grammatical education, the logic of the fart (how to divide one), the musical bum (both Boschian demons and proto-Pujolic pétomanes [already in Augustine]), farts elicited by movement, carminatives ⁽¹⁸⁾ charms to induce farting, its 'audible violence,' smell as the mediating sense (non-haptic), the stench of sin, sexual sedition in the privy, internal and external winds, breaths, spirits, and exhalations, microcosm and macrocosm, erections raised by air (not blood), farts as barometers of virility,⁽¹⁹⁾ the death fart (*crepitus mortis*), the testamentary fart, the fart as Pentecostal spirit, the fart omen of Baby Hermes, death in the privy, Dante's hell as intestinal, insect trials (p. 87), ubiquity of demons, anal death throes, *exsufflatio* at baptism, connections between gold and shit and alchemy, and 'Duck-Rabbit, Face-Bottom' (pp. 104-5), which comes out of nowhere and concludes the section primarily concerned with 'laughter.'

But there is also the ‘language’ side of the book. Laporte saw François I’s ordinances about the French language and about urban waste of 1539 as portentously linked, a moment when the mud-town of the *Parisii* ‘emerged from the muck.’ (20) And Allen’s ‘In Between’ is largely about etymology and language. But what medievalist needs to be told about the unscientific nature of medieval etymology or what modern linguistic theories about the regularity of sound change entail? Also puzzling is the flippant tone discernible in some of the comments about sound laws (p. 131). Is Allen tilting at a windmill or creating straw men? It all sounds like a defensive build-up to the multi-lingual pun she discerns in Chaucer’s ‘ars-metrike’ (p. 139 and p. 143). But it has been known for a long time (21), and few would question its legitimacy.

While there is much that is intriguing, learned, enlightening, clever, and – in flashes – profound in the book (22) there is also a fair amount of balderdash, both the portentous-pretentious type (23) and the fun-but-frivolous. (24) *Caveat lector!* While fine readings and insights are many (e.g. pp. 83–4, pp. 94–5), some material is presented that cannot stand up as any sort of rational literary or historical argument. And this reviewer missed exegetic sources. (25) And while systematization of this sort of subject is an easy target for derision, it should be possible to write a less persistently jocular scholarly cultural history of the medieval fart. (26)

Some connections seem based on false premises, e.g. the section on alchemy (pp. 95ff). It is hard to pin down the entry point for the discussion, beyond the image of the *Dukatenscheisser* shitting ducats (‘world upside-down’ seen as an image of alchemy). At p. 101 ‘metallic fodder gets putrefied into shit’ in the earth ‘en route to becoming gold.’ This seems to presuppose a misunderstanding about the range of meaning of *faex*. (27) Or perhaps the treatment was encouraged by the dread Laporte’s obsession with ‘lustral gold’ and theories about alchemy? (28) One might read the *Dukatenscheisser* as a miser punished, since in a Roman comedy a miser is fantastically imagined as a man so stingy that he stops his nether mouth too when he sleeps so as not to lose any wind. (29) A comic hellish torment – or alternatively as a surrealist fantasy of plenty.

The section on ‘Bastard Laughter,’ (pp. 144ff.) deals with *anagnorisis* in tragedy, specifically with Oedipus. Allen sees Oedipus as a ‘great farter’ on the basis of a cockamamie interpretation of *OT* 1074 where evils (*kaka*) breaking forth are interpreted as if they meant ‘shit’ (*caca*) (p. 146). She then moves on to Freud’s joke about Serenissimus’ paternity (which, by the way, must ultimately go back to Macrobius, *Sat.* 2.4.20 (of the Emperor Augustus), whence it was picked up by John of Salisbury, *Pol.* 3.14, l. 151). If even Oedipus’ tragic *anagnorisis* is a fart (for realization brings a smile), and *anagnorisis* ‘goose us in the ass,’ think what results comic *anagnorisis* could produce! Allen then moves on to Judas Iscariot (30), whose legend was contaminated with Oedipus’. Two versions of Judas’ death are transmitted (Mt. 27.3-8 for hanging and Acts 1.18-19, where he bursts open, and his bowels gush forth), which Allen identifies as ‘pooped or popped.’ Judas’ *anagnorisis* of his betrayal of Christ ‘brings a massive expenditure of bodily product’ (p. 150). And naturally tragic *katharsis* is laxative and enematic (p. 151). Aristotle must have talked about cathartic laughter in the lost second book of the *Poetics*. (31) Aristotelian pity, teary and wet, is linked to the opening of the Biblical ‘bowels of compassion’ (p. 152). (32) Words fail me: where to begin? ‘Mind and bowel, dilating and contracting, together register the bursting forth of knowledge’ (p. 153).

Allen’s breadth of learning is considerable. Few of us write books that give us the opportunity to get it wrong in so many different languages and areas. But under the hood there are problems, of which a sample. (33) To one coming to this (as this reviewer does) from behind, from antiquity, the medieval material seems more plentiful and more explicit, with access to higher literary genres (Dante, for example), but not substantially different. From the wall of a tavern at Ostia the Seven Sages seated gave advice about fecal matters: ‘Thales advises those who shit with difficulty to strain.’ and ‘sneaky Chilon taught how to fart (*vissire*, cf. ‘vesse’ above) soundlessly.’ (34) A Plautine comedy preserves for us the Latin sound that represented a fart (*prox!*). (35) There is a long ancient history of the thunderous fart (*papapappax!*) from Aristophanes’ *Clouds* 390-91 to Suetonius’ *Life of Lucan*, where with a fart the poet recited a half-line of Nero’s in a public latrine: ‘one would have thought that it thundered beneath the earth.’ (36) The Emperor Claudius’s soul suffered a vocal anal egress (Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis* 4.3), not irrelevant to death on the

can. Gold in shit had long been associated in an anecdote about Vergil and Ennius.[\(37\)](#) There is competitive farting in Petronius *Sat.* 117.12-13. There is plenty of material on farting in the late antique world too, particularly in relation to demonic activity. Demons consume rotting meat in peoples' bodies, thereby causing them to fart.[\(38\)](#) The heresiarch Arius died in a latrine.[\(39\)](#) Anal exorcisms are common.[\(40\)](#) A young student of Augustine's, reprimanded by his mother Monica for singing a psalm (79:8 *Deus converte nos et ostende faciem tuam et salvi erimus*) in a privy, jokingly countered, 'As if God would not be able to hear my voice, if an enemy shut me in!' [\(41\)](#) No idle worry, for devils had a habit of appearing in latrines or to those *in secessu*.[\(42\)](#) But a royal female saint could retreat there too for prayer.[\(43\)](#) Yet almost none of this material appears in the book.

Quis leget haec? While this reviewer enjoyed Allen's book very much, doubts remain about the project as straight academic scholarship (rather than as ludic essayistic journalism to tickle ignorant or jaded palates). [\(44\)](#) A distinguished medieval historian once joked that, although he did not expect the same reimbursement as Michael Jackson, he wanted his dean to understand that what he did in his lecture courses belonged *on the same pay-scale*—as entertainment. This book raises a similar question. One wishes to be fair to it by taking a lead from Collingwood, who emphasized the need correctly to identify the question to which a given proposition was the answer. What questions did Allen set herself? And here one encounters difficulties. The book features farts in many different contexts, particularly in OF fabliaux and ME literature. It certainly reminds us of the multiple contexts in which the fart makes its presence known in medieval literature. It contains many intriguing literary and cultural *aperçus*. But reading it is like watching a PowerPoint presentation whose slides could be presented in any order. There is pleasure in watching or reading the components, but no central arguments emerge, and beginners will find it hard to test Allen's assertions. A hypostasized dehistoricized Middle Ages is explored through the fart. Masses of detail are laid on, but not explored critically with regard to register, audience, or context. And many of its propositions are neither verifiable nor falsifiable, but the kind of thing one tries out in class or in a lecture or conversation—to see what the market can bear, or who salutes.

Neither pure literature, nor history, but cultural studies, there is nonetheless something oddly antiquarian about the project: a collection of appealing farts with meditations thereon. In the end one is left with a nagging worry that this, like other work from the new Medieval Studies, is a bit desperate to *épater les bourgeois*, to show administrators and colleagues in various modern cultures that we are 'with it' too, to combat the accusations that we are irrelevant, hidebound, archaic old fogeys (or farts), by somewhat exhibitionist farting in the face of academe. *Isn't this shit cool?* One would hate to feel that the only way to attract positive attention for Medieval Studies is to publish on paraphilias, defecation, venereal disease, mooning, menstrual blood, burps, farts, etc.[\(45\)](#) And on occasion one worries that too much engagement in topics such as this without sufficient scholarly preparation in more canonical studies may leave us with an excessively frivolous Middle Ages – of which we may rapidly begin to tire.

Notes

1. Alas, I am not Derek Pearsall, whom I once heard give a wonderful postprandial talk on this very subject.[Back to \(1\)](#)
2. See Eric S. Rabkin and Eugene M. Silverman, *It's a Gas: a Study of Flatulence* (Riverside, CA., 1991). Also Jim Dawson, *Who Cut the Cheese? A Cultural History of the Fart* (Berkeley, Calif., 1999). [Back to \(2\)](#)
3. There is another similar serjeanty (*Egidius [Gilles] de Wachesham xxx acras in Wachesham, et est ista seriantia faciendi unum saltum, siffletum, et pettum*) in Henry Churchill Maxwell Lyte et al., *Liber feodorum: The book of Fees, Commonly Called Testa de Nevill*, (3 vols., London, 1920–31), p. 1151. Were such people minstrels and acrobats, or jesters? Were they professionals or sufferers? Or the descendants of either of the above? See Dave Postles, *Naming the People of England, c. 1100–1350* (Newcastle, 2006), pp. 91–111 on the problems of bynames and pp. 112–24 for a hilarious conspectus of nickname bynames.[Back to \(3\)](#)
4. For a recent version, see Alan Dundes at [Back to \(4\)](#)

5. There is an amusing synoptic scientific table of farts in *Bibliotheca Scatologica*, (Paris: Giraudet et Jouast, 1849), 44.[Back to \(5\)](#)
6. Yes, there is a [hideously inadequate] chapter on this topic in Johannes Ravisius, "Todesursachen und Todesarten: *In latrinis occisi . . . In latrinis mortui*," in *Officinae epitome* (Lyon, 1593), 93.[Back to \(6\)](#)
7. Bringing out one's inner Erica Jong (Erica Jong, *Fear of Flying: A Novel* (New York, 1973), pp. 24–5).[Back to \(7\)](#)
8. Same connections and coverage in the *Bibliotheca Scatologica*.[Back to \(8\)](#)
9. Some hints, such as how scatological humour in fabliaux takes off and coincides with institutions of the self such as confession or wills (p. 16) or at p. 165 about late medieval/early modern 'fart discourse' vs. its earlier medieval version: the former exposes scholastic logic as hot air, the latter is concerned with acrobatics and is more anti-ecclesiastical.[Back to \(9\)](#)
10. E.g. pp. 38–39 on air, auras, and haloes.[Back to \(10\)](#)
11. E.g. on the sense of smell at pp. 40–43.[Back to \(11\)](#)
12. E.g. 'got wind' (p. 9); 'fundamentals of the toilet' (p. 18), 'tongues in turds, books in burps' (p. 18), 'the nose knows' (pp. 40 and 101), 'extimate relations' (p. 50), the 'hermeneutic of the fart' (p. 76), 'booty indeed' (p. 89) 'metrical arsis' (p. 117), 'ran out of steam' (p. 174).[Back to \(12\)](#)
13. Clearly Allen has different editors and copyeditors from other mortals![Back to \(13\)](#)
14. Cass. *Inst. 1 de octoteucho*, p. 540 *Vergilius dum Ennium legeret a quodam quid faceret inquisitus respondit, 'aurum in stercore quaero.* [Back to \(14\)](#)
15. Evan R. Goldstein, 'The language of farting,' *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 53 (July 2007), B2. [Back to \(15\)](#)
16. Like time present's its existence is hard to capture (Aug. *Conf.* 11.15.18).[Back to \(16\)](#)
17. Latin *vissinare*, *vissio*, and *vissire* (REW 9380-82) were likewise soundless. Other Romance languages also have reflexes.[Back to \(17\)](#)
18. One thinks of poor Denis the young writer who belatedly discovers that 'carminative' means 'Windtreibend' in Aldous Huxley, *Crome Yellow* (New York, 1922), 212–4.[Back to \(18\)](#)
19. Hence the vernal 'bucke verteth. Murie sing! cuccu.' [Back to \(19\)](#)
20. Dominique-Gilbert Laporte, *History of Shit* (Cambridge, Mass, 2000), 7 and 11.[Back to \(20\)](#)
21. Paull F. Baum, 'Chaucer's puns', *PMLA* (1946), 231.[Back to \(21\)](#)
22. Let readers decide which of the following *obiter dicta* is which: The fart pokes fun at reason; 'Personal space' is an area of 'smell exchange' (p. 46); 'Smell extends the self beyond the perimeters of the flesh' (p. 47); 'Permanently open for business they (the nostrils) are how we receive the world' (p. 50); 'It has become our fate as a species to be aroused and corrupted in the same breath;' Women fart by accident (p. 55) and are 'figures of incontinence;' The crowding in hell (p. 83).[Back to \(22\)](#)
23. A few samples: The anus represents emergent capitalism (Laporte) (p. 13); medieval grotesque bodies vs. closed early modern subjects (p. 14); Early moderns were anal retentive, the Lutheran bowel 'costive;' fart as meontological mark 'sign of not-being itself' (p. 19); The musical bum 'defamiliarizes the ordinary' (p. 32); 'Creaturely in itself, the air rearranges subject/object relations as a continuum, and causes our selfhood to expand and contract with the elements.'(p. 37); 'Prostitutes also inhabit a threshold within the social body, as does a fart within the body physical' (p. 168).[Back to \(23\)](#)
24. Turds are a baby's first act of creation (p. 46); the body in throes of a pneumatic seizure (p. 30) is played by a higher power; 'Like chocolate, shit is full of nutrients and dark promise' (p. 93); 'The butt ... does not wink or look shifty: it just wobbles and clenches.' [Back to \(24\)](#)
25. How was Judas' death interpreted, to take one example? What about sounds and winds?[Back to \(25\)](#)
26. Works such as J. N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (London, 1982) show ways to handle sexual material without giggling or gurning.[Back to \(26\)](#)
27. *Faex* and its plural *faeces* mean 'dregs' (what remains behind when liquids are poured) and do not have to have fecal connotations *pace* Allen p. 96.[Back to \(27\)](#)
28. Laporte pp. 18–9, 38–9, 76–7.[Back to \(28\)](#)
29. Plautus, *Aulularia* 304 *Etiamne obturat inferiorem gutturem/ne quid animai forte amittat dormiens?* [Back to \(29\)](#)
30. Here Paull F. Baum, 'The medieval legend of Judas Iscariot,' *PMLA* 31,3 (1916), 381-462 should be

- cited.[Back to \(30\)](#)
31. The *Tractatus Coislinianus* edited by Richard Janko, *Aristotle on Comedy: Towards a Reconstruction of Poetics II* (Berkeley, CA, 1984), pp. 24-25 speaks of *katharsis* through pleasure and laughter.[Back to \(31\)](#)
 32. 1 Joh.3.17. The term *splangchna* ‘entrails,’ ‘viscera,’ is not explored.[Back to \(32\)](#)
 33. On the Jew of Tewkesbury see Martha Bayless, ‘The story of the fallen Jew and the iconography of Jewish unbelief,’ *Viator* 34 (2003), 142–56; 18 Heraclitus’s ipnos in Arist. *Part. An.* 645a is highly unlikely to be a dunghill. After all his action of warming himself at it (theromenon pros to ipno) works best with an oven (which is what the word means); p. 30 (and also p. 129) Ps. 44.2: Latin *eructare* does mean ‘to belch,’ but is a special Christian Latin neutral usage derived from difficulties with the Hebrew verbs used (‘to bubble or gush’ or ‘to be excited, to speak, express’ and the LXX’s translation as ‘to belch.’ See Hermann Rönisch, *Itala und Vulgata* (München, 1965), p. 363. This is over-reading; ‘?iniscule’ (pp. 48 and 87) should be ‘minuscule;’ ‘Grenouille’ (p. 52) is a frog, not a toad (‘crapaud’); p. 56 ‘Sentir’ meaning ‘to embrace’ seems forced; p. 64 ‘Sepentrio’ should be ‘Septentrio;’ p. 85 On the baby who defecates in the font, n. 365 could cite Constantine Copronymus Theophanes, *Chronographia* 9 a.m. 6211 and also Ethelred the Unready in William of Malmesbury’s *Gesta Regum Anglorum* 2.164; p. 115 The correct reference is not James 5.12, but Matthew 5.37; p. 119 ‘Mugitus’ means ‘bellowing’ or ‘mooring,’ not ‘crying;’ p. 120 For ‘stidor’ read ‘stridor;’ p. 122 J. Ziolkowski, *Alan of Lille's Grammar of Sex: the Meaning of Grammar to a Twelfth-Century Intellectual*, Vol. 10, *Speculum Anniversary Monographs*. (Cambridge, Mass., 1985) could be cited; p. 128 On being ‘in a pet,’ Spitzer, L. ‘On the etymology of *pet*’, *Language* 26, 4 (1950), 533–8 is relevant; p. 128 Looking for the derivation of *petulans* and *petulantia* not in **petulo*, but in *pedo* is incorrect. Likewise the step further where *peto* is suggested as an etymon, and *petere* is translated as ‘letting fly’ (rather than ‘going for’, as in ‘letting fly a fart/dart.’ All of this is confused game-playing, which will not convince any philologist. Quantity *does* matter; p. 129 The etymology of *perdix* is unknown according to D’Arcy Wentworth Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds* (New ed., London, 1936), p. 234, but at p. 235 he mentions *Anth. Lat.* 733 Riese, which puns on the sound the bird makes (*kakkabizo*) and *caco* (also *vissire*). Pierre Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque: histoire des mots*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1968), 885 cites *perdomai*. Better, however, to cite scholarship than Rabkin and Silverman, *It's a Gas: a Study of Flatulence*, p. 27 on this matter; p. 143 ‘Captio’ should be ‘Capito;’ p. 159 consultation of the LLT would have shown that *flatus vocis* = ‘voice fart’ is highly unlikely. The *iunctura* common describes the production of sounds in grammatical works. The equation of *immo* and *imo* is likewise wrong; for ‘nonisi’ read ‘nonnisi;’ p. 217 Bernardus Silvestris (not ‘of Silvestris’).[Back to \(33\)](#)
 34. See Guido Calza, ‘Die Taberna der sieben Weisen in Ostia,’ *Die Antike* 15 (1939), 99–115: *Durum cacantes monuit ut nitant Thales and Vissire tacite Chilon docuit subdolos*. The origin of the ‘vesse.’ More recently John R. Clarke, *Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans: Visual Representation and Non-Elite Viewers in Italy 100 B.C. –A.D. 315* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 2003), pp. 170–80.[Back to \(34\)](#)
 35. *Pseud.* 1279 *itaque dum enitor, prox, iam paene inquinavi pallium*.[Back to \(35\)](#)
 36. p. 51.3.[Back to \(36\)](#)
 37. Above n. 000.[Back to \(37\)](#)
 38. See Porphyry, *De philosophia ex oraculis* in Eusebius, *PE* 4.23-174-75.[Back to \(38\)](#)
 39. His follower with a fart. Greg. Tur. *GM* 80.[Back to \(39\)](#)
 40. E.g. Sulp. Sev. *VMartini* 17.7; Greg. Tur. *GC* 9.[Back to \(40\)](#)
 41. Aug. *De ord.* 1.8.22. The subsequent post mortem merits closer attention.[Back to \(41\)](#)
 42. E.g. Greg. Tur. *VPatrum* 17.3. Martha Bayless has interesting unpublished work on the devil in the latrine.[Back to \(42\)](#)
 43. Fortunatus, *VRadegundis* 5.[Back to \(43\)](#)

44. The endnotes are maddening for serious readers, though this defect can hardly be laid at Allen's door. Those intending to track down references in the footnotes may have difficulties, for Allen does not always cite in canonical fashion. Augustine's *City of God* should be cited by book, chapter, and paragraph (or book and paragraph), but she cites by page in a given translation (e.g. p. 185, n. 49). [Back to \(44\)](#)
45. In the interest of disclosure this reviewer confesses to having spoken about *crepitus ventris* during academic lectures. [Back to \(45\)](#)

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