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A COMMUNITY OF PREACHERS: THE NORTH ITALIAN EPISCOPACY, 397-451

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a study of Christianity in northern Italy from the end of the fourth century to the middle of the fifth. It builds upon two important trends in recent scholarship on Late Antiquity. The first is the emphasis on the fragmentation of the Roman world along regional lines as the authority of the Roman emperors was weakened, particularly in the west. The second is the emergence of the bishop as the key cultural and political figure in the cities of the later empire.

The fact that the western Roman emperors spent most of their time in northern Italy in the period covered by this study means that the churches of northern Italy temporarily enjoyed greater prominence within the broader Christian world than it probably would have otherwise. During the early part of this period, Milan and Ravenna were important ecclesiastical centers that could briefly rival Rome for prestige and influence within the church as a whole. Ambrose of Milan is the best-known Italian bishop of this period, but this study focuses mainly on the contributions of figures who are less famous. Chromatius of Aquileia, Vigilius of Trent, Gaudentius of Brescia, Maximus of Turin, and Peter Chrysologus of Ravenna were all bishops. Rufinus of Aquileia was an ascetic scholar who lived much of his life in Italy. All but Peter and Rufinus knew Ambrose personally, and all of them were influenced by the bishop of Milan to such a degree that it is possible to speak of north Italian Christianity's "Ambrosian" outlook. This distinct perspective was expressed in writings of a variety of genres, but most of all in these bishops' sermons. It is most apparent in the way that they thought about issues of authority—both episcopal as well as imperial—as well in their approach to the purely theological questions that were being dealt with throughout the Christian world during their lifetimes.

To Teng-Lin, Samuel, and Lucy

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I approach the writing of an acknowledgments page with some trepidation, not wishing to overlook anyone who has helped me along the journey toward completing this dissertation. But it is easy to decide where to begin. I would first of all like to thank my advisor, Ralph Mathisen. When I entered the Ph.D. program in the History Department at UIUC almost nine years ago, my C. V. probably did not look like that of the typical student who pursues graduate studies in ancient history. As an undergraduate, I had majored not in history, but modern languages. From there, I had gone to seminary. Only after being in ministry for several years did I decide to go to grad school, and when I did it was for a degree in Medieval Studies. In all this peregrination, I had not yet had the chance to take any Roman history, and I was still quite new to the field of Late Antiquity. But I am thankful that Professor Mathisen nonetheless took me under his wing and quickly put me on the right track. His courses on Roman history and his graduate seminars on Late Antiquity have served me very well as preparation for undertaking research in this field, which had interested me for years before I came to study it formally. When I was a junior at Hope College and read my roommate's church history textbook, I found myself enchanted by the story of the councils and debates of the fourth and fifth centuries, as well as by the church's transformation from a marginal sect to an imperial church. By then, it was too late to declare a major in history or religion. But I took advantage of every opportunity I had to learn more about this period, and I am profoundly grateful for all the ways in which Professor Mathisen's encouragement and counsel has made me a better historian and guided me to a deeper and more mature understanding of this period. I am also happy to report that its allure has not died.

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Finally, and most of all, I would like to thank my family for their love and support. My parents, Ray and Mary, have been very patient with their son who has taken a most unconventional path in life. Trips to their house in Michigan with my wife and children have been welcome breaks from our normal routine in Illinois. I am also grateful to my brothers and their families, who would not have let me not finish my degree. Matt, Sara, Alena, and Carolyn; Andrew, Jakki, Koen, Elliot, Jack, and Keira, it's time to celebrate! My in-laws, Rong-Ting Chen and He-Yuan Jhang, also deserve a very special thanks for all the tangible forms of support they have afforded us from a great distance during these lean years. We hope we can come see

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AAAd</i>	<i>Antichità Altoadriatiche</i> (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friuliane)
<i>ACO</i>	<i>Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum</i> (Berlin: De Gruyter)
<i>ACW</i>	<i>Ancient Christian Writers</i> (New York: Paulist Press)
<i>CCL</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina</i> (Turnhout: Brepols)
<i>CCM</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Medievalis</i> (Turnhout: Brepols)
<i>Cod. Theod.</i>	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i> , ed. Mommsen (Hildesheim: Weidman, 1990)
<i>CSEL</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> (Vienna and Berlin)
<i>DCA</i>	<i>Dizionario della Chiesa ambrosiana</i> (Milan: NED, 1987-1993)
<i>DPAC</i>	<i>Dizionario patristico e di antichità cristiane</i> (Casale Monferrato: Casa Editrice Marietta, 1984)
<i>DTC</i>	<i>Dictionnaire de théologie catholique</i> (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1903-1950)
<i>FC</i>	<i>Fathers of the Church</i> (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press)
<i>GCS</i>	<i>Die Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte</i> (Leipzig and Berlin: Berlin-Brandenburgische Adademie der Wissenschaften)
<i>HE</i>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
<i>LCL</i>	<i>Loeb Classical Library</i> (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press)
<i>NPNF</i>	<i>Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers</i> (reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson)
<i>PCBE</i>	<i>Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire</i> (Rome: École Française de Rome; and Paris: Association des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance)
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i> (Paris)
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> (Paris)
<i>PLS</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina Supplementum</i> (Paris)

<i>PLRE</i>	<i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971-1980)
<i>SC</i>	<i>Sources chrétiennes</i> (Paris: Éditions du Cerf)
<i>TLL</i>	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i> (Berlin: De Gruyter)

PREFACE

In Book 8 of his *Confessions*, Augustine relates the story of the conversion to Christianity of Marius Victorinus, a highly regarded *rhetor* who achieved fame at Rome during the middle of the fourth century. The reason for Augustine's interest in this story is not far to seek, for it comes in the context of his recounting of the inward struggle that beset him as he came to embrace Christianity on an intellectual level, but hesitated to commit himself to living a Christian life within the Christian community. "I was attracted to the way, the Saviour himself," he writes, "but was still reluctant to go along its narrow paths."¹ During his brief sojourn in the north Italian city of Milan in the 380s, Augustine learned about the story of Victorinus from Simplicianus, a presbyter of Milan who had lived in Rome in the years around 360, and succeeded in persuading one who "was extremely learned and most expert in all the liberal disciplines" that to be a Christian meant not simply accepting the doctrines of Christianity in private, but being incorporated into the church through baptism, which in ancient Christianity was a ritual death and resurrection that marked a formal and public break with one's religious past and an entry into a new life in a new community, one bound together by a shared religion.²

Augustine could easily relate to the experience of someone who was like him in so many ways. Both men were parvenus from Africa who advanced in the world on the basis of their intellectual accomplishments.³ After a long and successful career, Victorinus had been honored with a statue in the Forum of Trajan; at the time he heard about Victorinus, Augustine had

¹ Augustine, *Confessions*, 8.1.1, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 133.

² *Confessions*, 8.2.

³ For Victorinus' African origins, see Chadwick, trans., *Confessions*, 134n.3. For his non-senatorial background, see Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 218, who describes him as ineligible for the traditional priesthoods of Rome, which were "reserved for the nobility."

recently been honored with an imperial appointment to the chair of rhetoric in Milan, residence of the western emperors.⁴ Both had been attracted to Neoplatonist philosophy, and this philosophy was for both of them a “tutor unto Christ.”⁵ Both balked at receiving baptism, Victorinus on account of the public and communal nature of the ritual, and Augustine on account of the stringent moral requirements that went along with receiving this sacrament.⁶ Simplicianus was instrumental in bringing both men formally into the Christian church, in the case of Victorinus by urging him not to fear the shame of receiving baptism alongside other catechumens of various social ranks and educational attainments, in the case of Augustine by relating to him the story of Victorinus’ baptism, whose experience illustrated for the doubtful Augustine the way in which baptism conveyed the grace that would enable him to live the chaste life that had hitherto been impossible for him.⁷ By relating the story of Victorinus, the Neoplatonist who found in Christianity (and not only Christian theology, but Christian ritual and Christian community) the fulfillment of his philosophy, Simplicianus helped Augustine envision his own future as a Christian. Or as Pierre Hadot put it, “À travers Simplicien, c’est avec la

⁴ For Victorinus’ statue, see *Confessions* 8.2.3, and Jerome, *Chronicle*, s. a. 354. For the significance of having one’s statue erected in the Forum of Trajan, see Charles W. Hedrick, Jr., *History and Silence: Purge and Rehabilitation of Memory in Late Antiquity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 230-236. Augustine briefly, almost laconically, tells the story of his appointment to the imperial chair of rhetoric in *Confessions*, 5.13.23.

⁵ Augustine relates how Neoplatonism’s many points of contact with Catholic theology made it relatively easy to accept the faith of the church. He characterizes Victorinus as a militant pagan in *Confessions* 8.2.3, claiming with regard to the pagan cults that he “tot annos ore terrecrepo defensitaverat.” But Cameron points out that Victorinus in fact did not attack Christianity in any of his extant philosophical writings, which he produced before becoming a Christian. His conversion should rather be seen as the result of studying Christian writings over a long period of time, and in this respect also he and Augustine can be compared to each other. See *The Last Pagans of Rome*, 218-220.

⁶ According to Augustine, Simplicianus told him that when he said to Victorinus that he would not believe he was a Christian until he officially joined the church, Victorinus resisted by asking him, “Ergo parietes faciunt christianos?” See *Confessions*, 8.2.4.

⁷ Augustine begins his narrative of Victorinus’ baptism by relating his own experience to Simplicianus, which he qualifies as “circuitus erroris mei.” He goes on to state that the pattern established by Victorinus was one that “habet magnam laudem gratiae tuae confitendam tibi.” See *Confessions*, 8.2.3.

personne même du rhéteur converti qu'il entraînait en rapport."⁸ Both men eventually gave up teaching rhetoric in favor of studying the Scriptures.⁹

Little is known about the intriguing figure of Simplicianus, who played such an important role in the conversion of two of the most gifted Christian intellectuals of Late Antiquity. Augustine's account of the friendship between Victorinus and Simplicianus indicates that the latter was resident in Rome during the late 350s and early 360s, as it was around this time that Victorinus went public with his Christianity and was baptized.¹⁰ Augustine calls him "a man of much experience and much learning," and goes on to tell us that upon meeting him in Milan in 386, soon after he had himself begun to study Neoplatonism, Simplicianus "congratulated me that I had not fallen in with the writings of other philosophers ... whereas in all the Platonic books God and his Word keep slipping in."¹¹ Simplicianus' learning and familiarity with the philosophical trends of the fourth century also explain why he was able to enjoy the confidence of Victorinus during the period when the latter was gradually embracing Christianity. Religious differences, after all, were no barrier to friendship among the educated in fourth-century Rome. What mattered more was the intellectual culture they shared.¹²

⁸ Pierre Hadot, *Marius Victorinus. Recherches sur sa vie et ses oeuvres* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1971), 14.

⁹ Victorinus was among those affected by Julian's edict of 362 that forbade Christians to teach classical literature. He thus resigned his position and became the first Latin author to write a commentary on the epistles of Paul. See Hadot, *Marius Victorinus*, 14.

¹⁰ Augustine, *Confessions*, 8.2.3. *PCBE* 2.2075 fixes the date of Victorinus' baptism between the end of 358 and the end of 361.

¹¹ Augustine, *Confessions*, 8.1.1 and 8.2.3.

¹² Indeed, recent scholarship has seriously called into question the notion of a conflict between pagans and Christians during the fourth century. There were, to be sure, conflicts over issues such as the Altar of Victory that had long been in the Senate House, and state subsidies to the Vestal Virgins. Christian emperors likewise succeeded in outlawing the public animal sacrifices so objectionable to Christian sensibilities. But there was no persecution of pagans as such by the Christian empire, nor was there an organized "pagan resistance" to the Constantinian or Theodosian dynasties. It is even doubtful whether the usurpation of Eugenius in 393-394 was in any way motivated by a desire to foster or create the space for a "pagan revival." Charles W. Hedrick has made the case in *History and*

At some point between the early 360s and the early 370s, Simplicianus made his way to Milan, and became the senior presbyter there by 374, when he baptized the newly elected bishop of the city who at the time was as yet but a catechumen, the *consularis* of Liguria and Aemilia, Ambrose.¹³ According to Augustine, the relationship between the two men was close: “Ambrose truly loved him as one loves a father.”¹⁴ The next episode in Simplicianus’ life with which we are familiar comes from the 380s, when he befriended Augustine. He succeeded Ambrose as bishop of Milan in 397. Around this time, he wrote to Augustine to ask him for help with certain difficult questions on the books of Kings and in interpreting two thorny passages from Paul’s Epistle to the Romans.¹⁵ He died in 400 or 401.¹⁶

Simplicianus illustrates two important intellectual trends in late antique Christianity. The first is the fusion of Neoplatonist philosophy with Christian theology, which bore fruit in Marius Victorinus’ defense of Nicene Trinitarianism and in the voluminous writings of both Ambrose

Silence that Eugenius was motivated in part by religious concerns, but Alan Cameron has effectively countered his arguments in *The Last Pagans of Rome*.

¹³ Augustine, *Confessions*, 8.2.3.

¹⁴ The designation of Simplicianus as “father” would have been somewhat out of place if he had not been quite a bit older than Ambrose, who was born ca. 339. This designation thus offers us a clue as to when Simplicianus himself was born. Luigi Crivelli, following the Bollandists, places the year around 320. See *Simpliciano. Vescovo della Chiesa milanese. Una guida dal silenzio* (Milan: San Paolo, 1994), 26. Cesare Pasini estimates around 325. See “Simpliciano,” in *DCA* 6.3454-3460, at 3454.

¹⁵ Augustine responded to the request of his old friend by writing *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum*, ed. Almut Mutzenbecher, *CCL* 44 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1970). Mutzenbecher discusses the uncertainty surrounding the precise date of this work, citing Augustine’s episcopal consecration on May 4, 395, as the *terminus post quem*, and early 398 as an approximate *terminus ante quem*. See *CCL* 44.xxx-xxxiii.

¹⁶ *PCBE* 2.2076, states that he died before November 400. Pasini, “Simpliciano e il vescovo Ambrogio,” in *Contributi di ricerca su Ambrogio e Simpliciano. Atti del secondo dies academicus, 3-4 aprile 2006* (Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 2007), 45-65, at 45, places his death “at the end of 400 or the first half of 401.” See also *idem*, “Simpliciano,” 3458-3459. Crivelli, *Simpliciano*, 84-86, concurs with Pasini. Jean-Charles Picard places Simplicianus’ death between November 27, 400, and June 29, 401. See *Le souvenir des évêques. Sépultures, listes épiscopales et culte des évêques en Italie du Nord des origines au Xe siècle* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1988), 620-621.

and Augustine.¹⁷ The second is the increasing interest taken by Latin Christian writers in St. Paul.¹⁸ Furthermore, the fact that Simplicianus chose to settle in Milan points to a feature of the political life of the later Roman Empire that is foundational for this dissertation, which is a study of Christianity in northern Italy from the death of Ambrose in 397 until the middle of the fifth century. During this period, the presence of the emperors at Milan and (from the early fifth century) Ravenna made northern Italy the political and economic center of gravity for the western empire.¹⁹ The strategic realities of the later empire that brought the western imperial court to these cities from the 380s until the 440s had the unintended consequence of magnifying the influence of the Christianity of these and several other nearby cities. The bishops of imperial cities had louder megaphones than their counterparts in other large cities that did not enjoy the presence of the emperor, and so Milan could for a time rival Rome as an ecclesiastical center, even though it was only a fraction the size of the old capital.²⁰ The economic boost generated in northern Italy by the court's spending on its needs or by the stationing of troops to defend against barbarian threats meant that other churches in the region enjoyed greater material abundance than they otherwise would have.

¹⁷ On this fusion in early Greek and Latin Christianity, see Salvatore Lilla, "Platonismo e i padri," in *DPAC* 2.2818-2858 (of which 2848-2858 focus on early Latin theologians); and Claudio Moreschini, *Storia della filosofia patristica* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2004), esp. 384-462, on Marius Victorinus, Ambrose, and Augustine.

¹⁸ Alexander Souter, *The Earliest Latin Commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927).

¹⁹ Lellia Cracco Ruggini, *Economia e società nell' "Italia annonaria." Rapporti fra agricoltura e commercio dal IV al VI secolo d. C.*, 2nd ed. (Bari: Edipuglia, 1995), 1-4, 25, and 511-512.

²⁰ Richard Krautheimer estimates the population of Rome in the year 400 at about 800,000; it would have fallen to a half million by the middle of the fifth century and a mere 100,000 by century's end. See *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 109. Mario Mirabella Roberti estimates the population of Milan to have been between 40,000 and 50,000 during the second century. See *Milano Romana* (Milan: Rusconi, 1984), 11. Even if we follow Frank Kolb, *Die Stadt im Altertum* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1984), 191, in estimating a population of 100,000 for late antique Milan, it is clear that the new capital was quite small in comparison to the old one.

Might the prospect of offering his services as a Christian intellectual devoted to the Nicene view of Christ to a church in need of people like him have motivated Simplicianus to relocate to Milan from Rome?²¹ It is impossible to know for sure, but the two most famous ancient Christians to call Milan home—Ambrose and Augustine—came to the city to as a result of imperial preferment, the former as *consularis*, the latter as a teacher of rhetoric.²² The presence of these and other well educated and intellectually curious Christians created the prospect of a meeting of the minds whose fruits—the vast corpus of the writings of these two *doctores ecclesiae*—are an enduring part of the heritage of Latin Christianity.²³

Doctors of the church and “the heritage of Latin Christianity” are two of the things that initially propelled me into graduate school, first in medieval studies and then in late antique history. Nine years in the Ph.D. program in History at UIUC have made me a historian, to be sure, but a historian of religion. This particular project, however, is not so much about theology (although there is plenty of that in it) but about bishops. I was drawn to these figures because

²¹ Crivelli succinctly states the limits of our knowledge in this regard: “It is not possible for us to establish when Simplicianus may have left Rome to come to Milan, nor to know why.” He goes on, however, to speculate that the timing and the reason for his move to Milan were both connected with Ambrose’s election as the city’s new bishop in November 374. See *Simpliciano*, 39-40. Pasini believes that the phrase Augustine uses to describe Simplicianus—“pater in accipienda gratia...episcopi Ambrosii” (*Confessions*, 8.2.3)—implies that he had been present in Milan during the tumultuous process whereby Ambrose was chosen as bishop, though he is not any more precise than that. See “Simpliciano e il vescovo Ambrogio,” 54. Hervé Savon discusses the hypothesis, first put forward by Baronius in the sixteenth century, that Damasus had sent Simplicianus from Rome to Milan for the express purpose of engineering Ambrose’s election, but rejects it as a product of Counter-Reformation ecclesiology rather than a judicious reading of the evidence. Like Pasini, he does not speculate as to when Simplicianus arrived in Milan. See “Simplicien, père d’Ambroise in accipienda gratia,” in *Contributi di ricerca su Ambrogio e Simpliciano. Atti del secondo dies academicus, 3-4 aprile 2006* (Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 2007), 147-159, at 147-150.

²² On Ambrose’s appointment as governor of Liguria and Aemilia, see Paulinus of Milan, *Vita sancti Ambrosii* 5; and Neil B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 42-43.

²³ On the intellectual climate in Milan in the late fourth century and the possible existence of a circle of Christian Neoplatonists, see Lilla, “Platonismo e i padri,” 2850-2858; Goulven Madec, “Le milieu milanais. Philosophie et christianisme,” *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* 88.3-4 (1987): 194-205; Aimé Solignac, “Le cercle milanais,” *Bibliothèque augustinienne* 14 (1992): 529-536 ; and Moreschini, *Storia della filosofia patristica*, 408-409.

there was something about them that was both familiar and strange. They were strange because, growing up in Dutch Reformed pietism, bishops were not part of my world. Yet because these bishops are known to us largely through their sermons, I sensed that here was a point at which I could connect with them. Bishops were not part of my background, but sermons certainly were! And meeting these bishops through writings of that genre is doubly personal for me, since as a theology student and later a minister in the Reformed Church in America, I have had my chance to deliver plenty of sermons. So first and foremost, I was attracted to this project because I wanted to explore the task of teaching and forming Christian communities through the preached word from a historical perspective, to study how preachers in Late Antiquity handled their text, how they related to their audience, how long and how often they preached. I was curious about which themes in their preaching were timeless and which were products of their own unique context. I thought just maybe I could learn something from them. Thankfully, I think I have.

As this project gradually took shape, I came to see something of what these churchmen were *doing* with their sermons. They were not just dealing in abstractions, trying to communicate disembodied ideas to their hearers. They were presenting and trying to embody a vision of community, and in that sense they were grappling with questions that people in the modern day also face—the proper basis for political and religious authority, how local authority should relate to central authority, the implications of the fact that humans are embodied, sexual creatures. As leaders of the church, they were also trying to understand what the proper relationship between the church and the broader society should be. The answers that the bishops considered in this study give to these questions are different in some ways from the ones that I would give, but nevertheless my conversation with them has been fruitful. C. S. Lewis said that we study history to liberate our minds from their isolation in the present. Ambrose, Chromatius,

Gaudentius, Maximus, Rufinus, and Peter have helped to set me free by forcing me to try to understand them on their own terms. In that way they have made me a better historian. But by confronting me with the different answers to the questions that they thought about then and that I think about now, they also force me to formulate better answers. In this way, they are making me into a better, more thoughtful person, and hopefully a better pastor, teacher, and observer of contemporary society. I am grateful for the gift they have given me. Soli Deo gloria.

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a study of the regional variety of Christianity that arose in this political context, a context in which Ambrose, bishop of Milan from 374 to 397, defended the Nicene Creed against Christian critics who subscribed to other views of Christ, navigated difficult relationships with a string of emperors, wrote some of the first Latin hymns, discovered the relics of two previously unknown Milanese martyrs, exchanged letters with his episcopal allies elsewhere in northern Italy and beyond, and produced writings that have remained influential down to the present day. This context also produced a number of other less well known bishops some of whose writings (mostly sermons) are extant. They are Chromatius of Aquileia, Vigilius of Trent, Gaudentius of Brescia, Maximus of Turin, and Peter Chrysologus of Ravenna. All of these bishops were influenced by Ambrose's writings to one degree or another. It is likely that all except Peter knew him personally and/or corresponded with him. This story, however, cannot be told without including one of their contemporaries who was not a bishop—the ascetic theologian Rufinus (ca. 345-410/411), a native of Concordia, the erstwhile friend of Jerome who translated Origen's *De principiis*, many of his biblical commentaries and sermons, Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, as well as sermons and other writings of Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus, and who spent many of his most productive years near the end of his life at Aquileia.²⁴

This study builds on a foundation laid by other scholars whose research has discussed northern Italy as it relates to a variety of topics, or whose investigation of other topics has

²⁴ The most comprehensive biography of Rufinus remains Murphy's *Rufinus of Aquileia (345-411): His Life and Works* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1945). But for a thorough analysis of Rufinus' later years, spent in Italy, see also C. P. Hammond, "The Last Ten Years of Rufinus of Aquileia's Life and the Date of His Move South from Aquileia," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n. s. 28.2 (1977): 372-429. Giorgio Fedalto's newer study, *Rufino di Concordia tra Oriente e Occidente* (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, 1990), is useful but does not surpass Murphy's work.

suggested parts of the conceptual framework used here. Much work has been done, for example, by biographers of Ambrose, especially Neil B. McLynn and Daniel H. Williams, whose careful studies of this outspoken and influential bishop helpfully place him in the context of the political and theological developments of his time, respectively.²⁵ My interpretation of Ambrose owes much to them. Another scholarly trend of the past generation that has influenced my approach is the attention paid to the increasing cultural and political fragmentation of the later Roman Empire, whose western provinces gradually became independent kingdoms in the course of the fifth century as imperial authority over them slowly weakened.²⁶ John Matthews' study of the aristocracies of the western empire and their relationship to the institution of the imperial court emphasized the centrifugal forces operating between the middle of the fourth and the first quarter of the fifth century.²⁷ These forces had their effect on the church, as well, making it possible, for example, for Ralph W. Mathisen or Brent D. Shaw to identify ecclesiastical factionalism in fifth-century Gaul religious violence in North Africa, respectively, as phenomena that differentiate the churches of these regions from those in others.²⁸ Peter Brown has given the name of "micro-

²⁵ Neil B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and State in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994); and Daniel H. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Arian-Nicene Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). Prior to McLynn and Williams, the last biography of Ambrose in English was that of F. Homes Dudden, *The Life and Times of Saint Ambrose* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935). I have also made use of John Moorhead, *Ambrose: Church and Society in the Late Roman World* (London and New York: Longman, 1999), which is short but contains many helpful observations about Ambrose's cultural and intellectual outlook.

²⁶ This fragmentation was not limited to the west, however. As Garth Fowden shows in *From Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), the Christological controversies of the fifth century helped unleash centrifugal forces that led to the creation of what he calls the "First Byzantine Commonwealth." This construct includes countries such as Nubia and Aksum that had never been part of the empire, but also Iberia and Armenia, on the eastern frontier of the empire. See pp. 100-137. Cf. Averil Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 166-168.

²⁷ Matthews, *Western Aristocrats and Imperial Court, A. D. 364-425* (Oxford, 1975).

²⁸ Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University Press, 1989); Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). For an example of the application of social network

Christendoms” to the regional Christian communities that emerged in the fifth through eighth centuries as a result of this trend. His *Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity* examines not only North Africa and Gaul, but also Spain, Ireland, and Anglo-Saxon England, through this same lens.²⁹ Another recent scholar has referred to them as “Western Christianities.”³⁰

The heightened sensitivity that scholars have recently shown to the unique features of individual regions within the broader late Roman world has also led to the appearance of a number of works devoted to northern Italy in whole or in part. Rita Lizzi’s *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche nella città tardoantica (L’Italia annonaria nel IV-V secolo d.C.)* discusses at length the contributions of Ambrose to the creation of a unique ecclesiastical culture in northern Italy and attempts to gauge the influence of Ambrose’s ideas about episcopal leadership on Chromatius of Aquileia, Gaudentius of Brescia, and Maximus of Turin in an environment where political and social realities were changing.³¹ Mark Humphries’ *Communities of the Blessed: Social Environment and Religious Change in Northern Italy, A. D. 200-400*, focuses on the

theory to the relations among bishops, see Adam Schor, *Theodoret’s People: Social Networks and Religious Conflict in Late Roman Syria* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011).

²⁹ As indicated by the subtitle of this study—“Triumph and Diversity”—Brown not only traces the process by which Christianity became the dominant religion of the late and post-Roman world, he also emphasizes the unique features of each regional variety of Christianity, likening each of them to “the cultural and religious equivalent of a ‘subsistence economy’” bound together by “a common pool of images and attitudes inherited from ancient Christianity.” See *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A. D. 200-1000* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2003), 364 and 378. For an overview of the concept, see pp. 13-17.

³⁰ The title of Winrich Löhr’s contribution to the *Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 2, *From Constantine to c. 600*, ed. Augustine Casiday and Frederick W. Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 9-51. Löhr’s chapter is the first of four that deal with “regional developments.” The others are called “Germanic and Celtic Christianities,” “Greek Christianities,” and “Early Asian and East African Christianities.”

³¹ Rita Lizzi, *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche nella città tardoantica (L’Italia Annonaria nel IV-V secolo d.C.)* (Como: Edizioni New Press, 1989).

arrival of Christianity in northern Italy during the late third and early fourth centuries.³² His discussion of the late fourth century helpfully underscores the impact of the presence of the emperors on these churches, particularly that of Milan.³³ Claire Sotinel's *Identité civique et christianisme. Aquilée du IIIe au VIe siècle* has informed much of what I say about that city and in particular its bishop Chromatius. My primary goal has been to trace the development of the community of preachers in the north Italian church from the death of Ambrose until the middle of the fifth century. The starting date, coinciding with the death of Ambrose and roughly with the Council of Turin that took place in 398 or 399, hardly needs to be justified. The choice of this ending date will be explained in due course. For now, let us turn to a brief discussion of what I argue and what I believe I have discovered.

The title of this dissertation characterizes the bishops of northern Italy in the two generations after Ambrose as a “community.” The term is not being used here in any technical sense. Instead, it is simply intended to underscore the fact that they shared several important traits. First of all, they shared an appreciation for Ambrose's writings, particularly his exegetical writings (they were preachers, after all), on which they all seem to have drawn.³⁴ In addition, they were all in Milan's ecclesiastical sphere of influence, a fact attested by the records we have of the Council of Aquileia of 381 and of Turin in 398/399.³⁵ Finally, they shared a concern for—

³² Mark Humphries, *Communities of the Blessed: Social Environment and Religious Change in Northern Italy, AD 200-400* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). In his introduction, Humphries promises a sequel to this study that will continue the story into the fifth century. It has not yet appeared, but it is my hope that the present work will go some way toward meeting the need he identified. In the meantime, we eagerly await his contribution.

³³ On this point, see pp. 147-148.

³⁴ The literary connections among these bishops will be discussed in greater detail below.

³⁵ That northern Italy constituted a Milanese sphere of influence in a loose sense is demonstrated by the list of signatories of these two councils, as well as by the leading role played by Ambrose at Aquileia and (presumably) by his successor Simplicianus at Turin. For the Council of Aquileia, see the *Gesta Concili Aquileiensis*, published in CSEL 82/3.313-368. See also the reconstructions of McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 124-137; and Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, . For that of Turin, see the canons published in *Conciles gaulois du IVe siècle*, ed. Charles Munier and

and in large part a similar approach to—issues related to the two broad themes that hold this study together: authority and heterodoxy.

The approach employed here differs in important ways from that of earlier studies. The thematic organization allows for a more consistent emphasis on shared traits in the theology and ecclesial life of this region.³⁶ By relying on recent developments in prosopography, I have been able to incorporate more bishops than earlier studies of this region.³⁷ By tracing the history of this “community” down to 451, this study has a broader chronological scope than others that focus on one combination or other of the bishops who are central figures here.³⁸ Finally, including discussions of all three of northern Italy’s metropolitan sees allows for a more comprehensive geographical focus. The larger number of bishops included, the terminal point, and the consideration of the three metropolitan sees make for a more comprehensive study than has been previously available.

This approach also highlights a number of features of the Christian culture of late antique northern Italy that have been underappreciated. First of all, it calls attention to important differences between Rome and northern Italy in two areas of ecclesiastical life. The work of

Jean Gaudemet, *SC 241-* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1977), 136-145; and the reconstruction of Ralph W. Mathisen, “The Council of Turin (398/399) and the Reorganization of Gaul ca. 395/406,” *Journal of Late Antiquity* 6.2 (2013): 264-307.

³⁶ This emphasis on shared traits does not, however, imply any downplaying of the changes that can be noted in the ecclesial culture of northern Italy when, for example, the influence of Augustine on Peter Chrysologus is analyzed in the final chapter.

³⁷ The two collections I have used are the *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, ed. A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, and J. Morris, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971-1980) and the *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire*, vol. 2, *Prosopographie de l'Italie chrétienne*, ed. Charles Pietri and Luce Pietri, (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1999).

³⁸ Carlo Truzzi’s *Zeno, Gaudenzio e Cromazio. Testi e contenuti della predicazione cristiana per le chiese di Verona, Brescia e Aquileia (360-410)* (Brescia: Paidea, 1985), for example, has a fairly broad chronological scope, but only considers three bishops, and concentrates thematically on preaching. In addition to Ambrose, Lizzi’s *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche* covers Chromatius, Gaudentius, and Maximus of Turin, and thus focuses on the period ca. 390-ca.425.

David Hunter has shown that Roman ideas about episcopal leadership were conservative in nature, and downplayed the importance of asceticism as a qualification for church office in itself. What I argue, building on this insight, is that the leading bishops of northern Italy during this period—not only Ambrose, but also Chromatius and Gaudentius—endorsed the ascetic ideal. The evidence is less clear in the case of Maximus and Peter, but at any rate it seems to point in the same direction. Northern Italy also differed from Rome in its practice of the cult of the saints. Whereas Rome could only make contact relics to give to other churches because it was unwilling to divide the relics it possessed, the churches of northern Italy were bound by no such scruples.

This study also shows the importance of the Arian-Nicene conflict in shaping northern Italian Christianity's sense of itself. Ambrose and Rufinus both mobilized the memory of the basilica crisis of 386 to impress on the churches of Milan and Aquileia, respectively, a strong consciousness of being different from the Homoians who could still be found in one part of northern Italy or another during the late fourth and early fifth century, and indeed, judging from the sermons of Maximus and Peter, throughout the first half of the fifth century. Moreover, it highlights the significance of Chromatius of Aquileia as an ascetic theologian, who was indeed at the center of a circle of ascetics living in and near Aquileia. Finally, this study underscores the ways in which the elevation of Ravenna to metropolitan status, a promotion probably engineered through the collaboration of the Augusta Galla Placidia and bishop Celestine of Rome (s. 422-432), increased Roman influence in the north by giving an influential platform to Peter Chrysologus, who went on to be a staunch ally of bishop Leo of Rome (s. 440-461) in his attempts to stamp out sympathy for Pelagianism in the upper Adriatic.

CHAPTER 1: SETTING THE STAGE

Foundations, 355-397

The bishops at the center of this study played their parts in a drama for which the stage had been set by an earlier generation of north Italian ecclesiastical figures. From the mid-350s until the death of Ambrose in 397, these bishops faced a set of challenges that was distinct in important ways from those that beset their successors. Thus the purpose of this opening chapter is to summarize the accomplishments of what we will refer to as the “foundational generation,” and in so doing, to highlight the ways in which their context was different from the one in which the post-Ambrosian generation operated. Important figures in the foundational generation include Fortunatianus of Aquileia (s. 340/342-ca. 360), Eusebius of Vercelli (s. ca. 350-ca. 371), Dionysius of Milan (s. before 355-361/362), Auxentius of Milan (s. 355-374), Valerian of Aquileia (s. ca. 360-388/389), Zeno of Verona (s. ca. 362-ca. 380), Filaster of Brescia (s. before 381-ca. 396), and Ambrose of Milan (s. 374-397). To underscore the salient features of this earlier context, we will briefly describe it in relation to four key issues: theology, the relationship between the church and the Roman state, the expansion of the church, and the empire’s political fortunes. We will then pause to consider the influential career of Ambrose as a transition between the earlier and later periods, and then discuss the background for our study of the north Italian church in the first half of the fifth century.

Theology: What Is an “Arian”?

We begin with theology. In the second half of this dissertation we will take up the theme of heterodoxy. However, to speak of heterodoxy implies that orthodox belief has been defined and that its normative status has been recognized. During the foundational period of the mid- to late fourth century, however, the Christian doctrine of God was still a matter of inquiry rather

than of established dogma.³⁹ The prominent north Italian bishops of this period held different positions on the most controversial theological question of the day—whether the Son, the second Person of the Trinity, was God in the same way as the Father was. Those who eventually emerged victorious in this debate almost unanimously referred to their opponents as “Arians.” But the use of this term to denote fourth-century (and later) Christians whose faith differed from that articulated in the Nicene Creed of 325 and the creed of 381, known somewhat awkwardly as the “Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed,” is the product of the ancient polemical tradition that used this catch-all term to give the impression that the various critics of the Nicene position represented a monolithic opposition, a strategy that masks the considerable diversity that existed among the non-Nicenes.⁴⁰ As Manlio Simonetti, R. P. C. Hanson, and Lewis Ayres show in their thorough studies of the ins and outs of the long controversy, three distinct positions emerged by about the year 360.⁴¹ Let us briefly consider each of these.

The first perspective was a middle-of-the-road position, essentially an attempt to thread the needle between what its adherents considered two extremes. One of them was the *homoousion* of the Nicene Creed, which claimed an absolute identity of the divine essence of the Father and the Son. The other was the concern of the more strident non-Nicenes that the distinction between the Father and the Son needed to be stressed so as to avoid the impression that Father and Son were simply different manifestations of the one God, like the different masks

³⁹ Hence the title of R. P. C. Hanson’s study of the Trinitarian debates: *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318-381* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988).

⁴⁰ As Harold Drake points out, this was a strategy of demonization that was first deployed by Athanasius of Alexandria. See *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 415.

⁴¹ Hanson’s monograph on the subject has already been cited. Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1975); Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318-381* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988); and Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

that could be worn by an actor in a Greek play.⁴² This centrist perspective seemed to have triumphed under the guidance of the emperor Constantius II (r. 337-361), and the support it received from the imperial government meant that it was the most formidable alternative to the pro-Nicene position. During the 350s and 360s, a significant number of bishops in northern Italy and (especially) in neighboring Illyricum were adherents of this position, which was articulated in the creed produced at the Council of Rimini of 359, where Auxentius of Milan played a leading role.⁴³ This creed stated that the Son was “like to the Father who begat him, according to the scriptures: whose generation no one knows.”⁴⁴ This perspective is known as Homoianism, after the Greek *homoios* (like).⁴⁵ We will see in chapter 5 that, in spite of a brief revival in northern Italy in the 380s due to the support of the western imperial court of Valentinian II (r. 375-392), it fell out of favor among the bishops of the established church during the 380s and 390s. This defeat notwithstanding, it continued to be the favored creed of most of the barbarians who entered the empire beginning in the late fourth century.

⁴² In fact, one reason the term *homoousion*, the shibboleth of the pro-Nicenes, was so controversial was precisely because of its association with the modalistic Monarchianism of Sabellius, according to which Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were simply the three successive manifestations whereby God revealed himself in the history of creation and salvation. See Simonetti, *La crisi ariana*, 91-93.

⁴³ On the Council of Rimini (Ariminum), see Manlio Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo*, 314-325; R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318-381* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 371-380; and Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 160-161. Auxentius’ role in the council is underscored by a letter the council sent to Constantius, preserved in Theodoret’s *Church History* (2.19), which refers to “those disturbers of the peace of the church, with whom Germanius, Auxentius, and Caius are now associated.”

⁴⁴ The creed itself is found in Socrates, *HE* 2.37. For context and comment, see Hanson, *The Search*, 557-597; and Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 133-140 (for Homoianism) and 160-166 (for the Council and Creed of Rimini and its legacy). See also Simonetti, *La crisi ariana*, 259-267 (for a discussion of the theology of the Homoians—as well as of the Homoiousians) and 314-325 (for the council).

⁴⁵ The creed produced by the Council of Rimini lost favor among the western churches soon after the death of Constantius II. Nevertheless, as we will soon see, it was destined to enjoy a long life in the western empire because it became the creed of the Christian barbarian peoples—the Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Burgundians, and Vandals—who settled in the western provinces in the fifth century. On barbarian “Arianism,” see the essays collected in *Arianism: Roman Heresy and Barbarian Creed*, ed. Guido M Berndt and Roland Steinacher (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2014).

The Homoian position was characterized by a latitudinarian approach that the other two perspectives rejected, each in its own way. The second perspective, championed by Greek theologians like Aetius and Eunomius, sought to highlight the difference in nature between the Father and the Son, with the Son having a nature that was decidedly lower on the hierarchy of being.⁴⁶ This approach had the advantage of accounting completely for those New Testament texts that attribute hunger, thirst, suffering, and death to the Son of God. However, its critics claimed that it did not do justice to those parts of the New Testament, in particular the prologue to the Gospel of John, that seem to attribute to the Son a nature that is equally exalted as that of the Father.⁴⁷ The emergence of this perspective as a distinct school of thought proved alarming to moderate churchmen, and drove many of them to forge an alliance with those who had long argued in favor of the third possible solution.⁴⁸

This third perspective consisted of those who believed that the Nicene Creed's use of *homoousion* to describe the relationship between the Father and the Son was essentially correct. Its weakness, in the eyes of its critics, was of course that it did not do justice to the claim, also

⁴⁶ Near the end of a long and varied career, Aetius was appointed bishop of an unknown see in Libya. He died around 367. See Hanson, *The Search*, 598-603. Eunomius (b. ca. 330) was Aetius' most loyal disciple. He became bishop of Cyzicus in 360, and the two men together organized a separate church hierarchy during the 360s, when it became clear that their views were not going to prevail. The date of Eunomius' death is unknown, but he may have still been alive in 397/98. See Hanson, *The Search*, 611-617.

⁴⁷ Hanson categorizes these two thinkers together under the heading "Neo-Arians." See *The Search*, 598-636. Ayres, however, prefers to call them "Heterousians" because they taught that Father and Son were "unlike according to essence." See *Nicaea*, 144-149. Simonetti, for his part, labels them "anomoians." See *La crisi ariana*, 253-259.

⁴⁸ The so-called Homoiousians, led by Basil of Ancyra, who were sensitive to the possible Sabellian implications of the *homoousion* (if all three persons were of the same substance, what real distinction among them could there be?), but who were not willing to reject "ousia"-language altogether, made common cause with Athanasius after the death of Constantius II. See Hanson, *The Search*, 362-381 (discussion of the Homoiousians is scattered throughout this section); Ayres, *Nicaea*, 149-153 (for Basil of Ancyra) and (for the role of the Homoiousians in the realignments of theological factions in the 360s and 370s) 170-171, 179; Simonetti, *La crisi ariana*, 347-49; and Winrich A. Löhr, "A Sense of Tradition: The Homoiousian Church Party," in *Arianism After Arius: Essays on the Development of the Fourth-Century Trinitarian Conflicts*, ed. Michel R. Barnes and Daniel H. Williams (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 81-100.

found in the prologue to John's Gospel, that "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." Athanasius was the original champion of this perspective, which after his death was taken up by the Cappadocians—Basil of Caesarea (s. 369-379), his brother Gregory of Nyssa (s. 372-394/400), and their friend Gregory of Nazianzus (329/330-389/390). These three differed on some points, and were not all devoted adherents of the exact phraseology used in the Nicene Creed. Taken together, however, they represent what will be referred to in this study as a pro-Nicene (occasionally simply "Nicene" or even "Catholic") perspective—one that built on the basic insights of the creed of 325, refined them, and began to point the way toward solutions to the weaknesses in the thought of that creed's early supporters.⁴⁹ The first and last of the three positions briefly outlined here are the only ones that appear in the following narrative. Many leading north Italian churchmen from both the foundational and the post-Ambrosian periods were firmly in the pro-Nicene camp; indeed, Eusebius of Vercelli, Dionysius of Milan, Ambrose, and all of the members of the later generation can be called militant exponents of this position.⁵⁰ Even if their opponents are sometimes, for their part, referred to as "Arians" (as our sources

⁴⁹ The term "pro-Nicene" is commonly used by scholars of the fourth-century theological debates, but it has been defined most precisely by Ayres. He argues that it is possible to speak of an "original Nicene theology," a core set of theological commitments shared by figures such as Marcellus of Ancyra and Athanasius of Alexandria that were elaborated on by later theologians. See *Nicaea*, 98-100. The specific label "pro-Nicene," however, is used by Ayres to denote different strands of theology "consisting of a set of arguments about the nature of the Trinity and about the enterprise of Trinitarian theology, and forming the basis of Nicene Christian belief in 380." For the definition of the term, see *Nicaea*, 6 and 236-240. For the theology of Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus, see 187-220 and 244-251. This trajectory emerged as a reaction to the confusing and chaotic theological situation of the 340s during which, Ayres argues, Athanasius and his allies succeeded in creating, for polemical purposes, a body of doctrine (which of course they opposed) called "Arianism." For this latter development, see *Nicaea*, 105-130. Hanson covers the theology of Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa in considerable detail in *The Search*, 676-737.

⁵⁰ The petulant Lucifer of Cagliari should also be mentioned in this connection, even though he was not, strictly speaking, from northern Italy. Lucifer's ordination of Paulinus to be bishop of a breakaway pro-Nicene community at Antioch in 362 caused a schism in that church that was not healed until the early fifth century. Likewise, his opposition to the policy of reconciliation with the moderates who were willing to sign the Nicene Creed led to a schism in the western churches, where hardliners withdrew from communion with "tainted" bishops who were theologically in the pro-Nicene camp but nonetheless compromised at church councils to avoid schism or, worse, losing their sees. See *PCBE* 2.1324-1328.

pejoratively label them), it should be kept in mind that, whether at the imperial court or in the ranks of the Roman army, their actual position can be described more neutrally as Homoian.

The churches of northern Italy and Illyricum were the main theater of action in the western debates related to the broader Arian controversy. The story of their involvement in these doctrinal struggles begins precisely during this foundational period, and reaches its first climax with the important church council that met at Aquileia in 381 to depose the two “Arian” bishops who remained in control of important sees in Illyricum.⁵¹ But in order to understand the hard-line pro-Nicene outlook articulated in all the surviving evidence from northern Italy from the time of Ambrose until the middle of the fifth century, it is first of all necessary to understand the experiences of these churches during the twenty years between the death of Constantius II in 361 and the moment when the imperial government, in a departure from the religious policy of Valentinian I (r. 364-375), intervened decisively in favor of the pro-Nicenes.⁵² During these formative decades, the pro-Nicene bishops of northern Italy were at the forefront of what Claire Sotinel has described as the “orthodox reconquest” of northern Italy.⁵³

The ecclesiastical situation in northern Italy during the 360s and 370s was characterized by a confrontation between two groups who were stuck in a stalemate produced by the pro-Homoian policy of Constantius II and by Valentinian I’s bias in favor of the status quo. This way of looking at matters, however, is the result of a recent historiographical trend. Since the

⁵¹ Claire Sotinel describes Aquileia as “the epicenter of the area that extends from Milan to Sirmium, in which almost all the events connected with the western theological debates during the end of the fourth century were concentrated.” *Identité civique et christianisme. Aquilée du IIIe au VIe siècle* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2005), 128. As this first section will show, what is true of Aquileia in particular is true also of northern Italy in general.

⁵² For Valentinian I’s policy of neutrality in the theological debates that embroiled the church, see below, pp. 32-33.

⁵³ Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 130.

end of the 1960s, scholarship on the Arian controversy in the western provinces of the Roman Empire has moved away from an understanding of the conflict between the pro-Nicene and Homoian camps that assumed that the western churches as a whole were firm adherents of the Nicene cause from the time they became aware of the debates troubling the eastern churches.⁵⁴ What scholars have discovered in the last half century is that the situation was in fact much more nuanced, and that the eventual triumph there of the pro-Nicene forces was by no means a foregone conclusion.⁵⁵ Sotinel's recent study of Aquileia between the late third and the end of the sixth centuries goes into considerable detail for this important ecclesiastical center in particular, as well as for northern Italy more generally. The following narrative thus follows her reconstruction very closely.

The pro-Nicene party in the church throughout the empire experienced a string of setbacks during the final years of Constantius II's reign, and this was especially true in northern Italy, where bishops Eusebius of Vercelli and Dionysius of Milan were exiled after a church council meeting in Milan in the year 355. The reason was their refusal to agree to the condemnation of Athanasius, by now universally regarded as the champion of the pro-Nicene cause.⁵⁶ They had to wait until after the emperor's death to undertake any attempts to recover

⁵⁴ This older view was characterized by two assumptions that are no longer taken for granted. The first is articulated by Manlio Simonetti, writing in 1967: "The Arian crisis, which began in the east around 318-320, with often dramatic events extended itself also into the west, thus involving almost all of Christendom." See "Arianesimo latino," *Studi medievali* 8.2 (1967): 663-744, at 663. Another assumption of the older view was that by the 370s, the Homoian bishop Auxentius of Milan was an anomaly among uniformly pro-Nicene westerners, or at any rate among north Italians, a view articulated by Charles Pietri when he states that "With the death of Auxentius in 374, the Arian bastion in northern Italy crumbled." See *Roma Christiana. Recherches sur l'Église de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie de Miltiade à Sixte III (311-440)* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1976), 1.736.

⁵⁵ As Sotinel points out in *Identité civique*, 126-127, referring to the work of Giuseppe Cusito, Michel Meslin, Manlio Simonetti, Roger Gryson, Neil B. McLynn, and Daniel H. Williams.

⁵⁶ Eusebius and Dionysius had become bishops of their respective cities by the early 350s, possibly by the late 340s. On their tenure, see *PCBE* 2.692-697 (Eusebius) and 563-565 (Dionysius). Athanasius had been a controversial figure almost from the time he succeeded Alexander as bishop of Alexandria in 328. But the grounds for the offense his opponents took at him evolved over time. In the 330s, he had been accused of crimes related more to his conduct of office rather than his theology. He was deposed for his conduct twice during the 330s, and on both

sees they had once held and to go on the offensive against bishop Auxentius of Milan, the imperially appointed successor to Dionysius who remained firmly in charge of that city's church.⁵⁷ One strategy they employed to increase their influence within the church as a whole was to reestablish communion with bishops whose theological position they did not regard as heretical but who, under pressure to toe the imperial line, had nevertheless not followed an intransigent anti-Homoian ecclesiastical policy.⁵⁸ Fortunatianus of Aquileia is an example of such a bishop.⁵⁹ Feeling constrained by the presence of a vocal Homoian faction within his own church, Fortunatianus had consented to the emperor's wishes at the Council of Milan, even though he had previously welcomed Athanasius at Aquileia during the latter's second exile.⁶⁰ Like a legislator in a swing district who votes against his own party to maintain enough support to prevent the opposition from winning the seat at the next election, he had managed to keep his

occasions was exiled to the west, where he managed to gain the support of many influential church figures, most especially bishop Julius of Rome during the early 340s. Julius reviewed the case against him and pronounced him innocent of the charges lodged against him by his erstwhile colleagues in the east. Both times, Athanasius was restored to his see, but each restoration was followed by renewed attempts to unseat him, always on the same disciplinary grounds as before. As time passed, however, Athanasius gradually managed to convince his supporters in both east and west that he was persecuted on account of his theological principles, and that the allegations of misconduct were a smokescreen masking the true motives of his opponents, who wished to be rid of him not so much for his heavy-handed style of leadership, but because he refused to compromise on critical matters of dogma. See Timothy D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 19-70 and 116-135; Hanson, *The Search*, 239-273, 293-314, 329-334, 341-343; Humphries, *Communities of the Blessed*, 116-117 and 118-119; and Ayres, *Nicaea*, 102-104, 106-110, 126-130, and 135-137.

⁵⁷ Dionysius had died in exile.

⁵⁸ The conciliatory policy was to reestablish communion with any bishop who had signed the Homoian creeds promulgated by the Councils of Rimini and Seleucia (359) and confirmed at Constantinople (360) who were willing to subscribe to the Nicene Creed and condemn Arius. See Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 62-68; and Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 130-131.

⁵⁹ The subscription list of a Roman church council held between 368 and 373 for the purpose of condemning Auxentius of Milan indicates that Valerian was bishop of Aquileia by this time, so Fortunatianus must have died before then. See Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1.733-736. But it is unknown whether or not he was still alive in 359 to sit at the Council of Rimini. Sotinel is convinced that such was the case, but concedes that "no trace of his presence has been preserved." See *Identité civique*, 128. If so, we would be very interested in knowing how he conducted himself at that council.

⁶⁰ Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 117-118.

see out of Homoian hands. By doing this, he may have prevented from occurring at Aquileia a course of events similar to the one that played out at Milan, where Auxentius survived Constantius by many years and represented a significant obstacle to pro-Nicene attempts to consolidate their control over northern Italy.⁶¹ It is impossible to know to what extent other north Italian bishops who were sympathetic to Athanasius' theology nevertheless consented to his condemnation because of similar considerations, but it is easy to see the attractions of a strategy that sought to limit the damage from a theological standpoint in exchange for acceding to the condemnation of an eastern bishop whose problems may have been largely of his own creation.⁶²

Fortunatianus was succeeded by Valerian, who like him was a pro-Nicene, but not a militant one in the mold of some of his north Italian colleagues. As we will see in chapter 6, he supported this cause at church councils in Rome, but left to his clergy—in particular, a cadre of young ascetics who were also zealous adherents of this position—the work of garnering support for the *homoousion* doctrine at the local level.⁶³ It was early in his episcopate, during the 360s, that Eusebius and Hilary of Poitiers returned from exile and traveled through northern Italy to

⁶¹ Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 111-117 (for the tension within the Christian community of Aquileia that led to civil strife when bishop Valens of Mursa attempted to transfer to that see); and (for Fortunatianus' actions as an attempt to hold the middle ground), Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 58; and Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 124-126. Yves-Marie Duval, for his part, takes a somewhat more critical view of Fortunatianus' "hedge." See "Aquilée et Sirmium durant la crise arienne (325-400)," in *Aquileia, la Dalmazia e l'Ilirico*, AAAd 26/2 (Udine: Tipografia Chiandetti, 1985), 331-379, at 347-348. For the deposition of Dionysius of Milan, see Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 117-118; and McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 13-22.

⁶² That Athanasius was by no means a purely innocent victim of his opponents' machination is a starting point for Barnes' study of his career, who holds "that Athanasius consistently misrepresented central facts about his ecclesiastical career, in particular about his relationship with the emperor Constantine and his three sons, who ruled the Roman Empire after their father's death in 337, and about his own standing within the Christian church in the eastern half of the empire, which Constantius ruled from 337 to 361." Moreover, he describes Athanasius' rebuttal of charges that he had contributed to bad feeling between Constantius and his brother Constans as "convoluted and evasive." See *Athanasius and Constantius*, 2 and 113.

⁶³ See below, pp. 393-395.

rally support for Nicaea and for reconciliation with the moderates.⁶⁴ But these efforts could only bear limited fruit so long as the leading church of the *Annonaria* diocese was in the hands of a committed Homoian, and the emperor was unsympathetic to attempts to dislodge him on theological grounds.⁶⁵ This difficulty is illustrated above all in the failure of Hilary's attempt in the mid-360s to have Auxentius of Milan deposed by Valentinian I for blasphemy, on the grounds that the bishop's faith differed from that of the sovereign. The accusation having been made, the matter was investigated by the *quaestor sacri palatii*, and a panel of about ten bishops was gathered to act as a jury. Auxentius was acquitted, and by order of the emperor Hilary was driven from Milan as a trouble-maker.⁶⁶

Auxentius' death and Ambrose's election in 374 is therefore a genuine turning point in northern Italy's realignment as the center of militant pro-Nicene agitation.⁶⁷ But the significance of this event can only be seen with the benefit of hindsight, for Ambrose had to tread carefully

⁶⁴ Exiled to the east, they took advantage of their sojourn to become more familiar with the theological issues being debated there with much greater depth and precision than in their homelands. When they returned, they were thus able to inform their colleagues in the west of what the issues were, and they were influential forging a pro-Nicene consensus. This is especially true of Hilary. On the activities of these two after their return from exile, see Rufinus, *Church History*, 1.31; Hanson, *The Search*, 463-464; Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 67-68 and 78-80; Humphries, *Communities of the Blessed*, 117-118 and 129-130; Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 179-186; and Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 129-134. These activities were matched by efforts on the part of Basil of Caesarea to build alliances with like-minded bishops, particularly among the Homoiousians. In the end, these efforts resulted in a pro-Nicene majority in both east and west. On Basil's alliance building, see Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 222-229. That a pro-Nicene majority in the west existed by the 370s is indicated by the success this party had in placing their candidates in episcopal sees vacated by the death of Homoian incumbents. See Ayres, 260.

⁶⁵ Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 127-134, emphasizes the diversity of theological opinion that persisted in northern Italy between 357 and 372. Regarding the visit that Eusebius paid to Aquileia on his way back to Vercelli from the east, she observes (p. 130) that "Nothing indicates that his mission had the slightest influence on episcopal policy." She does acknowledge, however, that Eusebius' visit to that city likely provided the spark that rekindled strong pro-Nicene feelings among part of the Christian community there. See also McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 22-31; and Daniel H. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Arian-Nicene Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 62-68.

⁶⁶ Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 132.

⁶⁷ Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 139, calls Ambrose's election "a decisive moment in the history of the churches of northern Italy, including *Venetia et Histria*."

during the early years of his episcopate. He dared not undertake a purge of Auxentius' clergy and risk pulling the rug out from underneath his own feet.⁶⁸ Rather, he bided his time, using the early years to promote the cause of female asceticism. In this way, he avoided causing alarm for the remaining Homoians among the ranks of the clergy and of the influential laity. During the first five years he was in office, he did more to promote his cause outside of Milan than in it.

One way in particular in which he did this was by intervening in the election of a successor for Germinius, bishop of Sirmium, who died in the late 370s.⁶⁹ At the time, the city was an imperial residence and therefore a prize to whichever ecclesiastical party possessed it.⁷⁰ Germinius had become bishop in the 350s, and began his episcopate as an ally of Valens of Mursa and Ursacius of Singidunum, the two leading Homoians among the Illyrican bishops of their generation.⁷¹ But his position became more moderate during the 360s, and his opposition to the efforts of Eusebius of Vercelli to promote the pro-Nicene cause in his city appears to have

⁶⁸ McLynn emphasizes the caution with which Ambrose approached the theological fault line that must have existed in the Milanese church during his early years, observing that "he could offer the people of Milan little except gestures, but these were precisely his forte." See *Ambrose of Milan*, 55, and the entire chapter, entitled "Consolidation," pp. 53-78; and Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 128-129, who notes the absence of anti-Arian polemic in any of his writings before 378.

⁶⁹ The date of this journey is a complicated matter, with some scholars placing it as early as 376, others as late as 380. 377/78 seems most likely, however. On this question, see Yves-Marie Duval, "Aquilée et Sirmium durant la crise arienne (325-400)," 370-371; McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 92; and Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 123-125.

⁷⁰ In addition to being an imperial residence Sirmium also boasted an imperial arms factory, a mint, and a woolen factory. See A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire: A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1964), 1.133, 366, and 437; and 2.834 and 836. One of the factors that no doubt complicated things from Ambrose's perspective was the presence of the deceased emperor's younger son, Valentinian II, along with his mother Justina, whom we will meet below as a convinced Homoian. See Duval, "Aquilée et Sirmium," 371.

⁷¹ We have already met Valens as the one who attempted to become bishop of Aquileia ca. 340 (see n.61 above). These two bishops were "actors and contemporaries of nearly the entire Arian crisis." See Michel Meslin, *Les ariens d'occident, 335-430* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1967), 71, and the entire discussion of their careers at 71-84; and Simonetti, "Valente di Mursa e Ursacio di Singidunum," in *DPAC* 2.3539. They were opponents of both Athanasius of Alexandria and Marcellus of Ancyra. When Sirmium became the center of Constantius II's attempts to impose his ecclesiastical settlement on the west after his brother Constans' death in 350 at the hands of the usurper Magnentius, Valens and Ursacius became his chief counselors in ecclesiastical affairs. They continued to hold their sees until their death, in both cases probably in the 370s.

been half-hearted.⁷² To secure the election of someone who he was confident would be an ally, Ambrose made the 300-mile journey to Sirmium to lend his weight to the candidacy of Anemius. His cause was no doubt helped when his prophecy of the imminent death of a consecrated virgin of Homoian persuasion who denounced the bishop of Milan's meddling was fulfilled.⁷³

The strategy of direct intervention in distant episcopal elections was, however, a rather clumsy way to build a solidly pro-Nicene episcopacy in the areas under Milan's influence. It might certainly prove effective in the long run, but it required Ambrose and his allies to wait, bide their time, and be ready to pounce when a Homoian-controlled see became vacant on the death of the incumbent. In the meantime, there was always the possibility that their opponents would learn to organize more effectively and at the very least make the struggle a long one. This situation was a product of the political environment that prevailed during the early years of Ambrose's episcopate. In his eagerness to remain neutral in the disputes between church factions, Valentinian I refused to exile bishops who had been condemned and deposed by a church council for strictly theological reasons.⁷⁴ His son Gratian (r. 375-383) continued this policy during the first few years of his reign. Using a church council, therefore, to dislodge the leaders of the Homoian party and replace them with pro-Nicenes, which would have been by far the most efficient way of achieving victory, was out of the question until such time as imperial policy changed.⁷⁵

⁷² On Germinius' evolution from a loyal ally of Valens and Ursacius to an unreliable member of Homoian block in Illyricum, see Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 122 and 131; and McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 95-96.

⁷³ *Vita Ambrosii* 11.1; McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 92; and Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 122-127. For the logical connection between the simultaneous promotion of the pro-Nicene cause in northern Italy and Illyricum, see Mark Humphries, *Communities of the Blessed: Social Environment and Religious Change in Northern Italy, AD 200-400* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 132.

⁷⁴ Meslin attributes Valens and Ursacius' staying power to Valentinian's neutrality. See *Les ariens d'occident*, 84.

⁷⁵ In the context of his discussion of the "coup" at Sirmium, McLynn nevertheless notes: "In Illyricum, business went on as usual. As the generation of Ursacius and Valens died out, the churches were handed on to like-minded

An opportunity to persuade Valentinian's young successor arose in the late 370s, when Gratian approached Ambrose to ask him for an explanation of his faith. As Neil McLynn and Daniel Williams argue in their studies of Ambrose, this was not a case of an inexperienced emperor seeking guidance from one he regarded as a champion of the true faith. Several factors, in fact, would have made such a request unwelcome at this moment from the point of view of the bishop of Milan. First, he was still a theological novice. Second, he held to a theological position that as yet enjoyed no legal privileges. What is more, Gratian's theological views were almost certainly not yet fully formed at this time, and he was equally susceptible (at least in theory) to the influence of the Homoians of Illyricum. Having in particular heard certain unflattering allegations with regard to the claims of Nicene theology, he instructed Ambrose to give an account of his faith.⁷⁶ In light of these considerations alone, Ambrose would have been well advised to exercise every caution. But the emperor's "request" coincided with a visit to Milan in the summer of 378, making the situation all the more delicate. Up until now, Ambrose had carefully attempted to avoid a direct confrontation with the Homoians within the church of Milan. But the emperor's visit and the increasing strength of Homoian influences in the city itself conspired to force him to speak.⁷⁷ It was in response to this imperial inquiry, therefore, that

heirs; at Singidunum, Ursacius was succeeded by his presbyter, Secundianus. The exception was Sirmium, which was stolen from them by Ambrose's intervention." See *Ambrose of Milan*, 97. Williams speaks of this maintenance of the status quo as a sort of "demilitarized zone" separating the two doctrinal camps. See *Ambrose of Milan*, 135.

⁷⁶ In the eyes of convinced Homoians, Nicene theology was tritheistic, and thus hardly better than paganism. At the very least, it had Sabellian implications, failing as it did (in their eyes) to distinguish adequately among the persons of the Trinity. See Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 144.

⁷⁷ A Homoian bishop, Julian Valens, who had been removed from the see of Pettau and made his way to Milan, was seeking to stir up opposition to Ambrose. At the same time, Gratian's stepmother Justina had accompanied him to the city. Lastly, there may have been refugees fleeing the war on the middle Danube, predominantly Homoian on account of the theological complexion of the Illyrian episcopacy. In addition to the presence of these "reinforcements" of the Homoian population of the city, Ambrose had one other potential problem to worry about. After leaving Milan, the emperor returned to the Danube to prosecute the war against the Goths. So long as he remained there, he was in what Ambrose could only regard as "enemy territory." See McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 91 and 104; and Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 141-144.

the bishop wrote Books I and II of *De fide*—not to instruct Gratian more deeply in a creed he already accepted, but rather to convince a skeptical emperor of his own orthodoxy.⁷⁸

After examining the first two books, Gratian and his advisors were not fully persuaded that Ambrose's position was satisfactory.⁷⁹ But he followed these up with three more, which were apparently more convincing.⁸⁰ After reviewing them, Gratian's religious policy began to move away from the neutrality he had inherited from his father. After nearly twenty years during which the civil authorities of the western empire had declined to take sides in the disputes between Homoians and pro-Nicenes, the ruler took steps to elevate the latter position to something resembling official status. Gratian's government was now solidly behind the pro-Nicene "reconquest."⁸¹ With the support of the imperial authorities, the way was open for Ambrose to use a church council to achieve his objective of clearing the leaders of the Homoian party out of their sees.⁸² If such a gambit were successful, it would fatally weaken the ability of

⁷⁸ As McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 98, states the matter: "Gratian's desire to 'hear' the bishop's 'faith' therefore amounted to a request to inspect his personal profession: Ambrose was being required neither to reinforce the emperor's beliefs nor demolish those of the homoean bishops, but to justify his *own* position."

⁷⁹ As Hanson and others have pointed out, these initial books—Ambrose's first attempt to write on a doctrinal subject—leave much to be desired. He seems not to have grappled with the position of his opponents, as demonstrated by his use of invective instead of argument at a number of points. See *The Search*, 669-675. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 103, qualifies it as "a splendid display of sophistry, misrepresentation on an heroic scale," and states that it contains "a grotesque caricature of Arianism." Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 147, does concede, however, that "even though *De fide*, I-II, has little theological originality, it is a tour de force depicting all anti-Nicenes as enemies of the Church and State."

⁸⁰ For the circumstances surrounding the production of these three further books, see McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 119-120; and Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 151. Ayres renders a somewhat positive evaluation of Ambrose's performance in Books III-V. See *Nicaea*, 262-264.

⁸¹ Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 166-169.

⁸² Both McLynn and Williams believe that the council was, in fact, Gratian's idea. However, Theodosius' self-presentation as early as the beginning of 380 as a friend of the pro-Nicene cause and his plans for a council to resolve the dispute over who was the rightful bishop of Constantinople upstaged Gratian's plans for an ecumenical council in the west. But because the council presented Ambrose with just the sort of opportunity he sought in order to deal a mortal blow to Homoianism in Illyricum, he salvaged the council just when Gratian had practically given up on it. See McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 124-125; and Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 163-164.

the Homoian forces to nourish and increase their support at the popular level. It would then be only a matter of time before Homoianism ceased to exist as a living force within the imperial church, and the victory of the pro-Nicene forces, led now by Ambrose, would be complete.

381 proved to be a watershed year for pro-Nicenes in both halves of the empire, where pro-Nicene rulers were now in charge. After the catastrophic death of his uncle Valens at the Battle of Adrianople in 378, Gratian had appointed Theodosius I as Augustus of the east.⁸³ Early in his reign, the new emperor at Constantinople announced his support for those bishops whose faith agreed with bishop Peter of Alexandria and bishop Damasus of Rome, and proceeded to make plans for a new church council that would settle ecclesiastical affairs in his half of the empire.⁸⁴ Gratian, meanwhile, had been planning a council of his own to implement his new religious policy. In the end, the Council of Constantinople met in May and June of 381, and the Council of Aquileia in the following September.⁸⁵ As it turned out, Aquileia was far from the ecumenical council that Gratian had originally intended.⁸⁶ Instead, it was little more than a glorified local council, as most of its delegates were from northern Italy, with a few others from Gaul and Illyricum. Disappointed though Gratian may have been in the turnout, the small size of the council made it easier for Ambrose to dominate it for his own ends. The minutes survive,

⁸³ For this Gothic uprising, see below, pp. 354-355.

⁸⁴ Theodosius went public with his support for the theological position of these two sees in an edict published on February 27, 380, preserved in *Cod. Theod.* 16.1.2.

⁸⁵ For the Council of Constantinople and the creed promulgated by it, see Manlio Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1975), 528-542, and Karl Baus et al., *The Imperial Church from Constantine to the Early Middle Ages*, trans. Anselm Biggs (New York: Seabury Press, 1980), 67-76. For that of Aquileia, see McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 124-149 (the council and its aftermath); Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 169-184 (who also discusses its aftermath); and Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 145-169.

⁸⁶ McLynn argues that Theodosius' plans had the effect of pulling the rug out from underneath Gratian, who had intended to invite the eastern bishops to his council in the hopes that it would truly be ecumenical. See *Ambrose of Milan*, 124-125.

and show the bishop of Milan in rare form, taking full advantage of his experience as a Roman magistrate, as well as of the presence of his allies, to put Palladius of Ratiaria and Secundianus of Singidunum on the defensive.⁸⁷ Because the council was dominated by churchmen who were sympathetic to Ambrose's position, he was able to maneuver his opponents into a corner and eventually secure their condemnation.

The Pro-Nicene Alliance with the Roman State

The fourth century witnessed a total sea change in the relationship between the Christian church and the Roman state. The importance of Constantine's legalization of Christianity and of his patronage of church building projects should not be minimized, but these represented only the beginning of a process that continued apace over the course of most of this century. Indeed, many of the significant developments in the transformation of Christianity's place in Roman life took place precisely during the period now under examination, beginning with the reigns of Constantine's sons and ending roughly with the death of emperor Theodosius I (r. 379-395). These developments can be roughly divided into two categories: those that elevated the public role and the privileges of Christianity, and those whereby the emperors came to support the specifically Nicene form of Christianity and to de-privilege other forms to a greater or lesser extent.

Perhaps the most dramatic of the legal developments affecting the public role of Christianity in the later Roman Empire was the prohibition of pagan sacrifice. Scholars debate the moment at which the public sacrifices that had for centuries been part of the common life of cities all over the empire—and whose cessation would have been immediately noticeable to any resident of an ancient Mediterranean city—came to an end. The most well-known legislation

⁸⁷ *CSEL* 82/3.313-368.

relating to this practice was that of Theodosius, who issued two laws in the early 390s that amounted to a total ban on any form of public sacrifice.⁸⁸ According to the traditional interpretation of the religious history of the fourth century, the laws of Theodosius marked the culmination of a gradual development that had lasted the entire century, whereby Christianity only slowly came to supplant the old religion, which remained vibrant until the very end of Theodosius' reign. Some variants of this view even posit a pagan revival in the 390s that manifested itself politically in the revolt of Eugenius (392-394), which was supposedly the last, desperate act of a die-hard pagan coterie intent on preserving the old religious order. However, Timothy D. Barnes and Alan Cameron have recently argued that public sacrifice had in fact come to an end during the Constantinian dynasty.⁸⁹ If they are correct, then Theodosius' legislation becomes much less momentous in the history of the Christian empire's dealings with the traditional religion.⁹⁰ The decisive shift in the government's policy would then have come much earlier.⁹¹

Others, such as Peter Brown and David Potter, argue that while Constantine's reign (306-337) was indeed significant for the future of Christianity in the Roman world, he did not take the

⁸⁸ *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.10-12.

⁸⁹ Barnes relies on a passage in Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* (2.45). See "Constantine's Prohibition of Pagan Sacrifice," *American Journal of Philology* 105 (1984): 69-75; "The Constantinian Reformation," *The Crake Lectures 1984* (Sackville, N. B.: The Crake Institute, 1986), 39-57; "Religion and Society in the Age of Theodosius," in *Grace, Politics, and Desire: Essays on Augustine*, ed. H. A. Meynell (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1990), 157-175; and *Constantine: Dynasty, Religion, and Power in the Later Roman Empire* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 109-110. Cameron, by contrast, appeals to evidence from the *Theodosian Code*, especially 16.10.4, which was issued during the 340s or 350s. On the prohibition of pagan sacrifice in general, see *The Last Pagans of Rome*, 59-74. The use of the legislation of Constantius comes at p. 61.

⁹⁰ Cameron highlights this point in particular in *Last Pagans of Rome*, 63.

⁹¹ Cameron nevertheless acknowledges that the reign of Theodosius was "a turning point in the decline of paganism." However, he argues that it should not be taken for granted that the cause was legislation. See *Last Pagans of Rome*, 60. He speculates (67) that animals sacrifices were no longer part of public festivals in major cities as early as the 370s, and that the only pagan sacrifices that continued thereafter were conducted privately, away from the imperial government's penetrating gaze.

drastic actions against paganism attributed to him by Barnes and Cameron. Potter has emphasized the conservative aspects of Constantine's rule, in particular his religious policy, while Brown has stressed the peaceful nature of relations between Christian and pagan aristocrats in the later fourth century.⁹² On this reading of the evidence, the reign of Gratian and Theodosius—roughly the years between 380 and 395—are the key time in a shift that might be described as one from a pagan empire with Christian rulers to a Christian empire with Catholic rulers.

We have already seen that Gratian inherited from his father, Valentinian I, a religious policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of the churches and of upholding the status quo as regards the relationship of the Roman state to the traditional cults.⁹³ Valentinian in turn had inherited the broad outlines of this policy from his Christian predecessors, according to which the Vestal Virgins and the priestly colleges of the city of Rome received modest but symbolically important subsidies from the treasury.⁹⁴ Since by the mid-fourth century pagan priesthoods had come to be seen as “political rewards rather than religious responsibilities,” the Christian emperors who continued to fund them were in the happy position of neither being implicated in pagan religious rites nor persecuting religious dissenters.⁹⁵ Meanwhile, the imperial government (at least in the west—the situation was rather different in the east) made no effort to oust from

⁹² Potter, *Constantine the Emperor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), *passim*; Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, Christianity, and the Fall of Rome A. D. 350-550* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), xxvii and 102.

⁹³ Ammianus Marcellinus praised Valentinian for his traditional moderation in such matters, writing in *Res gestae* 30.9.5: “Postremo hoc moderamine principatus inclaruit, quod inter religionum diversitates medius stetit, nec quemquam inquietavit, neque ut hoc colereter, imperavit aut illud: nec interdictis minacibus subiectorum cervicem ad id, quod ipse coluit, inclinabat, sed intemeratas reliquit has partes ut repperit (*LCL* 331.370-372).

⁹⁴ For the finances of the state cults in general under Gratian and Theodosius, and in particular the importance of state funding them, see Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, 39-51.

⁹⁵ For this characterization of the significance of the priesthoods, see Cameron, *Last Pagans of Rome*, 133.

their sees bishops whose theological views were objectionable to the emerging pro-Nicene majority in the church throughout the empire.⁹⁶ This policy meant, for example, that despite the best efforts of Eusebius of Vercelli, Hilary of Poitiers, and the Milanese presbyter Filaster, later bishop of Brescia, to enlist imperial aid for their attempts to force bishop Auxentius from the see of Milan, no aid was forthcoming.⁹⁷ Valentinian's policy of neutrality in ecclesiastical affairs, however, did not long survive his death in 375. Within five years, his son Gratian began to move away from this policy and to establish Nicene Christianity as the only religion that would receive official support from the government. Early in 381, he returned to the Nicene community of Milan a basilica he had sequestered two years previously for the use of the "Arian" minority of the city.⁹⁸ Later that same year, he ordered that the subsidies to the Vestal Virgins and the pagan cults of Rome be terminated, and that the Altar of Victory be removed from the Senate House at

⁹⁶ Noel Lenski characterizes Valentinian as "largely indifferent" in religious matters, and points out that he even passed laws in favor of Jews. The only religious groups he targeted were Donatists and Manichaeans, not for their doctrines *per se* but for their alleged subversiveness. He was favorable to Christians, but unlike Constantine granted them "simple and inexpensive privileges." See *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A. D.* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 238-242. Lenski argues that Valens' attempts to uphold Constantius' big-tent, centrist policy—which drove him to persecute some pro-Nicene and neo-Arian bishops—was dictated more by circumstances than by zeal. See *Failure of Empire*, 242-263. On Valentinian's religious policy, see also David Hunt, "Valentinian and the Bishops: Ammianus 30.9.5 in Context," in *Ammianus after Julian: The Reign of Valentinian and Valens in Books 26-31 of the Res Gestae*, ed. J. den Boeft et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 71-93.

⁹⁷ Rufinus of Aquileia refers in a general way to Eusebius' and Hilary's efforts to bring the churches of northern Italy into the pro-Nicene fold, but makes no mention of the vain attempts to dislodge Auxentius. See *HE* 10.31-32. These are recounted by Hilary of Poitiers, *Contra Auxentium*, 14. See also McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 23-27; Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 77-80; Mark Humphries, *Communities of the Blessed: Social Environment and Religious Change in Northern Italy, AD 200-400* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 117-118; and Claire Sotinel, *Identité civique et christianisme. Aquilée du IIIe au VIe siècle* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2005), 128-134. The failed attacks on Auxentius, however, were only one part of a broader effort to secure the allegiance of the bishops of northern Italy to the Nicene camp, a project that was "not so much polemical as pastoral" inasmuch as it consisted mainly of reestablishing relationships with centrist bishops who had signed on to the Creed of Rimini more in response to imperial pressure than out of religious conviction. See Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 67.

⁹⁸ On the sequestration and subsequent return of the basilica, see Ambrose, *De spiritu sancto* 1.19-21; Barnes, "Ambrose and Gratian," *Antiquité tardive* 7 (1999), 173; and Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 139-140. As will be seen in chap. 5, the Homoian minority in Milan would once more play an important role in the religious history of the western capital during the reign of Gratian's half-brother and successor, Valentinian II.

Rome.⁹⁹ He likewise modified the ancient imperial title *pontifex maximus*, opting instead to style himself *pontifex inclitus*, a move that allowed him to define his priestly authority more ambiguously.¹⁰⁰ And as we have seen in our discussion of theological developments, the Councils of Constantinople and Aquileia, both meeting in 381, decisively tipped the balance of power throughout the empire in favor of the pro-Nicene camp. This year also proved a turning point for the relationship between the church and the empire because this was moment at which the rulers of both halves of the empire adopted (or institutionalized, in the case of the east) a new religious policy that threw the support of the imperial government behind the Nicene Creed.

The role of both Theodosius and Gratian in calling these councils might, however, easily conceal one important way in which their relationship to the church was different from that of Constantine and his son Constantius II, both of whom had been heavily involved in ecclesiastical affairs. The difference lies in the role played by the emperors from the late fourth century onward in formulating the dogma of the church (though the eastern emperors after the middle of the fifth century retreated from this newer approach). The church historian Eusebius of Caesarea reports that Constantine intervened directly in the discussions at the Council of Nicaea, “persuading some, convincing others by his reasonings, praising those who spoke well, and urging all to unity of sentiment, until at last he succeeded in bringing them to one mind and

⁹⁹ McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 151-152; Cameron, *Last Pagans of Rome*, 39-51.

¹⁰⁰ Cameron, *Last Pagans of Rome*, 51-56. None of these actions constituted direct interference of any kind with the pagan cults, but they did represent attempts to put an end to those ways in which the imperial government might be thought to be implicated in paganism by supporting it financially, by allowing a prominent pagan monument—one flush with ideological significance—to occupy a prominent place in the Senate House, or by the emperor’s use of a title that highlighted his patronage of the old Roman priesthoods. It was not until a decade later that Theodosius banned both public and private pagan sacrifices and thus made it official imperial policy to put an end to the most visible practice of the old religion. Julian, not surprisingly, had revoked the ban on animal sacrifices enacted by Constantine for the east and by Constans for the west. On his religious policy, which Barnes summarizes as “a systematic attempt to undo the Constantinian reformation,” see *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 154-155. For the prohibition of pagan sacrifices by Theodosius, see *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.9-12, and cf. Cameron, *Last Pagans of Rome*, 59-74.

judgment respecting every disputed question.”¹⁰¹ By the end of the century, however, in light of the at times heavy-handed attempts of Constantius to forge a consensus, the bishops were much less willing to countenance such a direct involvement of the emperor in a sphere they believed was exclusively theirs.¹⁰² In spite of this reticence, though, they continued to expect the emperor to recognize true dogma once it was promulgated by the church, and to favor it both in the law and in their financial support of the church, particularly in the construction of church buildings.¹⁰³

The relationship between the Roman emperors and both the old and new religions of the empire thus changed in important ways within a span of about fifteen years. It would be going too far to call this a “revolution,” but the change was rapid, decisive, and significant. In this short period, Christian emperors who favored either no particular form of Christianity (those in the west) or the Homoian position (Constantius II and Valens in the east) were replaced by emperors who were firmly in the pro-Nicene camp.¹⁰⁴ The emperors’ hands were likewise

¹⁰¹ *Vita Constantini* 3.13.

¹⁰² Susan Wessel contrasts Constantine’s conciliar theory, which she argues accorded to the emperor a limited role in conciliar proceedings—convocation and participation as a layman—with that of Theodosius I, who convoked the Council of Constantinople in 381 but was absent from it. She attributes the change in the relationship between emperor and council to the outlook of Athanasius of Alexandria, which was forged in his long conflict with Constantius II, and was influential in shaping the attitude of his theological heirs in the late fourth century. In her view, the actions of eastern emperors beginning in the second half of the fifth century, whereby Anastasius and Justinian intervened directly in the process of formulating dogma, marked a break from all earlier practice up to and including the Council of Chalcedon. See *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy: The Making of a Saint and a Heretic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 144-146 and 160-161.

¹⁰³ As will be seen in the discussion of Ambrose’s ecclesiastical career, he was opposed in principle to any action on the part of the emperor that was prejudicial to the interests of the true (i. e., Nicene) church. Imperial sponsorship of Christian architecture had been a tradition since Constantine’s patronage of the Christian community of Rome. In the fifth century, Galla Placidia was to adorn the city of Ravenna with an addition to the Church of Saint John the Evangelist, a mausoleum, a number of mosaics, either the construction or embellishment of the Church of Santa Croce, as well as other benefactions to the church of that city. See Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 273-278.

¹⁰⁴ Though in the west, barbarian troops serving in the Roman army who confessed the Creed of Rimini of 359 were given complete freedom to assemble for worship. See Mathisen, “Barbarian ‘Arian’ Clergy, Church Organization, and Church Practices,” in *Arianism: Roman Heresy and Barbarian Creed*, ed. Guido M. Berndt and Roland Steinacher (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2014), 145-191, at 147-149.

“clean” with regard to any implication in pagan practices, which were now banned in any case. Moreover, these developments were followed up by further tightening of imperial religious policy during the reigns of Theodosius’ successors. Jews were in successive stages barred from more and more roles in the imperial administration (at least officially), and even though pagans were never barred from holding high office, it became much rarer for them to do so as more and more elite pagans converted to Christianity.¹⁰⁵ Once sacrifices had been banned, Arcadius and Honorius issued laws protecting pagan temples from destruction. Thus the architectural monuments of the empire’s ancient religion were allowed to stand, even while the public cult that was at its heart was suppressed, and their priests—whose profession was now prohibited by law—lost their legal privileges.¹⁰⁶ Severe disabilities were imposed on dissenting Christians, such as the Donatists.¹⁰⁷ By around the year 400, the Roman Empire bore a distinctively Catholic Christian face.

¹⁰⁵ Restrictions on Jews in imperial service: *Cod. Theod.* 16.8.24 (issued from Ravenna on March 10, 418), which barred new Jewish recruits to the imperial *militia*. It permitted those currently serving as *agentes in rebus* or as palatines to complete their term of service, but called for those who sought entrance into the *militia armata* to be dismissed immediately. Theodosian Novel 3, issued in 438 (valid in the west as of 448), forbids Jews (and Samaritans) from holding imperial office (s. 2: “*neminem Iudaeum neminem Samaritam ... ad honores et dignitates accedere*”) and (s. 3) outlaws the construction of new synagogues.

¹⁰⁶ Protection of temples: *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.15-19. Loss of privileges for pagan priests: *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.14.

¹⁰⁷ In an edict issued in January 380, just a few months after his accession, and preserved in *Cod. Theod.* 16.1.2, Theodosius had given official status to the faith confessed at Alexandria and Rome. Another law of Theodosius issued on January 10, 381, defined true Christians as those who confess “that Almighty God and Christ the Son of God are One in name, God of God, Light of Light,” and who do not “violate by denial the Holy Spirit which we hope for and receive from the Supreme Author of things.” It likewise employs “a Greek word, *ousia*,” to denote what the three Persons of the Trinity share. The law prescribes branding for those who were found guilty of not adhering to such beliefs, forbids them to assemble within the towns, and orders that their churches be handed over “to all orthodox bishops who hold the Nicene faith.” See *Cod. Theod.* 16.5.6. Another law specifically aimed at “the Eunomians and the Arians” followed in July of the same year. Subsequent statutes issued by Theodosius (*Cod. Theod.* 16.5.11-16) outlawed other Trinitarian or Christological heresies and subjected their adherents to similar constraints. These restrictions were upheld by a number of laws issued from Constantinople during the reign of Arcadius (*Cod. Theod.* 16.5.25-34). If Honorius’ court issued no analogous legislation for the west, the reason seems to be that the particular groups targeted by Arcadius’ government simply were not present in the west. The one dissenting group that presented a major headache for the western government was, of course, the Donatists, who were targeted by a series of laws issued during the early fifth century (*Cod. Theod.* 16.5.37, 39-44, 51-52, and 54-56). Manichaeans, who had long been considered subversive by Roman authorities, continued to be targeted by legislation during this period. A law of Valentinian I (*Cod. Theod.* 16.5.3) ordered their property confiscated.

The Expansion of the Church

These changes in the empire's religious profile during the foundational period are also visible in the church's numerical growth, which can be measured both in terms of the creation of new bishoprics and of the construction of new church buildings. This section will draw on literary as well as archaeological evidence to chart this growth, for which northern Italy is a paradigmatic example.¹⁰⁸ Because this growth of the church was not affected in any discernible way by the theological and legal developments that have just been outlined, our discussion will not be bound by the division between the foundational and the post-Ambrosian periods employed above.

By 350, only seven bishoprics in the provinces of Flaminia and Picenum, Alpes Cottiae, Venetia and Histria, and Liguria and Aemilia are known to have been established.¹⁰⁹ As of 381, the year in which the bishops of northern Italy met for a council at Aquileia, that number had risen to 21.¹¹⁰ Ambrose's organizational efforts led to the foundation of bishoprics in Como, Novara, Ivrea, Aosta, and Turin, raising the total to 26 by the time of his death in 397.¹¹¹ By

Another, issued by Theodosius (*Cod. Theod.* 16.5.7), prohibited them from passing their property to their heirs and denied them the right to assemble in the cities. See also 16.5.9, 18, 20, and 35.

¹⁰⁸ The following statistics are based on the tables in P. Testini, G. Cantino Wataghin, and L. Pani Ermini, "La cattedrale in Italia," in *Actes du XIe congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne. Lyon, Vienne, Grenoble, Genève et Aoste (21-28 septembre 1986)* (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1989), 5-232, at 19-26. The first table is based on literary sources, the second (which is necessarily much less precise) is based on archaeological finds of the remains of episcopal groups. I have mainly used the first table, but incorporated data from the second for Albenga, Parenzo, and Pola, since in these cases the archaeological evidence allows us to establish the foundation of a bishopric significantly earlier than the literary evidence does.

¹⁰⁹ These were: Ravenna, Faenza, Aquileia, Brescia, Padua, Verona, and Milan.

¹¹⁰ These were (new sees in bold): Ravenna, **Rimini**, **Bologna**, Faenza, **Imola**, **Parma**, **Piacenza**, **Genoa**, **Albenga**, **Parenzo**, **Pola**, **Tortona**, **Altino**, Aquileia, Brescia, Padua, **Trent**, **Lodi**, **Ticinum/Pavia**, Verona, Milan, and **Vercelli**.

¹¹¹ For Como, see Testini et al., "La cattedrale in Italia," 23; for the others, see McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 285-286. Sotinel points out that Ambrose's main motivation for establishing these new sees was to gain allies in the fight against heresy rather than being evangelistic in nature. See *Identité civique*, 199.

451, when a council of the bishops under the jurisdiction of the metropolitan see of Milan met in that city, the number had risen to 36.¹¹² To be sure, the establishment of a bishopric does not necessarily coincide with the introduction of Christianity into a city. Many of these new bishoprics will have had a church under the supervision of the bishop of another city long before receiving one of their own. But the creation of a new episcopal see in a city was a recognition of its importance in the ecclesiastical geography. Moreover, the creation of new bishoprics is one of the precious few metrics by which it is possible to trace the growth of the Christian church in the fourth and fifth centuries.

Another is the construction of new church buildings. The steady numerical growth suggested by the increase in the number of episcopal sees is confirmed by the evidence for an explosion in new church construction uncovered by archaeologists since the 1960s.¹¹³ This new building activity might take the form of the enlarging of existing edifices. It might also take the form of completely new structures, as was the case with the several churches constructed during the second half of the fourth century in Milan (especially during the episcopate of Ambrose) and in other cities of northern Italy.¹¹⁴ Christian bishops, most of whom came from the curial class—

¹¹² These were (new sees in bold): **Ascoli Piceno**, **S. Maria a Potenza**, Ravenna, Rimini, Bologna, **Brescello**, Faenza, Imola, **Modena**, Parma, Piacenza, Genoa, **Reggio Emilia**, **Vicohabentia**, Albenga, **Asti**, Genoa, Tortona, Altinum, Aquileia, Brescia, **Concordia**, **Cremona**, Padua, Trent, Verona, **Aosta**, **Bergamo**, **Ivrea**, Lodi, Milan, **Novara**, **Turin**, and Vercelli.

¹¹³ For this explosion of church construction in fourth-century Italy, see Testini, Cantino Wataghin, and Ermini., “La cattedrale in Italia,” *passim*.

¹¹⁴ New churches in Milan from this period include the *Basilica Nova*, an enormous structure of 80 x 45 meters (the cathedral of the city), which may have been completed during the episcopate of Auxentius (355-374); the *Basilica Ambrosiana* (Sant’Ambrogio); the *Basilica Apostolorum* (San Nazaro); the *Basilica Portiana*; and the *Basilica Virginum* (San Simpliciano). See Richard Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 68-92; Mario Mirabelli Roberta, *Milano Romana* (Milan: Rusconi, 1984), 106-111 (*Basilica Nova*), 120-124 (*Basilica Ambrosiana*), and 125-129 (*Basilica Apostolorum*); Caterina Giostra, “La basilica di S. Simpliciano fra età paleocristiana e altomedioevo: alcuni spinti,” in *Contributi di ricerca su Ambrogio e Simpliciano. Atti del secondo dies academicus, 3-4 aprile 2006* (Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 2007), 77-98 (*Basilica Virginum*); McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 226-229 (*Basilica Ambrosiana*), 229-236 (*Basilica Apostolorum*), and 235-236 (*Basilica Virginum*); and (for the *Basilica Portiana*),

the local elites who had traditionally administered the cities of the Mediterranean world on behalf of the Roman emperor—took a leading role in their capacity as leaders of Christian communities in overseeing the construction of these new monumental buildings. Before the emergence of Christianity as the dominant religion of the Roman world, decurions had been in the habit of devoting their resources to the building of circuses, baths, and amphitheaters, and also to maintaining the amenities that gave ancient urban life its charm.¹¹⁵ Bishops continued to exercise the same function as their families had for generations, the only change being in the type of structure whose building they now sponsored.

The fourth-century history of the main church building in Aquileia—the Theodorean Basilica—illustrates the leading role played by bishops in organizing construction projects as well as the common practice of expanding an existing structure rather than building an entirely new one. This particular city was well known for its “precocious” Christian community, one of the few in the Roman world to have a dedicated church building already in the early fourth century. This church, an example of what is known as the *domus ecclesiae* style, was essentially a house that had been remodeled to serve as a gathering place for Christian worship.¹¹⁶ It had a mosaic floor that is mostly preserved, and on which there is found an inscription celebrating the patronage of bishop Theodorus. Over the course of the fourth century, it was enlarged by successive bishops. One stage of the enlargement was overseen by Fortunatianus, whose role in

Marcia Colish, “Why the Portian? Reflections on the Milanese Basilica Crisis of 386,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 10.3 (2002): 361-372, at 368-370.

¹¹⁵ On the variety of services decurions rendered to their cities, see Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 1.734-737.

¹¹⁶ For the *domus Dei* type of early Christian architecture, see L. Michael White, *Building God's House in the Roman World: Architectural Adaptation among Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 111-123. This section is part of a chapter that discusses house church structures (103-111) as well as Christian architecture that was more monumental in nature than the *domus ecclesiae* (123-139).

the Arian controversy has been discussed above. As the structure was enlarged, it also became more fully integrated, both socially and architecturally, with its surroundings.¹¹⁷ A subsequent stage that followed soon thereafter may have been overseen by Fortunatianus or by his successor Valerian, whom we also met earlier in this chapter.¹¹⁸

The story of church construction in Milan in the late fourth century is something of an outlier because of the activities of bishop Ambrose, who possessed a vast personal fortune thanks to his senatorial background.¹¹⁹ He personally underwrote the construction of the Milanese church that came to be known simply as the *Basilica Ambrosiana*.¹²⁰ But since the vast majority of bishops did not have the personal wealth necessary to qualify for the rank of *vir clarissimus*, they would simply have acted as coordinators of building programs to which several members of the church contributed rather than as the sole financial sponsors of new construction. Such was evidently the case in Aquileia in the early fourth century, where the names of other members of

¹¹⁷ Humphries, *Communities of the Blessed*, 192-195, describes the transformation of the Theodorean Basilica during the episcopacy of Fortunatianus. See especially p. 194, where he writes, “Fortunatianus’ basilica, like its Theodorean predecessor, marks a further stage in the increasing monumentality of the cathedral site. And just as the building itself was becoming a more visible feature in the urban landscape of Aquileia, so too the liturgy celebrated within was no longer shielded from the prying eyes of the urban community as a whole. With this new church, Aquileian Christianity became more integrated into the public life of the city; the clandestine mentality underlying the Theodorean building had evaporated to be replaced by greater self-confidence in the episcopate of Fortunatianus.” Sotinel points out that, according to Athanasius (*Apol. Ad Constantium* 14), the older structure was enlarged (to dimensions of 73.4 x 30.95 meters, she tells us, on the basis of the archaeological record) in order to accommodate a growing Christian community. See *Identité civique*, 41-46. See also Pasquale Testini, “‘Basilica,’ ‘Domus ecclesiae,’ e aule teodoriane di Aquileia,” in *Aquileia nel IV secolo*, vol. 2, *AAAd* 22 (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1982), 369-398.

¹¹⁸ For the mosaic floor and the later enlargement of the Theodorean basilica, see Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 72-89, Pl. I, and figures 5-8 on pp. 431-434.

¹¹⁹ The size of Ambrose’s fortune is one area of disagreement between Barnes and Brown covered in their exchange over the broader issue of Christianity and wealth in the fourth century (“Peter Brown on Christian Attitudes to Wealth in the Late Roman West,” *Canadian Journal of History/Annales canadiennes d’histoire* 49 [2014]: 67-74). Barnes’ point that the ‘impoverished’ situation of Ambrose’s family (since his father had his property confiscated, having been on the wrong side of the civil war between Constantine and Constans) must be taken into account (p. 71) is well taken, but Brown is surely correct to point out that “a gift, even from a senator down on his luck, was not to be sniffed at” (p. 73).

¹²⁰ As McLynn indicates, *Ambrose of Milan*, 56, Ambrose had the structure built to house his remains.

the church, such as one Cyriacus, appear on the mosaic pavement alongside that of bishop Theodorus.¹²¹

Imperial Politics

The political situation of the empire at the beginning of the foundational period was relatively secure. The reforms of Constantine had brought an end to the civil wars by restoring the dynastic principle as the basis for the succession. His currency reform had improved economic conditions by making a reliable gold coinage available to merchants once again. His embrace of Christianity had put an end to the destructive and demoralizing persecutions of the Tetrarchs. The borders of the empire remained for the most part secure into the 370s.¹²² But one of the most significant differences between the foundational period and our main period of inquiry lies precisely in the changes in the empire's relationship with its barbarian neighbors to the north. For by 397, clear signs of the weakened state of the imperial political structure—at least in the west—had begun to emerge.

The most significant political challenge faced by the late empire was the increasingly difficult task of keeping the barbarians on the northern side of the Rhine-Danube frontier, or at least of bringing them into the empire on its own terms. In 378, the emperor Valens (r. 364-378) was killed in battle against the Visigoths, who had been brought over the Danube with imperial permission but rose up in armed rebellion after being oppressed by the imperial officials tasked

¹²¹ That Theodorus should be located chronologically in the early fourth century is based on the appearance of a bishop of Aquileia of that name in the list of signatories of the Council of Rome (313) and Arles (314) that dealt with the Donatist schism in North Africa. See *PCBE* 2.2166. For Cyriacus, see Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 78 and Pl. Ib.

¹²² John Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court, A. D. 364-425* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1975), 33

with provisioning them.¹²³ This was only the second time in the empire's history that an emperor had lost his life in battle against a barbarian enemy. The following year, Gratian named the Spanish general Theodosius as his colleague to rule the eastern provinces.¹²⁴ Older than Gratian and more experienced in military affairs, Theodosius was able to conclude a treaty with the Goths whereby they would be allowed to settle in the empire in return for military service.¹²⁵ Unlike previous groups of barbarians who had been given idle land in exchange for military service, however, the Goths would serve in their own units under their own commanders, and would receive an annual payment from the imperial government. This new arrangement, under which the Goths served in the Roman army as *foederati*, was a sign of things to come. In the late fourth century, the balance of power between the empire and her barbarian neighbors was changing, and this shift would produce dramatic results by the middle of the following century.

Ambrose of Milan

Before setting the stage for the proper subject of this dissertation by considering the political context of the first half of the fifth century, we must pause to summarize the career of the one individual who more than any other spoke on behalf of Latin Christianity in the late fourth century and who profoundly influenced the culture of the churches of northern Italy for several decades beyond his lifetime: bishop Ambrose of Milan. The significant changes that have just been described—the resolution of the Arian controversy, the reform of the empire's

¹²³ On the Goths' entry into imperial territory and the Battle of Adrianople, see Herwig Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 2nd ed., trans. Thomas J. Dunlap (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 117-131; and Peter Heather, *Goths and Romans 332-489* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 130-142.

¹²⁴ For a thorough discussion of the circumstances surrounding Theodosius' accession, see Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 88-100.

¹²⁵ The terms of this treaty—"probably the most momentous *foedus* in Roman history"—are discussed in Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 131-134; and Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 158-165.

religious policy that so drastically altered its public life, and the creation of new episcopal sees and new church buildings in northern Italy—were a long way from being fully worked out at the time when Ambrose suddenly found himself elected as bishop of Milan. The political crisis that was to trouble the western empire during the reign of Theodosius and on into the fifth century had not yet materialized. Late in 374, the death of the aging bishop Auxentius, long a thorn in the side of the many pro-Nicene bishops in other Italian sees, created a golden opportunity for a minority party within the Milanese church to put an end to the “Arian” interlude in that church’s history, represented by the tenure of the now deceased usurper (for so he was in their eyes) Auxentius, and to reclaim the mantle of his predecessor Dionysius, whom they regarded as a hero of authentic Christianity.¹²⁶ In this situation, engineering the election of a solidly pro-Nicene bishop for the church of Milan would have been a major victory. That the person put in office by this faction at this moment was Ambrose was an epic coup because he possessed three traits that few other fourth-century bishops could claim. These enabled him, more than any other bishop of this period, to put his particular stamp on the ecclesiastical life of his age: an elevated social status, an administrative background, and the intellectual endowment he enjoyed by virtue of his elite education. These traits allowed him to exercise an enormous influence on the churches of *Italia Annonaria*, which lay most directly within his sphere of influence, and to project his power into the ecclesiastical life of neighboring dioceses. And so, Gaudentius of Brescia could refer in one of his sermons (delivered in Ambrose’s presence) to the fact that the north Italian bishops of his day looked for leadership to their “*communem patrem*

¹²⁶ On this pro-Nicene minority within the Christian community of Milan, see McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 3-4, 10, 13-31, 43-47, and 49; Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 77-78; and Cesare Pasini, *Ambrose of Milan: Deeds and Thought of a Bishop*, trans. Robert L. Grant (Staten Island: St. Paul’s, 2013), 43. In contrast to McLynn, Barnes argues that while by 374 the clergy of Milan had become majority Homoian, there is good reason to believe that the laity were in fact overwhelmingly Nicene. See “Valentinian, Auxentius, and Ambrose,” *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 51.2 (2002): 227-237, at 235-236.

Ambrosium.”¹²⁷ His considerable prestige also enabled him to forge relationships with influential churchmen in Illyricum, Gaul, and southern Italy.¹²⁸ Let us therefore briefly consider each of these three qualities in turn.

Ambrose stood apart from almost every other fourth-century bishop first of all in his social status. Until the fifth century, the vast majority of Christian bishops came from curial families, the local elites who were generally wealthy enough to provide their sons with a liberal education and who took care of local administration on behalf of the imperial government.¹²⁹ A clerical career was an attractive choice to many men of such a background, especially after Constantine granted to Christian clergy the same exemptions from civic *munera* and many types of taxation that were enjoyed by the officials of other religions.¹³⁰ But men of senatorial status

¹²⁷ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 16.10; cf. Cesare Pasini, “‘*Communem patrem Ambrosium*’: Sant’Ambrogio e i vescovi dell’Italia settentrionale,” *La Scuola cattolica* 126 (1998): 273-286.

¹²⁸ Ambrose’s intervention in a key episcopal election in Sirmium, an imperial residence and the leading city of Illyricum, will be discussed in chap. 5. His relationships with like-minded bishops in Gaul (Victricius of Rouen) and southern Italy (Paulinus of Nola) will be discussed in chap. 3.

¹²⁹ The work of Frank D. Gilliard and Claire Sotinel has clearly demonstrated the “middling” background of nearly all of the fourth- and a large majority of the fifth-century bishops for whom information is available. See Gilliard, “Senatorial Bishops in the Fourth Century,” *Harvard Theological Review* 77.2 (1984): 153-175; and Sotinel, “Le recrutement des évêques en Italie aux IV^e et V^e siècles: essai d’enquête prosopographique,” in *Vescovi e pastori in epoca teodosiana: in occasione del XVI centenario della consacrazione episcopale di S. Agostino, 396-1996: XXV incontro di studiosi dell’antichità cristiana Roma, 8-11 maggio 1996* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1997), 1.193-204. Mathisen notes that senatorial bishops did not become common until the fifth century. See “Petronius, Hilarius, and Valerianus: Prosopographical Notes on the Conversion of the Roman Aristocracy,” *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 30.1 (1981), 112. For the light bureaucratic footprint of the later Roman Empire, see Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 2.1057, who estimates the total size of the imperial civil service during the later empire to have been approximately 30,000; Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 28, who estimates the number of “senior” bureaucrats to have been around 6,000; and Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, 4-5.

¹³⁰ The exemption from *munera* had been given perhaps as early as 313. See *Cod. Theod.* 16.2.2. It is unclear when tax exemption began for Christian clergy, but *Cod. Theod.* 16.2.8, promulgated by Constantius in 343, refers to an earlier exemption. On these matters, see also 16.2.3, 6-10, 16.2.14-19, 16.2.21-22, 16.2.24, 16.2.26, 16.2.29-30, and 16.2.38-40. That Jewish religious officials already enjoyed a similar exemption is demonstrated by a law of Constantine from the year 330 (*Cod. Theod.* 16.8.2) stating that all those who “with complete devotion should dedicate themselves to the synagogues of the Jews as patriarchs and priests and should live in the aforementioned sect and preside over the administration of their law ... shall *continue to be* exempt from all compulsory public services that are incumbent on their persons, as well as those that are due to the municipalities” (emphasis added). The “privileges” of pagan priests are mentioned in *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.14, where they are “completely abolished.”

typically set their sights on a more traditional career in the imperial administration, and in this respect Ambrose followed the standard procedure for young men of his social class—at least at the beginning of his career.¹³¹ His father had been praetorian prefect of Gaul, and thus Ambrose inherited from him the status of a *vir clarissimus*. He therefore possessed the social connections—and the supreme self-confidence—typical of a member of the empire-wide ruling class.¹³²

Ambrose's social background meant that he was groomed from an early age, by virtue of his education and his social network, to serve the empire in its administration. Thus after completing his studies, he served on the staff of Petronius Probus, Praetorian Prefect of Italy and Illyricum. After a period of service there, he was awarded the post of *consularis* of Liguria and Aemilia, a province that included most of the present-day Italian regions of Valle d'Aosta, Liguria, Lombardy, and Emilia-Romagna. Its capital was Milan, at the time also an imperial residence, even if Valentinian I spent more of his time in Trier or elsewhere along the Rhine-Danube frontier. This assignment brought him to the city whose bishop he would eventually become.¹³³

¹³¹ Matthews summarizes the career of Quintus Aurelius Symmachus as one that was typical for a man of senatorial rank in *Western Aristocracies*, 12-17.

¹³² It is, however, necessary to be cautious in this connection. As Neil McLynn points out, Ambrose's father fell from imperial favor and lost his life as a result. Moreover, he had not himself been born into a senatorial family. He was a parvenu, a member of the new, wider senatorial class that was a product of Constantine's administrative reforms, which enabled many curial families to enter the lower ranks of the aristocracy. And so, although Ambrose was technically a senator, he was not the social equal of such pagan senators as Quintus Aurelius Symmachus and Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, or the Christian senator Paulinus of Nola, all of whom were members of the exclusive class of *virii inlustres*. And, though considerable, the fortune of Ambrose's family was insignificant compared to the vast possessions of members of the uppermost ranks of the nobility. See *Ambrose of Milan*, 31-33, 37-38, 55, 69-72, and 263-264; the exchange between Barnes and Brown in Barnes in "Peter Brown on Christian Attitudes to Wealth in the Late Roman West"; and Barnes, "The Election of Ambrose of Milan," in *Episcopal Elections in Late Antiquity*, ed. Johan Leemans et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 39-59.

¹³³ Paulinus, *Vita Ambrosii*, 5; and McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 42-44.

Ambrose's elite background also provided him with an education and an intellectual framework that allowed him to make an enormous contribution to the church and to Christian literature on a variety of subjects. His legal training enabled him to use church councils effectively to advance his agenda, as seen in his dominance of the Council of Aquileia in 381, where he was the moving force behind the strong pro-Nicene decisions of the council even though Valerian, as bishop of the host city, was technically the presiding officer.¹³⁴ Ambrose was a mere catechumen when he was suddenly chosen as bishop of Milan, and he famously lamented to his clergy that he was woefully unprepared to be a teacher of the Christian faith at the beginning of his tenure. However, the liberal education he had received served him well as he played catch-up during the first few years of his episcopate. During the years 379-381, he wrote a number of dogmatic treatises on subjects related to the Arian controversy.¹³⁵ He published a great many sermons on the Old Testament in the form of exegetical treatises, works for which he drew heavily on the writings Philo of Alexandria, Origen, and Basil of Caesarea.¹³⁶ One of the most important features of the intellectual climate of north Italian Christianity in the late fourth century was precisely its absorption of Greek Christian thought; Ambrose, who unlike almost any other western bishop of his age was able to read Greek, was well positioned to

¹³⁴ F. Homes Dudden's account of the council, though strongly biased in favor of Ambrose's cause, does bring out the way in which his legal training allowed him to browbeat his opponents. See *The Life and Times of Saint Ambrose* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), 201-205.

¹³⁵ Not only the *De fide* (CSEL 78), but also the *De spiritu sancto* and the *De incarnationis dominicae sacramento* (both found in CSEL 79).

¹³⁶ John Moorhead discusses Ambrose's use of these Greek writers in *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Society in the Late Roman World* (London and New York: Longman, 1999), 72-74. Other theological influences on Ambrose, besides his fellow westerner Hilary of Poitiers, included Athanasius of Alexandria, Gregory of Nazianzus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Didymus the Blind. See Pasini, *Ambrose of Milan*, 35. Didymus' influence on Ambrose's *De Spiritu sancto* was, as Pasini points out, *Ambrose of Milan*, 28-29, so palpable that it prompted Jerome to accuse Ambrose of plagiarism.

produce works that built on and accentuated this tradition.¹³⁷ In the realm of exegesis, he also produced a commentary on Luke that was used by Chromatius, Gaudentius, Maximus, and Peter Chrysologus. In addition to producing dogmatic works and exegetical treatises, Ambrose kept up a correspondence with a variety of types of people—emperors, bishops, priests, laymen, and even his sister. Nearly 100 of his letters have come down to us, having been published by Ambrose himself during his lifetime.¹³⁸ The fruits of his intellectual labors were not, however, without their critics. Jerome, in particular, derided his talents as an exegete as only he could.¹³⁹ Anyone trying to evaluate Ambrose’s writings in a fair-minded way has to admit that Jerome had a point, even if he went too far. Ambrose’s greatest gift was as an organizer and political operator. As a theologian, he had a certain flair. And as an exegete, it should be said in his defense that he showed the young Augustine how allegorical interpretation could render the Old Testament useful for the Christian.¹⁴⁰ However, he did not have nearly the philological expertise

¹³⁷ The significance of the eastern sojourns of Hilary of Poitiers and Eusebius of Vercelli for the development of western Trinitarian theology has already been mentioned. But other areas of church life in which eastern connections were significant—and unique to northern Italy—were the cult of the saints and exegesis. The influence of eastern exegesis is noticeable in the preaching of Zeno of Verona, whose episcopate spanned from the 360s until ca. 380. See especially Yves-Marie Duval, “Les sources grecques de l’exégèse de Jonas chez Zénon de Vérone,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 20.2 (1966): 98-115. Duval notes at the end of this article (114-115) that there are likely parallels for the influence of Greek exegesis on Zeno in the cases of Chromatius and Gaudentius as well. See also Vittorio Boccardi, “Quantum spiritaliter intellegi datur: L’esegesi di Zenone di Verona,” *Augustinianum* 23.3 (1983): 453-485 at 453, 468, 469, 475, and 485; Pierre Maravel, “Job dans l’oeuvre de Zénon de Vérone,” in *Le livre de Job chez les Pères* (Strasbourg: Centre d’Analyse et de Documentation Patristique, 1996), 23-30. For a critique of Duval’s thesis, see Annarita Magri, “Zenone e l’esegesi di Giona,” *Rivista di teologia e scienze religiose* 13.1 (2002): 79-100. As for the cult of the saints, Gaudentius of Brescia was visiting the east when he received word that the church of Brescia would accept no one else as the successor to Filaster (*Tr.* 16.2). His *Tr.* 17 is devoted to listing and praising all of the saints whose relics the church of Brescia possessed. In it, he relates how a group of consecrated virgins insisted that he take with him the relics of forty Cappadocian martyrs (14-15).

¹³⁸ Ambrose’s letters have been published in *CSEL* 82/1-3.

¹³⁹ On Jerome’s stinging criticisms, see McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 289-290; and David Hunter, “The Raven Replies: Ambrose’s *Letter to the Church at Vercelli* (*Ep.ex.coll.* 14) and the Criticism of Jerome,” in *Jerome of Stridon: His Life, Writings, and Legacy*, ed. Andrew Cain and Josef Lössl (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2009), 175-189.

¹⁴⁰ Augustine, *Confessions*, 5.14.24, describing Ambrose’s preaching, which first attracted his attention on account of its rhetorical technique rather than its content, writes: “Above all, I heard first one, then another, then many difficult passages in the Old Testament scriptures figuratively interpreted, where I, by taking them literally, had

that Jerome or Origen possessed, with their knowledge of Hebrew and access to the most authoritative manuscripts of the Scriptures. But what he did accomplish was remarkable. He embodied the spirit of his age; he powerfully influenced the culture of north Italian Christianity for several decades beyond his death; and his labors as an ecclesiastical official and a theological writer earned him the status of one of the Fathers of the Latin Church.

Background, 397-451

We have now sketched the basic features of the political and ecclesiastical world in which Chromatius of Aquileia (s. 388/389-ca. 407), Gaudentius of Brescia (s. ca. 396-ca. 410), Vigilius of Trent (s. before 397-after 398), Maximus of Turin (ca. 398-408/423), Peter Chrysologus (s. 426/430-ca. 450), and Rufinus (ca. 345-410/411) came of age, and in which they began their ecclesiastical careers.¹⁴¹ It remains for us to return to the themes of theology and the empire's political situation and to trace the major developments in these areas down to the year 451. Having done that, we will consider three other issues that are significant for this study—the duties of bishops in the late antique church, the emergence of the three metropolitan sees of northern Italy, and the degree to which these bishops can be described as a “community of preachers.”

Theology: Barbarian Arians

The increasing strength of Ambrose and his pro-Nicene partisans should not obscure that, whatever successes they had in securing the allegiance of Roman Christians to Nicaea, the number of barbarians living inside the empire—most of whom were Homoian Christians—was

found them to kill. So after several passages in the Old Testament had been expounded spiritually, I now found fault with that despair of mine, caused by my belief tht the law and the prophets could not be defended at all against the mockery of hostile critics” (trans. Chadwick).

¹⁴¹ The dates of the episcopates of Chromatius, Vigilius, Gaudentius, and Maximus will be discussed in the Appendix. For Peter's dates, see below, p. 67n.197.

growing steadily in the late fourth century.¹⁴² To be sure, by the time of his death in 397, the possibility that the imperially sponsored Creed of Rimini would be imposed on any of the churches of the Roman Empire was remote in the extreme, and the commitment of the great majority of bishops throughout the empire to the Nicene Creed was firmly established. But as more and more barbarians entered the western provinces of the empire—whether they came as part of armies led by barbarian kings or migrated in the hopes of serving in the Roman army—their presence on Roman soil created new possibilities for interaction between adherents of different creeds. These possibilities arose more and more only after Ambrose’s death, and so they presented Gaudentius, Maximus, and Peter with a situation in which they, like Ambrose, were ranged against a competing Christian theology, but within a new context that would have been hard to imagine before the military emergency into which northern Italy was plunged at the beginning of the fifth century.¹⁴³ We will now trace the ups and downs of the empire’s political situation from the tail end of the fourth until the middle of the fifth century, when Theodosius’ line expired with the death of grandson, Valentinian III (r. 425-455).

Imperial Politics: The Gradual Disintegration of the Western Empire

¹⁴² I am using the term “Roman” here in both a cultural and a political sense. That is, it refers to those who were Latin-speaking and, in legal terms, citizens of the empire. It must be conceded, however, that in the context of the late empire, this definition perhaps makes too rigid a distinction between two groups—“Romans” and “barbarians”—in between which there was not a hard and fast boundary which a person might always be conscious of crossing. Rather, there was room in between the two poles of Roman and barbarian (to be conceived of more as ideal types than as the only two options for a late antique person’s identity) for a number of shades of difference. The barbarians whose migrations brought them into the Roman Empire during the fifth century in particular might occupy different areas within this space as they assimilated into the cultural and legal matrix of the empire to different degrees. On this point, see Ralph W. Mathisen, “*Peregrini, Barbari, and Cives Romani*: Concepts of Citizenship and the Legal Identity of Barbarians in the Later Roman Empire,” *American Historical Review* 111.4 (2006): 1011-1040. One cultural and religious trait that most of these barbarian migrants brought into the empire with them was adherence to Arian rather than Nicene Christianity. As will be discussed in chap. 5, their numbers grew during the period covered by this study, along with their political importance (a factor of their making up a significant portion of the Roman army). Thus it became all the more necessary for the emperors to respect their right to assemble for worship. And so the “resolution” of which I speak should be understood with this caveat in mind.

¹⁴³ These bishops’ response to the challenge posed by “Arianism” will be the main subject of chap. 5.

Theodosius died in Milan in January 395, a few months after taking his army to the west to put down the usurpation of Eugenius, the second such expedition he led during his reign.¹⁴⁴ He was succeeded in the west by his son Honorius (r. 393-423), who was only ten years old at the time. However, the steady hand of Stilicho, a general of part-Roman, part-barbarian ancestry who was also Theodosius' son-in-law, ensured the stability of Honorius' government until he reached his majority.¹⁴⁵ As it turns out, it was fortunate that Stilicho had been left in the west by Theodosius to look after the young Augustus.¹⁴⁶ For the death of the emperor, who in 382 had brokered the uneasy peace with Gothic insurgents who had defeated and killed Valens, prompted the Visigoths, led by their king Alaric, to insist once again on a more permanent resolution of their status. They had remained in the Balkans since the 380s, but Alaric desired a high office in

¹⁴⁴ Theodosius had earlier journeyed west at the head of an army to put down the usurpation of Magnus Maximus, an episode that will be discussed at greater length in chap. 5 in the context of the conflict between Ambrose and the court of Valentinian II over the desire of the latter to use a basilica in Milan to celebrate Easter. As for the usurpation of Eugenius, its true motivation has become a matter of controversy in recent scholarship. Ambrose and Rufinus presented it as the fruit of a "pagan reaction" against the harsh restrictions Theodosius imposed on the traditional cults, a view that has been influential on modern accounts of this episode, in particular that of Herbert Bloch, "A New Document of the Last Pagan Revival in the West," *Harvard Theological Review* 38 (1945): 199-244. The most recent treatments of Eugenius from the traditional point of view are Charles W. Hedrick, *History and Silence: Purge and Rehabilitation of Memory in Late Antiquity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 39-54. Alan Cameron has spent his career articulating a revisionist view, which denies that Eugenius had any particular sympathy for paganism and downplays the role of religion in his bid for imperial power. His decades of labor culminated in *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 74-89. For the responses of a number of scholars supporting the traditional view, see Rita Lizzi Testa, ed., *The Strange Death of Pagan Rome* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).

¹⁴⁵ For Stilicho's regency, see J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire: From the Death of Theodosius I to the Death of Justinian* (New York: Dover, 1958), 1.106-173 (a rather unsympathetic account); A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire: A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1964), 1.182-185; Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (London: MacMillan, 2005), 205-227; and especially Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 253-283.

¹⁴⁶ At least we are told that he had been given this responsibility. To be sure, despite his hostility toward Stilicho, Bury takes at face value the claim that he was given a supervisory responsibility not only for the ten-year-old Honorius, but also for the eighteen-year-old Arcadius, who had been left by his father to rule in Constantinople. See *History of the Later Roman Empire*, 1.106. However, McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 356, is justifiably skeptical, as is Cameron, on whom he relies. See Cameron, *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 38-45.

the Roman military and a permanent homeland for his people on imperial territory.¹⁴⁷ In pursuit of these aims, he led his army into Italy twice in the first decade of the 400s.¹⁴⁸ Alaric was not the only barbarian leader who led an armed force into Italy during this decade, which was a time of acute military crisis for the peninsula. While he was alive, Stilicho managed to defeat—or at least drive out—whatever barbarian armies attempted to force their way into Italy. Thus in 402, his forces inflicted enough damage on Alaric’s army to force him to withdraw to the Balkans, if only temporarily.¹⁴⁹ In 406, he decisively defeated the army of the chieftain Radagaisus.¹⁵⁰ By the time Alaric and the Visigoths returned in 408, however, Stilicho had been assassinated, the victim of intrigue on the part of those aristocrats who were critical of his handling of the empire’s foreign and military policy.¹⁵¹ Their second such foray lasted several years and had much more serious consequences than the first. Alaric was able to set up a puppet emperor as a rival to Honorius, and he also managed to enter Rome and sack the city for three days.¹⁵² Upon his departure, he took with him one particularly high-value hostage, Galla Placidia, daughter of

¹⁴⁷ As Wolfram points out, the death of Theodosius annulled the treaty of 382. For the fortunes of the Goths in the Balkans between 395 and 401, including the campaigns Stilicho led against them, see *History of the Goths*, 139-150; Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 199-208; and *The Goths* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996), 138-146.

¹⁴⁸ Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 150-161; and Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 273-276.

¹⁴⁹ For the battles of Verona and Pollentia, see Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 209.

¹⁵⁰ Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 1.184; Heather, *The Goths* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996), 147; and *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 194.

¹⁵¹ Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 276-283.

¹⁵² The puppet emperor was Attalus, at the time prefect of Rome. He was eventually captured after accompanying the Goths to Spain. Once captured, his hand was cut off, though he was allowed to live. See Orosius, *Seven Books of History against the Pagans*, 7.42; and Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 293, 295-299, and 314-316. The destruction wrought by the Visigoths’ sack of Rome should not be exaggerated. Peter Heather characterizes it as “one of the most civilized sacks of a city ever witnessed.” The sanctity of holy places was for the most part respected and few structures were destroyed. The Visigoths were mainly interested in seizing movable property. See *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 227-232, at 227-228. Peter Brown describes the sack as “a chillingly well-conducted act of spoliation.” See *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 294-295. It is Orosius (7.40.2) who informs us that the Goths took Galla Placidia with them when they left the city.

Theodosius and half-sister to Honorius. The Visigoths' Italian expedition came to an end in 412, a little over a year after the sudden death of Alaric. However, Placidia remained their hostage even after they made their way to southwestern Gaul, and would eventually be married to Alaric's brother and successor, Athaulf, to whom she bore a son.¹⁵³ The empire managed to weather the storm of Alaric's invasion of Italy, but the crisis of the first decade of the fifth century created tensions not only within the imperial ruling class—tensions seen in the fall of Stilicho—but also, as we shall see, among the Christian communities of northern Italy, where the imperial troops stationed there to oppose Alaric and his army created pastoral challenges for the bishops of these cities.¹⁵⁴

The Visigoths' entry into Italy was significant not only because they were the first barbarian people to be settled permanently on imperial soil as *foederati*, but also because the need to confront them militarily had repercussions that reverberated well beyond Italy and that involved other barbarian peoples. Sensible though it was, the western government's preoccupation with the defense of Italy against Alaric (and Radagaisus) created an opportunity for other barbarian peoples to move into the empire. On New Year's Eve 406 the Suebi, Vandals and Alans marched across the frozen Rhine.¹⁵⁵ Over the next several years, the Vandals made their way across Gaul and into Spain. The Burgundians were settled on the middle Rhine during

¹⁵³ Orosius relates that Athaulf harbored hopes that his marriage with the imperial house would lead to a renewal of the Roman Empire, aided by the strength of Gothic arms. See *Seven Books of History*, 7.43.4. Placidia named the boy Theodosius, perhaps a sign of her hope that he would grow up not only to be king of the Visigoths, but also emperor of Rome. He was, after all, the grandson of one emperor, the nephew of another, and the first cousin of still another. Whatever designs his mother may have had in this regard, however, were brought to nothing when he died in infancy. On this, see Stewart I. Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta: A Biographical Essay* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 133-134; and Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 238-240.

¹⁵⁴ These tensions will be considered in chap. 5, when we turn to the subject of "Arianism."

¹⁵⁵ Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 307-308; and Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 206-209.

the second decade of the century, and moved into Savoy in the 440s.¹⁵⁶ In 429, the Vandals crossed into North Africa and began to push east, toward the western empire's breadbasket. In 430, they reached Hippo, and Augustine died during their siege of the city. In 439 they captured Carthage, one of the largest cities of the empire and the port from which the African grain supply was shipped to Rome. The loss of both the tax revenue and the grain shipments coming from Africa dealt a serious blow to the fiscal stability of the western imperial government, one from which it never really recovered.¹⁵⁷

The entry of these barbarian peoples into the empire at a time when its military and economic power were gradually being weakened created the conditions in which independent kingdoms ruled by barbarians emerged toward the middle and end of the fifth century. The Visigothic invasion of Italy and the ensuing sack of Rome certainly captured the headlines in the ancient world, just as they still captivate the imagination of modern people. In fact, however, the most serious crisis of Honorius' reign was a series of usurpations in Gaul during the years 406-413, prompted by the central government's inability to defend the Rhine frontier.¹⁵⁸

Constantius, his new *magister militum*, was an energetic and effective commander who successfully suppressed these threats to imperial rule.¹⁵⁹ Once that situation had been sorted out,

¹⁵⁶ Middle Rhine: Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 1.187-188; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 321. Savoy: Jones, 1.189; Matthews, 331.

¹⁵⁷ Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean 400-800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 87; and Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 267-299.

¹⁵⁸ As had so many previous revolts in the late empire, this one began in Britain, but under the leadership of Constantine III it quickly spread to Gaul just after the barbarian invasions of New Year's Eve 406. See Orosius, *Seven Books of History*, 7.40-42; Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 1.185, 187-188; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 308-314; and Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 209-211.

¹⁵⁹ Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 236-238.

the generalissimo was free to impose a settlement on the Visigoths, whereby they would be domiciled permanently in southwestern Gaul.¹⁶⁰

The decade after 410 thus saw a recovery of the western empire's fortunes, with Italy enjoying relative peace and stability during the decades between 410 and 450. After the departure of the Visigoths, no barbarian force entered Italy again until that of Attila the Hun in 452. Meanwhile, the imperial court was transferred from Milan to Ravenna in 402, where it remained until the 440s. This move has traditionally been interpreted as an attempt to profit from the strategic advantages afforded by the swamps surrounding the low-lying city.¹⁶¹ Whatever the reasons for the court's move to the city of marshes, it proved significant for the history of the north Italian church, for the presence of the emperors there, as we will see below, led to the elevation of Ravenna to the status of a metropolitan see, alongside Milan and Aquileia. As we will see, this elevation was probably engineered through the cooperation of the court and the church of Rome, a sign of increasing centralization in the ecclesiastical bureaucracy.¹⁶² The trend in imperial administration was, however, in the opposite direction. The establishment in 418 of the *concilium septem provinciarum*, a means whereby the resident aristocracy of Gaul

¹⁶⁰ Orosius, *History*, 7.42-43; Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 170-173; Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 219-224; *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 240-243; and Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 317-319.

¹⁶¹ The traditional explanation for this transfer is that Ravenna, protected by marshes and easily supplied by sea, was much less vulnerable to a siege than Milan, which lay in the middle of an open plain. See Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 1.260; Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 1.366; Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta*, 70 and 88; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 274; and Chris Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy: Central Power and Local Society* (London: Macmillan, 1981), 11. This explanation has recently been contested by Andrew Gillett, "Rome, Ravenna, and the Last Western Emperors," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 69 (2001): 131-167. He points out (160-161) that, because of the limited availability in the surrounding area of the sort of natural resources needed to withstand a protracted siege (particularly wood and fresh water), Ravenna was especially vulnerable to such an attack, and indeed was successfully besieged on many occasions in the fifth and sixth centuries. As an alternative rationale for the choice of Ravenna as the main imperial residence during the early fifth century, he appeals to its location, which allowed it to act as "a conduit to the East" (162). Ravenna once again became the capital of Italy under Odovacer and Theodoric, and was also the capital of the Exarchate of Ravenna until it was successfully besieged by the Lombards in the middle of the eighth century.

¹⁶² On Ravenna's elevation, see below, pp. 70-75.

could make its voice heard in the administration of their provinces, was a sign of the growing centrifugal forces making it harder to hold the empire together.¹⁶³ Not long after this administrative reform, dynastic instability briefly threatened the hard-won peace. Honorius' death without a male heir in 423 led to a brief usurpation, which was brought to an end two years later when a military expedition sent from Constantinople managed to capture the usurper and place on the throne Valentinian III, the son of Honorius' half-sister Galla Placidia.¹⁶⁴

Valentinian was only six years old when he came to the throne, and for over a decade thereafter his mother acted as regent. Even after he reached his majority, he was not a particularly effective emperor, but he had one advantage that none of his successors in the west had—the legitimacy that came from being a member of the house of Theodosius.¹⁶⁵ Thus,

¹⁶³ The creation of the council was part of a larger program meant to reestablish imperial authority in Gaul after the unrest caused by the invasions and usurpations. See Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 333-337; and Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 250. As Ralph W. Mathisen has pointed out, this was actually a revival of a council established during a previous reorganization of the imperial administration in Gaul, some time before 407. See *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 19 and 42; and "The Council of Turin and the Reorganization of Gaul ca. 395/406," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 6.2 (2013): 264-307, at 287-291.

¹⁶⁴ Valentinian's father was the same Constantius whose military abilities had helped Honorius achieve a modicum of peace and stability during the second half of his reign. He secured the hand of Galla Placidia in 417, Valentinian was born in 419, and Constantius died in 421. Near the end of his life, Honorius had sent Placidia and the young Valentinian into exile in Constantinople. Their presence at the eastern court proved awkward, and when Honorius died, Theodosius II hesitated to grant Valentinian the rank of Augustus and appoint him as his western colleague. The usurpation of John forced his hand, however, and he decided to risk attempting to put his nephew on the throne of the west. In the end, the gamble paid off and helped to ensure a measure of stability for the west for another three decades. On this sequence of events, see Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta*, 169-193; Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 377-381; and Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 251 and 258-260.

¹⁶⁵ Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 1.250, denounces Valentinian as "weak and worthless." By contrast, Ernst Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1968), 1.338-340, notes that the ancient historiographical tradition consists of sources emanating from the senatorial class, which Stein believed was on the whole favorable to the Aetius. He appeals to some of Valentinian's legislation, intended to shore up the empire's desperate financial situation, as evidence that Valentinian was a conscientious emperor who was the victim of circumstances, particularly the overweening ambition of Aetius. Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta*, 235, generally follows Stein in this interpretation, though he points out that the Roman aristocracy had traditionally been politically divided, rendering it more likely that Aetius commanded the support of only a faction. Aetius' staying power can be attributed to the good relations he enjoyed with the Huns, among whom he had spent part of his youth and on whom he could call for large numbers of troops. See *Later Roman Empire*, 1.176-177, 199; and Heather, "The Huns and the End of the Roman Empire in Western Europe," *English Historical Review* 110 (1995): 4-41, at 26.

although the western provinces had begun break free of centralized control even before his lifetime, nevertheless, as long as he lived he was able to command the loyalty of enough of the elites to keep the edifice together.¹⁶⁶ To this end, he was aided by talented generals, such as Flavius Aetius, who with few resources were able to achieve much to keep the provinces within the imperial orbit.¹⁶⁷ However, as had happened in other periods of Roman history, the military success of these generals made them politically powerful, and when Valentinian in turn was assassinated in 455 without a male heir, the leading military offer, now usually a barbarian, became in practice the real power behind the throne.¹⁶⁸ This state of affairs explains why

¹⁶⁶ The gradual weakening of the links between the western provinces and the imperial center is one of the main themes of Matthews' *Western Aristocracies*. But, as has been widely recognized, the presence of a legitimate emperor helped keep the center strong. See, for example, Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 1.173-174; Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, 349; and Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta*, 193-94, 201, 202, 247.

¹⁶⁷ It was Aetius, for example, who assembled the coalition of Romans and Visigoths that defeated Attila and his Huns at the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains in 451. But the very same generals whose abilities were needed to keep the empire together could easily become rivals, competing for imperial favor and using their armies against the best interests of the empire as a whole. This tendency is well illustrated by two civil wars that took place during Placidia's regency (425-438). The first was the rebellion of Boniface, prompted by the rivalry between Felix and Boniface. In 427, Felix, then the leading courtier in Ravenna (he was to be consul in 428), had Boniface, then Count of Africa, recalled. Fearing a plot against his life, Boniface refused to come to Italy, an act of high treason. The first army sent by the court failed to suppress the rebellion. A second, sent the following year, enjoyed more success against him, which prompted the beleaguered count to call in a favor from the Vandal king, Geiseric, then in southern Spain. Geiseric led his people across the Straits of Gibraltar in 429, and they became permanent residents. The second conflict was the brief civil war fought by Boniface and Aetius in 432, likely an attempt by Galla Placidia (one that failed, as it turned out) to curb Aetius' power. The decisive battle, which took place near Ariminum, Boniface's forces were victorious but he himself was mortally wounded. On the rebellion of Boniface, see Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta*, 220-224; Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, 318-319; and Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 261. For the civil war between Boniface and Aetius, see Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 232-233; Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, 321-322; and Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 261-262. For the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains, see Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 295-297; Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, 334-335; and Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 338-339.

¹⁶⁸ The danger of the situation is illustrated by the sequence of events that ended in Valentinian's assassination. By the early 450s, he had begun to grow concerned at Aetius' unrivalled influence at court, and was opposed to his desire to marry his son to Valentinian's daughter Placidia. By 454, the danger of the Hunnic empire had been eliminated, and so he decided to take extra-judicial action against the generalissimo, believing that this was the only means of ridding himself of a threat to his rule. He therefore summoned the general to a personal audience. When Aetius entered his presence, Valentinian began to berate him for his alleged treason. He then drew his sword and cut the aging general down. The threat, if indeed that is what Aetius was, was neutralized. But by doing the dirty deed with his own hand, Valentinian made himself a target for Aetius' clients, some of whom were both powerful and daring enough to raise their own hand against the emperor's sacred person. This is precisely what happened early the following spring. See John of Antioch, frg. 201.1; Prosper of Aquitaine, *Chronica*, 1373; Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 301-305; and Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 371-375.

emperors succeeded one another in such quick succession for the next two decades, until in 476, Odovacer, the *magister militum*, decided the time had come to dispense altogether with the figurehead of the emperor and to rule Italy (the only province that had not yet become independent of imperial rule) in his own right, but theoretically in the name of Zeno, Augustus of the east.¹⁶⁹

The Christian Bishop in Late Antiquity

Ambrose has left us a mountain of letters, exegetical treatises, and other works, which allows modern historians to observe him at his post much more easily than we can observe almost any other ancient Christian bishop. The image of himself that he cultivates in his writings, especially in his letters, does not reflect the way that most bishops in Late Antiquity would have presented themselves to the public, nor been perceived by the public.¹⁷⁰ The episcopal office in these centuries was above all a pastoral office, and so the great majority of a bishop's time was spent engaged in activities whose ultimate purpose was the building up of the Christian community entrusted to his care: preaching and catechizing, presiding at the *episcopalis audientia*, promoting the cult of the saints, coordinating missionary activities, and overseeing the construction of new churches. Let us briefly survey some of these. In so doing, we will refer wherever possible to the works of Ambrose and his north Italian contemporaries, and where appropriate to the works of better-known patristic authors.

Perhaps the most visible activity of any bishop was his preaching. Hundreds of surviving sermons from late antique bishops, in both Greek and Latin, testify to the centrality of this

¹⁶⁹ Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, 398-399; Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 428-430; and Averil Cameron. *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity, A. D. 395-700*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2012), 40.

¹⁷⁰ McLynn's biography of Ambrose, for example, is so engaging precisely because he appears in it as primarily a political figure. But just as most Roman towns and cities were rarely if ever visited by an emperor, so most bishops did not interact with emperors, let alone face them down over questions of policy and protocol.

practice throughout the ancient church. A sermon delivered by Maximus of Turin to his congregation shortly after his return from a church council in the last decade of the fourth or the first decade of the fifth century helps us understand why preaching was such a central part of the exercise of episcopal authority in Late Antiquity. In this sermon, Maximus compares the gathering of bishops he had just attended to a swarm of bees.

Just like bees, they prepare sweet honey from the little flowers of the divine scriptures, and whatever pertains to the medicine of souls they put together by the skill of their mouths. Bishops are rightly compared to bees, because like bees, they prefer chastity of body, they hold forth the food of heavenly life, and they administer the sting of the law. They are pure for the purpose of sanctification, sweet for the purpose of restoration, and severe for the purpose of vengeance. Obviously they should be compared to bees who, as if by a kind of hive, are held fast by the grace of mother church whereby, arranging the chambers of various merits by means of the sweetest proclamations, out of the one swarm of the Savior bring forth many swarms of Christians.¹⁷¹

The comparison he makes here indicates the central place that speech played in a bishop's leadership of an urban Christian community. All bishops, for example, were preachers and teachers. In his study of ancient Christian preaching, Alexandre Olivar defines this activity as "the proclamation and the explanation of the Word of God, to which were normally added exhortations to accept this message and to be faithful to it."¹⁷² Late antique bishops typically did

¹⁷¹ Maximus, Serm. 89, *CCL* 23.364: "...sicut apes de divinarum scripturarum flosculis suavia mella conficiunt, et quidquid ad medicinam pertinet animarum oris sui arte componunt. Recte comparantur apibus sacerdotes, quia sicut apes castitatem corporis praeferunt cibum vitae caelestis exhibent aculeum legis exercent. Puri enim ad sanctificationem suaves ad refectionem severi sunt ad ultionem. Apibus plane sunt comparandi, qui velut alveo quodam gratia matris ecclesiae continentur, in qua diversorum meritorum cellulas dulcissimis praedictionibus componentes de uno salvatoris examine christianorum examina multa producant" (trans. Boniface Ramsey).

¹⁷² Alexandre Olivar, *La predicación cristiana antigua* (Barcelona: Editorial Herder, 1991), 31. His study focuses specifically on "the official preaching of the Church"—that of its officers, as opposed to less formal attempts by lay Christians to proclaim their faith—"in connection, ordinarily, with the sacred cult" (31 – All translations of this work are mine). Olivar argues that ancient Christian preaching was rooted in, and yet represented a departure from, ancient ways of communicating. Due to its public nature as well as the fact that it involved the imparting of intellectual content, Christian preaching resembled other forms of discourse common in the ancient Greco-Roman world, whether it be the teaching of itinerant philosophers or the writers of the Second Sophistic, whose possible influence he detects in "the dominance of exegesis" in Christian preaching and in the ways in which some of the methods of this movement may have helped preachers make connections between the Old and New Testaments. See p. 37.

this within the context of the Christian liturgy, held both on Sundays as well as on the feast days of Christian saints that might fall during the week.¹⁷³ With regard to content, preaching in the ancient church focused on the life, death, and resurrection of Christ and the moral implications of these events.¹⁷⁴ In respect of its distinctive content, then, it was a novelty, but as a form of communication, preaching borrowed important elements from the broader context in which it appeared. It had roots in the preaching of the Jewish synagogue insofar as its message was religious in nature and based on a sacred text, and it also took a cue from the rhetorical techniques with which any educated person in the ancient world would have been familiar.¹⁷⁵ Ancient preaching had two basic purposes, both of which are referred to by Christian preachers of the patristic era. The first was to teach the message of the Bible to lay Christians, and by so doing, to “raise the understandings of the faithful to the sublime comprehension of the written revelation.”¹⁷⁶ The other purpose was practical—to inform Christians of their duties as baptized members of the church.¹⁷⁷ Writing near the end of the second or the beginning of the third century, Tertullian explained in his *Apology* that

We assemble to read our sacred writings, if any peculiarity of the times makes either forewarning or reminiscence needful. However it be in that respect, with the sacred words we nourish our faith, we animate our hope, we make our confidence more steadfast; and no less by inculcations of God’s precepts we

¹⁷³ *Predicación cristiana*, 515-527 (preaching as a liturgical act) and 641-662 (the frequency of preaching).

¹⁷⁴ Olivar regards this as the key difference between Christian preaching and other forms of communication common in antiquity. See *Predicación cristiana*, 35, 38-39. This is certainly true of the sermons produced by the north Italian bishops considered in this study.

¹⁷⁵ For the relation between Christian preaching and that of the synagogue, see Olivar, *Predicación cristiana*, 32-33. For the role of rhetoric—“the queen of subjects”—in ancient education, see Henri-Irénée Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), 194-205, 286, and 303.

¹⁷⁶ *Predicación cristiana*, 42, relying on Augustine.

¹⁷⁷ *Predicación cristiana*, 41-43, relying on Tertullian, Augustine, and John Chrysostom.

confirm good habits. In the same place also exhortations are made, rebukes and sacred censures are administered.¹⁷⁸

The sermons delivered by preachers like Ambrose, Chromatius, Gaudentius, Maximus, and Peter Chrysologus contain a similar blend of doctrinal instruction (that which “nourish[es] faith ... animate[s] hope [and] make[s] ... confidence more steadfast”) and ethical exhortation.

Bishops in the ancient church also addressed more than one audience in their preaching, for as long as there were large numbers of unbaptized adults, every Christian community was a mixture of baptized and unbaptized. In sermons addressed to the congregation as a whole, bishops at times made explicit reference to catechumens—those who had accepted the Christian message but had not yet been formally received into the church through baptism.¹⁷⁹ It is probably to the presence of catechumens that Maximus is referring to when he states that bishops “out of the one swarm of the Savior bring forth many swarms of Christians.” This “bringing forth” of “swarms of Christians” refers to an important set of practices in ancient Christianity (known collectively as the catechumenate), which together constituted an elaborate, ritualized experience of initiation that all Christians underwent. The flowering of Christian literature during the fourth and fifth centuries allows us to form a clear picture of this set of practices.¹⁸⁰ They varied somewhat across the Christian world, but certain features seem to have been part of most churches’ practice.

¹⁷⁸ *Apologeticum* 39.3-4, *CCL* 1.150: “Coimus ad litterarum divinarum commemorationem, si quid praesentium temporum qualitas aut praemonere cogit aut recognoscere. Certe fidem sanctis vocibus pascimus, spem erigimus, fiduciam figimus, disciplinam praeceptorum nihilominus densamus. Ibidem etiam exhortationes, castigationes, et censura divina” (trans. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, cited in Oliver, *Predicación cristiana*, 41).

¹⁷⁹ For example, Chromatius, *Serm.* 15.6; Gaudentius, *Tr.* 2.8, 5.1; Maximus, *Sermm.* 13.1, 33.5, 65.1 and 2, 91.2, and 111.3.

¹⁸⁰ For an extensive survey of the practices across the Roman world from the second through the fourth centuries, see Paul L. Gavriluk, *Histoire du catéchuménat dans l’église ancienne* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2007); and for a detailed study of one bishop’s approach to catechesis, see William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1995).

The first stage of the catechumenate was a ritual of exorcism whereby the catechist blew into the face and ears of the candidate. Those who had undergone it were henceforth known as *auditores*.¹⁸¹ One might remain in this state for a short time or a very long time. Augustine's mother had enrolled him in the catechumenate when he was only a small child, and so technically he was an *auditor* for about thirty years.¹⁸² Whenever they decided to do so, catechumens would apply (sometime during Epiphany) to receive baptism at Easter. A six-week period then followed during Lent, when these *competentes*, as they were now called, would undergo special instruction from the bishop or a designated agent, and also have a number of rituals of exorcism and of the cleaning of the body performed on them.¹⁸³ In this way they would be prepared in both mind and body to receive the sacrament of Christian initiation.

The catechetical process culminated in baptism, which typically took place at the Easter vigil. There, those about to be baptized would recite the creed of the church to the bishop. This creed was officially one of the *arcana* that were not to be divulged to the uninitiated (the unbaptized were also dismissed before the Eucharist at the Sunday service), and the (oral) giving of the creed to the *competentes* one week before their baptism was set in a ritual context that, like the other stages of a catechumen's journey toward baptism, marked the transition from outsider

¹⁸¹ Gavriluk, *Histoire du catéchuménat*, 287.

¹⁸² Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, 80.

¹⁸³ These rituals were the *scrutinium* and the *ephphetha*. The former is briefly described by Peter Chrysologus in Sermon 52.4, *CCL* 24.290-291: "Hinc est quod veniens ex gentibus inpositione manus exorcismi ante a daemone purgatur, adaperitionem aurium percipit, ut fidei capere possit auditum, ut possit ad salutem prosequente domino pervenire." Peter's Sermons 56-62A are expositions of the Creed directed to catechumens, while Sermons 67-72 are expositions of the Lord's Prayer likewise directed to catechumens. See also Ambrose, *De mysteriis* 1.3 and *De sacramentis* 1.1.2.

to insider.¹⁸⁴ The newly baptized, now called *neophyti*, received further instruction over the next several days (known as mystagogical catechesis) on the meaning of the Eucharist, in which they had shared for the first time with the full community on Easter morning; they were also taught more about the meaning of baptism and a number of the other rites they had experienced during the Lenten catechesis.¹⁸⁵

Preaching and catechesis were among the most visible activities of late antique bishops. Catechesis afforded an opportunity for personal interaction between the bishop and the individual members of his community, and his role as preacher, combined with the life tenure his position entailed, gave him a platform from which he could make his views known on a number of subjects. But bishops in Late Antiquity wore other hats, too. The words of Maximus that were cited above allude to some of them. For example, his observation that bishops, like bees, “prefer chastity of body,” refers to the expectations placed on bishops with regard to their sexual behavior. The Christian communities of Late Antiquity believed that bishops ought to be an example of holiness, which meant abstaining from sexual intercourse with their wives upon assuming office or foregoing marriage altogether. This theme will be explored more fully in chapter 2, so it need not detain us here.

Maximus’ observation that bishops are “sweet for the purpose of restoration,” and that they “administer the sting of the law” may allude to another role they played in Late Antiquity. These words might refer simply to the exhortations to righteous living that were included in most

¹⁸⁴ The handing over of the Creed to the *competentes* was called the *traditio*, while the reciting of the Creed to the bishop a week later was called the *redditio*. See Gavrilyuk, *Histoire du catéchuménat*, 297-306, Ambrose, *Explanatio symboli ad initiandos*, and Peter Chrysologus, Sermons 57 and 61.

¹⁸⁵ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 3-9, Maximus, *Serm.* 55. On this final stage of catechesis, see Gavrilyuk, *Histoire du catéchuménat*, 312-318; and Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, 99-104 and 106 (for Ambrose’s practices), and 316-330, 341-342, and 344-345 (for those of Augustine).

ancient sermons. They could also be taken as a reference to the role bishops played as settlers of disputes, a role that was codified in Roman law by the Christian emperors.¹⁸⁶ The *episcopalis audientia*, as the bishop's court was called, was a dispute-settling mechanism that provided an alternative to the overloaded judicial system of the later empire. Its primary advantage was that of efficiency, as bishops were not bound to adhere to the complicated rules of procedure that characterized late Roman law. Likewise, the lengthy appeals process of the imperial judicial system meant that cases easily became bogged down.¹⁸⁷ But there was no appeal from a bishop's decision. This efficiency greatly reduced the cost for litigants in comparison with the imperial courts, for in the case of an appeal they might be required to reside for an extended period of time in a distant city, a prospect that would have made justice prohibitively expensive for those of modest means.¹⁸⁸ Imperial courts were also few, whereas even in the more sparsely populated western provinces of the empire, a town or city with a bishop was within easier reach than the tribunal of Caesar or his representative. In North Africa and Italy, the number of episcopal sees as early as the beginning of the fourth century made the bishop's court an attractive option on account of its comparative accessibility. Another aspect of *episcopalis audientia* that many late Romans may have found appealing was the way in which the pastoral nature of the episcopal office typically made the bishop more eager than his secular counterpart

¹⁸⁶ Constantine was the first emperor to accord the bishops this privilege; see *Cod. Theod.* 1.27.1 and *Constitutio Sirmondiana* 1. See also Walter Selb, "Episcopalis audientia von der Zeit Konstantins bis zur Nov. XXXV Valentinians III." *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 97 (1967): 162-217; Harold Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 322-325; and Jill Harries, *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 191-211. Constantine also recognized the right of bishops to certify the manumission of slaves. See *Cod. Theod.* 4.7.1.

¹⁸⁷ Indeed, as the imperial legislation on this matter made clear, there could be no appeal to a higher authority.

¹⁸⁸ To be sure, in Harries' judgment, "if considerations of cost were excluded, [the right of appeal] was, in formal terms, easily exercised." But woe to the man of modest means who found himself caught up in the legal system! See *Law and Empire*, 167.

to bring about a reconciliation between the disputing parties rather than a rigid application of the law.¹⁸⁹ Unfortunately, with the exception of Ambrose, we have no direct evidence about the way in which the individual bishops considered in this study functioned in their judicial capacity. Indeed, we can say nothing at all about how the vast majority of late antique bishops approached this task, but it seems likely that most would have agreed with Augustine that it was a great burden they would sooner have been rid of.¹⁹⁰ But the very reason Constantine had extended privileges to the Christian bishops was so that they could share in the burden of empire, and so share in it they did.¹⁹¹

The partnership between the bishops and the empire established by Constantine not only led the bishops to take on a judicial role traditionally reserved for imperial officials. It also led them to become the patrons of the urban lower classes. Because most bishops had come from the very same social class that traditionally exercised this function, it was quite natural that they should do so. However, just as Christian preaching both borrowed from and went beyond existing forms of oral communication, so the exercise of patronage by bishops in the new ideological and institutional framework represented by the Christian church was a departure from

¹⁸⁹ Harries refers to “the kind of flexibility in dispute settlement envisaged for the bishop, who was expected to act as judge and conciliator.” See *Law and Empire*, 103. One case in which Ambrose was involved, however, illustrates the way in which a decision in a bishop’s court, arrived at by taking advantage of precisely this personal quality of the episcopal office, could be suddenly overturned in a context in which the church’s own structures of authority were not yet clearly defined. The case had to do with a charge leveled against Indicia, a consecrated virgin of the church of Verona, who had been accused of giving birth to a baby and killing it. Syagrius, bishop of Verona, had apparently conducted a rather informal inquiry into the matter, calling in a midwife to ascertain whether Indicia was in fact a virgin. The examination seems to have proved inconclusive, and the cloud of suspicion remained over her. Though the basis of his authority to do so was poorly defined, Ambrose agreed to hear an appeal, and after questioning various witnesses decided the charge was baseless. He issued a formal acquittal and excommunicated her accusers. See Ambrose, *Epp.* 56 and 57; McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 286-287; and Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 193-197.

¹⁹⁰ Augustine, *De opere monachorum*, 37; *Ep.* 213; cf. *Enarrationes in psalmos* 118.114.

¹⁹¹ Drake refers to the bishops under the reign of Constantine as “players in the game of empire” and interprets the judicial powers accorded them by Constantine in the context of a broader reform of the judicial system as a whole. See *Constantine and the Bishops*, 73 and 325-336.

older practices. This change occurred mainly due to a transformation of what it meant to be “poor.” Previously, the “poor” were those members of the citizen body of an ancient city who were unskilled day laborers—those at the bottom of the social ladder, but known in the community because they had been part of it all their lives. They were distinct in the minds of the elites of the city from the *peregrini*—foreigners who could never become part of the social fabric, or immigrants from the countryside who largely remained invisible in this classical way of conceptualizing the population of a city. But one of the effects of the rise of the bishops was a reconceptualization of who constituted the “poor.” The new model, borrowed from the Bible, imagined the poor as those who, because they belonged to the people of God, could boldly come before the rich with a claim on their generosity, a claim that was valid whether they were citizens or not.¹⁹²

The exercise of patronage by the bishops of the later empire might also take the form of *intercessio* on behalf of those who had run afoul of the imperial authorities, whether poor or great. The memory of two such episodes, which are recounted in the seventh chapter of deacon Paulinus of Milan’s *Vita sancti Ambrosii*, contributed to the stature Ambrose was to enjoy in the eyes of later generations. The first is his rebuke of Theodosius over the emperor’s order to the bishop of Callinicum to rebuild the local synagogue, which had been burned down by a mob of angry monks. In recounting Ambrose’s response to the incident, Paulinus highlights the dual intercession of bishops—on behalf of imperial subjects before the emperor, and on behalf of emperors before God. He first approached Theodosius on this matter *via* a letter, in which he

¹⁹² Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, 53-90; see also *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* (Hanover, N. H.: University Press of New England, 2002), 1-11. On the same subject of continuities and discontinuities in the practice of patronage by bishops, see also Claude Lepelley, “Le patronat épiscopal aux IV^e et V^e siècles: continuités et ruptures avec le patronat classique,” in *L’évêque dans la cité du IV^e au V^e siècle: image et autorité*, ed. Éric Rebillard and Claire Sotinel (Rome: École française de Rome, 1998): 17-33.

stressed that “if he [Ambrose] were not worthy to be heard by him [Theodosius], neither would he be worthy to be heard by the Lord in his behalf, nor would anyone to whom he might entrust his prayers and promises.”¹⁹³ Eventually, Theodosius rescinded the order originally given to the bishop to underwrite the rebuilding of the synagogue.¹⁹⁴ The second famous episode recounted by Paulinus is Ambrose’s intervention on behalf of the people of Thessalonica after the murder of the *magister militum* of Illyricum. Theodosius had in response ordered a general massacre of the citizens of the city, an order he rescinded too late to prevent the bloodshed, which claimed 7,000 lives.¹⁹⁵ Ambrose sought to compel the emperor to do public penance for this misdeed, and in the end Theodosius yielded to the bishop’s insistence.¹⁹⁶

Metropolitan Sees in Northern Italy

Late antique bishops exercised functions such as these in the context of an ecclesiastical governing structure that was growing more complex, as the bishops of some cities came to exercise authority over those of their smaller neighbors. Three sees in the *Annonaria* diocese exercised metropolitan authority by the middle of the fifth century: Milan, Aquileia, and Ravenna. The churches of Milan and Aquileia had exercised a primacy of influence since the early fourth century (and perhaps as early as the third) that was codified in a formal way by the time of Ambrose’s death or shortly thereafter. Their achievement of this status was thus the natural and organic result of the place they occupied in the north Italian church over the course

¹⁹³ *Vita sancti Ambrosii Mediolanensis episcopi a Paulino eius notario ad Beatum Augustinum conscripta*, ed. and trans. Mary Simplicia Kaniecka (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1928) §7.

¹⁹⁴ *Vita Ambrosii* 7.

¹⁹⁵ Paulinus does not refer to the murder of the general. This piece of information is preserved in the letter Ambrose wrote to Theodosius after the massacre (*Ep. extr. collect.* 11 [Maur. 51]), and in Sozomen, *Church History* 7.25.

¹⁹⁶ Paulinus, *Vita Ambrosii* 7. These episodes are also significant insofar as they reflect Ambrose’s desire to establish the boundaries between the spheres in which the spiritual power of the church and the secular power of the state properly operated. They will thus be discussed further in chap. 4, on imperial power.

of a long period of development. The story of Ravenna's rise to metropolitan status was, by comparison, somewhat artificial. Its recognition as a metropolitan see was engineered by the imperial government around the time that Peter Chrysologus became its bishop (426/430).¹⁹⁷ But we will begin our exploration of the structures of regional church authority in northern Italy by looking at the two aforementioned cases. In 1973, Gian Carlo Menis undertook a study of the metropolitan jurisdiction exercised by Milan and Aquileia, in which he surveyed the scholarship on this question going back to the eighteenth century. He concluded that Milan began to exercise metropolitan authority sometime in the late fourth century, and Aquileia in the late fourth to early fifth.¹⁹⁸ Menis' date for Milan seems right. In the light of more recent scholarship, however, his date for Aquileia seems somewhat early.

¹⁹⁷ On what can be known about Peter's biography, see *Peter Chrysologus: Selected Sermons*, vol. 2, ed. William B. Palardy, FC 109 (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 5-12; and *PCBE* 2.1728-1730. The date of Peter's episcopal consecration is difficult to pin down. Palardy gives 426, but cites no source to support his contention. He refers to Peter's inaugural sermon, 130, in which he mentions "the lengthy anticipation of some great thing that was promised." Palardy takes the "great thing" as an allusion to a vacancy in the see of Ravenna that was brought to an end with Peter's consecration (FC 109.8). This same sermon refers to the presence of Galla Placidia, and must therefore have been delivered only after her return to Ravenna in 425. How long, then, was the period between the death of Ravenna's former bishop and the consecration of Peter to be his successor? It is impossible to know for sure, but the fact that Peter deemed it worth mentioning indicates that it must have been considerably longer than the normal period between the death of a bishop and the election of his successor. But unless a disputed election lengthened the process of choosing a new bishop, it was usually a matter of a few weeks. The choice of a successor for Auxentius of Milan, who died in autumn of 374, took roughly two months, coming to an end on December 7 with the consecration of Ambrose (for the season of Auxentius' death, see Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 104). In the case of the disputed election of Boniface as bishop of Rome, where both he and his rival Eulalius enjoyed the support of a faction of the church, the period of vacancy lasted less than four months: from December 26, 418 (the death of Zosimus) through April 3, 419 (when Honorius officially recognized Boniface as the rightful bishop). See Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 156-161. The downfall of the usurper John came in the summer of 425, and on October 23, 425, Valentinian III was invested as Augustus of the west (Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 189 and 192; and Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 259-260). If the incumbent of the see of Ravenna had died during the usurpation, the clergy of the city might have taken the precaution of waiting until the political situation had stabilized before electing a successor. The installation of a new emperor would have been a signal that it was safe to proceed with a new episcopal election. Thus, estimating conservatively, Peter could have been elected and consecrated early in 426, though a somewhat later date cannot be ruled out. The date of Peter's death is unknown, but the evidence collected by the editors of the *PCBE* allow us to locate it no later than 458, when his successor, Neon, is attested in bishop Leo of Rome's *Ep.* 140.

¹⁹⁸ Menis, "Le giurisdizioni metropolitiche di Aquileia e di Milano nell'antichità," in *Aquileia e Milano* (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane): 271-294, at 288-289 (Milan) and 289-290 (Aquileia).

The many and varied interventions of Ambrose in churches outside of Milan, outside of the province of Liguria and Aemilia, and even outside of *Italia Annonaria*, leave little doubt that he exercised metropolitan jurisdiction.¹⁹⁹ Establishing the precise date at which the bishop of Milan began to enjoy such authority is beyond the bounds of this study, for the evidence is clear that Ambrose played the role of a metropolitan bishop (and even more). What interests us is the ebb and flow of Milan's authority during the period from the tail end of the fourth until the midpoint of the fifth century. And on this matter we can say that the removal of the imperial court to Ravenna in 402 spelled the end of any attempt by the bishops of Milan to operate on a level similar to that of the bishops of Rome.²⁰⁰ Bishop Zosimus of Rome's grant of extraordinary metropolitan jurisdiction to bishop Patroclus of Arles in 417 was motivated, at least in part, by a desire to restrict the authority of Milan over some of the churches of southeastern Gaul.²⁰¹ In spite of these setbacks, however, the bishops of Milan continued to exercise regular metropolitan authority over the churches of northwestern Italy, as illustrated by

¹⁹⁹ Menis lists these interventions at great length on pp. 284-289, grouping them into the following categories: A) Acts of metropolitan jurisdiction involving the provinces of northern Italy under Milan's immediate influence; B) Acts of Ambrose regarding Spain and Gaul (the *Praefectura Galliarum*); C) Acts of Ambrose regarding the civil diocese of Pannonia; D) Acts of Ambrose regarding Dacia and Macedonia (the *Praefectura Illyrici Orientalis*); and E) Acts of Ambrose regarding Venetia and Histria. He concludes that Ambrose in fact exercised something more than metropolitan jurisdiction, but that his successors Simplicianus and Venerius did not exercise similar authority. See also Charles Pietri, *Roma Christiana. Recherches sur l'Église de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie de Miltiade à Sixte III (311-440)* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1976), 2.897-901. Ralph Mathisen argues that Ambrose's successor Simplicianus continued Ambrose's attempts to exercise an authority rivaling that of the bishop of Rome by extending the influence of Milan into Gaul. See "The Council of Turin (398/399) and the Reorganization of Gaul ca. 395-406," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 6.2 (2013): 264-307, at 291-296. In spite of the evidence adduced by Menis, Enrico Cattaneo is skeptical that Ambrose himself exercised metropolitan jurisdiction, preferring instead to locate the origins of this status for Milan with the Council of Turin, which he dates to the period 398 to 404. See "Il governo ecclesiastico nell'Italia settentrionale," in *Aquileia nel IV secolo*, AAAd 22 (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1982), 175-187, at 184-185.

²⁰⁰ For the decline of Milan's influence after the departure of the emperors, see Menis, "Le giurisdizioni metropolitiche," 289 and 291; Cesare Alzati, "Metropoli e sedi episcopali fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo," in *Chiesa e società. Appunti per una storia delle diocesi di Lombardia*, ed. A. Caprioli, A. Rimoldi, and L. Vaccaro (Brescia: Editrice La Scuola, 1986), 47-77, at 50-52; and Mathisen, "The Council of Turin," 295-296.

²⁰¹ Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 18-19, 49-50, and 72.

Eusebius of Milan's presiding at the Council of Milan of 451, called to ratify bishop Leo of Rome's dogmatic statement on Christ's Incarnation in preparation for an Ecumenical Council to be held at Chalcedon later that year.²⁰²

The case of Aquileia is rather more difficult than that of Milan. It exercised influence over nearby churches, especially in Illyricum, already during the reign of Constantius II, in the mid-fourth century.²⁰³ The prestige of this Christian community is evident from the fact that bishop Fortunatianus was able to prevail upon the exiled Liberius of Rome to modify his attitude regarding the emperor's ecclesiastical policy during the 350s.²⁰⁴ In the first decade of the fifth century, John Chrysostom appealed by letter to three Italian bishops—Innocent I of Rome, Venerius of Milan, and Chromatius of Aquileia.²⁰⁵ It is certain that by the year 442 at the latest,

²⁰² Our evidence for the council consists of the synodical epistle Eusebius sent to bishop Leo of Rome, to which were appended the signatures of Eusebius of Milan as well as 18 other bishops or their delegates, mainly from the province of Liguria and Aemilia—those churches, in other words, that fell into the natural sphere of influence of Milan in the absence of a bishop of Ambrose's stature as well as of the imperial court. The letter is found in *PL* 54.945-950. Cf. Menis, "Le giurisdizioni metropolitiche," 291.

²⁰³ Some of the older scholarship surveyed by Menis had assigned a very early date to Milan and Aquileia's metropolitan status, as early as the early fourth century. See pp. 273-275. Recent scholarship shares Menis' skepticism in this regard. See, for example, Humphries, *Communities of the Blessed*, 140-145 (for Aquileia) and 147-149 (for Milan); as well as (at least for Aquileia) the very cautious Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 105-109, esp. 106, where she notes "the impossibility of specifying a hierarchy" in the relations between the church of Aquileia and those of Illyricum, and 109, where she concludes that "the idea of a zone of influence itself remains imprecise." Sotinel discusses the evidence that Milan and Aquileia exercised metropolitan jurisdiction in the late fourth century on pp. 188-212. With regard to churches within their theoretical zones of influence, her conclusions are as follows: "Ambrose's attempts to exercise authority over the affairs of *Italia Annonaria* appear as innovations, and were often not supported by the local communities. By contrast, no equivalent attempt on the part of Chromatius is observed. None of the sees of *Venetia et Histria* that exist before the council of 381 can be situated in a hierarchical ecclesiastical organization, whether centered on Milan or on Aquileia" (199); and "The second conclusion that can be drawn from this inquiry is, indeed, the profoundly inadequate character of the proposition according to which Milan is the only metropolitan see in northern Italy, and the futility of every attempt to inquire as to the boundaries of Milan's authority. The vagueness that surrounds the two collective manifestations that set the stage for the bishops of northern Italy, which we have examined above, do not fit well with the existence of strict rules of metropolitan hierarchy" (210, translations mine). Sotinel stresses likewise the role of the Arian controversy in northern Italy in the creation of new episcopal sees that, unlike the older ones, were subject to the bishops who established them (210).

²⁰⁴ On Fortunatianus' relationship with Liberius, see Humphries, *Communities of the Blessed*, 155-157; and Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 121-126.

²⁰⁵ *PG* 52.702-703 and 714-716,

Aquileia's role as the preeminent episcopal see in northeastern Italy had been officially recognized in the form of metropolitan status, for in that year Leo of Rome sent two letters to churches in the province of Venetia and Histria—Aquileia and Altinum—with instructions regarding the reception back into communion of clerics who had been found to harbor Pelagian views. These letters refer to the “*metropolitanum episcopum Venetiae*” (Ep. 1) or the “*metropolitanum episcopum provinciae Venetiae*” (Ep. 2).²⁰⁶

Ravenna's elevation to metropolitan status is easier to locate chronologically and equally easy to account for, perhaps because its church, not having had a particularly distinguished history until the time it became a metropolitan see, was the result of political intervention rather than of natural development.²⁰⁷ The arrival of the imperial court there in the first years of the fifth century eventually led to a significant change in the city's place in the hierarchy of the Italian church. However, this change took several decades to accomplish. Before considering why this may have been the case, let us first look at the circumstances in which Ravenna was accorded metropolitan rank.²⁰⁸

The city's elevation dates to the time of Peter Chrysologus (ca. 426/430-ca. 450). The evidence for this date consists of two of Peter's Sermons—175 and 136—and a letter (not extant)

²⁰⁶ The role of the churches of northern Italy in the Pelagian controversy, regarding the nature of divine grace and the question of human free will in salvation, will be discussed in chapter 7. For Leo's letters, see *PL* 54.593-598.

²⁰⁷ What is most difficult about dating Ravenna's elevation is the muddled state of the chronology of its fifth-century bishops. Andreas Agnellus, the ninth-century Ravennate historian, did not make judicious use of his sources, and so the account of this period of the history of Ravenna's bishops is much less helpful in this regard than it might otherwise have been. See Mario Mazzotti, “La provincia Ecclesiastica Ravennate attraverso i secoli,” in *Atti dei convegni di Cesena e Ravenna (1966-1967)*, vol. 1 (Ravenna: Badia di Santa Maria del Monte, 1969), 21. On this point, see also René Massigli, “La création de la métropole ecclésiastique de Ravenne,” *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 31 (1911), 278, who argues that “A still greater obscurity covers the origins of the province of Ravenna [as compared with that of Aquileia].”

²⁰⁸ Alzati, “Metropoli e sedi episcopali,” 50-51; Vincenza Zangara, “Una predicazione alla presenza dei principi. La chiesa di Ravenna nella prima metà del sec. V,” *Antiquité tardive* 8 (2000): 265-304, at 298-304; and Deborah Deliyannis, *Ravenna in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 84-85.

written by Theodoret of Cyrrhus to the bishops of Rome, Milan, Aquileia, and Ravenna.²⁰⁹

Peter's Sermon 175, delivered on the occasion of the consecration of Marcellinus as bishop of Voghenza, refers to the recent *decretum* issued by "blessed Peter" and by "the Christian leader" to grant Ravenna metropolitan rank. The sermon also alludes to resistance from the bishop of Milan, whose authority was curtailed by this change in the church's governing structures.²¹⁰

But Sermon 175 was evidently delivered a number of years into Peter's episcopacy, for Sermon 136 seems to indicate that when Peter took up the see of Ravenna, he did not enjoy any metropolitan authority. This sermon contains praise for Adelphius, metropolitan bishop of Aquileia, and of such a kind that leads Alexandre Olivar to conclude, in the *monitum* that prefaces it in his critical edition, that Peter's words about his guest are "almost laughable," and that the sermon shows him to be a "young orator rather than a mature preacher."²¹¹ According to Francesco Lanzoni, "it can be gathered from this sermon that at the moment of this visit [sc. of Adelphius to Ravenna] Peter was still a simple bishop of Region VIII, which was part of the Roman patriarchate, without any hierarchical authority."²¹²

²⁰⁹ Francesco Lanzoni puts the date of Peter's election as bishop of Ravenna between 425 and 429. The rationale for the *terminus post quem* is Peter's Serm. 130, his inaugural sermon, which was delivered in the presence of Galla Placidia, who returned to Ravenna as Augusta in 425. He does not give a rationale for the *terminus ante quem*. See *Diocesi d'Italia dalle origini al principio del secolo VII (an. 604)* (Faenza: Stabilimento Grafico F. Lega, 1927), 750.

²¹⁰ *Serm.* 175.3, *CCL* 24B.1066: "et decreto beati Petri, decreto principis christiani, servus adhuc aliquis irreverenter obsistit." Palardy translates "christiani principis" as "Christian leader" because he believes, no doubt correctly, that the reference is to Galla Placidia, not the child Valentinian III. The bishop of Milan ("servus aliquis") opposed the action because it caused some of his suffragans—particularly those in Aemilia, such as Vicohabentia and Peter's own home town of Forum Cornelii, where he preached Sermon 165 on the occasion of the consecration of another suffragan—to be transferred to the jurisdiction of Ravenna. On this, see Lanzoni, *Diocesi d'Italia*, 750-751; and Mazzotti, "La provincia Ecclesiastica Ravennate," 21-22; and *FC* 109.9-10. Alexandre Olivar believes this sermon can be dated to 431. See "La consagración del Obispo Marcelino de Voghenza, *Rivista di storia della chiesa in Italia* 22 (1968): 87-93.

²¹¹ *CCL* 24B.824: "Submissus sermo, qui virum vocat antistitem atque elocutiones adhibet ad hospitem dilaudandum propter nimiam diligentiam fere ridiculas, oratorem iuniorem potius quam praedicatorem probat" (translation mine).

²¹² Lanzoni, *Diocesi d'Italia*, 750 (translation mine).

Finally, the letter of Theodoret allows us to establish a firm *terminus ante quem* for this event. It was sent to several leading sees of Italy. The letter itself is not extant, but Theodoret, writing to bishop Domnus of Antioch in 449, alludes to certain events that followed closely on the heels of the Council of Ephesus (431), which had been so unfortunate for the bishops of Syria. He refers in particular to a letter he had sent shortly after Ephesus “to the bishops of the west, very dear to God—of Milan, of Aquileia, and of Ravenna”—a choice which indicates that Theodoret believed Ravenna to enjoy a high status in the Italian ecclesiastical world.²¹³ The context makes it clear that Theodoret is referring to events from the year 432, and so on this basis it has been concluded that Ravenna’s elevation must have taken place in 430 or 431.²¹⁴ However, there seems to be good reason to believe that Ravenna’s elevation and Peter’s accession to the see were intimately related.

Identifying the date of Ravenna’s elevation requires us to make inferences from somewhat fragmentary evidence, but it can be done to within a year or two. The timing of this promotion, late both with respect to the elevation of other cities of its size and with respect to the transfer there of the imperial court, is best explained as the result of several different factors. The first is the slow rate at which the developments in church hierarchy that appeared in the east during the fourth century made their way to the west. Second, after what might be called an experiment in granting metropolitan authority to the bishops of Arles in the early fifth century went awry, the bishops of Rome were wary of creating new metropolitan sees. The third and fourth factors are related to the ecclesiastical policies of Galla Placidia, who served as regent for

²¹³ *Ep.* 112, *SC* 111.46-57, at 53.

²¹⁴ *SC* 111.53n.5; Lanzoni, *Diocesi d’Italia*, 750.

Valentinian III from 425 to 438, as well as her relationship with the city of Ravenna. Let us briefly look at each of these factors in turn.

We begin with the fact that the western church lagged behind its eastern counterpart in developing the more hierarchical structures of church authority that had appeared in the Greek-speaking Christian world already by the time of the Council of Nicaea. This lag helps to explain why scholars investigating the history of the metropolitan jurisdictions of Milan and Aquileia have reached such vastly different conclusions. The lack of formal hierarchical structures never prevented certain bishops from exercising great influence outside of their city. But the churches in the west seem not to have used the formal terminology of “metropolitan see” until the late fourth century at the earliest. What was true *de facto* was thus sometimes ahead of what was true *de iure*. The fact that Ravenna was still subject to Rome’s ecclesiastical jurisdiction when the imperial court moved there means that until this time, its bishop had no reason to exercise anything other than ordinary episcopal authority within his city. As soon as the court arrived in there, however, some of the same conditions that had allowed Milan’s influence to grow appeared in the new capital as well. What happened early in the time of Peter Chrysologus may have simply been a formalization of conditions that had already prevailed for some time.²¹⁵

The second factor that might possibly explain why Ravenna had to wait so long for its status to be formalized is the thorny situation caused by the extraordinary metropolitan jurisdiction accorded by bishop Zosimus of Rome (s. 417-418) to bishop Patroclus of Arles.²¹⁶ Zosimus had hoped to increase his authority in Gaul with this move, but in the end it only united

²¹⁵ A particularly famous bishop could be a great boon for the prestige of his church, and Peter seems to have had functioned in this way for Ravenna. As Deliyannis observes, “Chrysologus became for Ravenna what Ambrose had been for the see of Milan sixty years earlier.” See *Ravenna in Late Antiquity*, 84.

²¹⁶ Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 48-60.

the resistance of the anti-Roman party in the Gallic church against him.²¹⁷ This result could not have made his successors eager to make a similar grant elsewhere. In fact, as soon as he had a chance, Zosimus' successor Boniface (s. 418-422) rescinded some of the powers previously given to Patroclus.²¹⁸ But the unstable ecclesiastical situation continued, and even caused so much resentment that Patroclus was murdered in 426.²¹⁹ Boniface's successor Celestine (s. 422-432) no doubt drew the appropriate lesson from this sorry episode.

The third factor that may explain the timing of Ravenna's elevation is Galla Placidia's experience in attempting to manage the disputed papal election in Rome after the death of Zosimus in 418, which pit Boniface against Eulalius, with each claimant enjoying the support of a faction.²²⁰ The matter was eventually resolved by imperial intervention, after a council held at Ravenna failed to induce either of the contenders to yield. In the wake of this episode, Hagith Sivan writes, Placidia became convinced that "the ultimate unilateral decision of the emperor without episcopal endorsement illuminated the need to forge a balance between Rome and Ravenna. To ensure coexistence rather than competitiveness would become the underpinning of Galla's papal politics."²²¹ Perhaps part of "forg[ing] a balance" between the ancient capital and the current home of the imperial court had to be elevating the ecclesiastical rank of the latter—provided, of course, that the collaboration of the bishop of Rome could be secured.²²² But before

²¹⁷ Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 60.

²¹⁸ His opportunity came only toward the end of his tenure, after the death of Constantius III, husband of Galla Placidia, father of Valentinian III, and patron of Patroclus of Arles. See Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 69-71.

²¹⁹ Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 73-74.

²²⁰ On this episode, see Hagith Sivan, *Galla Placidia: The Last Roman Empress* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 72-79.

²²¹ Sivan, *Galla Placidia*, 79.

²²² To be clear, this supposition is not Sivan's, but mine.

Placidia could act on the wisdom gleaned from this experience, her husband Constantius died, and she was caught up in intrigue at the court that led to her being banished from Ravenna with her son and her entourage.²²³ Once she returned to Ravenna after her banishment and her son was secure on the throne of the western empire, she could turn her attention to securing for Ravenna an appropriate rank within the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Finally, Ravenna's elevation may be a token of the close association between Galla Placidia and Peter Chrysologus, who became bishop not long after the Augusta and her young son Valentinian returned triumphantly to the city in 425.²²⁴ This association between Placidia and Peter is mirrored in some ways by the empress' relationship with the city of Ravenna itself, in which she sponsored the construction the Church of John the Evangelist and the Church of the Holy Cross.²²⁵ But monumental architecture was only one form of patronage that Placidia could show toward her capital and its church. Securing for it the dignity of metropolitan rank was another. The reason for the close association between Placidia and Peter is not known, but the latter's accession to the episcopacy of the city seems to have been the final ingredient that accounts for the timing of Ravenna's change in status.²²⁶

²²³ Constantius died in September 421. By the next year, sporadic violence broke out in the streets of Ravenna between the supporters of Placidia and those of Castinus, a courtier who opposed Placidia's influence at the court. And so, either late in 422 or early in 423 she sailed from Rome to Constantinople with her son and her retainers. See Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 166-177; Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 259; and Sivan, *Galla Placidia*, 86-90.

²²⁴ This close connection is illustrated in his *Sermo* 130.3, in which Peter proclaims, "Also present is the mother of the Christian, eternal and faithful Empire herself, who by following and imitating the blessed church in her faith, her works of mercy, her holiness, and in her reverence for the Trinity, has been found worthy of bringing to birth, embracing, and possessing an august trinity." Cited in Sivan, *Galla Placidia*, 162. Deliyannis speculates, quite reasonably, that "Galla Placidia may have had something to do with Chrysologus' elevation." See *Ravenna in Late Antiquity*, 84.

²²⁵ Agnellus of Ravenna, *Liber pontificalis ecclesiae ravennatis*, 27 and 41-42, cited in Sivan, *Galla Placidia*, 163-164.

²²⁶ Throughout his biography of Placidia, Oost emphasizes the Augusta's piety and devotion to Christian orthodoxy, traits that any catholic prelate would likely have appreciated. Their relationship was also represented artistically in the Church of St. John the Evangelist, built with the patronage of Placidia, where a mosaic mounted over the

Literary Connections among the North Italian Bishops

One task remains before moving on to the main themes of this study—authority and heterodoxy in the works of the fifth-century bishops of northern Italy. That is to justify treating these bishops as a group, rather than as individuals connected only by geography and chronology. We have seen that the cities of all the bishops considered in this dissertation—Milan, Turin, Brescia, Trent, Aquileia, and Ravenna—were located in the civil diocese of *Italia Annonaria*. By the end of the fourth century, Milan and Aquileia had exercised considerable influence outside of their own provinces of Liguria and Aemilia and Venetia and Histria, respectively. They were likewise not subject to the direct authority of Rome, and although it is unclear whether Trent lay in the sphere of influence of Milan or Aquileia as the fourth century ended and the fifth began, Turin and Brescia were firmly in that of Milan.²²⁷ At the end of the fourth century, Ravenna was under Rome's direct authority, but its elevation to metropolitan rank around the middle of the period under consideration and the transfer to its jurisdiction of several bishoprics formerly under Milanese authority gave it closer connections with the ecclesiastical culture that had been developed during the last quarter of the previous century. We thus now turn to look at the literary and theological connections that bind these bishops together. The wide-ranging influence of the prolific bishop of Milan from the late fourth century, which is plain to every reader of the critical editions of the works of the churchmen at the center of this study, justifies applying the moniker "Ambrosian" to the culture of these churches and their bishops. We will look at only two examples of the influence of Ambrose, many of whose works

episcopal throne depicted a bishop that can be none other than Peter celebrating mass. See *PCBE* 2.1729; and Deliyannis, *Ravenna in Late Antiquity*, 68-69.

²²⁷ Brescia and Trent: Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 190-193. That Turin was still in Milan's reduced sphere of influence at the end of our period is indicated by the signature of its bishop Maximus (not the same whose sermons are a major source for this dissertation) appended to the synodical epistle of the Council of Milan of 451.

were plainly read by his younger contemporaries Chromatius, Gaudentius, and Maximus, and likely by Peter Chrysologus as well.

Our first example of Ambrosian influence is the role played by Ambrose as the common source of an exegetical point picked up by Maximus and Peter. The biblical text in question is Luke 6:6-11, a pericope in which Jesus heals a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath.

Ambrose writes:

From there the Lord passes on to other things. For he who had arranged to save the entire man ran through the individual parts of the body one at a time, so that he spoke truly when he said, *Are you angry with me, who have cured the entire man on the Sabbath?* And so, in this place he has wetted with the saving moisture of good deeds that hand that Adam stretched out and that plucked the fruit of the forbidden tree, in order that what had been withered by the misdeed might be restored to health with good works. By doing this Christ refuted the Jews, who by their false interpretations violated the teachings of the law, judging that on the Sabbath it was necessary to rest from good works, even though in present things the Law prefigured the shape of things to come, in which there will indeed come rest from evil things, not from good ones. For even though the works of this world will rest, resting in the praise of God is nevertheless not an act devoid of good work. You have therefore heard the words of the Lord when he said, *Extend your hand.* Here is the universal and general medicine. And you who believe that you have a healthy hand, be on guard lest it be united to avarice, be on guard lest it be united to sacrilege. Stretch out your hand often; stretch it out to the poor man who asks of you; stretch it out in order to help your neighbor, render aid to the widow, or snatch from injustice the one whom you see subjected to unjust abuse, stretch it out to God for your sins. Thus the hand is stretched out, thus it is made well. In this way Jeroboam, when he was sacrificing to idols, united his hand to them, but when he prayed to God he stretched it out.²²⁸

²²⁸ *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam* 5.39-40, CCL 14.148-149: "Hinc ad alia progreditur dominus Iesus. Nam qui totum hominem saluum facere disposuerat per singula membra currebat, ut vere diceret: *mihi irascimini, qui totum hominem saluum feci in sabbato?* Itaque hoc loco manum illam, quam extendit Adam et interdictae arboris poma decerpserat, sucis bonorum factorum salutaribus inrigavit, ut quae crimine aruerat bonis operibus sanaretur. In quo Iudaeos redarguit Christus, qui malis interpretationibus legis praecepta violarent, aestimantes sabbato etiam a bonis operibus feriandum, cum lex in praesentibus formam praefiguravit futurorum, in quibus utique malorum feriae venturae sunt, non bonorum. Nam licet saecularia opera conquiescant, non otiosus tamen boni operis actus est in dei laude requiescere. Audisti igitur domini verba dicentis: *extende manum tuam.* Communis ista generalisque medicina est. Et tu qui putas manum habere te sanam, cave ne avaritia, cave ne sacrilegio contrahatur. Extende saepius eam, extende ad illum pauperem qui te obsecrat, extende ad proximum iuves, ut viduae praesidium feras, eripias iniuriae quem vides iniustae contumeliae subiaceret, extende ad deum pro peccatis tuis. Sic manus extenditur, sic sanatur. Sic Hieroboam manum cum idolis sacrificaret contraxit, cum deum rogaret extendit" (translation mine).

Both Maximus and Peter borrow important elements of Ambrose's exegesis. Maximus states in Sermon 43.4, based not on Luke 6 but the parallel passage in Mark 3:1-7:

But let us see when this hand first began to be withered or dead. I am certain that it first began to wither in Adam. For when, against the prohibition of the Lord, it plucked the fruits of the forbidden tree it lost the vigor of immortality. And then it dried up to a certain degree when by his sin he dissolved the human person, formed in the image of God, into dust. If only the wicked hand alone were held by sin! What is worse, the entire body was sentenced to death when the first hand sinned. Nor should you wonder if the member that is the hand did not remain whole in Adam, for the vigor of eternity dried up in it. Just as the hand of Moses, who was keeping the commandments of the Lord, shone with snowy splendor, so also the hand of Adam, who acted against the precepts of God, was clenched tight with a deadly pallor. It is this hand of Adam's that the Savior heals in the synagogue. That is to say, He is eager to cure the sickness of the whole human race, and so this medicine is universal. For He says to him: *Stretch out your hand!*—he who clenched it by sacrificing to idols. He says to him: *Stretch out your hand!*—whose hand dried up by accepting usury. He says to him: *Stretch out your hand!*—he who used it to seize the goods of orphans and widows. But you who think that you have a healthy hand, beware lest avarice close it tight. Rather, stretch it out frequently to the poor for mercy's sake, more frequently to the traveler for hospitality, and always to the Lord because of sin. Be merciful, be generous, and observe what the prophet says: *Let not your hand be extended when it is time to receive and clenched when it is time to give.* For thus your hand will be able to be healthy if it is held back from evil deeds but stretched out for good works.²²⁹

In both Ambrose and Maximus, the symbolic value of the man with the withered hand is emphasized. Both refer to Adam's act of stretching out his hand to pluck the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, and explain the withering of the man's hand as a punishment that fits the crime. The healing of his hand is said to be the healing of the entire race, thus making the man

²²⁹ CCL 23.175-176: "Sed videamus, manus ista quando primum arida coeperit esse vel mortua! Ego illam primum in Adam aruisse confirmo. Cum enim contra vetitum domini interdictae arboris poma decerpsit, sucum immortalitatis amisit; et tunc siccata quodammodo est, quando hominem ad imaginem dei factum peccato suo solui fecit in pulverem. Atque utinam sola manus peccato teneretur obnoxia! Quod est gravius, omne corpus morte damnatum est, cum dextera prima peccaverit. Nec mireris, se membrum dexteræ in Adam non integrum mansit! Vigor enim in illa aeternitatis exaruit. Nam sicut Moysi dextera custodientis mandata domini niveo fulgore resplenduit, ita et Adæ dextera praevaricantis dei praecepta mortifero pallore contracta est. Hanc igitur Adæ manum salvator curat in synagoga, hoc est totius generis humani inbecillitatem sanare festinat, unde communis ista est medicina."

an archetype of all those who are saved. The drama of fall and redemption is thus played out here in microcosm.

The interpretative key to the passage for both Ambrose and Maximus is the notion that the man's withered hand is a symbol of the sinfulness of the entire race. Maximus' sermon shares several other elements besides the same general approach to the Gospel pericope. First, like Ambrose, he says that it was "Adam's hand" that was healed that day. Second, both use very similar language to describe the "medicine" applied by Christ to work the cure of the withered hand. Ambrose says, "*Communis ista generalisque medicina est*," whereas Maximus says, "*communis ista est medicina*." Third, both mention the act of stretching out the hand to sacrifice to idols; Ambrose alludes specifically to King Jeroboam, whereas Maximus alludes to no one in particular. Finally, using almost exactly the same words, both issue a warning to the complacent: "*Et tu qui putas manum habere te sanam, cave ne avaritia, cave ne sacrilegio contrahatur*" (Ambrose); "*Sed et tu, qui putas manum habere te sanam, cave ne avaritia contrahatur*" (Maximus). The number of common elements that link these two texts make it natural to conclude that Maximus' sermon borrows directly from Ambrose's commentary.²³⁰

Peter's exegesis of the same text from Mark in his Sermon 32.1 is similar:

In this person the image of all people is being depicted, in this person is being accomplished the cure of all people, in this person is found the long awaited restoration of everyone's health. For the hand of the man had withered more by dullness of faith than by the dryness of nerves; and more by a guilty conscience than by physical weakness. For that infirmity was very ancient which had arisen at the very beginning of the world, and it could be cured by neither human skill nor human mediation, since it had been contracted according to the justified displeasure of God. For [it] had touched what was forbidden, it had taken what was prohibited, when it had reached out to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

²³⁰ In the judgment of Rita Lizzi, Maximus "showed himself to have a wide familiarity with the works of the Milanese prelate, from which he drew widely." See *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche nella città tardoantica (L'Italia Annonaria nel IV-V secolo d.C.)* (Como: Edizioni New Press, 1989), 189-190.

... In this man only a shadow of our healing is being accomplished, while perfect health is being kept for us in Christ; that is, the pitiful withering of our hand disappears at the time when it is drenched in the blood of the Lord's passion, when it is stretched out on that life-giving wood of the cross, when it plucks the potent fruit that comes from suffering, when it embraces the entire tree of salvation, where the Lord's body is fastened with nails, never to return with a withered will to the tree of concupiscence.²³¹

Here again, the man with the withered hand is a stand-in for the entire human race. Peter focuses on the action of the hand in the Garden of Eden, as if thereby to explain why it was the hand of the man that had withered.²³² But unlike Ambrose and Maximus, Peter focuses more specifically on the passion of Christ as that which works the restoration of human nature and makes the withered hand a symbol of the withered will.²³³ In the exhortation that comes near the end of his sermon, however, Peter uses language very similar to that of Ambrose and Maximus:

Pray, brothers, that only the synagogue be darkened by such an infirmity, and that there be no one in the Church who has a hand that greed withers, avarice shrivels up, thievery makes infirm, and sick stinginess shackles. But if this very thing happens, let him listen to the Lord, and quickly stretch out his hand in an act of kindness, loosen it in mercy, and extend it in almsgiving. He knows no healing if he does not know how to lend to the poor.²³⁴

²³¹ CCL 24.182-183: "In hoc homine omnium hominum imago figuratur, in hoc geritur cura cunctorum, in hoc universorum sanitas diu expectata reparatur. Aruerat enim manus hominis magis stupore fidei, quam siccitate carnali. Antiqua nimis ista erat, et quae in ipso mundi principio contigerat aegritudo, nec arte hominis aut beneficio poterat haec curari, quae iusta dei fuerat indignatione contracta. Tetigerat vetita, inconcessa praesumpserat, cum ad arborem sciendi bonum malumve porrexerat. Auctore indigebat, non qui malagma inponeret, sed qui possit inlatam relaxare sententiam, et ignoscendo resolvere, quod ligaverat indignando. In hoc homine nostrae tantum geritur umbra sanitatis, perfecta autem salus nobis reservatur in Christo; quia tunc ariditas nostrae manus miseranda dissolvitur, cum cruore perfunditur dominicae passionis, cum in illo vitali ligno crucis extenditur, cum carpit fructuosam de dolore virtutem, cum totam arborem salutis amplectitur, cum clavis domini corpus affigitur, quod numquam ad arborem concupiscentiae aridae redeat voluntatis" (trans. William B. Palardy, slightly modified).

²³² My interpretation of the final sentence in the first paragraph is different from Palardy's, and it is here that I have modified his translation, replacing his "man" between the brackets with "it," referring to the hand, which seems to me the natural subject of the verbs "tetigerat," "praesumpserat," and "porrexerat." As Palardy points out (*FC* 109.134n.2), the subject could be "homo" or "manus," and "manus" is closer than "homo," having been the subject of the verb "aruerat" a few lines above. "Manus" is also the subject of the verb "aruerat" in the Ambrosian passage (*Exp. in Luc.* 5.39) from which Peter draws this insight.

²³³ In chap. 7, we will see that Peter's mention of the will in a context like this is evidence of the influence on him of Augustinian ideas about human nature.

²³⁴ CCL 24.184: "Orate, fratres, ut sola synagoga tali debilitate fuscetur, nec sit in ecclesia cuius manum arefaciat cupiditas, contrahat avaritia, rapina debilitet, tenacitas aegrota constringat. Sed si acciderit idipsum, audiat

Like Ambrose and Maximus, Peter describes the effect of *avaritia* by using the verb *contrahere*. And also like them, he urges his listeners who have fallen short on this point to “stretch out (*extendere*)” their hand in good works so as to make up for their failings.

This first example thus shows how Maximus, whose episcopate in nearby Turin began not long after the end of Ambrose’s life, as well as Peter, whose episcopate in more distant Ravenna was separated from that of Ambrose by several decades, both drew on the writings of the bishop of Milan. Maximus’ Sermon 43 shows a much closer reliance on Ambrose with regard to both the overarching exegetical approach as well as some of the details of the exegesis, and in several cases the very language used to interpret and apply the text. Peter, by contrast, borrows somewhat more loosely from Ambrose, but the similarities of theme and word choice make it very likely that the Ambrosian text was one of his sources for his Sermon 32. Many similar examples could be adduced to demonstrate the reliance of Chromatius, Gaudentius, Maximus, and Peter on Ambrose’s vast corpus of writings. Given the great prestige of the church of Milan during Ambrose’s episcopate, as well as the correspondence he kept up with other churchmen, bishops and non-bishops, both within and beyond the *Annonaria* diocese, the influence of his exegetical and theological writings comes as no surprise to us.²³⁵ Reference has already been made to the fact that, on the day of his episcopal ordination, Gaudentius referred to

dominum, et cito eam in opere pietatis extendat, relaxet in misericordia in elemosinis porrigat. Sanari nescit, qui nescit pauperi fenerari” (trans. Palardy).

²³⁵ Ambrose’s *Ep.* 28 [Maur. 50] was addressed to Chromatius, and dealt with the question of whether God could lie. Ambrose wrote to Vigilus of Trent shortly after the latter’s election, to offer advice (*institutionis insigniae*) as to how to carry out his new duties (*Ep.* 62 [Maur. 19]). Six of his letters to Sabinus of Piacenza have survived (32-35, 37, and 39 [Maur. 48, 49, 45, 83, 47, and 46, respectively]), as has a circular letter to the bishops of Aemilia (*Ep. extr. coll.* 13 [Maur. 23]).

the bishop of Milan as “*communem patrem Ambrosium*.”²³⁶ The depth of his literary influence on this group of north Italian bishops in the early fifth century shows that this was no empty title.

But the other question that must be asked about the literary relationships among these bishops pertains to those that may or may not have existed among Chromatius, Gaudentius, Maximus, and Peter. There is no clear evidence that the first three, who were contemporaries of one another, were familiar with the writings of each of the other two. Likewise, there is no decisive evidence that Peter was greatly influenced by or even familiar with the writings of these three.²³⁷ The common bond that united all these figures was that they drew on the writings of Ambrose.²³⁸ The one literary relationship that does seem to have existed between two of these younger figures is that between Chromatius and Gaudentius. Four of Chromatius’ sermons and one of his *Tractatus in Mathaeum* seem to have verbal echoes in five of Gaudentius’ *Tractatus*. Table 1 puts the relevant passages side by side. It is difficult if not impossible to determine which way the influence went simply by looking at these parallels. Did the more prolix Gaudentius expand on a thought he had found in the work of Chromatius? Or did the rather laconic Chromatius express more concisely a point he had taken from Gaudentius? One thing that we know that may help answer this question is that Gaudentius published a collection of some of his sermons during his lifetime, partly in an effort to forestall the circulation of

²³⁶ *Tr.* 16.9, *CSEL* 68.139. His words come in the context of his invitation to Ambrose to preach to the people of Brescia after Gaudentius himself has finished: “Nunc vero, quoniam lectionum puteus altus est et ego hauritorium verbi non habens aquam vivam sitientibus vobis interim ministrare non possum, obsecro communem patrem Ambrosium, ut post exiguum rorem sermonis mei ipse inriget corda vestra divinarum mysteriis litterarum.”

²³⁷ But cf. *Serm.* 2.5.90-91 and Gaudentius, *Tr.* 21.7.57-58; cf. *Serm.* 13.5.79-80 and Maximus, *Sermm.* 1.3.64 and 31.3.76-77.; cf. *Serm.* 50.1.5-6 and Zeno of Verona, *Tr.* 1.46; cf. *Serm.* 71.11.107-113 and Zeno, *Tr.* 1.36.3; cf. *Sermon* 84.8.92 and Gaudentius, *Tr.* 17.6.45-9.80; cf. *Serm.* 124.3.37-38 and Zeno, *Tr.* 1.15; cf. *Serm.* 154.3.22 and Zeno, *Tr.* 1.36.20 and 2.4.16; cf. *Serm.* 166.3 and Maximus, *Serm.* 50.2; cf. *Serm.* 170.1 and Chromatius, *Serm.* 21; *Serm.* 170.4.52 and Zeno, *Tr.* 2.4.6.

²³⁸ There is, quite naturally, also a clear literary relationship between some of Chromatius’ sermons and Rufinus’ *Expositio symboli*, which was based on the form of the creed then in use in Aquileia.

Table 1: Literary Connections between Chromatius and Gaudentius

Chromatius		Gaudentius
Serm. 11.4.95-97: <i>In capite enim, ut diximus, <u>divinitas</u> eius quae de Patre est significatur; in <u>pedibus</u> vero incarnatio eius quae ex virgine est.</i>		Tr. 2.18.105-107: ...videlicet ut <u>in capite divinitatem</u> accipias in quattuor evangelistarum testimonio, <u>pedes</u> ad incorporationem sumas circa finem saeculi celebratam...
Serm. 17A.2.25-26: <i>Azimi sumus si sine <u>fermento malitiae</u> manemus. Azimi sumus si alieni sumus ab omni <u>conspersione peccati</u>.</i>		Tr. 7.20.135-137: <i>Caveamus ergo a <u>fermento malitiae</u>; ubi enim paruerit <u>fermentum nequitiae</u>, confectum a diabolo de <u>conspersione peccatorum</u>...</i>
Serm. 26.1.2-3: <i>Perfecta est <u>basilica in honorem sanctorum</u>, et velociter perfecta.</i>	Tr. 17.1: <i>Divinis muneribus et caelestibus beneficiis condignas referre gratias pusillitas nostra non praevalet, fratres carissimi. Nam ut venerandas <u>sanctorum reliquias</u> haberemus, deus noster tribuit; deinde, ut hanc <u>honori eorum fundare basilicam</u> valeremus, ipse largitus est; et hodie, ut adepti summorum sacerdotum praesentiam dedicationem celebrare mereamur, ipse concessit.</i>	
Serm. 26.1.15-16: <i>Data est <u>portio</u>, ut et vos <u>totum in portione haberetis</u>...</i>	Tr. 17.35-37: <i><u>Portionem</u> reliquiarum sumpsimus et nihil nos minus <u>possidere</u> confidimus, dum <u>totos</u> Quadraginta in suis favillis venerantes amplectimur, sicut illa in evangelio fidelis mulier, quae per fimbriam Christi salvata est, oram tenuit vestimenti et virtutem divinitatis exegit, attactu fimbriae medellam credenti fides traxit et salutem, quam praesumpserat, adquisivit. Itaque <u>pars</u> ipsa, quam meruimus, <u>plenitudo</u> est...</i>	
Serm. 29.3.39-42: <i><u>Calciamus</u> et pedes nostros, si <u>gressus</u> vitae nostrae <u>praeceptis</u> evangelicis ac virtute fidei <u>muniamus</u>, ut securi <u>spinas</u> peccatorum et iniquitatis <u>tribulos</u> conculcemus.</i>	Tr. 5.4.26-32 and 13.106-109: <i>Sicut enim <u>calciamenta</u> terrestria carnalium pedum <u>munimina</u> sunt et vel asperitati frigoris vel serpentum morsui vel <u>spinarum</u> resistunt aculeis, ita legis divinae <u>praecepta</u>, quibus <u>gressus</u> nostrarum mentium munire <u>praecipimur</u>, repugnant et serpenti diabolo et asperrimo aquiloni gentilium et hereticorum undique compungentium <u>spinis</u> ac <u>tribulis</u>. ... Propter incredulos et parvae fidei homines iubentur in via praedicationis habere <u>calciamenta</u> apostoli, ut verbum dei <u>calciatum</u> et contextum in mysterio propter <u>spinas</u> et <u>tribulos</u> blasphemantium praedicent.</i>	
Tr. 46.5.126-130: <i>In <u>utres</u> vero <u>novos</u> in quibus <u>vinum novum</u> mittendum esse dicit ut utrumque <u>serventur</u>, homines fideles ostendit, qui per <u>caelestem nativitatem</u> et per Christi <u>gratiam innovati</u>, acceptum in se <u>vinum novum</u>, id est donum Spiritus sancti, traditam sibi <u>gratiam integram</u> et illibatam <u>custodiunt</u>.</i>	Tr. 8.50-51: <i>Elaboret ergo omni studio unusquisque vestrum permanere in domo domini exercens opera perceptae <u>gratiae</u> congrua. Oportet enim in novum <u>renatos</u> hominem a peccatis pristinis iam cavere. Servate, quaeso, <u>utres novos</u>, neophyti, ne vitam veterem repetentes <u>vinum novum</u> disrupti perdatis; rumpit enim vinum novum utres veteres et vinum effundetur et utres peribunt. <u>Custodite</u> igitur <u>regenerati hominis integram novitatem</u> et <u>caeleste</u> vinum in vestris <u>utribus conservate</u>, ut vos ipsa fides <u>custodita conservet</u> per salvatorem generis humani Christum Iesum dominum deum nostrum regnantem cum patre et cum spiritu sancto ante omnia et nunc et semper et in cuncta saecula.</i>	

unauthorized copies.²³⁹ Thus it seems more likely that Gaudentius' work would have reached Aquileia during the episcopate of Chromatius than that the work of Chromatius would have reached Brescia during that of Gaudentius.²⁴⁰ Whether this conclusion is correct or incorrect is, however, of less importance than the broader point that this connection did exist between them. Moreover, an important subtext of the rest of this dissertation is that the concerns shared by these bishops also constitutes evidence that their outlook was formed by the same cultural, theological, and political realities. What united these bishops, besides their common debt to Ambrose, is the subject of much of the rest of this dissertation: a shared view of the relationship between asceticism and episcopal authority, a shared desire to use the cult of relics to stake claims to authority within their zones of influence, a shared view of the proper exercise of imperial authority, and a shared approach to the theological controversies of their time.

One more question regarding these bishops' status as a community needs to be answered: How much evidence is there that manuscripts containing their writings circulated together, or were housed in the same libraries in the centuries immediately following their deaths? Stated differently, to what degree did these bishops constitute a community in the memory of later generations of churchmen? To approach an answer to this question, the surviving manuscripts from the sixth through the ninth century containing at least a portion of their sermons or other writings will be listed, organized by century. The list will include, to the extent possible, information about where the manuscript was created, where it was housed during the early Middle Ages, and which works of the bishop in question it contained. Manuscripts containing Chromatius' sermons and those containing his *Tractatus* will be listed under separate entries.

²³⁹ Gaudentius, *Praef. ad Beniv.*, 7 and 9-11.

²⁴⁰ As discussed in the Appendix, pp. 565-568 and 569-572, the episcopates of Chromatius and Gaudentius overlapped by roughly ten years, possibly more, starting ca. 396.

SIXTH CENTURY

Maximus

Rome, Bibl. Vittorio Emmanuele, Codex Sessorianus 55/2009 (possibly fifth cent.; ss. 1-6, 9-12, 13, 14 dubious, 15-22, 23-29, 40-44, 45 spurious, 48-50, 51-59, 62-66; “presumably came early to Nonantola Abbey,” which was founded in 752)²⁴¹

Peter

Milan, Bibl. Ambrosiana C. 77. sup., (provenance Verona, belonged to Bobbio)²⁴²

SEVENTH CENTURY

Maximus

St. Petersburg, Öffentliche Staatsbibliothek, Codex Leninopolitanus Q.v.I.5 (“already in Corbie in the 15th century”; ss. 74-76)²⁴³

Milan, Bibl. Ambrosiana, C. 98 inf. (possibly eighth cent.; 29 ss.; belonged to Bobbio in the 15th cent.)²⁴⁴

Peter

Vat. Lat. 5758, Bobbio (possibly sixth cent.; provenance N. Italy, belonged to Bobbio)²⁴⁵

EIGHTH CENTURY

Chromatius (Sermons)

Verona, Bibl. Capitolare LII, (possibly early ninth cent.; provenance Burgundy)²⁴⁶

Maximus

²⁴¹ This ms. contains the oldest copy of Augustine’s *Confessions*. Unfortunately, Mutzenbecher does not specify what she means by “early.” CCL 23.xxxviii-xli.

²⁴² CCL 24.ix-x.

²⁴³ CCL 23.xli-xlii.

²⁴⁴ CCL 23.xlii-xliv.

²⁴⁵ CCL 24.xiv-xvii.

²⁴⁶ CCL 9A.xx; Raymond Étaix, “Un homiliaire ancien dans le ms. LII de la Bibliothèque capitulaire de Vérone,” *Revue bénédictine* 73 (1963): 289-306.

Codex Sangallensis 188 (contains the majority of Maximus' ss.; "must have come already at an early date to [the Abbey of St. Gall], which was founded in the seventh century")²⁴⁷

Chromatius (Sermons)

Paris, Bibl. Nat. Lat. 2328 (provenance S. Burgundy or Rhone Valley; s. 15)²⁴⁸

Chromatius (*Tractatus*)

Paris, Bibl. Nat. Lat. 1771 (provenance Fulda; the portion containing the Chromatian texts is based on a sixth-century model likely from the area around Ravenna; *Tr.* 35)²⁴⁹

Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek Aug. perg. XVIII (provenance Reichenau; anonymous; commentary on the Lord's Prayer)²⁵⁰

NINTH CENTURY

Chromatius (Sermons)

Wien, Öster. Nationalbibliothek Lat. 1014 (an. 811-819; provenance Mondsee; parts of ss. 6, 9, 17, 17A, and 42, either anonymous or attributed to Augustine)²⁵¹

Chromatius (*Tractatus*)

Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale, F II 19 (860) (possibly tenth cent.; provenance Bobbio; *Tr.* 26-27, 29-30, and 42, attributed to Chrysostom)²⁵²

Gaudentius

Rheims, Codex Remensis 369 (*Praef. ad Beniv.* and *Tr.* 1-19)²⁵³

Vigilius

²⁴⁷ CCL 23.xliv-xlvii.

²⁴⁸ CCL 9A.xix.

²⁴⁹ CCL 9A.xl.

²⁵⁰ CCL 9A.xxix.

²⁵¹ CCL 9A.xv.

²⁵² CCL 9A.xxxi-xxxii.

²⁵³ CSEL 68.xx-xxii.

Verona, Bibl. Capitolare XCV (90) (*Ep.* 1)²⁵⁴

Maximus

Lyon, Bib. Municipale, Codex Lugdunensis 1236 (1108) (possibly tenth-cent.; 94 of Maximus' ss.; belonged to the episcopal library of Lyon)²⁵⁵

The information contained in this list of manuscripts demonstrates that the writings of these bishops circulated for the most part as parts of collections of the works of a number of different writers or preachers. There are exceptions to this general rule, such as Codex Sangallensis 188, which contains nearly all of Maximus' extant sermons, Codex Lugdunensis 1236 (1108), which likewise contains most of Maximus' sermons, and Codex Remensis 369, which contains most of Gaudentius' surviving writings. Collections of Peter's sermons circulated (Bibl. Ambrosiana C. 77. sup. and Vat. Lat. 5758) even before archbishop Felix of Ravenna in the early eighth century put together a larger collection that closely resembles the corpus of Petrine sermons that is standard today.²⁵⁶ But for the most part, the reception of these bishops' work on the part of early medieval monastic audiences was selective. They copied and pasted what they liked and ignored what seemed less useful. Moreover, although the aforementioned collections of Peter's and Gaudentius' writings had their names attached to them, those of Maximus did not. Nor did those of Chromatius, which were not attributed to him again until the 1960s.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁴ Enrico Menestò, "Le lettere di S. Vigilio," in *I martiri della Val di Non e la reazione pagana alla fine del IV secolo. Atti del convegno. Trento, 27-28 marzo 1984*, ed. Antonio Quacquarelli and Iginio Rogger (Trent: Istituto Trentino di Cultura, 1985), 151-170, at 151.

²⁵⁵ *CCL* 23.xlvii.

²⁵⁶ *CCL* 24.xvii-xviii.

²⁵⁷ On the rediscovery of the majority of Chromatius' works during this decade, see chap. 6 below, pp. 383-387.

The circulation of these works under other names and/or in a dispersed fashion has certain implications for what we can know about how the memory of this north Italian “community” of bishops survived past the fifth century. The fact that Chromatius became disassociated from his works, especially from his *Tractatus in Mathaeum*, by the end of the fifth century, suggests that what mattered most for his early medieval readers was the quality of his work rather than his identity as their author. In any case, his fate, along with that of the other north Italian bishops of his generation, suggests that no memory of a “community of preachers” existed, nor indeed could it exist, until modern scholars went through the slow and painstaking process of matching these works with their individual authors. They had been absorbed into the stream of the spiritual heritage of western Christianity, a stream that was in large part either anonymous or the preserve (so it was thought) of a small number of marquee authors. They can be likened to salts and sugars of various types that are dissolved in water and that affect its flavor even if their individual identities can only be discerned if the water is allowed to evaporate. The work of disaggregation that earlier scholars and editors have undertaken is somewhat akin to that process of evaporation. Their achievement now makes it possible to put the individual authors side by side and to identify the common themes and concerns that united them as members of the same generation who were shaped by the same political and ecclesiastical context. The rest of this dissertation will aim to do precisely that.

CHAPTER 2: ASCETICISM AND EPISCOPAL AUTHORITY: ROME AND NORTHERN ITALY

“Now explain to me: what is that gathering or faction of monks, and why are they despised, even by our own people? Certainly, if they are engaged in honorable pursuits and are not violating the unity of the faith, they ought to be imitated, rather than avoided. As I see it, it is a crime and a sin in the eyes of God to hate good people and not to avoid wicked people.”

—*Consultationes Zacchei et Apollonii* 3.3.1-2²⁵⁸

“And the Senate of pharisees cried aloud; and the entire faction of ignorance—not just a single scribe or faker—conspired against me, as if a combat of doctrines had been announced to them.”

—Jerome, Prologue to the Latin translation of Didymus the Blind’s *On the Holy Spirit*²⁵⁹

We saw in chapter 1 that Maximus of Turin compared bishops to bees, who go about their work “with the skill of their mouth.” His observation of the role of the spoken word in enabling bishops to exercise their authority contains much insight into nature of the episcopal office. But words alone were not enough to make an effective bishop. They had to be backed up by concrete evidence that bishops were the sort of people whose opinion mattered, and so certain behaviors were expected of them, especially when it came to sex. That is to say, a bishop should at the very least have put it behind him, as something that belonged to an earlier chapter in his life. But in the late fourth century, some Christian thinkers began to go farther, insisting that men who had been lifelong virgins, or who had at least given up marital relations as part of a dramatic break with their former way of life and an embrace of asceticism, were even more

²⁵⁸ SC 402.178: “Quae nunc igitur monachorum congregatio vel secta sit, vel quam ob causam etiam nostrorum odiis digni habeantur, exprome. Qui utique, si honesta sectantur, neque a fidei unitate dissentiunt, imitandi sunt potius quam vitandi, quia, ut arbitror, eiusdem apud deum criminis atque peccati est, odisse bonos, cuius et noxius non vitare” (trans. David G. Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity: The Jovinianist Controversy* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007], 59).

²⁵⁹ SC 386.136: “Et pharisaeorum conclamavit senatus; et nullus scriba vel fictus sed omnis, quasi indicto sibi praelio doctrinarum, adversum me imperitiae factio coniuravit” (translation mine).

suited to be bishops than those who had not made such a break.²⁶⁰ To the degree that their attitude can be reconstructed, the surviving writings of the bishops at the center of this study all expressed a strong preference that bishops forego marriage altogether. This chapter examines this attitude in more detail in the context of a survey of the varieties of the ascetic life that had been established in northern Italy before the end of the fourth century. It thus deals mainly with the “foundations” period outlined in chapter 1, but our discussion of Chromatius, Gaudentius, Maximus, and Peter at the end of the chapter will bring us into the period in which we are mainly interested.

Concerns about the intersection between sexual renunciation and episcopal authority were certainly on Ambrose’s mind when, near the end of his life, he penned an impassioned plea to the church of Vercelli. Its goal was simple: to convince them not to break with the pioneering precedent set by their proto-bishop Eusebius, who had organized his clergy into a type of monastic community, by electing a non-ascetic to be their next bishop.²⁶¹ As the Roman Empire entered into a period of political uncertainty after the death of Theodosius, however, it seems that many in the church of Vercelli desired the protection that only a man of worldly experience could provide. The natural choice for the new era that was dawning was a powerful landowner, not an other-worldly figure whose celibacy (which may even have been lifelong), fasting, prayer vigils, and simplicity of life were marks of extraordinary dedication to God, but whose holiness could hardly be expected to benefit a church in the turbulent world they (rightly) saw themselves

²⁶⁰ The term “asceticism” will be used in this chapter, and throughout this study, to denote a set of behaviors whereby a person renounced some of the ordinary bodily pleasures—delicate foods, sufficient sleep, a comfortable dwelling, and most of all sexual intercourse—in order to achieve a religious goal.

²⁶¹ *Ep. 14 extr. coll.* In §63, Ambrose refers to the way in which Eusebius governed his clergy. See also Lorenzo Dattrino, “Il cenobio clericale di Eusebio,” in *Eusebio di Vercelli e il suo tempo*, ed. Enrico dal Covolo, Renato Uglione, and Giovanni M. Vian (Rome: Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 1997), 339-345.

as entering.²⁶² The strident, almost panicked, tone of Ambrose's letter shows that he feared his cause was in real danger of suffering a setback. And what a setback it would be, for Vercelli was the first church outside the Greek east whose bishop had adopted this form of life. To abandon this path would provide its opponents with all the more reason to believe that it had been a failed experiment in ecclesiastical leadership, a misguided attempt to sanctify the world, and to pull down into the earthly realm the heavenly kingdom, in which there would be no marriage or giving in marriage.

Ambrose's pleas were ultimately successful, but without them things might have turned out very differently. Recent research on the attitudes of fourth-century Christians has shown that, while most of them accepted the superiority of virginity over the married state in theory, this attitude was by no means universal, and those who held it did not necessarily believe that ascetics made effective clerics. Much of our knowledge of Christian attitudes about these issues comes from the literature produced by controversies that arose in response to the teaching of Helvidius in the 380s and Jovinian in the 390s. Helvidius was a critic of the doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity, a teaching that was in fact relatively new at this stage in Christian history, and the acceptance of which had obvious implications for evaluating the comparative merit of virginity and marriage. He did not, however, explicitly raise the question of the sexual renunciation of clerics.²⁶³ But Jovinian did.²⁶⁴ Jovinian was a lay ascetic who lived in Rome

²⁶² Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Ancient Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 361.

²⁶³ Daniel Callam, "Clerical Continence in the Fourth Century: Three Papal Decretals," *Theological Studies* 41 (1980): 3-50, at 5.

²⁶⁴ The work of David Hunter has been especially helpful in shedding light on the reasons why Jovinian's teachings were able to gain a significant following, even though in the end he was unable to carry the day. They also helpfully illuminate the late antique debate over whether the church should merely require abstinence from sexual relations on the part of bishops after their ordination or insist on lifelong celibacy. In addition to his monograph on *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity*, see also "Resistance to the Virginal Ideal in Late-Fourth-Century Rome: The Case of Jovinian," *Theological Studies* 48 (1987): 45-64; "Clerical Celibacy and the Veiling of Virgins:

during the 380s and 390s and who cultivated relationships with aristocratic patrons whom he mentored in their own ascetic endeavors. In this regard he was not so different from contemporary figures like Pelagius, Jerome, and Rufinus, all of whom had their circles of aristocratic protégés and patrons.²⁶⁵ But on the basis of his interpretation of Christian baptism, Jovinian objected to the notion that either marriage or virginity could be superior to the other.²⁶⁶ Thus in the context of “the wave of ascetic enthusiasm which spread throughout the church in the fourth century,” he represented an extreme reaction against some of the claims that were made in favor of the virtues of the ascetic life.²⁶⁷

His ideas were condemned in the year 393 by church councils in both Rome and Milan.²⁶⁸ But the fact that he had been able to generate no little support for his view of the ascetic life—a view driven by his ecclesiology—shows that no single theological understanding of the church and of its leadership had yet gained hold in the Christian world by the end of the fourth century. On the contrary, two different models for episcopal leadership emerged in Italy at this time, reflecting different ideas and priorities in the selection of bishops. One of these

New Boundaries in Late Ancient Christianity,” in *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R. A. Markus*, ed. William E. Klingshirn and Mark Vessey (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999): 139-152; “Rereading the Jovinianist Controversy: Asceticism and Clerical Authority in Late Ancient Christianity,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33.3 (2003): 453-470; and “Clerical Marriage and Episcopal Elections in the Latin West: From Siricius to Leo I,” in *Episcopal Elections in Late Antiquity*, ed. Johan Leemans, Peter Van Nuffelen, Shawn W. J. Keough, and Carla Nicolaye (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011): 184-202. Another extensive modern study of the Jovinianist Controversy is Yves-Marie Duval’s *L’affaire Jovinien. D’une crise de la société romaine à une crise de la pensée chrétienne à la fin du IVe et au début du Ve siècle* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2003).

²⁶⁵ On Pelagius and Rufinus, see Peter Brown, “Pelagius and His Supporters: Aims and Environment,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, n. s. 19.1 (1968): 93-114; and “The Patrons of Pelagius: The Roman Aristocracy between East and West,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, n. s. 21.1 (1970): 56-72. On Jerome, see Stefan Rebenich, *Hieronymus und sein Kreis. Prosopographische und sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1992).

²⁶⁶ Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 26-50; and Duval, *L’affaire Jovinien*, 58-62, 71-80.

²⁶⁷ Hunter, “Resistance to the Virginal Ideal,” 45.

²⁶⁸ On his condemnation, see Duval, *L’affaire Jovinien*, 81-95; and Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy and Heresy*, 16-17.

models was that of the church of Rome. There, the younger and lower-ranking clergy were typically married, but once a man was promoted to the office of deacon or presbyter, he would cease having marital relations. The bishops of Rome were then chosen from among these continent clergy. This model, or a variation of it, prevailed in most of the western churches in the 390s.²⁶⁹ In northern Italy, by contrast, many churches had begun to show a preference for bishops who, like Ambrose and Eusebius, had given up all sexual activity as part of a larger break with the world.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore why asceticism—a collection of self-denying behaviors and habits, including especially the renunciation of sex—became widely accepted in northern Italy as a key component of episcopal authority around the end of the fourth century. To answer this question, we will begin by exploring bishop Siricius of Rome’s program for the professionalization of the clergy, which involved marital continence on the part of the upper clergy. Against this background of a partial embrace of this one aspect of ascetic discipline on the part of the Roman church’s leaders, we will proceed with the rest of our discussion. We will look, second, at the increasing popularity of various forms of the ascetic lifestyle in Italy—particularly in northern Italy—during this period. As we do this, we will look at how the ascetic theories of Ambrose and Jerome intersect with the exercise of clerical authority. Third, we will show that for most of the north Italian bishops whose writings we possess, asceticism—including

²⁶⁹ The fact that when Martin of Tours faced strong opposition on account of his ascetic manner of life when he was chosen bishop ca. 371, and that when he died in 397, was succeeded by Briccius, who was not an ascetic, illustrates the strength of this more traditional attitude in Gaul at the end of the fourth century. Augustine’s selection as bishop of Carthage in 395 did not arouse opposition on account of his asceticism, but rather because of his past Manichaean associations and his sexual history, which he wrote the *Confessions* in part, at least, to address. For Martin, see Ralph W. Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 20-22; and David Hunter, “Vigilantius of Calagurris and Victricius of Rouen: Ascetics, Relics, and Clerics in Late Roman Gaul,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 7.3 (1999): 401-430, at 413; and (for Augustine) Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 156; and pp. xi-xii of Chadwick’s Introduction to his translation.

the foregoing of marriage altogether—genuinely was a central element of episcopal authority. In those cases where it is impossible to be sure, a case can at the very least be made. Finally, we will attempt to determine to what extent the north Italian episcopacy as a whole from the middle of the fourth through the middle of the fifth century embraced this same ideal.

The Making of the Roman Clergy: Ascetic and Aristocratic Values in Tension

During the past twenty years a literature has begun to grow up exploring the fusion between the charisma of ascetics and the institutionalized authority of ecclesiastical office, with some of the more recent work focusing narrowly on the emergence of the “monk-bishop” in Late Antiquity.²⁷⁰ Various scholars have noted the way in which ascetics began to appear on episcopal chairs during the fourth century. While the phenomenon is real, their models tend to focus only on the east, or to over-generalize and obscure our understanding of the development of the episcopal office in the west.²⁷¹ The fact of the matter is that although asceticism itself was making significant inroads into Italian Christianity by the end of the fourth century, not everyone agreed that ascetics were the best candidates for church office, let alone for the episcopate.²⁷² The doubts harbored by one of the factions at Vercelli about the suitability of such men for the leadership of their church were shared by many Christians elsewhere, too. In fact, the church of Rome was itself quite slow in coming around to embracing ascetic leadership. In this regard, the churches of Rome and Milan (and with Milan the rest of northern Italy) developed along rather

²⁷⁰ David Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Andrea Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church: The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004); and Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005).

²⁷¹ Sterk’s study focuses on the east, where there is strong evidence that monks came to be among the favored candidates to become bishops—the beginnings of a tradition that continues to this day in the Eastern Orthodox churches. Rapp, however, develops an imaginative but overly ambitious model that works better for the east than for the west. More on this below.

²⁷² Hunter, “Clerical Marriage and Episcopal Elections in the Latin West,” *passim*.

different lines at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth centuries, a divergence dictated by the adoption of two very different models of clerical leadership.

The attitude of Roman Christians toward asceticism in the late fourth century was something of a paradox.²⁷³ As we will see shortly, the city was one of the early centers of female asceticism in the west, a trend that caught on especially among the aristocracy. But it was also a center of opposition to the burgeoning ascetic movement, the place from which Helvidius and Jovinian both launched their attack against the notion that virginity was more sacred than married life. Opponents of asceticism in the late fourth century objected to one or both of two basic features of its program. The first was related to the threat that it posed to the traditional concerns of Roman aristocrats for social status, based on the one hand on the ability to preserve the family's property and pass it on to the following generation, and on the other hand on the prestige derived from holding high office in the imperial service.²⁷⁴ Related to this objection was the unease felt by some, given the unstable political conditions of age, in entrusting episcopal power to men whose claim to exercise authority was based on their ascetic achievement, and not on their experience wielding political power in either the military or the civil service.²⁷⁵ The other objection was theological in nature, and was related to the claims of some ascetic theorists

²⁷³ Jacques Fontaine speaks of the aristocracy's "contradictory reactions" to the ascetic movement in the fourth century. See "L'aristocratie occidentale devant le monachisme au IV^eme et V^eme siecles," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 15 (1979): 28-53, at 31.

²⁷⁴ The attitude that lay behind these objections, which regarded the conversion of an aristocrat to an ascetic way of life as an abandonment of his class responsibilities, is effectively captured in a letter written by Ambrose to Sabinus of Piacenza, in which he refers to the case of Paulinus of Nola: "Haec ubi audierint procures viri, quae loquentur? Ex illa familia, illa prosapia, illa indole, tanta praeditum eloquentia, migrasse a senatu, interceptasse familiae nobilis successionem: ferri non posse" (Ep. 27.3 *CSEL* 82/1.181, cited in Fontaine, "L'aristocratie occidentale," at 33-34 and 35).

²⁷⁵ As Fontaine points out, the lifestyle of ascetics—especially hermits—possessed what in the minds of Roman aristocrats could only be interpreted as a strongly anti-social element, a separatism that removed the ascetic from the "real world." See "L'aristocratie occidentale," 34. The unease felt by the party at Vercelli that hoped to elect a non-ascetic successor to Limenius was likely related to this concern. See also Hunter, "Clerical Marriage and Episcopal Elections," 187-188.

that a hierarchy existed among the various modes of the Christian life, ascending from marriage, which some ascetics, like Jerome, only reluctantly accepted as valid, to widowhood, and finally to virginity, the most excellent way of life, because it was followed by the blessed virgin Mary herself.²⁷⁶

The bishops of Rome therefore had a difficult balancing act to perform, for they needed to satisfy both ascetics, with their lofty ideals, as well as those who were skittish about the virtues of sexual renunciation and radical self-denial—at least in candidates for clerical office. We see the dynamics with which they had to contend most of all in the attempts of Siricius to create a professional clergy with a cohesive corporate identity.²⁷⁷ His insistence that the upper clergy—deacons, presbyters, and bishops—should be continent was part of an attempt to create a “third way” that catered both to the anxieties of the traditionalists who were suspicious of the claim that asceticism in itself was a qualification for church office, and yet would embody the widely shared presupposition that a hierarchy existed among the various forms of Christian

²⁷⁶ Helvidius and Jovinian (in particular the latter) were the principle exponents of this view in Rome, and Vigilantius in Gaul. See Jerome, *Adversus Helvidium*, *Adversus Iovinianum* and *Contra Vigilantium*; and Hunter, “Helvidius, Jovinian, and the Virginity of Mary in Late Fourth-Century Rome,” *passim*, and *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity*, 188-192, 231-234, and 258-259.

²⁷⁷ The usefulness of a corps of professional clerics is quite evident when one considers the objectives of the bishops of Rome from Damasus (s. 366-384) to Sixtus III (s. 432-440) in two key areas of ecclesiastical organization related to the assertion of Roman influence in the broader church. The first of these is the use of legations and embassies for the conduct of “foreign affairs.” During this period, the bishops of Rome typically used deacons and subdeacons as messengers, and presbyters (and sometimes the bishops of neighboring sees) as negotiators. The other area of ecclesiastical organization in which the bishops of Rome found a group of professional clerics very useful was at synodical gatherings, which the church of Rome frequently hosted in this period, often to deal with questions brought to it from abroad. At these gatherings, presbyters served as the bishops’ principal advisors. At the same time, the record-keeping practices of the Roman church were becoming more sophisticated, as the bishops of Rome arranged for the archiving of the decisions of their *audientia episcopalis*, of collections of canonical legislation, as well as of their correspondence. Parallel to this development was the increasing sophistication of the Roman church’s chancery, which borrowed certain techniques and rhetorical features from the imperial chancery while maintaining important features of traditional Christian epistolography. Meanwhile, the creation of the position of *defensor ecclesiae Romanae* led to the employment by the church of juridical *periti* to look after its financial and other interests. See Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1.669-680.

life—virgin, widow, and married.²⁷⁸ And so, whereas he upheld high standards for the sexual behavior of those already in the higher orders, and called and presided over the first church council to condemn Jovinian, Siricius was nonetheless cool toward certain forms of asceticism and those who practiced them. The Roman sources from this period give three reasons for the requirement that the upper clergy live in continence.²⁷⁹ The first is that as those who served at the altar (and baptized), deacons and presbyters must be pure of “fleshly concupiscence,” just as was required of the Levites of the Old Testament during their periodic time of service in the Temple.²⁸⁰ Second, deacons and presbyters must be given over completely to the mission of the church, which required them to set aside their wives.²⁸¹ Third, because presbyters in their capacity as preachers would be required to exhort others to continence, it was only right that they practice what they preach.²⁸²

Two observations should be made regarding this set of rationales. First, the concern about ritual purity was shared by both Siricius (as well as his successors) and Ambrose, whose

²⁷⁸ On the requirement of continence for the upper clergy, see Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1.689. Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 218-219, argues that Siricius’ promotion of post-marital celibacy for the upper clergy was part of his attempt to enhance clerical authority, a concern that underlay his opposition to the egalitarian teachings of Jovinian, which tended to undercut any attempt to put clerics in a special sub-category of Christians.

²⁷⁹ The evidence is summarized in Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1.689. The primary sources referred to in the next three notes are cited there.

²⁸⁰ According to Hunter (*Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 215-218), this was the chief rationale for clerical continence. The primary sources seem to bear this out. See, e. g., Ambrosiaster, *Commentary on I Timothy* 3:12-13 (CSEL 81/3.269); Damasus, *Ad Gallos Episcopos*, 2.5, in Yves-Marie Duval, *La décrétale Ad Gallos Episcopos. Son texte et son auteur* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 32; Siricius, *Ep.* 1.7.8-9 and *Ep.* 5.3 (PL 13.1138 and 1160-1161); Innocent, *Ep.* 2.6.12, *Ep.* 6.1.2, and *Ep.* 38 (PL 20.474-476, 496-497, and 605). Nevertheless, they are not the only concerns that drove the attempts of Siricius and others to promote clerical continence. In any case, the concern for ritual purity evinced in these references is somewhat different, as we will see, from the rationales provided by their contemporaries to the north.

²⁸¹ Innocent, *Ep.* 2.9.12, PL 20.476.

²⁸² *Ad Gallos Episcopos*, 2.5, in Duval *La décrétale*, 32.

ideas will be explored in detail below.²⁸³ Thus the difference between northern and southern Italy was not here. Second, the other two rationales cited by the Roman sources are of a practical nature, suggesting perhaps that they were somewhat secondary and ancillary to the concern for ritual purity. When seen in this light, the conduct of Siricius in the Jovinian controversy becomes quite transparent. Jovinian's views were unacceptable first of all because they ran roughshod over the concern for ritual purity. But not only that, a married clergy, as envisioned by Jovinian, would not have stood out clearly from the laity over whom they were to exercise authority.²⁸⁴ At the same time, however, Siricius' condemnation of Jovinian should not be taken to imply that he regarded ascetic achievement as a particularly effective measure of a man's suitability for a position in the clergy. What mattered much more, as his 385 letter to bishop Himerius of Tarragona reveals, was length of experience. His desire to create a professional *esprit de corps* among the Roman clergy led him to take care to "promote from within" and to require those who aspired to higher office to pass through the lower offices (lector and subdeacon) before entering the higher offices of deacon or presbyter, let alone bishop. This requirement, which applied to ascetic and non-ascetic candidates on an equal basis, was meant to ensure that no man would be entrusted with ecclesiastical authority without first having passed through an appropriate period of testing.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ See below, pp. 132-141.

²⁸⁴ Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 218.

²⁸⁵ Siricius, *Ep.* 1.13.17; Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1.690-696; Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority and the Church*, 129; Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy and Heresy*, 211-213; and (for developments in Italy and the west more broadly) Claire Sotinel, "Le recrutement des évêques en Italie au IV^e et V^e siècles. Essai d'une enquête prosopographique," in *Vescovi e pastori in epoca teodosiana. In occasione del XVI centenario della consacrazione episcopale di S. Agostino, 396-1996* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1997), 1.193-204, at 200-202. Innocent I shared this concern, as shown by his *Ep.* 37.5.6, *PL* 20.604-605.

This stance also helps to explain two noteworthy encounters that took place between Siricius and prominent ascetics during his tenure as bishop of Rome. The first of these involved Jerome, the acerbic critic of the worldliness of the Roman clergy, who had worked as secretary to Siricius' predecessor Damasus from 382 until his death in December 384. The ascetic writings he produced during his years in Rome offended the sensibilities of many of the Roman clergy, but Damasus valued his services enough to protect him from the natural consequences of his actions. Within months of Siricius' accession, however, the Senate of Rome—doubtless with the new bishop's approval, even if not with his direct participation—undertook a formal investigation of Jerome's relationships with his prominent female students and forced him to leave the city.²⁸⁶

The second of these encounters took place roughly ten years later, when Siricius refused to grant an audience to Paulinus, the Aquitanian aristocrat, convert to asceticism, and newly ordained presbyter, when he passed through Rome on his way from Spain to Nola, where he was to become the founder and caretaker of a shrine to Felix, the town's patron saint.²⁸⁷ Siricius' "haughty separation" from Paulinus may also have stemmed from concerns over the latter's cavalier (from his point of view) attitude to the protocols that bound members of the clergy, as well as over his choice of friends.²⁸⁸ On the one hand, Paulinus had not come up through the

²⁸⁶ The Senate's investigation looked into allegations that Jerome had engaged in criminal behavior of a sexual nature in connection with his relationships with the aristocratic women he mentored. No evidence was found that justified a prosecution, but the Senate apparently dug up enough potentially embarrassing information to compel Jerome to sign a written promise never to return to Rome. See Kelly, *Jerome*, 111-115.

²⁸⁷ See Paulinus, *Ep.* 5, *CSEL* 29.24-39; Joseph T. Lienhard, *Paulinus of Nola and Early Western Monasticism* (Köln and Bonn: Peter Hanstein Verlag, 1977), 121-124; Trout, *Paulinus of Nola: Life, Letters, and Poems* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 113-115; and Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy and Heresy*, 210-211.

²⁸⁸ The phrase is Paulinus' own, from *Ep.* 5.14: "superba discretio."

ranks of the clergy of Barcelona, where he had been ordained.²⁸⁹ Siricius' insistence on advancement through the ranks implied that clergy would remain in one place and not seek to advance themselves through migration.²⁹⁰ Paulinus, however, had accepted ordination in Barcelona only on condition that he be allowed to transfer to Nola, in the province of Campania, whose governor he had been before his baptism.²⁹¹ But as if Paulinus' neophyte status were not irksome enough for Siricius, there was also the matter of his epistolary relationship with Jerome, whose stinging rebukes of the Roman clergy during the episcopate of Siricius' predecessor gave him more than enough reason to regard that monk, now exiled in Bethlehem, as the paradigmatic ascetic troublemaker.²⁹²

We may therefore conclude that Siricius' concerns about the dignity and cohesiveness of the Roman clergy as a body were the source of his somewhat ambivalent attitude toward asceticism. But although he was skeptical of much of the ascetic piety of his day, he was not opposed to asceticism in principle—only to what he regarded as its excesses.²⁹³ Moreover, the attitude of his successors gradually evolved on the question of ascetic clergy. Whereas Siricius himself did not regard an ascetic lifestyle as proof that a man was particularly suited to clerical

²⁸⁹ Trout notes the “highly unusual presbyterial ordination of this *vir clarissimus*.” See *Paulinus of Nola*, 94.

²⁹⁰ Siricius, *Ep.* 1.7.9-10; and Trout, *Paulinus of Nola*, 114.

²⁹¹ For Paulinus' term as governor, see Trout, *Paulinus of Nola*, 47-49. On Paulinus' accepting ordination on condition that he be allowed to migrate, see p. 94.

²⁹² Looking back on his ill treatment at the hands of the Roman clergy, Jerome called them a “Senate of pharisees.” See the Prologue to his Latin translation of Didymus the Blind's *On the Holy Spirit*, cited at the beginning of this chapter (n.214 above). For his stormy relationship with the Roman clergy during his three-year sojourn in the city, see Kelly, *Jerome*, 89-90 (criticism—led by Ambrosiaster—of his translation of the Gospels), and 107-111 (opposition to his promotion of radical asceticism, resentment over his biting criticism of the Roman clergy, from which he exempted his friend and patron Damasus, and even his enthusiasm for Origen, never beloved in the capital). For Paulinus' relationship with Jerome (never as natural as his relationship with Augustine)—and with some of Jerome's friends in Rome—see Trout, *Paulinus of Nola*, 90-93, 95-101, and 114-115.

²⁹³ Hunter suggests that Siricius' attitude mirrored that expressed in the *Consultationes Zacchaei et Apollonii*. See *Marriage, Celibacy and Heresy*, 210.

duties, and thus advised the bishop of Tarragona that ascetics not be given special consideration in this regard, Innocent I (s. 402-417) already shows a greater openness to welcoming ascetics into the ranks of the clergy.²⁹⁴ But even after this development of the attitudes of the church of Rome, by the middle of the fifth century there was still no expectation that the bishop of Rome must be an ascetic.

Asceticism in Northern Italy in the Fourth Century

Athanasius, the frequently exiled patriarch of Alexandria who ruled that church from 328 to 373, may have been the first bishop to discover how the support of large numbers of loyal ascetics could bolster his authority.²⁹⁵ It is perhaps not surprising that a patriarch of Alexandria was a pioneer in this area, given the fact that Egypt was one of the cradles of Christian asceticism. By the early fourth century, Egypt had given birth to a variety of forms of the consecrated life, both in the city and in the desert.²⁹⁶ In the city, there were both male and female celibates known as *monazontes* and *parthenoi*, respectively. In the Nitrian desert, both eremitic and semi-eremitic monasticism flourished. The communal monasticism of Pachomius emerged in the 320s and during the middle of the fourth century the network of monasteries he founded became wealthy and powerful. By the 360s, the Pachomian federation had become such

²⁹⁴ As evidenced by the fact that one version of the *Liber pontificalis* credits him with having written a *constitutum de regulis monasteriorum*. See *Gestorum Pontificum Romanorum, pars prior*, ed. Mommsen, *MGH* (Berlin: Weidmanns, 1898), 88.

²⁹⁵ Harold Drake discusses two different ways in which a bishop in the Constantinian age could exercise power, each of which had its antecedents in the politics of the late Republic. Whereas Eusebius of Nicomedia was the consummate insider, using his connections with powerful individuals within the imperial bureaucracy to gain access to the emperor, Athanasius was a populist, whose ability to command the loyalty of the urban masses in Alexandria—as well as of the ascetics outside of the city—made him a powerful opponent for any emperor. See *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 397.

²⁹⁶ For Egyptian asceticism and its role in helping Athanasius build an Egyptian church more dependent on the Alexandrian episcopate, see Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism*, esp. 8-9 and 80-141. See also Philip Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 2010), 56-67.

an important institution that Athanasius could no longer maintain his authority as patriarch without also asserting his right to intervene, albeit ever so tactfully, in its internal affairs.²⁹⁷

Athanasius' long tenure in office was marked by conflicts with a variety of opponents, both episcopal and imperial, which forced him to spend much of his episcopate outside of Alexandria. These periods of exile had an important impact on the development of asceticism, not only in Egypt, but also in the west. Although little is known about his goals in this respect and the methods he employed to achieve them, it seems that in those places in the west where Athanasius spent his exiles (in Trier from 335 to 337, in Italy and Gaul from 339 to 346), signs of a budding ascetic movement soon appeared. In particular, he seems to have played a role in sowing the seeds of the ascetic movement in northern Italy during his second exile, parts of which he spent in Milan and Aquileia.²⁹⁸ Athanasius' sojourn in Italy during these years, however, represented only the first of many occasions on which influential proponents of asceticism arrived in the west during the fourth century. These visits had the effect of encouraging westerners either to take up asceticism or to experiment with new models. Jerome returned from Syria to Rome in 382 and stayed until 385, and Rufinus returned to Italy in 397, and spent most of the rest of his life in or around Rome and in Aquileia.²⁹⁹ The variety of

²⁹⁷ On these interventions, see Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism*, 81-82.

²⁹⁸ Milan: Athanasius, *Apologia ad Constantium* 4. Aquileia: *Apologia contra Arianos* 4.51; *Apologia ad Constantium* 3, 4, and 15. Timothy Barnes' reconstruction of Athanasius' career puts him in Milan in the autumn of 342 for his first audience with Constans, and at Aquileia in the spring of 345 and again in the summer of 346. See *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), xi-xii. For Athanasius' influence on the early asceticism of Aquileia, see also Francis X. Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia (345-411): His Life and Works* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1945), 15 and 20-21. For the evidence in Rufinus' *Historia Ecclesiastica* for continued close links between the churches of Alexandria and Aquileia in the late fourth century, see Cuscito, "L'ambiente di cultura e di fede nell'età di Cromazio alla luce della recente storiografia," in *Chromatius Episcopus, 388-1988, AAAd* 34 (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1989), 12 and 15-16.

²⁹⁹ Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church*, 81-91. For Jerome's three years in Rome during the 380s, see J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (London: Duckworth, 1975), 80-115; for Rufinus' career after his return from the east, see Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 82-229; and C. P. Hammond, "The Last Ten Years of

sources from which Italian ascetics drew inspiration resulted in a great deal of diversity in the practices that were established there during this period. And so, as true as it may be that from the time of Athanasius' second exile, stories coming out of the Egyptian desert were an important impetus in the development of Roman asceticism, we will see that Rome was by no means the only center of ascetic life in fourth-century Italy, and that Egypt was by no means the only part of the east to which westerners turned to seek information about the ascetic life.

Rita Lizzi has located the origins of most forms of Italian asceticism within a ten-year window around the middle of the fourth century.³⁰⁰ From this time, it rapidly became a standard feature of church life in Italy from Rome northward, and a powerful force in the internal politics of these churches. Therefore, rather than trying to discuss the emergence of asceticism in terms of the chronological order in which it appeared in each geographical location, which would be somewhat artificial, we will look at the various types of ascetic practice. We will begin with the asceticism of upper-class women, which was the most prominent type at Rome and which was important also in northern Italy. Next, we will survey the evidence for asceticism among clerics, which became common in northern Italy much earlier than in most other parts of the western church. Finally, we will have a few words to say about hermits, a number of whom can be identified in northern Italy by the end of the fourth century.

Differences of geography and culture in Italy meant that, whatever the source of inspiration was for any particular ascetic individual or community, once the ascetic movement took root there, it was bound to look quite different from that of Egypt and the east. For one

Rufinus' Life and the Date of His Move South from Aquileia," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n. s. 28.2 (1977): 372-429.

³⁰⁰ "Ascetismo e monachesimo dell'Italia tardoantica," *Codex Aquilarensis* 5 (Palencia: Aguilar de Campoo, 1991): 55-76, at 56: "Il primo elemento che colpisce, nella riconsiderazione delle fonti, è la contemporaneità d'inizio delle manifestazioni ascetiche nelle varie parti d'Italia: quasi tutte, infatti, sembrano risalire al periodo fra il 350 e il 360."

thing, nothing in the physical landscape of Italy remotely resembled the desert of Egypt, with all the possibilities for withdrawal from the world that it created, even if in Egypt itself the distance between city and desert was at least in part a product of the imagination of ascetic writers.³⁰¹

The forms of ascetic discipline that were prominent in Italy in the fourth century were united, however, by the fact that they were less drastic than eastern practices. Western asceticism at this time was “a more ‘civilized’ affair” than that practiced in the wilderness of Egypt and Syria.³⁰²

At any rate, these traditions, imported into Italy from Syria, Asia Minor, and Egypt, contributed new elements to the existing set of ascetic practices and institutions, resulting in a great degree of diversity in theory and practice by the end of the fourth century.³⁰³

Consecrated Virgins in Rome and Northern Italy in the Fourth Century

When Athanasius first arrived in Rome in 339, he may have been struck by the near absence of ascetics in the city, in stark contrast to the situation that prevailed in his native Alexandria. True, the city probably boasted a few consecrated virgins already in the first half of the fourth century, but the significance of this phenomenon increased greatly around the middle

³⁰¹ Although as Rita Lizzi points out, there were certain parallels between the way in which the desert eremitism of Egypt and the insular eremitism of Italy were imagined the fourth century. See “Ascetismo e monachesimo,” 64: “Per la maggiore segregazione che assicurava, esso poteva meglio soddisfare la spiritualità ascetica comunque evocante il desiderio tutto orientale del deserto, e insieme la necessità di un rifugio sicuro per quanti come Martino erano perseguitati dagli avversari di fede. Il fenomeno fu infatti presentato da Gerolamo in forme non disimili dal coevo eremitismo egiziano, cui è costantemente raffrontato. In una lettera a Rufino, il loro comune amico Bonoso è raffigurato come un solitario del deserto, avvolto in un lurido sacco, tormentato dal freddo in un’isoletta sperduta e inospitale del Mediterraneo.”

³⁰² Andrew Cain, *Jerome and the Monastic Clergy* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 60.

³⁰³ A diversity also noted by Rita Lizzi, “Ascetismo e monachesimo,” 55: “Il panorama religioso della penisola in età tardoantica è caratterizzato da una grande varietà di esperienze ascetiche e dalla compresenza, anche all’interno della stessa città o regione, di monachesimo domestico e vita in comunità, eremitismo insulare, anacoretismo montano, forme di clericato vissuto nella continenza sessuale e nel ritiro ascetico, ma in funzione di un futuro inserimento nelle gerarchie ecclesiastiche. Il quadro si presenta anche più variegato se, accanto al movimento maschile, si considerano le coeve espressioni ascetiche femminili. Valutati in un contesto esclusivamente italico, ai due fenomeni, peraltro, non sembra possibile applicare quella distinzione di massima, valevole per esempio in Oriente, secondo cui il primo si definì per la forte spinta antisociale...”

of the century when a number of aristocratic women, including some from the highest ranks of the senatorial class, were veiled.³⁰⁴ As ascetics, these women achieved an independence to which most Roman women could never hope to aspire (most were widows who had successfully resisted their families' attempts to persuade them to remarry, or else daughters of widows) and were thus able to use their great wealth to patronize the church and to support the work of male intellectuals such as Jerome, Rufinus, and Pelagius.³⁰⁵ Because of their high status and wealth, the names of many of them are known, and the writings produced by the men they supported afford us a glimpse of the individual character traits of some of them. We even possess an ancient biography of Melania the Younger, the granddaughter of one of the first women (also named Melania) to convert to the ascetic life and a member of the Anicii family, who persuaded her husband Pinianus to live in marital continence and to liquidate and donate their vast landed wealth.³⁰⁶ This survey of consecrated virgins, widows, and *famulae Dei* at Rome, however, will focus mainly on the second half of the fourth century and the first decade of the fifth. The Visigothic threat to Rome prompted many aristocrats, including many of the ascetics discussed here, to seek refuge away from the city, at first in Africa and thereafter (in some cases) in Palestine. What follows is based on the information gathered from volume 2 of the *Prosopographie chrétienne du bas-empire*, and an attempt will be made to locate each woman, to

³⁰⁴ The evidence for these pioneers of the ascetic life comes mainly from funerary inscriptions. See Lizzi, "Ascetismo e monachesimo," 57.

³⁰⁵ Marilyn Dunn, "Asceticism and Monasticism, II: Western," in *Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 2, *Constantine to c. 600*, ed. Augustine Casiday and Frederick W. Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 669-690, at 670-671. On the asceticism of these aristocratic Roman women, see also *eadem*, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2003), 42-58.

³⁰⁶ Gerontius, *Vie de sainte Mélanie*, SC 90. See also Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 291-300; and *PCBE* 2.1483-1490 (for Melania) and 1798-1802 (for Pinianus).

the degree possible, within a circle of ascetics consisting of other women gathered around a male mentor.³⁰⁷

One of the earliest such women for whom there is solid evidence is **Marcellina**, the sister of Ambrose, who dedicated herself to virginity probably in the 340s, when the family had returned to Rome after the death of her father, who served Constantine II as the Praetorian Prefect for the Gauls.³⁰⁸ That is where she underwent the formal *velatio* ceremony, presided over by bishop Liberius (s. 352-366) before he went into exile in 356.³⁰⁹ She shared her family's house with another virgin named **Candida**, about whom little else is known besides this obvious connection with the family of Marcellina and Ambrose.³¹⁰

The widest of these ascetic circles was the one that orbited around Jerome, who arrived in Rome in the summer of 382 with bishop Epiphanius of Salamis and Paulinus, the claimant to the episcopal see of Antioch who was supported by the western church.³¹¹ It comes to life in Jerome's extensive collection of letters, of which one in particular, Letter 45, is especially illuminating. Written as Jerome was about to leave Rome in the summer of 385 and addressed to

³⁰⁷ See also Peter Brown, "The Patrons of Pelagius"; and Marilyn Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2003), 46-48.

³⁰⁸ A death possibly connected with Constantine's failed invasion of the territories of his brother Constans. See Paulinus, *Vita Ambrosii*, 2.3-4; and McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 32-33. For Marcella, see *PCBE* 2.1365-1366. I have put the name of each woman in bold one time where her place in one of these circles is discussed so as to aid the reader in keeping track of who is who in the midst of the flurry of names.

³⁰⁹ Dunn dates the ceremony to 352-353. See *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 47.

³¹⁰ For Candida, see *PCBE* 2.387.

³¹¹ The schism in the church of Antioch went back to the 340s and arose out of the Arian controversy. Paulinus' rival for control of the see was Meletius, originally a member of the Eusebian party of establishmentarian moderates, but whose views gradually evolved in a pro-Nicene direction. He was supported by prominent pro-Nicenes in the east, such as Basil of Caesarea. But for various reasons, Paulinus had convinced most western bishops that Meletius was not theologically reliable. He gained the support of both Damasus and the prominent Antiochian figure (and friend of Jerome) Evagrius. After leaving the Syrian desert in 376/77, Jerome, neutral in the dispute up until that time, threw his weight (such as it was) behind Paulinus, who shortly thereafter ordained Jerome a presbyter. Jerome and Epiphanius came to Rome in 382 to attend a council that was intended in part to sort out the situation in Antioch. See Kelly, *Jerome*, 38-39, 57-58, and 80-82.

Asella, it includes greetings to most of the ascetic women he is known to have mentored during his years in the city: “Greet Paula and Eustochium, who, whatever the world may think, are always mine in Christ. Greet Albina, your mother, and Marcella, your sister; Marcellina also, and the holy Felicitas.”³¹² Jerome’s circle stands out not only on account of its size, but also for the fact that it spanned four generations, which we will briefly consider from oldest to youngest.³¹³

One of the **Generation 1** members of Jerome’s circle, who was probably also the first to establish relations with him on his arrival in Rome, was **Marcella**.³¹⁴ During Athanasius’ second exile (339-346), while she was still quite young, she had learned from him about the hermit Antony, by whose life she was evidently intrigued. By the time of Jerome’s arrival in Rome she was an elderly widow who in the 350s had resisted her mother Albina’s attempts to arrange a second marriage for her, preferring rather to consecrate her widowhood to God. Interested in biblical exegesis, when she learned that Jerome had come to Rome in the summer of 382 she insisted on meeting him. She then began with him a frequent correspondence concerning the explanation of biblical passages, one that lasted throughout Jerome’s stay in Rome and continued (albeit less frequently) after his departure in 385. Through these exchanges she gained such a thorough knowledge of biblical interpretation that she was at times consulted to resolve exegetical controversies. At some time after Jerome left for the east, Marcella became the guide of a young virgin, Principia, with whom she lived until her death. Marcella played an active role

³¹² *CSEL* 54.328: “Saluta Paulam et Eustochium – velit nolit mundus, in Christo meae sunt –, saluta matrem Albinam sororesque Marcellas, Marcellinam quoque et sanctam Felicitatem” (trans. *NPNF* 2.6, slightly altered). The Marcellina appears to be the sister of Ambrose, whose name does not appear elsewhere in Jerome’s correspondence.

³¹³ On this circle, see also Kelly, *Jerome*, 91-103.

³¹⁴ *PCBE* 2.1357-1362.

in the dispute between Rufinus and Jerome after the former's arrival in Rome in 397 and publication of a Latin translation of Origen's *Peri Archon*. She also sought earnestly, but in vain, to secure the condemnation of Origenists in both Rome and Milan. When the Goths besieged Rome in 410, she did not attempt to flee, and during their sack they entered her home on the Aventine Hill and beat her and Principia. She died a few months later.

Of the same generation as Marcella was **Asella**, born before 334, who at age ten decided to consecrate herself to God, and from the age of twelve lived in seclusion in her family's home, which she only left to visit the tombs of the martyrs.³¹⁵ In the early 400s she was still alive, now more than seventy years of age, when Palladius described her as a "virgin who had grown old in the monastery," an apparent reference to the many decades she had lived as an ascetic.³¹⁶ Another member of this circle who should possibly (though not definitely) be assigned to Generation 1 is **Lea**, a friend of Marcella's who appears not to have shared the exegetical interests of some of the other members of the circle, but who after the death of her husband dedicated herself to chastity "*de secundo ordine*."³¹⁷ She led a community of female ascetics until her death in late 384.

Generation 2 of Jerome's circle was represented by **Paula 1**, who of all the members of his coterie was the closest to him in age.³¹⁸ She was born to one of the oldest and highest-

³¹⁵ *PCBE* 2.1268 (Lea 2).

³¹⁶ *PCBE* 2.199-200

³¹⁷ Jerome, *Ep.* 24.1, *CSEL* 54.212.

³¹⁸ Paula 1, *PCBE* 2.1617-1626. As *PCBE* 2.1617 indicates, the date of her birth was May 5, 347. J. N. D. Kelly dates Jerome's birth to 331, but this date faces insurmountable problems. Not the least of these is the fact that the birth year of Jerome's brother, Paulinian, can be placed to ca. 366. We can be reasonably sure of the date of Paulinian's birth because when he was ordained a presbyter by Epiphanius of Salamis in 394, the supporters of John of Jerusalem objected that Paulinianus was too young to be made a presbyter. In Jerome's *Ep.* 82.8, written in 399, he affirms that his brother has reached thirty years of age, the minimum for attaining the office, meaning that he was born no later than 369, and probably at least a year or two earlier, since Jerome does not refer to his brother's attainment of the proper age as a recent event. (On this fiasco, see Kelly, *Jerome*, 200-201.) The year of his birth

ranking of Rome's noble families, and married into another illustrious family. She bore her husband Toxotius four daughters and a son, after which, his desire for a male heir now satisfied, the two lived in marital continence. After Toxotius' death ca. 381, she turned her back on the aristocratic lifestyle she had hitherto led, dressing simply, giving to the poor, spending most of her time at home, and intently studying the Scriptures. Around this time, she became friends with Marcella, with whom she shared an interest in biblical learning, and whom she entrusted with the ascetic education of her daughter Eustochium. Despite her own withdrawal, she arranged advantageous marriages for two of her daughters. Blesilla, the eldest, was joined to a brother of Furia, a prominent noble lady; Paulina to Jerome's schoolmate, the aristocrat Pammachius.³¹⁹ When Jerome arrived in Rome in 382, she began an epistolary exchange with him aimed at satisfying her desire for a deeper knowledge of the Scriptures. This course of study included Hebrew, and as a result she learned to chant the Psalms in their original language. Shortly after Jerome's departure, she and Eustochium left for the East themselves, where they joined him, making journeys together to Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine, and Egypt to visit holy sites and holy men. Having returned to Palestine from this last destination in the company of Jerome, mother and daughter settled down in Bethlehem, where they sponsored the construction of two

was thus about 366/367, which would require their mother to have given birth to them about 35 years apart. Biologically possible, perhaps even in the fourth century, but unlikely in the extreme. The alternative date for Jerome's birth is 347, which is preferable not only because it means that his mother would have given birth to him and his brother around twenty years apart (remarkable still, but much more believable), but also because it makes him roughly the same age as Rufinus (b. 345). These two men indicate that they became friends while in school at Rome, but if Jerome had been born in 331, as Kelly believes, this means that Jerome would have finished grammar school before Rufinus had even learned to talk! Their friendship in youth can best be accounted for by taking the later date for Jerome's birth, which would mean that his school career in Rome overlapped with that of Rufinus. Notably, although Kelly mentions the fact that their friendship went back to their student years together, he makes no attempt to explain how, in the light of the fourteen-year difference in age that he posits, the two could ever have crossed paths in the capital. See *Jerome*, 10-19 (for Jerome's student days in Rome) and 337-339 (for Kelly's argument for 331 as the year of Jerome's birth).

³¹⁹ Furia, a Roman widow, was the daughter-in-law of Sextus Petronius Probus; Jerome dedicated his *Adversus Jovinianum* to her in response to her inquiry as to how she might "preserve the crown of her widowhood." See *PCBE* 2.878-879.

monasteries—one for women, in which they and their attendants would live, and one for men, in which Jerome and his ascetic friends would live. There, Paula and Eustochium engaged in the normal ascetic routine of work, study, and prayer. Their study was enriched by daily exchanges of letters with Jerome, whose scholarship they encouraged by asking him for biblical commentaries and Latin translations of both Greek theological works and biblical books. Jerome responded to these requests by dedicating a large number of his writings to these two women. But by assisting Jerome with his Latin translation of the Psalms from the Septuagint, Paula showed that she was no mere passive recipient of the fruits of this scholarly enterprise. In fact, during the 390s she even became the object of criticism (along with Eustochium) on account of the fact that her name continually appeared in the dedications to Jerome's translations of Old Testament books.³²⁰ Worn out by her work and her fasting, Paula fell sick and died on January 27, 404.

We move now to **Generation 3**, and begin with **Eustochium**, the third of Paula's four daughters and the member of this generation of Jerome's circle with whom his life was most closely connected.³²¹ After the death of her father ca. 381, she joined her mother in adopting an ascetic lifestyle, vowing her virginity to God. Having made the acquaintance of Jerome not long after his arrival in Rome, she was the recipient of his famous Letter 22, a treatise on female asceticism that became sensational for its biting criticisms of the Roman clergy.³²² Under his direction, she also read widely in Latin theology. Soon after Jerome's departure from the city,

³²⁰ Jerome refers to these criticisms in the Prologue to his *Commentary on Zephaniah*, CCL 76A.655.

³²¹ *PCBE* 2.713-718.

³²² *CSEL* 54.143-211.

she accompanied her mother to the East and lived in the women's monastery established there by her mother until her death in 418 or 419, roughly a year earlier than Jerome.

Blesilla, the eldest daughter of Paula 1, was married during her teenage years, but was widowed after only seven months.³²³ After that, she became part of Jerome's circle while still maintaining her worldly lifestyle. She became interested in the study of Scripture, and asked Jerome to write her a commentary on Ecclesiastes and to translate for her Origen's homilies on Matthew, Luke, and John. She also learned Hebrew within a short time, and was able to rival her mother in chanting the Psalms in the original language. At length, she committed herself to an ascetic lifestyle, and with such an intensity that she may well have brought on herself the sickness that took her life at twenty years of age, probably in late 384.³²⁴ Many opponents of asceticism blamed her death on Jerome, who was known to be her teacher.

Little is known about **Felicitas** other than that she was part of Jerome's circle. The fact that she is only mentioned in his Letter 45 means that it is impossible even to determine to which generation she belonged.³²⁵

Principia illustrates the way in which Jerome's circle at Rome could expand even after his departure, for it was shortly after August 385 that she took up residence with Marcella in the latter's suburban home.³²⁶ She was constantly with her elder companion until the latter's death a few months after the sack of Rome. During the intervening years, she asked Jerome to write her

³²³ *PCBE* 2.310-311.

³²⁴ The *PCBE* dates her death to "certainly before August 385," whereas Kelly places it in "October/November 384," before the death of Damasus. See *Jerome*, 98.

³²⁵ *PCBE* 2.767.

³²⁶ *PCBE* 2.1825.

an exposition of Psalm 44, and she participated along with Marcella in the anti-Origenist campaign during the episcopate of bishop Anastasius I of Rome (s. 399-402).

Like Principia, **Fabiola** established her links with Jerome only after his departure from Rome.³²⁷ That she did so is only known to us through the latter's writings, especially Letter 77.³²⁸ This missive, addressed to his friend Oceanus, praises her for having amended her life after divorcing her first husband and remarrying—a scandalous marital history in Jerome's estimation. After the death of her second husband, she underwent public penance and gave away her fortune to charitable causes—the founding of a *nosokomion* in which she personally cared for the sick, and the construction of a number of monasteries. She then left for Palestine, where she received Jerome's hospitality. She extracted from Jerome a promise that he would write her a short treatise on the sacred vestments of the Levitical priests, which he eventually fulfilled in the form of Letter 64, written to her after she had returned to Rome.³²⁹ She died ca. 400.

Generation 4 of Jerome's circle is represented by Paula 1's granddaughter, also named **Paula**, the daughter of her son Toxotius and his wife Laeta.³³⁰ Born sometime before 402, she was at first entrusted to the care of the Roman priest Boniface (later bishop of Rome, s. 418-422) and was brought to Bethlehem in 410, perhaps after the capture of Rome by the Visigoths. She spent the rest of her days there, at first under the supervision of her aunt Eustochium, then under the care of Jerome after the death of Eustochium and during roughly the last year of Jerome's

³²⁷ *PCBE* 2.734-735.

³²⁸ *Ep.* 77, *CSEL* 55.37-49, is a *eulogium* composed by Jerome shortly after her death.

³²⁹ *CSEL* 54.586-615.

³³⁰ *PCBE* 2.1627-1628 (Paula 3).

life. Her membership in Jerome's circle illustrates the way in which ascetic loyalties, like other relationships in Roman society, were passed down from one generation to the next.

The third and final group of ascetic women that we will consider here gathered around Rufinus, a companion from Jerome's days as a student in Rome with whom he had a falling out in the late 390s when the two men took opposite sides in the Origenist controversy.³³¹ His coterie was similar in some ways to that of Jerome in that it consisted of members of the highest levels of Roman society and in that relationships in it were passed down from one generation to the next. But it was different in some important ways. First, it consisted of men as well as women. Second, it did not take shape until fifteen years after Jerome's did, since Rufinus did not spend any time in the city between the late 360s and 397. Finally, the intellectual pursuits Rufinus encouraged in his protégé(e)s were different from those encouraged by Jerome, focusing as they did mainly on Greek theology, in particular Origen and those influenced by him.

Rufinus had been in the east—mainly Egypt and Palestine—from 372 or 373 until 397.³³² While in the east (probably in Alexandria in the spring of 373), he had met Melania the Elder, and at some point between 378 and 380 he accepted her invitation to join her in Jerusalem, where she used a portion of her considerable fortune to establish twin monastic houses for men and women.³³³ In spring 397, he returned to Italy, hoping to share with the Latin-speaking world some of the theological treasures he had discovered in the east.³³⁴ His friendship with Melania

³³¹ This conflict will be explored in greater detail in chap. 6 below.

³³² For this portion of Rufinus' life, see Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 28-82; and Giorgio Fedalto, *Rufino di Concordia tra Oriente e Occidente* (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, 1990), 51-106.

³³³ These were probably the model for the twin communities established by Paula and Jerome in the following decade. See Murphy, *Rufinus*, 53; and Fedalto, *Rufino*, 96.

³³⁴ Many of his efforts were aimed at making the works of Origen available to readers of Latin, as well as attempting to salvage the reputation of the Alexandrian theologian, damaged as a result of the attacks of Epiphanius of Salamis. See Murphy, *Rufinus*, 82-96.

the Elder served as his point of contact with some of the highest circles of the Roman aristocracy, and it also allowed him to befriend Paulinus of Nola.³³⁵ Not surprisingly, his enthusiastic promotion of Origen after his return to Rome embroiled him in controversy, with Jerome's Roman friends (Marcella, Pammachius, and Oceanus) seeking to secure his condemnation by the ecclesiastical authorities.³³⁶ He returned to Aquileia in early 399, where he spent several years before moving south once again. During these years, he was immensely productive, completing a number of significant translations as well as original compositions.³³⁷ He died in Sicily in 410 or 411, during the Visigoths' expedition into southern Italy following their capture of Rome, having spent the last years of his life enjoying the hospitality of his aristocratic patrons in Campania.

Melania the Elder was born ca. 340 into a senatorial family of Spanish origin. She was married at a young age to a prominent nobleman, to whom she bore three sons.³³⁸ By age 22, however, she had lost her husband and two of her sons, and it was at that time that she decided to become an ascetic. She eventually left her surviving son, Publicola, in Rome and set off for the east in late 372 or early 373.³³⁹ She was in Alexandria in late spring/summer 373, just after the death of Athanasius, and may have met Rufinus at that time. She visited the desert fathers in

³³⁵ Trout, *Paulinus of Nola*, 97 and 100-101.

³³⁶ Murphy, *Rufinus*, 97-110.

³³⁷ His translations included a number of homilies of Origen, Origen's *Commentary on Romans*, the *Clementine Recognitions*, and Eusebius' *Church History* (condensed into nine books). His original works included the two books he wrote in continuation of Eusebius, his *Commentary on the Apostles' Creed*, a *Historia monachorum*, and his *Apologia adversus Hieronymum*. See Murphy, *Rufinus*, 111-212. The date of his departure from Aquileia is not precisely known; it could have been as early as late 402 or as late as late 407, shortly after the death of Chromatius. On this question, see C. P. Hammond, "The Last Decade of Rufinus' Life and the Date of His Move South from Aquileia."

³³⁸ *PCBE* 2.1480-1483.

³³⁹ For Publicola, see *PCBE* 2.1863-1864.

Nitria, and settled in Jerusalem ca. 375. The house for women she built on the Mount of Olives was home to fifty virgins, and by around 380, Rufinus had accepted her invitation to join her. Encouraged by Rufinus, Melania is said to have read three million lines of Origen, as well as copious amounts of the works of other Greek theologians.³⁴⁰ She also played a key role in persuading Evagrius of Pontus, who would later become the leading “Origenist” thinker of the late fourth century, to take up the ascetic life, and thereafter remained in regular epistolary contact with him. In 400, she returned to Rome to support the wishes of her granddaughter, Melania the Younger, to live in continence with her husband, Pinianus, and to divest herself of her property. The couple had faced opposition from Publicola and his wife **Albina**.³⁴¹ The elder Melania used her considerable powers of persuasion to convince her daughter-in-law not only not to stand in the young couple’s way, but to embrace the ascetic life herself. During this visit to Rome, she also persuaded **Avita** to dedicate herself to asceticism, and her husband **Apronianus** joined her in this pursuit.³⁴² Their theological interests are illustrated by the fact that Rufinus dedicated to one or both of them his translation of eight homilies of Basil of Caesarea and of Origen’s *Commentary on Romans*. Melania spent several more years in the west, on spiritual retreat in Campania with Albina, Pinianus, Melania the Younger, Paulinus of Nola, and probably Rufinus, who had likely returned south from Aquileia in 403 or 404.³⁴³ She also visited Africa, where she spent time with Augustine of Hippo. She returned to Jerusalem

³⁴⁰ According to Palladius’ *Lausiac History* 55, cited in Murphy, *Rufinus*, 55.

³⁴¹ *PCBE* 2.75-77 (Albina 2) and 171-173 (Apronianus 1).

³⁴² *PCBE* 2.228-229.

³⁴³ One might add Avita and Apronianus to the list of those who joined in the spiritual retreats in Campania, as Paulinus’ *Carmen* 21.283 attests their presence at Nola for the *natalicium* of St. Felix on January 14, 407.

before 408 and died there the same year. Albina, for her part, remained with Melania the Younger and Pinianus until her death in 431.

It is not likely that **Melania the Younger** shared her grandmother's close relations with Rufinus, the fruit of over fifteen years in close proximity to one another in neighboring monasteries on the Mount of Olives.³⁴⁴ But her links with others who were close to Rufinus—her grandmother and Paulinus of Nola—mean that she was firmly within the same circle, at least in the early part of her life as an ascetic. Born around 380, she had been inspired by the example of her elder namesake even as a young child, and was prevailed upon to marry Pinianus against her will at the age of thirteen. Early in their marriage, she urged her husband to live with her in continence, but he was only willing to do so after having two children. When this condition had been met, around the year 400, they gave up marital relations and, in the face of the stiff opposition of their relatives and powerful social pressures, they began to divest themselves of their enormous fortune. It was at this time that Melania the Elder returned to Italy to support them in this endeavor. Between then and the sack of Rome in 410, the younger Melania and Pinianus shared in the spiritual retreat of Melania the Elder (before her return to Jerusalem), Paulinus, and (after his return from Aquileia) Rufinus in Campania, after which they took refuge in Africa. There, they cultivated their relationship with Augustine, who later addressed two anti-Pelagian treatises to them. In 417, Melania and Pinianus left for Palestine, where they settled in the twin monasteries on the Mount of Olives built many decades before. Melania met Jerome and was visited by the younger Paula, who was also her cousin, connections no doubt made possible in part by the fact that Rufinus was dead and the Origenist controversy which had

³⁴⁴ *PCBE* 2.1483-1490.

divided them was becoming a distant memory.³⁴⁵ Indeed, the fact that she was on friendly terms with Jerome during the years between her arrival in Palestine and Jerome's death means that she was able to transcend the barriers that separated Jerome's circle from that of Rufinus during the latter's lifetime. Near the end of her life, Melania traveled to Constantinople, where she met the empress Eudocia and the princess Eudoxia. She escorted the former to Jerusalem, having persuaded the emperor to allow her to travel there on pilgrimage. She died on December 31, 439, and her biography was later written by Gerontius, a priest she had put in charge of the oratory that stood between the men's and women's houses on the Mount of Olives.

This survey of the asceticism of the consecrated widows and virgins of Rome illustrates two important features of their lives. First, it reveals the intellectual interests that animated many of them, especially of the older generations, embodied in the exegetical pursuits of Marcella and Paula, and the broad reading in theology of Melania the Elder. It also reveals the degree to which these women were mobile. Africa, Egypt, and Palestine were well within their reach, and many of them were quite willing and able to pack up and move so as to be near to the holy sites. It was, of course, the large fortunes and the social networks possessed by these women and their families that enabled them not only to find hospitality in the places they visited, but also to establish themselves on a more or less permanent basis in either Jerusalem or Bethlehem and support the scholarly pursuits undertaken by Jerome and Rufinus, and in which they themselves also participated. Their inclination to make their home in the east probably reflects the general

³⁴⁵ Paula 3 in the *PBCE*, discussed above. Melania the Younger also seems not to have inherited the theological interests of her grandmother, which evidently made her such a controversial figure that Gerontius made no mention of her in his biography of Melania, a remarkable fact in light of the support she had rendered her granddaughter at a key moment in her development as an ascetic.

interest of western Christians—particularly, it seems, of women—to explore the holy sites in and around Jerusalem, an interest illustrated by the Spanish pilgrim Egeria.³⁴⁶

Rome may have been the epicenter of early female asceticism in the west, but it quickly reached other Italian cities, especially in the north. Following the practice of Rome, bishops in these provincial centers presided over *velatio* ceremonies, marking a woman's entry into the consecrated life. Zeno, who was bishop of Verona ca. 362 to ca. 380, appears to have presided over such a ceremony near the beginning of his episcopate.³⁴⁷ At Aquileia, the circle of ascetics centered on the home of the presbyter Chromatius included his mother and his sister, as well as Jerome's sister.³⁴⁸ Brescia during the 380s may also have been home to a consecrated virgin.³⁴⁹ It was, moreover, the north of Italy that produced the most imaginative theorist of consecrated virginity.³⁵⁰ Ambrose, who never married and was himself was an ascetic, articulated more than anyone else in his generation just why it was that consecrated virgins spent their time hidden away in the *cubiculum*, out of the view of men's prying eyes. His vision of the ascetic life was mostly focused on these women, and his theorizing about the ascetic life concentrated primarily

³⁴⁶ On Egeria, see her *Journal de voyage: itinéraire*, SC 296. Might the visit to Jerusalem of Constantine's mother Helena in the 320s have established a precedent? If so, the desire of the empress Eudocia, mentioned above in connection with Melania the Younger, should perhaps also be viewed in this light.

³⁴⁷ The virgin in question was Indicia. See Lizzi, "Ascetismo e monachesimo," 58; and *PCBE* 2.1039-1040. Among Indicia's entourage was one Paterna, who may also have been a consecrated virgin herself. See *PCBE* 2.1614. For the dates of Zeno's episcopate, see Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 192. He follows Lizzi, "Ambrose's Contemporaries and the Christianization of Northern Italy," *Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990): 156-173.

³⁴⁸ See the full discussion of this group of ascetics in chap. 6.

³⁴⁹ One Silvia, referred to in Rufinus of Aquileia's Prologue to his translation of the *Clementine Recognitions*, which he dedicated to bishop Gaudentius: *CCL* 20.281

³⁵⁰ This account mostly draws on Brown's *The Body and Society*, but see also Neil B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 60-68; and Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 224-230.

on the power of female virginity as a symbol, and indeed the embodiment, of the appropriate respecting of boundaries. As Peter Brown writes, describing Ambrose's position,

To avoid sexual intercourse was to avoid an act that involved 'mixing,' 'relaxing,' 'becoming unstrung.' The cloying, labile mixture of male seed and female blood associated with the moment of conception struck [Ambrose] as a microcosm of the many smudged areas that weakened humankind: in its present fallen condition, the soul 'stuck' to the body in an analogous glutinous and confused manner. ... Ambrose's thought on virginity could be summed up in one word: *integritas*.³⁵¹

This concern for boundaries naturally led Ambrose to expend most of his mental energy constructing a rationale for the lifelong virginity of women from elite families, for whom any compromise of their pre-marital virginity had for a long time been fraught with consequences for their marriage prospects and their family's social standing.³⁵²

Ambrose made Milan a center of the practice of female virginity, where young women came from nearby towns to be consecrated by the famous bishop who was himself the brother of a consecrated virgin.³⁵³ By preserving the integrity of their bodies after the pattern established by Mary herself, these virgins "acted as nothing less than human boundary-stones. Their

³⁵¹ Brown, *Body and Society*, 353-354.

³⁵² The *Lex Julia de adulteriis*, passed during the reign of Augustus, had made adultery a public crime and required men to divorce their adulterous wives. See David Hunter, "Sexuality, Marriage, and the Family," in *Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 2: *Constantine to c. 600*, 585-600, at 585-586. For the sexual integrity that Roman fathers expected of their daughters, see Judith P. Hallett, *Fathers and Daughters in Roman Society: Women and the Elite Family* (Princeton University Press, 1984), 141-142. Much of the concern on the part of elite Roman fathers for the sexual integrity of their daughters was bound up with the hope that they would continue the family line, a hope that might lead a father to oppose his daughter's commitment to lifelong virginity just as he was expected to oppose her engaging in a pre- or extramarital affair. See Gillian Clark, *Women in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 52. These expectations were also reinforced in the law as of the late republican period. The edict *de adtemptata pudicitia* even allowed a legal action for *iniuria* to be brought against "anyone who addressed unmarried girls (*virgines*) or married women, or followed one of them about, or took away her attendant, whether by persuasion or by force." The strictures were less severe, however, in the case of slaves and prostitutes, presumably because their sexual honor was deemed to be unimportant in the case of the former, or to have been compromised in the case of the latter. See Jane Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), 117-118.

³⁵³ Ambrose, *De virginibus*, 1.57, mentions Piacenza, Bologna, and even Mauretania. See also McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 66-67.

presence defined the Catholic basilica as a privileged, sacred space.”³⁵⁴ The close relationship between the concepts of *integritas* and holiness in Ambrose’s mind led him to take a definite stand on a theological question that was vigorously discussed in Italy during the 370s and 380s. Helvidius has already been mentioned above as a skeptic of the notion that Mary remained a virgin after giving birth to Christ, a belief whose popularity was growing in the late fourth century.³⁵⁵ In doing so, he was simply expressing doubts long harbored by many Christians both in Rome and elsewhere in Italy, a fact attested by the concern for Mary’s perpetual virginity displayed by both Ambrose and Zeno of Verona. These two writers were instrumental in the shift from a “Mariologically indifferent attitude” toward a general acceptance of, and indeed insistence on, Mary’s virginity, both *post partum* as well as *in partu*.³⁵⁶ This change in attitude created the ideological conditions necessary for the success of female asceticism throughout Italy, and we should therefore pause to examine more closely their justifications for this novel outlook.

We will look first at the earlier of these two bishops. Two main concerns led Zeno to affirm Mary’s *virginitas in partu*.³⁵⁷ First of all, he believed that Christ’s divine nature required that he be conceived and born in a miraculous way, and in particular in a way that avoided the “contamination” that normally accompanied childbirth.³⁵⁸ But he also clearly taught that

³⁵⁴ Brown, *Body and Society*, 356.

³⁵⁵ Most of what is known about Helvidius comes from Jerome’s rejoinder, *Liber adversus Helvidium de perpetua virginitate beatae Mariae*, PL 23.193-216. See also David Hunter, “Helvidius, Jovinian, and the Virginity of Mary in Late Fourth-Century Rome,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 1.1 (1993): 47-71, at 48-50; and *Marriage, Celibacy and Heresy in Ancient Christianity*, 188-190.

³⁵⁶ Hans von Campenhausen, *The Virgin Birth*, 51, cited in Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 187.

³⁵⁷ Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 192-196.

³⁵⁸ *Tr.* 1.54, cited in Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 195: “Interea rudis non gemit feta. Non mundum, ut assolet, infans fusus ingrediens sponte vitae reptantis praevis lacrimis auspicatur. Non mater eius tanti partus pondere exhausta totis pallens iacuit resoluta visceribus. Non filius matris aut suis est ullis sordibus delibutus;

virginity was superior to any other way of life, a conclusion he reached on the basis of the fact that Christ had restored virginity to his mother after she gave birth to him, a restoration that would seem pointless if the virgin state were not superior to others.³⁵⁹ Thus for a combination of Christological and ascetical reasons, Zeno affirmed Mary's virginity not only before Christ's conception, but also *in partu* and *post partum*. His position, however, was not without its problems. In the first place, there was the issue of the sources to which he appealed to support it, for Zeno based his view on certain statements found in the *Protevangelium of James* at the very time when influential voices, like those of Epiphanius of Salamis, Filaster of Brescia, and Jerome, were challenging the reliability of the apocrypha.³⁶⁰ Even more troubling for some was his assertion that "both Jesus and his mother were spared certain features of the process of conception and birth that would have produced 'contamination,'" for such a contention seemed to border on a denial of Jesus' full humanity.³⁶¹ It would fall to Ambrose to formulate and provide a rationale for Mary's *virginitas in partu* that could withstand the scrutiny of critics like Helvidius.

The bishop of Milan therefore came to the same conclusion as Zeno regarding the virginity of Mary, but by a different path. Whereas Zeno's overriding concern was Christological, Ambrose's was ecclesiological. For him, since Mary served as a symbol of the

neque enim re uera aliquid circa se habere possit immundum, qui humani generis peccata, sordes et maculas uenerat mundaturus."

³⁵⁹ *Tr. 2.7*, cited in Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 193: "Sit aliqua talis, et cedo! ceterum illa fuit uirgo post connubium, uirgo post conceptum, uirgo post filium. Denique si esset aliquid virginitate melius, dei filius hoc magis potuerat suae matri praestare, cui praestitit, ut redivivae virginitatis honore polleret."

³⁶⁰ Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 151 (Epiphanius and Filaster) and 196 (Filaster and Jerome).

³⁶¹ *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 196. As Hunter argues throughout this work, opponents of asceticism would seize upon any failure to uphold the full humanity of Christ so as to foist upon the supporters of asceticism the opprobrious label of "Manichaeans."

church, her virginity was a symbol of the church's virginity.³⁶² Just as Mary conceived and gave birth without pain and without compromising her virginity, so also the church "bears us not with bodily pain, but with the joy of angels."³⁶³ David G. Hunter therefore concludes that

For Ambrose, the notion of Mary as the *ecclesiae typus* involved the claim that the virginal conception and birth of Jesus was both a *symbol* and an effective *source* of the baptismal birth of the Church as the pure body of Christ. In the writings of Ambrose, therefore, the perpetual virginity of Mary had become an essential mechanism in the mystery of salvation.³⁶⁴

For Ambrose, then, a crucial piece in God's redemption of the human race could not be accounted for without positing a view of Mary that had not been held by anyone prior to the second half of the fourth century. The significance of his conception of Mary, however, lies in its implications for ecclesiology, for in his mind "virginal integrity was the touchstone of salvation. ... In Ambrose's vision the virginal Christ, the virgin Mary, the virginal Church, and the consecrated Christian virgin merged into a unity that virtually excluded the average, married Christian."³⁶⁵ Stated differently, Mary's virginity was for Ambrose "the charter which validated the ascetic life of his sister and of others like her."³⁶⁶ The hierarchical view of the church upheld by Ambrose and those of like mind—according to which married Christians, widows, and virgins should be accorded different levels of honor in the present age on the grounds that they would receive distinct rewards in the age to come—had its opponents, such as Helvidius and Jovinian. The latter especially seems to have been most concerned with his opponents' tendency

³⁶² *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 197.

³⁶³ Ambrose, *De virginibus* 1.31, cited in Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 198.

³⁶⁴ Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 201.

³⁶⁵ *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 204. Chromatius of Aquileia's view of Mary was, like that of Ambrose, linked to his conception of the church. Cf. Cuscito, "L'ambiente di cultura e di fede nell'età di Cromazio," 25.

³⁶⁶ J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and John Chrysostom: Ascetics Between Desert and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 66.

to exclude baptized but non-ascetic Christians from leadership in the church.³⁶⁷ By the same token, then, to approve of and promote female asceticism, especially female virginity, and to argue in favor of the related doctrine of Mary's perpetual virginity, was also to support this hierarchical view of the church and of salvation. According to Ambrose's ideal, the church was stratified—not along the lines of social class, but along the lines of (perceived) holiness.

But Ambrose's vigorous promotion of female virginity was not only related to his concern for the purity of the church. It also arose from his concern to strengthen episcopal authority, as evidenced by the central role the bishop played in the granting of official approval to young women who aspired to be consecrated virgins, in the ritual whereby they entered into this status, and in their supervision after their consecration. As Hunter observes,

The writings of Ambrose make it abundantly clear that the *velatio* was a decidedly *episcopal* event. According to Ambrose it was the bishop's duty to decide at what age a girl should take the veil and whether or not she had the requisite virtues. The bishop customarily presided at the ceremony, bestowed the veil, pronounced the liturgical benediction, and delivered a sermon of exhortation. The bishop also continued to supervise the consecrated virgin after her veiling and sometimes took responsibility for her welfare after the death of her parents. In essence, the ritual of virginal consecration enabled the bishop to assume the traditional role of the *paterfamilias* by offering the virgin as his "daughter" to Christ as her "bridegroom."³⁶⁸

As far as Ambrose was concerned, therefore, the presence of consecrated virgins served to remind the whole church when it gathered at the liturgy that it was called to embody purity, exemplified especially in the lives of these chaste women. But in addition, the role of the bishop at every stage of these virgins' lives underscored the fact that they were subject to episcopal authority. The fact that the bishop was something of a surrogate father to the consecrated virgin

³⁶⁷ Hunter's argument throughout his study of this controversy is that Jovinian's opposition to the emerging notion of a hierarchy of merit was ecclesiological in nature, rooted in his theology of baptism.

³⁶⁸ *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 228-229.

symbolized his fatherly authority over the church more broadly.³⁶⁹ It is helpful to consider Ambrose's view on these matters in the context of the efforts undertaken by both him and bishop Siricius of Rome to emphasize the special status of the clergy. Siricius' approach to this matter has already been discussed, and when we discuss Ambrose's approach further below, the important differences in their strategies will become evident, particularly the way each of them thought about the relationship between a man's ascetic discipline and his suitability for clerical office. But what their strategies had in common was that they were both motivated by a desire to enhance clerical authority and to acknowledge the role of sexual renunciation in preparing clerics for wielding the authority given them by their office. Before discussing these strategies for enhancing the stature of the clergy, we will first seek to determine in what churches ascetic clerics could be found by the end of the fourth century.

Ascetic Clerics

Jovinian's ultimate failure to win acceptance for his ideas shows that, by the end of the fourth century, there was a broad consensus in favor of the superiority of virginity over marriage as a form of the Christian life. One way in which this attitude influenced ideas about church leadership was in the widespread expectation that, whatever their sexual history may have been, bishops should be celibate from the time they took up their office.³⁷⁰ For the majority of late antique churches, it was normal to select bishops from among the ranks of priests or deacons,

³⁶⁹ Hunter goes on to point out, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 229, that "In *De institutione virginis*, his sermon delivered at the veiling of Ambrosia, Ambrose referred to his namesake as 'she, whom I offer in my office as bishop (*sacerdotali munere*), whom I present with fatherly affection (*affectu patrio*).'" Gaudentius of Brescia, *Tr.* 16.9, *CSEL* 68.139, called Ambrose as the "patrem communem" of the bishops of northern Italy. These two references show the way in which the paternal image could be made to apply to the bishop's authority over women as well as men.

³⁷⁰ As we have seen in the case of Rome and will see in the case of Milan, this expectation was placed on all members of the upper clergy, deacons and above.

many of whom were married, and ordain them on condition that they henceforth abstain from sexual relations with their wives.³⁷¹ By the late fourth century, however, some had begun to question whether a man who had been married and possibly fathered children was the ideal candidate for episcopal ordination. The logic that had made asceticism popular in the first place dictated (so it seemed to them) that men who demonstrated their holiness through renunciation should be considered the most qualified. However, many tradition-minded Christians resisted this new outlook, objecting to it on one or both of two possible grounds. First, objections might be raised on the basis of more traditional understandings of the source and nature of clerical authority. Ascetics' radical way of life—which in addition to abstention from sexual intercourse might also involve a sparse diet (without meat or wine), nocturnal vigils, and a renunciation of the luxurious (or at least comfortable) surroundings that other clerics might expect to enjoy—could potentially disrupt the peace and order of a Christian community on account of the penchant critique of mainstream society—and of clerical authority—that it implied.³⁷² A man whose career up until the time of his election as bishop had been more worldly—even as a member of the clergy—was seen as less likely to be disruptive as a bishop. Given the fact that some fourth-century ascetic bishops expected their clergy to imitate their lifestyle of self-denial, clerics who were less enthusiastic about the prospect of conforming to such a strict pattern of behavior had a genuine interest in ensuring the selection of a suitably conventional candidate.³⁷³

³⁷¹ Indeed, Jerome laments the fact that in some circles, married men were preferred to those who had never been married. See *Adversus Jovinianum* 1.34 and *Contra Vigilantium* 2 and 17, cited in Hunter, “Clerical Marriage and Episcopal Elections in the Latin West,” 186.

³⁷² David Hunter argues that such concerns for “ecclesiastical order and clerical dignity” lay at the heart of Siricius of Rome’s suspicion of the ascetic movement, a suspicion illustrated by his orchestration of Jerome’s expulsion from Rome as one of his first acts upon becoming bishop there. See *Marriage, Celibacy and Heresy in Ancient Christianity*, 210; and “Clerical Marriage and Episcopal Elections,” 186, where he notes that “monks were often perceived as disruptive to church order or as rivals to clerical authority.”

³⁷³ Two prominent examples came precisely from northern Italy. The first is Eusebius of Vercelli, whose clergy seem to have been organized into an ascetic community perhaps from the time of his return from exile in the early

Second, considerations about the functions of bishops might prompt some, on purely pragmatic grounds, to question the relevance of ascetic achievements to the exercise of episcopal authority. As Sidonius Apollinaris wrote in the 470s, an ascetic was “better qualified to intercede with the heavenly Judge for our souls than with an earthly judge for our bodies.”³⁷⁴ In other words, such an individual’s lack of administrative experience and the social connections that went along with it would make it difficult for him to perform what in Gaul in the late fifth century had become an important episcopal duty. The sentiment expressed by Sidonius also shows that the very same concerns that had led a faction of the church of Vercelli in 396 to prefer a man of the world to watch over them had not gone away. If anything, they had intensified. Yet, in spite of the resistance to tapping into the pool of talent represented by ascetics and thus put such men in clerical orders—as happened in one way or another in the case of John Chrysostom, Paulinus of Nola, Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine—this ideal did make headway in northern Italy toward the end of the fourth century. One way in which it did so was quite simply by proving itself as a workable model of episcopal authority through the lived experience of the north Italian churches that adopted it.

The earliest center of clerical asceticism in Italy was Eusebius’ Vercelli, but what we know about the practices he introduced comes mainly from one letter of Ambrose of Milan, which was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. As we have seen, Ambrose’s ascetic

360s. See Ambrose of Milan, *Ep. 14 extr. coll.*, cited above; and Ps.-Maximus of Turin, Sermon 7, *CCL* 23.23-26, which erroneously claims that Eusebius suffered martyrdom at the hands of the “Arians” after having been exiled to the east. The second example is Chromatius of Aquileia, who while a presbyter in the 360s had turned his house into an ascetic community in which he lived with his brother Eusebius, who was a deacon at Aquileia, his sister, and his mother. The evidence that Chromatius organized his clergy (or at least some of them) into an ascetic or monastic community will be explored in chapter 6.

³⁷⁴ *Ep. 7.9.9*, trans. W. B. Anderson, *Sidonius: Letters III-IX* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), 343, cited in Hunter, “Clerical Marriage and Episcopal Elections,” 186.

theology focused mainly on women, as he perceived that female virgins were a powerful symbol of purity and sanctity. But his ascetic lifestyle and his conduct as a bishop, both in the recruitment of clergy for the church of Milan and in releasing Milanese clergy to serve as bishops elsewhere in northern Italy, show that he was also concerned with male asceticism, particularly with ascetic clerics.³⁷⁵

Eusebius was bishop of Vercelli from about 350 until perhaps 371.³⁷⁶ His tenure of roughly twenty years was interrupted by his exile to the east for refusing to condemn Athanasius at the Council of Milan in 355.³⁷⁷ It is not known whether he established the ascetic life as the standard for his clergy before or after his departure, but it seems more likely that he did so after having been inspired by observing ascetic communities up close during his exile, which took him to both Palestine and Egypt.³⁷⁸ Unfortunately, Eusebius' own writings tell us nothing about this community, so we are left to piece together what we can on the basis of Ambrose's letter to that church, which he wrote to in order to resolve a stalemate that emerged after the death of

³⁷⁵ Ambrose's standard of behavior for clerics is discussed in great detail in his *De officiis*. That his aim in this work was not simply to provide the church of Milan with qualified clerics, but to make his city a proving ground for ecclesiastical talent that was exported to vacant episcopal sees, is evident in the fact that during his episcopate Milan gave so many deacons and presbyters to other north Italian churches as bishops. Many of these will be discussed below in the section on ascetic bishops in northern Italy.

³⁷⁶ For the dates of Eusebius' episcopate, see Lanzoni, *Le diocesi d'Italia dalle origini al principio del secolo VII (an. 604)* (Faenza: Stabilimento F. Lega, 1927), 1037-1039.

³⁷⁷ For the background to and the outcome of the Council of Milan, see Timothy D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 115-118.

³⁷⁸ For his exile, see Manlio Simonetti, "Eusebio nella controversia ariana," in *Eusebio di Vercelli e il suo tempo*, 155-179, at 159-162. Ambrose, *Ep. 14.71 extr. coll.*, attributes Eusebius' ability to endure the hardships of exile to his ascetic practices, but all that can be surmised on the basis of this comment is that Eusebius had undertaken an ascetic lifestyle himself. Lanzoni is of the opinion that he organized his clergy into an ascetic community only after his return from exile. See *Le diocesi d'Italia*, 1038. Dattrino concurs with this judgment. See "Il cenobio clericale," 342.

Limenius, who was Eusebius' immediate successor.³⁷⁹ Limenius was also an ascetic, and the existence of an anti-ascetic faction that was nearly powerful enough to put an end to what was by then an established tradition of ascetic leadership in Vercelli prompted Ambrose to intervene in the hopes of ensuring the election of his preferred candidate.³⁸⁰

The letter, which runs to 113 paragraphs, is a genuine treatise on asceticism, but its immediate significance for our purposes lies in the fact that in it Ambrose conveys precious information about the lifestyle of bishop Eusebius, as well as that of his clergy, and in so doing provides an outline (albeit very basic) of the practices of that church. Ambrose evokes the established precedent of Eusebius' novel institution, reminding the people of Vercelli that their former bishop was a pioneer in fusing the twin ideals of the ascetic and the cleric, "so that living in the city he observed the rules of the monks, and ruled the Church in the temperance of fasting."³⁸¹ In addition to the fact that Eusebius was the first to combine *monasterii continentia* and *disciplina ecclesiae*, Ambrose notes two other things about that bishop's way of life that the people of Vercelli must not fail to appreciate: the urban setting, and the *ieiunium* and *sobrietas* that characterized his way of life.³⁸²

³⁷⁹ On Limenius, see *PCBE* 2.1306-1307. The letter is found in *CSEL* 82/3.235-295. Peter Brown summarizes what is known about the background to this letter in *The Body and Society*, 361.

³⁸⁰ There were other issues involved in the conflict, too, such as the desire of the church of Vercelli to recover some of the autonomy it had lost during Ambrose's episcopate. But the two men supported by the factions in their very different lifestyles embodied and recapitulated the clash between two distinct approaches to church leadership. See Rita Lizzi, *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche nella città tardoantica (L'Italia Annonaria nel IV-V secolo d.C.)* (Como: Edizioni New Press, 1989), 46-50; and McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 285-286.

³⁸¹ *Ep.* 14.66 *extr. coll.*, *CSEL* 82/3.270: "Quod si in aliis ecclesiis tanta suppetit ordinandi sacerdotis consideratio, quanta cura expetitur in Vercellensi ecclesia, ubi duo pariter exigi videntur ab episcopo, monasterii continentia et disciplina ecclesiae? Haec enim primus in occidentis partibus diversa inter se Eusebius sanctae memoriae coniunxit, ut et in civitate positus instituta monachorum teneret et ecclesiam regeret ieiunii sobrietate." All translations of this letter are those of Mary Melchior Beyenka in *FC* 26.

³⁸² That Ambrose means clerical orders in general rather than the episcopacy in particular is suggested by the fact that further down he praises the joining of "clerical office" to "the rule of the monks." See *Ep.* 14.71 *extr. coll.*,

In addition to these features of Eusebius' personal conduct, Ambrose also seems to suggest that Eusebius was not the only ascetic among the clergy of Vercelli during his tenure, "For," he says, "one brings much support to the grace of the priesthood if he binds youth to the practice of abstinence and to the rule of purity, and forbids them, even though living in the city, the manners and mode of the city."³⁸³ These words seem to imply that those who wished to be part of the clergy of Vercelli were required to imitate Eusebius' practice of asceticism as a condition of joining the ranks of this body, the reference to "youth" indicating that, as different from the church of Rome, it was not only those occupying the higher clerical ranks but also those just beginning their ecclesiastical career who were subject to this strict discipline.³⁸⁴ Nothing that Ambrose says allows us to determine whether they lived together in the same household, and so we cannot say with any certainty to what extent the mode of life followed by Eusebius and his clergy resembled or differed from that of the Pachomian federation or of the community of Basil of Caesarea, the two models that could have been imported from the east.³⁸⁵ Likewise, since we have no information from Eusebius himself about his motives for taking up asceticism and imposing a similar lifestyle on his clergy, we can also say nothing about how his ideas about asceticism intersected with his conception of episcopal authority.

CSEL 82/3.273: "Namque haec duo in attentiore Christianorum devotione praestantiora esse quis ambigat, clericorum officia et monachorum instituta?"

³⁸³ Ambrose, *Ep.* 14.71 *extr. coll.*, CSEL 82/3.273: "Multum enim adiumenti accedit ad sacerdotis gratiam, si ad studium abstinence et normam integritatis iuventutem astringat et versantes intra urbem abdicet usu urbis et conversatione."

³⁸⁴ Yves-Marie Duval likewise takes Ambrose's words to imply that the clergy of Vercelli were also ascetics. See "L'originalité du *De virginibus* dans le mouvement ascétique occidental. Ambroise, Cyprien, Athanase," in *Ambroise de Milan. XVIe anniversaire de son élection épiscopale* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1974), 9-66, at 56n.228.

³⁸⁵ For more on Pachomian and Basilian monasticism, see Philip Rousseau's studies *Pachomius: The Making of a Community in Fourth-Century Egypt* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985); and *Basil of Caesarea* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994).

Eusebius returned from his exile in the east in 363, and it was probably at this time that he introduced these changes in the organization of the lifestyle of Vercelli's clergy.³⁸⁶ If this conclusion is correct, then Eusebius' reform took place at roughly the same time that another group of ascetics appeared in northeastern Italy, in the port city of Aquileia, which had long enjoyed connections with many parts of the east, in particular with Egypt.³⁸⁷ The circle of ascetics that was centered on the household of Chromatius, when he was as yet a presbyter, will be explored more fully in chapter 6.³⁸⁸ Here we simply note its prominent members and its chief characteristics. In addition to several members of Chromatius' own family, including his sisters and his mother, both Jerome as well as Rufinus spent time in Aquileia in the early 370s.³⁸⁹ Heliodorus, who later became bishop of Altinum, was also connected with this circle, which was characterized by the fact that many of its members were young men who had turned their backs on promising careers in order to pursue asceticism, and by the fact that many of them were keenly interested in the theological questions being debated in the second half of the fourth century among intellectually-minded Christians. Jerome and Rufinus especially illustrate this tendency, as they would go on to play an important role in the debates that most impinged upon the concerns of ascetics. But Chromatius' sponsorship not only of translations but also of

³⁸⁶ For the date of Eusebius' return to Italy after attending the Council of Alexandria and the Council of Antioch, both in the year 362, see Yves-Marie Duval, "Vrais et faux problèmes concernant le retour d'exil d'Hilaire de Poitiers et son action en Italie en 360-363," *Athenaeum* 48 (1970): 251-275, at 270 and 275.

³⁸⁷ Most of our evidence for this circle comes from several of Jerome's letters (3, 4, 6-10, and 14), as well as his *Chronicon*, sub a. 374 (GCS 24.247). On the question of when it was formed, see Claire Sotinel, *Identité civique et christianisme. Aquilée du IIIe au VIe siècle* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2005), 135.

³⁸⁸ See below, pp. 387-396.

³⁸⁹ Indeed, it was Rufinus' close association with this city, both in the late 360s/early 370s as well as the tail end of the fourth and early years of the fifth century, that led to his being known as Rufinus of Aquileia in spite of the fact that he was born and raised (at least until his education at Rome) in nearby Concordia.

original writings by both of these individuals, as well as his composition of his own *Tractatus in Mathaeum*, point to the literary and theological interests of the circle as a whole.³⁹⁰

The Aquileian circle was significant also insofar as its contacts with a variety of well-known ascetic figures between the 360s and the early fifth century served as one of Italy's important links to the older and better established traditions of asceticism in such places as Syria, Egypt, and Asia Minor. In this respect it performed a function similar to that of the circles of aristocratic ascetics at Rome. Evagrius of Antioch, the translator of the *Life of St. Antony* who had accompanied Eusebius of Vercelli to the west when he returned from exile, maintained close contacts with this group.³⁹¹ But these connections were nourished most of all *via* Jerome and Rufinus' common friendship with Chromatius, a link that they maintained after they had both moved to the east and established their respective monastic communities in Bethlehem and on the Mount of Olives. Chromatius even managed to remain friends with both men after they themselves had a falling out as a result of their disagreement in the Origenist controversy. The connections of these two prominent theologians with the church of Aquileia, and in particular the literary activities of Chromatius and Rufinus during the latter's sojourn there in the early fifth century (which lasted several years), gave this church a decidedly intellectual character that would probably not have been found in Vercelli, whose clergy was noteworthy for the discipline of its common life, but probably not for its intellectual heft.³⁹²

³⁹⁰ This conclusion is further supported by evidence from Jerome's *Ep.* 10, which indicates that a certain Paul, an elderly ascetic and bibliophile from nearby Concordia, was also connected with this circle.

³⁹¹ Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 25-26; and Kelly, *Jerome*, 33, 38, 40, 48, 50, 57-58, and 116.

³⁹² These literary activities are explored in some detail in future chapters. Chromatius' sermons and *Tractatus in Mathaeum* are the basis for the discussion of his ascetic theology in chap. 6. Rufinus' extension of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, written at Chromatius' request while he was in Aquileia, is an important source for four chapters 4 and 5. The claim about the lack of significant intellectual activity in Vercelli under Eusebius may be perceived as somewhat controversial, as he has been credited with writing a treatise *De trinitate*. His authorship of the work is, however, contested, and even if it is his, the quality and long-term influence does not approach that of Chromatius' two friends and protégés. Daniel H. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Arian-Nicene Controversy*

Vercelli and Aquileia were thus the first churches in the west whose clergy experimented with living a common life, though in Aquileia the driving force behind the experiment seems not to have been bishop Valerian, but Chromatius, who at the time was a presbyter.³⁹³ But in order to understand what advantages fourth-century Christians might have perceived in having ascetics in positions of ecclesiastical authority, we have to turn to two other late fourth-century ascetics, one a bishop, the other a feisty scholar.

Ambrose: Asceticism as Training for Public Life

We begin with Ambrose, who of all the bishops of his generation was the most outspoken champion of the ascetic ideal for clergy. Part of his rationale for such a vision of clerical leadership was his belief that holders of church office should be held to a higher standard of behavior than laypeople, denying themselves many bodily pleasures that would be permissible to ordinary Christians, in particular sexual intercourse. This insistence comes across in his letter to the church of Vercelli, near the beginning of which he tells his readers that “those who do not chastise their body and yet wish to preach to others are themselves considered castaways.”³⁹⁴ After referring to the possibility that a widower cleric might remarry, he appeals to the word of the apostle Paul and the decree of the Council of Nicaea, writing that “the life of a priest ought to surpass others as its grace surpasses, and he who binds himself by his precepts ought himself to

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 239-242, has argued in favor of Eusebian authorship of the work, at least of the first seven books (out of a total of eight). Manlio Simonetti has presented the case against Eusebian authorship in several publications over a period of nearly thirty-five years. See “Qualche osservazione sul *de trinitate* attribuito a Eusebio di Vercelli,” *Rivista de cultura classica e medievale* 5 (1963): 386-393; “Hilary of Poitiers and the Arian Crisis in the West,” in *Patrology*, vol. 4, *The Golden Age of Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Chalcedon*, ed. Angelo di Berardino, trans. Placid Solari (Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics, 1986), 33-143, at 63-64; and “Eusebio nella controversia ariana,” 175-177 (a reply to Williams’ arguments).

³⁹³ On Chromatius as one of those who stood at the center this circle, see chap. 6 below, pp. 359-368.

³⁹⁴ *Ep.* 14.7 *extr. coll.* [Maur. 63], *CSEL* 82/3.238: “Ergo qui non castigant corpus suum et volunt praedicare aliis, ipsi reprobi habentur.”

keep the precepts of the law himself.”³⁹⁵ But for Ambrose, the ideal for clerics was that they forego marriage entirely. Further down in the same letter, he makes his expectations explicit: “one brings much support to the grace of the priesthood if he binds youth to the practice of abstinence and to the rule of purity, and forbids them, even though living in the city, the manners and mode of the city.”³⁹⁶

Ascetic discipline thus raised a person above the common run of lay Christians, whose inability to give up bodily pleasures entirely was certainly not to be considered sinful, even if such laxity was inappropriate for the church’s leaders. But it also prepared clerics—especially bishops—to face the conditions of physical deprivation imposed by exile, a fate suffered, as Ambrose points out, by Eusebius as well as by Dionysius, one of his own predecessors as bishop of Milan. He likens these heroic figures to the biblical prophets Elijah, Elisha, and John the Baptist, who “wandered in deserts,” and with Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, “who were reared in a royal palace, [and] were fed with fasting, as though in the desert.”³⁹⁷ Their

³⁹⁵ *Ep. 14.64 extr. coll., CSEL 82/3.269*. I have held to Beyenka’s translation in *FC 26*, which renders *sacerdotis* as “priest.” Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and John Chrysostom*, 66, renders it as “bishop,” but given the context, it seemed to me more natural to take Ambrose as speaking of clerics in general here, not of bishops specifically: “Diximus quid legis sit, dicamus quid rationis. Sed prius cognoscamus non solum hoc apostolum de episcopo et presbytero statuisset, sed etiam patres in concilii Nicaeni tractatu addidisse neque clericum quemquam debere esse qui secunda coniugia sortitus sit. Quomodo enim potest consolari viduam, honorare, cohortari ad custodendam viduitatem, servandam marito fidem, quam ipse prior coniugio non reservaverit? Aut quid interesset inter populum et sacerdotem si isdem astringerentur legibus? Debet praeponderare vita sacerdotis sicut praeponderat gratia; nam qui alios praeceptis suis ligat debet ipse legitima praecepta in se custodire.”

³⁹⁶ *Ep. 14.66 extr. coll., CSEL 82/3.270*. Here again, Ambrose seems to be using *sacerdos* in a more generic sense, referring as he is in this passage to Eusebius’ imposition of an ascetic lifestyle on all his clergy. I have thus once more followed Beyenka instead of Liebeschuetz (*Ambrose and John Chrysostom*, 65-66): “Quod si in aliis ecclesiis tanta suppetit ordinandi sacerdotis consideratio, quanta cura expetitur in Vercellensi ecclesia, ubi duo pariter exigi videntur ab episcopo, monasterii continentia et disciplina ecclesiae? Haec enim primus in occidentis partibus diversa inter se Eusebius sanctae memoriae coniunxit, ut et in civitate positus instituta monachorum teneret et ecclesiam regeret ieiunii sobrietate. Multum enim adiumenti accedit ad sacerdotis gratiam, si ad studium abstinenciae et normam integritatis iuventutem astringat et versantes intra urbem abdicet usu urbis et conversatione.”

³⁹⁷ *Ep. 14.67 extr. coll., CSEL 82/3.270*: “Hinc illi processerunt viri, Helias Helisaeus Iohannes Elisabeth, qui pellicis tunicis et caprinis exuviis induti inopes atque egentes angustiis et doloribus afflicti in solitudinibus errabant inter alta et condensa montium, invia rupium, speluncarum horrida, fovearum vadasa, quorum conversatione dignus

discipline, however, enabled them to resist the political powers of their day that sought to harm the people of God, a fact that was especially evident in the life of John the Baptist, who in the desert “first practiced that austerity that later he might rebuke the king.”³⁹⁸ By the end of his episcopate, Ambrose had both confronted and collaborated with a number of emperors. He was more attentive than most late antique bishops to the political nature of his office—the life of the bishop was lived “as on an open stage”—and he regarded asceticism as a tool that trained bishops “in secrecy” to carry out their public, political duties more effectively.³⁹⁹ A man who was accustomed to self-denial in food and drink, who had given his property away, and who had no wife and children from whom exile would separate him, was a much more difficult target for an emperor who found resistance to the imperial will on the part of such a bishop inconvenient. All he could take from an ascetic was his life, and in so doing, give him the gift of making him a martyr.⁴⁰⁰

The careers of Eusebius and Dionysius were, in Ambrose’s mind, paradigmatic examples of the way in which ascetic self-denial prepared a bishop to engage in political resistance to protect the church’s interests. The former “preferred living in foreign lands to ease at home,”

orbis terrarum non erat. Hinc illi Danihel Ananias Azarias Misahel, qui in aula regia pascebantur, ieiunio alebantur tamquam in desertis cibo aspero potuque obvio.”

³⁹⁸ *Ep.* 14.76 *extr. coll.*, *CSEL* 82/3.275: “Iohannes quoque in deserto adolevit et constantiam illic prius exercuit ut postea regem increparet.”

³⁹⁹ *Ep.* 14.71 *extr. coll.*, *CSEL* 82/3.273: “Ista [sc., clericorum officia] ad commoditatem et moralitatem disciplina, illa [sc. monachorum instituta] ad abstinentiam assuefacta atque patientiam; haec velut in quodam theatro, illa in secreto, spectator ista, illa absconditur.” Cf. John Moorhead, *Ambrose: Church and Society in the Late Roman World* (London and New York: Longman, 1999), 33.

⁴⁰⁰ That a willingness to die in the course of doing one’s duty was central to Ambrose’s conception of the ideal cleric is evident from what he tells his sister he said to the eunuch Calligonius, who threatened to kill him after the court’s capitulation in the second basilica crisis of 386: “Deus permittat tibi ut impleas quod minaris, ego enim patiar quod episcopi, tu facies quod spadonis” (*Ep.* 76.28 [Maur. 20], *CSEL* 82/3.125).

while the latter “esteemed the emperor’s friendship less than voluntary exile.”⁴⁰¹ By 396, it probably seemed to most Christians in the Roman Empire that the conditions that had led to the exile of these two bishops—the theological strife over Trinitarian doctrine—was a thing of the past. Had they not been settled by the church councils of 381 and by the civil wars that had been fought and won in northeastern Italy in 388 and 394 by Theodosius, considered by Ambrose and many of his north Italian contemporaries to be the ideal orthodox emperor?⁴⁰² His concerns might therefore easily have been dismissed as anachronistic, more appropriate to an age that had come and gone, and to conditions that were unlikely to return. But as we will see in chapter 4, the lesson that Ambrose drew from the reign of Constantine, as well as his personal experiences with Gratian, Valentinian II, and Theodosius, applied regardless of the ruler’s theological persuasion: the temptations of power meant that ambitious emperors were always a potential threat to the church’s independence and therefore to the integrity of the faith.⁴⁰³ Bishops must therefore be eternally vigilant, always prepared to go into exile rather than compromise the faith.⁴⁰⁴ But the willingness of Eusebius and Dionysius to endure this separation from their homeland led to their “triumph[ing] over the imperial power, for by these hardships on earth they purchased fortitude of spirit and kingly power.”⁴⁰⁵ The lesson was clear, at least for Ambrose:

⁴⁰¹ *Ep.* 14.68 *extr. coll.*, *CSEL* 82/3.271: “Eusebius sanctus exivit de terra sua et de cognatione sua et domestico otio peregrinationem praetulit. Pro fide quoque exilii dura praeoptavit atque elegit coniuncto sibi sanctae memoriae Dionysio qui posthabuit imperatoris amicitiam exilio voluntario.”

⁴⁰² The views of Ambrose and Rufinus on Theodosius as the ideal emperor are explored further in chap. 4 below.

⁴⁰³ See below, pp. 266-275. Cf. the discussion of Rufinus on pp. 275-299.

⁴⁰⁴ Ambrose does not refer to his own personal history here, but his departure from Milan while the usurper Eugenius was there in 393-394 nearly aligned with the pattern established by Eusebius and Dionysius.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ep.* 14.68 *extr. coll.*, *CSEL* 82/3.271-272: “Itaque memorabiles viri circumdati armis, vallati exercitu cum raperentur de ecclesia triumphabant de imperio, quia contumelia terrestri mercabantur mentis fortitudinem, regni potentiam, quibus militaris manus, armorum strepitus extorquere non potuit fidem subegerunt bestialis animi feritatem quae nocere sanctis nequivit.”

without asceticism, a man was not truly fit for clerical life, especially for the public demands of the episcopal office.

Ambrose's statement in the letter to Vercelli that "he who binds others by his precepts ought himself to keep the precepts of the law himself," implies that he had imposed such a manner of life on the clergy of Milan, and evidence from his *De officiis* confirms that this was the case. Near the end of the first book of this work, he brings up the question of whether a man who has been married more than once ought to be ordained.⁴⁰⁶ "All that is permitted," he states, "is one union and one union only, never to be repeated. ... A lot of people find this surprising: why should a second marriage, even one contracted before baptism, raise obstacles to a person's election to sacred office and to the privilege of ordination?"⁴⁰⁷ But he goes on to remind his audience—the clergy of Milan—that "you have this obligation to present a ministry that is blameless and beyond reproach, and undefiled by any marital intercourse, for you have received the grace of the sacred ministry with your bodies pure, with your modesty intact, and with no experience of marital union."⁴⁰⁸ According to Ivor J. Davidson, these words are "another indication that many of the clerical addressees are young men, who have been devoted to the

⁴⁰⁶ Ivor J. Davidson, the translator of the *De officiis*, notes the difference in perspective on this point between Ambrose and Jerome, the latter of whom believed that a twice-married man whose first marriage had been contracted before baptism was eligible for ordination. See *Ambrose: De officiis*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 2.677.

⁴⁰⁷ *De offic.* 1.248, *CCL* 15.91: "De castimonia autem quid loquar, quando una tantum nec repetita permittitur copula? Et in ipso ergo coniugio lex est non iterare coniugium nec secundae coniugis sortiri coniunctionem. Quod plerisque mirum videtur cur etiam ante baptismum iterati coniugii ad electionem muneris et ordinationis praerogativam impedimenta generentur, cum etiam delicta obesse non soleant si lavacri remissa fuerint sacramento" (trans. Davidson, 1.261).

⁴⁰⁸ *De offic.* 1.249, *CCL* 15.91: "Inoffensum autem exhibendum et immaculatum ministerium nec ullo coniugali coitu violandum cognoscitis qui integri corpore, incorrupto pudore, alieni etiam ab ipso consortio coniugali, sacri ministerii gratiam recepistis?" (trans. Davidson, 1.261). Ambrose is making a distinction between two types of union here: "coniugalis coitus" and "consortium coniugale." The former refers more narrowly to the "commixtio sexualis," whereas the latter refers more broadly to the link, the "societas" between the partners created by the marriage, translated by Davidson as "marital union." See *TLL* 3.1567 (for "coitus") and 4.488 (for "consortium").

church and dedicated to chastity from an early age.”⁴⁰⁹ Even if they do not allow us to conclude that every individual member of his audience had foregone marriage altogether, they indicate at the very least that it was normal for a member of the Milanese clergy to have taken such a path. Moreover, Ambrose makes no exceptions to the rule of abstinence from marital relations for the lower clerical offices, and so it can be concluded that, as in Vercelli, the clergy of Milan lived according to an ascetic discipline.⁴¹⁰

The clergy were not the only Christian ascetics in or around the city of Milan during the episcopate of Ambrose. Two works of Augustine indicate that there was also a monastic community just outside the city walls during the period 383-387, when he resided there.⁴¹¹ The first of these is his *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae*, written between 388 and 390 as the first of a

⁴⁰⁹ Davidson, *Ambrose: De officiis*, 2.678-679.

⁴¹⁰ To be sure, it may be possible to explain Ambrose’s failure to make this distinction by appealing to the possibility that the lower orders were not organized in the church of Milan as formally as they were elsewhere. This is how Roger Gryson depicts the situation there during Ambrose’s time, asserting that instead of having set offices below the level of deacon, he simply assigned specific duties to specific individuals on a somewhat ad hoc basis. See *Le prêtre selon Ambroise* (Louvain: Imprimerie Orientale, 1968), 144-145, where he writes: “Outside of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, Ambrose speaks of yet other members of the clergy whose exact status is more difficult to define on the basis of his writings. It appears that the bishop assigned them different duties, but it would be a mistake to attribute to them, in the church of Milan in the fourth century, the consistency that the minor orders have later and in other places. A table like that of [F. Homes] Dudden [in his *Life and Times of St. Ambrose of Milan*], which at Milan during the time of St. Ambrose stages porters, lectors, exorcists, and sub-deacons, listed out in an order that is given as if hierarchical, absolutely lacks support in the texts and is merely an accumulation of almost entirely gratuitous conjectures. ... Nothing in Ambrose’s writings indicates that one acceded to these different functions in any other way besides by a simple decision of the bishop, who chose to entrust to such and such a cleric such and such a responsibility; no trace is found in them of any sort of ordination, benediction, or installation. Nothing allows us to suppose, either, that there was a hierarchy among these functions along which one would climb by steps from one to the next: this notion of ‘steps’ is only applied in Ambrose’s writings to the three higher orders” (translation mine). But we may wonder whether Gryson’s depiction of the situation is based on an illegitimate argument from silence, one that fails to take into account the way in which other factors ought to inform our reconstruction of the situation. For example, the fact that the emperor resided at Milan during most of Ambrose’s episcopate, and the prestige—and thus the recruiting ability—that this gave him, meant that he certainly would not have lacked the manpower to fill these various clerical orders. But the larger point is that he did not need to have the same desire as Siricius to organize the clergy hierarchically, to promote from within, and to force clerics to follow a strict *cursus honorum* in order to wish for all who held clerical office to prove themselves worthy by their virtue—in particular with regard to matters sexual. In any case, my conclusion is therefore the same as that of Lizzi, *Vescovi e strutture*, 47-48: “At Milan he [sc., Ambrose] succeeded in creating an episcopal-monastic center analogous to that at Vercelli” (translation mine).

⁴¹¹ On this period in Augustine’s life, see *Confessions*, 5.13.23-9.7.17; and Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 59-120.

pair of books that were meant to be a defense against Manichaean accusations that Catholic morals were lax.⁴¹² The other is his *Confessions*, written between 397 and 400.⁴¹³ The relevant passage in the *De moribus* comes near the end of the first book, after a discussion of the virtues of Catholic ascetics throughout the world who have established themselves in remote places, far from settled human life. In chap. 33.70, he says the following about the community in Milan:

There is still another praiseworthy group of Christians whom I do not wish to slight, namely, those who dwell in the cities, yet lead a life altogether removed from the ordinary. I myself saw at Milan a group of holy men, not inconsiderable in number, lodging together under the direction of an exemplary and learned priest.⁴¹⁴

He immediately goes on to mention that he became acquainted in Rome with “several houses” presided over by individuals distinguished for their “sobriety, wisdom, and divine learning.”⁴¹⁵

These little communities (here he seems to refer both to that in Milan as well as to those in Rome) supported themselves through manual labor and engaged in regular fasts; some were made up of men, others of women. The relevant passage from Book 8 of the *Confessions* is quite a bit shorter. While discussing the way in which he had been informed about Antony and other

⁴¹² According to Johannes Bauer, he wrote these books while at Rome, on his way from Milan to Africa. See *CSEL* 90.vii. Peter Brown is somewhat less certain, dating them to some time between Augustine’s arrival in Rome in 388 and 390, when he was living with his friends in a spiritual community in Thagaste. See *Augustine of Hippo*, 64,

⁴¹³ Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), xxix.

⁴¹⁴ *CSEL* 90.74: “Nec ideo tamen laudabile Christianorum genus contempserim eorum scilicet qui in civitatibus degunt a vulgari vita remotissimi. Vidi ego sanctorum diversorium Mediolani non paucorum hominum, quibus unus presbyter praeerat vir optimus et doctissimus” (trans. Gallagher and Callagher, *FC* 56.53-54).

⁴¹⁵ *CSEL* 90.74-75: “Romae etiam plura cognovi, in quibus singuli gravitate atque prudentia et divina scientia praepollentes ceteris secum habitantibus praesunt Christiana caritate, sanctitate, libertate viventibus; ne ipsi quidem cuiquam onerosi sunt, sed orientis more et Pauli apostoli auctoritate minibus suis se transigunt” (trans. Gallagher and Gallagher, *FC* 56.54, slightly altered).

early Christian ascetics, he writes, “There was a monastery full of good brothers at Milan outside the city walls, fostered by Ambrose, and we [sc. he and Alypius] had not known it.”⁴¹⁶

Both of these passages offer important clues about the development of asceticism in Milan during the 380s. First, the group of ascetics Augustine mentions lived in what in 388/90 he calls a *diversorium*. Writing ten years later, he refers to this community as a *monasterium*. The use of *diversorium*—a word not typically used for the dwellings of ascetics—to denote the building inhabited by this group suggests that it was not a purpose-built structure, and hence that the community was not large or not highly organized at the time of which Augustine speaks.⁴¹⁷ It is possible that this shift in terminology is significant. It may indicate a development in the community—that it “graduated” to a new building and/or a new organizational structure. But if so, how would Augustine have learned of this development from far-off Africa? It seems more likely that the author of the *Confessions*, now a bishop, was more careful to use a technical term for the dwelling of a group of ascetics, rather than the more general *diversorium* that had sufficed when he was not yet a member of the clergy and merely writing as a lay ascetic.⁴¹⁸ Second, he notes in *De moribus* that the community at Milan was under the supervision of a priest, who was himself as a matter of course under the authority of Ambrose, the bishop. In the *Confessions*, he mentions Ambrose explicitly as the “*nutritor*” of these ascetics. Third, he describes the priest who was in charge of the community as “*optimus et doctissimus*,” probably indicating that part of his leadership involved the intellectual formation of the ascetics under his authority. The

⁴¹⁶ 8.6.15, *CCL* 27.122: “Et erat monasterium Mediolani plenum bonis fratribus extra urbis moenia sub Ambrosio nutritore, et non noveramus.”

⁴¹⁷ *Diversorium*: See *Deversorium*, *TLL* 5.852-853. *Monasterium*: *TLL* 8.1402-1404.

⁴¹⁸ Brown notes that Augustine’s anti-Manichaean works written between 388 and 390 gradually became more “ecclesiastical,” and this general feature may help to explain Augustine’s change in terminology. See *Augustine of Hippo*, 127.

possibility cannot be ruled out, therefore, that this community served at least in part as a seminary of sorts for those who aspired to become clergy in Milan.⁴¹⁹ If this is the case, then it can be compared to the monastery founded by Augustine at Hippo for his clergy, which produced ten bishops for the African church.⁴²⁰ Only at Hippo, a much smaller city than Milan, there was no need for Augustine to delegate the supervisory responsibility to a priest.

To attribute such a purpose to this Milanese community is, of course, merely speculation. The possibility remains that this *monasterium* was simply a gathering of men who wished to live an ascetic life without entering the clergy, but that Ambrose desired to bring them firmly under his control by placing one of his presbyters in charge of them. His assigning of a competent guide to be in charge of the *monasterium* is understandable in light of later events. In his letter to the church of Vercelli, he complains about two renegade ascetics, Sarmatio and Barbatianus, who at one time “stayed within the monastery [presumably the one mentioned by Augustine],” but left in order to spread the teachings of Jovinian.⁴²¹ After their preaching tour they apparently

⁴¹⁹ This possibility is perhaps strengthened by the fact that, as McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 284-285, notes, “Milan’s developing position as an avenue of promotion must have helped recruitment to the clergy there.”

⁴²⁰ Frederik van der Meer makes such a connection in his discussion of the *episcopium* established by Augustine in Hippo after becoming bishop there, while being careful to avoid overly simplistic comparisons. “Although they followed the Italian example [i. e., the model of the ascetic communities Augustine had seen first-hand in Milan and Rome],” he writes, “they nevertheless laid an emphasis on studies which was peculiar to themselves. . . . A great deal of work, no doubt, was done, but it was brain-work, and though these men owned no personal property and lived very simply, they lived undisturbed, and relatively carefree, and exclusively in the company of laymen.” See *Augustine the Bishop*, trans. Brian Battershaw and G. R. Lamb (London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), 207-209. Cf. p. xviii for the number of bishops who came out of this community. See also Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 129.

⁴²¹ *Ep.* 14.8 *extr. coll.*, CSEL 82/3.239: “intra monasterium continebantur.”

wished to continue living in the community, unaware of the offense they had given.⁴²² Ambrose did not allow the “Epicureans” to return.⁴²³

We have seen that this same letter of Ambrose to the church of Vercelli stressed that it was not only no disadvantage for a church to be led by an ascetic, but that, due to their moral superiority and their ability to bear up under the sufferings imposed on them by persecution, ascetics were ideally suited to serve as bishops. But we have also seen that this rationale might have made more sense to the skeptics in Vercelli at a time when bishops were liable to be exiled for opposing an emperor’s ecclesiastical policy. They might have conceded that the experience of Eusebius, as well as of his contemporaries Dionysius of Milan, Hilary of Poitiers, and Lucifer of Cagliari, demonstrated that there was a time when Ambrose’s concern was legitimate. But by the end of the fourth century, the controversy over the doctrine of the Trinity had been resolved, thanks in no small part to the fact that the emperors and a majority of the bishops now saw eye to eye on this matter. The justifications he offered for the ascetic bishop were not likely to be convincing for much longer as social and political conditions evolved. At roughly the same time that Ambrose made his plea to the church of Vercelli, however, another ascetic scholar was seeking an alternative rationale for the ascetic clergyman, one that would prove more enduring.

Jerome: The Ascetic Scholar-Cleric

The irascible Jerome, whom we have already met as a member of the ascetic circle of Aquileia and the center of another circle of female aristocratic ascetics, hailed from Pannonia, was educated in Rome, took up the ascetic life as a young man in the early 370s, sojourned for a brief time at Aquileia, came of age in the Syrian desert, was ordained a priest at Antioch by

⁴²² *Ep.* 14.9 *extr. coll.*, *CSEL* 82/3.239: “Hoc delicati non potuerunt ferre, abierunt. Deinde volentes redire non sunt recepti.”

⁴²³ So he calls them at 14.8.

Paulinus, one of the claimants to that see, and returned to Rome in 382 under the patronage of bishop Damasus.⁴²⁴ His reputation for sanctity there accounts for the access he enjoyed into some of the privileged circles of consecrated aristocratic women in Rome.⁴²⁵ He was compelled to leave the city in early 385, however, after the death of Damasus, having been expelled by the clergy who had finally had their fill of the biting satire that flowed from his acerbic pen, mostly directed at them.⁴²⁶ Upon his departure he returned to the east and established himself in Bethlehem, where he was joined by Paula and Eustochium, two of his aristocratic protégées from Rome.⁴²⁷ Although his exile took him to the far eastern end of the Roman world, the many letters he sent to “a younger generation of militants” in Italy, Gaul, and North Africa nonetheless continued to impact the development of asceticism in the west.⁴²⁸ As Philip Rousseau has put it, they constituted “a self-sufficient fund of experience and instruction” that could be appropriated and applied in a variety of contexts.⁴²⁹

Ambrose’s ascetic theology, as we have seen, centered on the notion of respecting boundaries, and thus exalted virgins as the microcosm of a rightly ordered world, in which things that should not be mixed were kept apart. Jerome’s approach, by contrast, was characterized by a number of features that were especially relevant for male ascetics: a tension between his desire for anchoritic withdrawal on the one hand, and the way in which ascetics were almost inevitably

⁴²⁴ For the chronology of Jerome’s life until his sojourn in Rome in the 380s, see Kelly, *Jerome*, 1-79.

⁴²⁵ On these aristocratic circles and Jerome’s activities as a teacher and mentor in them, see Peter Brown, “The Patrons of Pelagius: The Roman Aristocracy Between East and West,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, n. s. 21.1 (1970): 56-72, *passim*; and esp. Stefan Rebenich, *Hieronymus und Sein Kreis. Prosopographische und sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1992), 154-180.

⁴²⁶ Kelly, *Jerome*, 80-89 and 104-115.

⁴²⁷ Kelly, *Jerome*, 116-128.

⁴²⁸ Brown, *Body and Society*, 373.

⁴²⁹ Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church*, 99; cf. Cain, *Jerome and the Monastic Clergy*, 13-14.

drawn into the public affairs of the church; a keen sense of anxiety regarding the dangers of sexual temptation; and a focus on the life of the mind. All of these concerns revolved around the unique qualifications that an ascetic might bring to clerical office.

But it took Jerome a long time even to acknowledge that asceticism and clerical responsibility could be combined in the same person.⁴³⁰ In particular, his letters to his friends in the Aquileian circle, written in the mid-370s from Chalcis in the Syrian desert, are marked by an unresolved tension between his recognition on the one hand that the ascetic should value community and friendship with other ascetics—“the heavenly family here on earth”—and on the other hand the drive to withdraw completely from the world for the sake of prayer and the cultivation of the inner life.⁴³¹ But perhaps surprisingly, given the principles he had enunciated in his letters, Jerome left the desert for the excitement of the Eternal City.⁴³² In the end, however, his principles caught up with his (temporary) practice, and even went beyond it. His mature vision of the ascetic life allowed for the possibility that the city could be the proper setting for the life of self-denial (as it had been for Eusebius of Vercelli). His mind was opened even to the possibility that an ascetic could be a clergyman (a possibility he might envision for others, but not for himself, for although he was ordained, he refused to preside at the Eucharist for his fellow monks at Bethlehem).⁴³³ Writing to Heliodorus’ nephew Nepotianus in 394, he

⁴³⁰ For these changes in Jerome’s outlook, see Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church*, 105-113; and Cain, *Jerome and the Monastic Clergy*, 6-13.

⁴³¹ *Ep.* 3, cited in Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church*, 101. On this stage in Jerome’s life (mid-370s), see also Kelly, *Jerome*, 46-56.

⁴³² For Jerome’s attempts to resolve the tension between his principles and his temperament, see Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church*, 101-103.

⁴³³ On Jerome’s sacerdotal stinginess, see *Ep.* 51.1 (which is in fact his Latin translation for Eusebius of Cremona of Epiphanius’ letter to bishop John of Jerusalem), which attributes his abstention to “verecundiam et humilitatem” (*CSEL* 54.396); and Kelly, *Jerome*, 200.

backtracked on his strident insistence that the true ascetic must retreat even from the public commitment involved with being a member of the clergy. His reconciliation with the (almost inevitable) concept of the ascetic cleric was complete, and thus was born an ideal that proved to be profoundly influential.⁴³⁴

His Letter 52 to Nepotianus is one of the best known of his ascetic treatises, and contains advice given to the young priest of Altinum, a town of Venetia and Histria that was under Aquileia's ecclesiastical jurisdiction.⁴³⁵ The letter is significant precisely because it lays out his ideal of the ascetic clergyman, who in his person joined poverty, scholarly activity, and the duties of pastoral care to the sexual renunciation that was *de rigueur* for ascetics. For example, he advises Nepotianus to live simply, shunning the accumulation of wealth. Based on what he claims is the etymology of the word κληρός ("lot," or "portion"), whence the Latin *clericus*, Jerome likens the clergy to the Levites (as do Siricius and Ambrose—but with a rather different purpose), who received no inheritance of land, but rather lived on the tithes of their fellow Israelites.⁴³⁶ And so, "having food and raiment, I shall be content with these, and as a disciple of the Cross shall share its poverty."⁴³⁷ Contrasting what he expects of Nepotianus' conduct with the alleged practice of non-ascetic clergy, Jerome elaborates: "You despise gold; he loves it.

⁴³⁴ It was, however, a grudging concession, and one about whose feasibility he still seems to have harbored doubts even after composing this letter for Nepotianus. The following year, he wrote as follows to Paulinus of Nola, recently ordained a presbyter and newly settled in Nola, who had initiated an epistolary friendship with him: "Quia igitur fraterne interrogas, per quam viam incedere debeas, revelata tecum facie loquar. Si officium vis exercere presbyteri, si episcopatus te vel opus vel honos forte delectat, vive in urbibus et castellis et aliorum salutem fac lucrum animae tuae. Sin autem cupis esse, quod diceris, monachus, id est solus, quid facis in urbibus, quae utique non sunt solorum habitacula, sed multorum?" (CSEL 54.533). See Lienhard, *Paulinus of Nola*, 89-90; and Dennis E. Trout, *Paulinus of Nola: Life, Letters, and Poems* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1999), 96.

⁴³⁵ CSEL 54.413-441. For placement of the letter in the context of Jerome's developing ideas, see Cain, *Jerome and the Monastic Clergy*, 1-4.

⁴³⁶ Ep. 52.5, CSEL 54.421: "si enim κληρός Graece 'sors' Latine appellatur, propterea vocantur clerici, vel quia de sorte sunt domini vel quia dominus ipse sors, id est pars, clericorum est."

⁴³⁷ Ep. 52.5, CSEL 54.422: "habens victum et vestitum his contentus ero et nudam crucem nudus sequar."

You spurn wealth; he eagerly pursues it. You love silence, meekness, privacy; he takes delight in talking and effrontery, in squares, and streets, and apothecaries' shops."⁴³⁸ As a clergyman, Nepotianus will not be able to avoid being a public figure, nor will he be able to avoid managing the church's wealth.⁴³⁹ But nonetheless the ideal of poverty and withdrawal is not entirely sacrificed in Jerome's new synthesis. In keeping with this ideal, priests should likewise not be legacy-hunters; this common practice led the emperor Valentinian I to ban the clergy from receiving bequests, a restriction that Jerome lamented even while acknowledging its necessity.⁴⁴⁰ In short, "It is the glory of a bishop to make provision for the wants of the poor; but it is the shame of all priests to amass private fortunes."⁴⁴¹

At every stage of its development, Jerome's vision of the ascetic life included a wide space for scholarly activity. By the time he writes to Nepotianus, however, it is given a slightly different purpose as compared to his earlier ascetic writings. He begins the letter with a discussion of Abishag the Shunamite, the young woman who was summoned to the elderly King David's palace to lie next to him and keep him warm. Convinced that the story could not be literally true, Jerome concludes that Abishag refers mystically to wisdom, the love of which

⁴³⁸ *Ep.* 52.5, *CSEL* 54.422: "tu aurum contemnis, alius diligit; tu calcas opes, ille sectatur; tibi cordi est silentium, mansuetudo, secretum, illi uerbositas, adtrita frons, fora placent et plateae ac medicorum tabernae." Cain, appealing to the generally public nature of ancient epistolary, argues that the real target of Jerome's satirical depiction of the "worldly cleric" is not only the non-ascetic clergy of Altinum, but especially of Rome. See *Jerome and the Monastic Clergy*, 13-16.

⁴³⁹ For this function of clerics, see Harmut G. Ziche, "Administrer la propriété de l'église. L'évêque comme clerc et comme entrepreneur," *Antiquité tardive* 14 (2006): 69-78.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ep.* 52.6, *CSEL* 54.425: "nec de lege conqueror, sed doleo, cur meruerimus hanc legem." Cf. *Cod. Th.* 16.2.20 and 22. For the background of this remark, the eagerness of the Roman church to receive bequests from wealthy Christians, see also Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1.657-658.

⁴⁴¹ *Ep.* 52.6, *CSEL* 54.425: "gloria episcopi est pauperum opibus prouidere, ignominia omnium sacerdotum est propriis studere diuitiis."

“becomes warm and glowing through religious study.”⁴⁴² But as he reveals later in the letter, the reason the ascetic clergyman engages in study is so that he may in turn teach. “Read the divine scriptures constantly,” he urges His young protégé. “[N]ever, indeed, let the sacred volume be out of your hand. Learn what you have to teach.”⁴⁴³ In contrast to those clergy of whom Jerome disapproves, he enjoins Nepotianus:

When teaching in church seek to call forth not plaudits but groans. Let the tears of your hearers be your glory. A presbyter’s words ought to be seasoned by his reading of scripture. Be not a declaimer or a ranter, one who gabbles without rhyme or reason; but show yourself skilled in the deep things and versed in the mysteries of God. To mouth your words and by your quickness of utterance astonish the unlettered crowd is a mark of ignorance. Assurance often explains that of which it knows nothing; and when it has convinced others imposes on itself.⁴⁴⁴

Jerome was evidently well aware of the temptation experienced by many preachers to take the path of least resistance by telling their hearers what they wanted to hear. But just as an ascetic’s entire way of life constituted an implicit rebuke to the pursuit of material gain and social status that characterized worldly ways of living, so also in his preaching, the ascetic clergyman should not hold back from criticizing the morals of his hearers. Likewise, his preaching should not simply beat the air with rhetorical flourishes devoid of any edifying substance. It should contain solid spiritual food.

⁴⁴² *Ep.* 52.3, *CSEL* 54.418-419: “sed et ipsius 'Abisag' nominis sacramentum sapientiam senum indicat amplioem. ... porro 'Somanitis' in lingua nostra 'coccinea' dicitur, ut significet calere sapientiam et diuina lectione feruere.”

⁴⁴³ *Ep.* 52.7, *CSEL* 54.426: “Diuias scripturas saepius lege, immo numquam de manibus tuis sacra lectio deponatur. disce, quod doceas.”

⁴⁴⁴ *Ep.* 52.8, *CSEL* 54.428-429: “Dicente te in ecclesia non clamor populi, sed gemitus suscitetur; lacrimae auditorum laudes tuae sint; sermo presbyteri scripturarum lectione conditus sit. Nolo te declamatorem esse et rabulam garrulumque, sed mysterii peritum et sacramentorum dei tui eruditissimum. Verba volvere et celeritate dicendi apud inperitum vulgus admirationem sui facere indoctorum hominum est. Adtrita frons interpretatur saepe, quod nescit, et, cum aliis suaserit, sibi quoque usurpat scientiam.”

Finally, Jerome's ascetic clergyman would be expected to offer pastoral care and to become familiar enough with the private lives of those under his care in order to do so effectively. "It is your duty," he writes, "to visit the sick, to know the homes and children of ladies who are married, and to guard the secrets of noblemen."⁴⁴⁵ The cleric's role as care-giver, however, should not lead him to be indiscriminate in the type of care he bestowed. He should avoid being roped into "helping" in ways that were merely aimed at improving the social standing of the families under his care, or the security of widows, but would at the same time undermine the ascetic's commitment to celibacy:

The preacher of continence must not be a maker of marriages. Why does he who reads the apostle's words 'it remaineth that they that have wives be as though they had none'—why does he press a virgin to marry? Why does a priest, who must be a monogamist, urge a widow to marry again? How can the clergy be managers and stewards of other men's households, when they are bidden to disregard even their own interest?⁴⁴⁶

Jerome's ideal thus envisioned the ascetic as a public man, teaching the church and establishing close personal relationships with those he taught. Nonetheless, he remained keenly aware that he was subject to the very temptations that so easily ensnared worldly-minded clerics: the very real possibility of amassing a private fortune and the desire for ill-gotten popularity in the eyes of his church. He had seen it all before during his three years in Rome.⁴⁴⁷ But he did not believe these

⁴⁴⁵ *Ep.* 52.15, *CSEL* 54.438: "officii tui est visitare languentes, nosse domos, matronas ac liberos earum et nobilium virorum non ignorare secreta."

⁴⁴⁶ *Ep.* 52.16, *CSEL* 54.439: "praedicator continentiae, nuptias ne conciliet. Qui apostolum legit: superest, ut et qui habent uxores, sic sint, quasi non habentes, cur virginem cogit, ut nubat? Qui de monogamia sacerdos est, quare viduam hortatur, ut δῖγαμος sit? Procuratores et dispensatores domorum alienarum atque villarum quomodo esse possunt, qui proprias iubentur contemnere facultates?"

⁴⁴⁷ It was, after all, to Jerome's own patron, Damasus, that the urban prefect Praetextatus, referring to the pomp and luxury in which the bishops of Rome lived, had quipped: "Make me bishop of Rome, and I will be a Christian tomorrow." See Jerome, *Contra Iohannem* 8, *CCL* 79A.15: "Miserabilis Praetextatus, qui designatus consul est mortuus, homo sacrilegus et idolorum cultor, solebat ludens beato papae Damaso dicere: Facite me romanae urbis episcopum et ero protinus christianus."

temptations were insuperable. With the proper safeguards, and within certain strictly defined boundaries, ascetics could engage in the church's public affairs.

As an ascetic who became a clergyman, therefore, Jerome developed a model of asceticism that sought to create a space within the church for the celibate, scholarly cleric, devoted at once to "silence, meekness, privacy" on the one hand, and on the other hand to public preaching and pastoral care that took him into the homes of women and into the confidence of elite men. Ambrose's vision of ascetic clergy was based in part on the presupposition that sexual renunciation would enhance clerical and episcopal authority by setting one segment of the church off from the rest of it to serve as a symbol of that the purity of Christ's bride. This idea was becoming increasingly popular in Italy in the late fourth century, even if not every part of the western church was ready to accept it, along with what it implied for the lives of the clergy. But another important part of Ambrose's vision was the way in which he cast ascetic bishops as the heroes who resisted the tyranny of overweening emperors, and so the usefulness of his outlook as an explanation of why ascetic clergy were necessary might be questioned in happier times when relations between emperors and bishops were more cooperative. Jerome's conception, by contrast, was one whose usefulness was based squarely on the increasingly mainstream idea of the superiority of the virginal over the married life. It was thus designed (whether intentionally or not) to endure even during more ordinary times, when there were no tensions between church and empire as there had been during the middle of the fourth century. And endure it did.

Ascetics on the Margins: Italian Hermits in the Fourth Century

The types of asceticism practiced in Italy that have been discussed so far were situated in an urban context, involving either members of the clergy, elite women, or both. But another

form also began to appear by the late fourth century. In Italy, if one wanted to live the life of a hermit, the many offshore islands near the coasts of the peninsula provided an ideal environment. In such desolate places, many of this generation sought to imitate the life of the indomitable Antony more closely than was possible in the city. Two of them are known to us by name. One was Martin, later bishop of Tours, who attempted unsuccessfully to establish a “monastery” outside Milan, and when driven away by Auxentius, the Homoian incumbent of the see at that time, retired to an island off the Ligurian coast. The other was Jerome’s friend Bonosus, who in the 370s retired to an island in the Adriatic.

Martin of Tours is of course best known for his tenure as bishop of that city of western Gaul, but he was born in Pannonia and spent his youth in northern Italy before being enlisted into the emperor Julian’s legions on the Rhine frontier.⁴⁴⁸ After securing his discharge from the army, he made his way to Poitiers, where bishop Hilary made him a deacon and sought to “lead him to take part in divine service.”⁴⁴⁹ Shortly thereafter, perhaps in order to avoid becoming entangled in Hilary’s plans for him, he returned to Pannonia “with a regard for [his parents’] religious interests.”⁴⁵⁰ After being ill-treated there, his biographer Sulpicius Severus informs us, on account of his opposition to the “*haeresis Arriana*,” he set off once more for Gaul.⁴⁵¹ Hearing

⁴⁴⁸ Sulpicius Severus, *Vita sancti Martini*, 1-4.

⁴⁴⁹ Martin, however, resisted being made a deacon, and in the end Hilary made him an exorcist. See *Vita Martini*, 5.2, SC 133.262: “Temptavit autem idem Hilarius inposito diaconatus officio sibi eum artius implicare et ministerio vincere divino sed cum saepissime restitisset indignum se esse vociferans intellexit vir altioris ingenii uno eum modo posse constringi, si id ei officii imponeret in quo quidam locus iniuriae videretur. Itaque exorcistam eum esse praecepit.”

⁴⁵⁰ *Vit. Mart.*, 5.3, SC 133.262: “Nec multo post admonitus per soporem ut patriam parentesque quos, adhuc gentilitas detinebat, religiosa sollicitudine visitaret, ex voluntate sancti Hilari profectus est, multis ab eo obstrictus precibus et lacrimis ut rediret.”

⁴⁵¹ *Vit. Mart.*, 6.4.

of Hilary's exile, however, he stopped in Milan.⁴⁵² Though one wonders what hope he had of succeeding, since bishop Auxentius ("the originator and leader of the Arians," as Sulpicius would have it) had the backing of the emperor, Martin took the bold step of "establish[ing] a monastery for himself at Milan." Not unsurprisingly, since his relationship with Hilary, now deposed and exiled, was a matter of public knowledge, Auxentius "bitterly persecuted him" and "violently expelled him from the city."⁴⁵³ Martin's plan may have been to support the minority in the church of Milan that was loyal to the Nicene Creed and had withdrawn from fellowship with Auxentius, but the attempt to shore up this opposition with ascetic reinforcements must have been seen as a serious challenge to Auxentius' authority.⁴⁵⁴

This setback prompted Martin to seek retirement on the island of Gallinaria, off the Ligurian coast, accompanied by "a certain presbyter ... a man of distinguished excellences."⁴⁵⁵ Sulpicius recounts Martin's diet of roots and hellebore, the latter of which nearly killed him. In a foreshadowing of the thaumaturgical powers that he would soon display, however, Martin "warded off the immediate danger by means of prayer."⁴⁵⁶ Not long after this, we are informed, he received word that Hilary had been allowed to return to his see. He thus put an end to his brief experiment as a hermit and set out for Rome, where he hoped to catch up with his

⁴⁵² *Vit. Mart.*, 6.4

⁴⁵³ *Vit. Mart.*, 6.4, SC 133.266: "Mediolani sibi monasterium statuit. Ibi quoque eum Auxentius auctor et princeps Arrianorum gravissime insectatus est multisque adfectum iniuriis de civitate exturbavit."

⁴⁵⁴ This interpretation of the episode agrees with that of McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 21-22, who dates it to the year 357. Alessio Peršič would place it in 359. See "Aquileia monastica. I primordi eremitico-martiriale e martiniani, il 'coro' cromaziano 'di beati', le idealità 'terapeutiche' di Girolamo," in *Cromazio di Aquileia. Al crocevia di genti e religioni*, 254-267, at 255.

⁴⁵⁵ *Vit. Mart.*, 6.5, SC 133.266: "Cedendum itaque tempori ratus ad insulam cui Gallinaria nomen est, secessit, comite quodam presbytero magnarum virtutum viro."

⁴⁵⁶ *Vit. Mart.*, 6.6, SC 133.266: "Sed cum vim veneni in se grassantis vicina iam morte sensisset, imminens periculum oratione repulit statimque omnis dolor fugatus est."

mentor.⁴⁵⁷ And so ends the brief story of Martin's contribution to fourth-century Italian asceticism.

It was probably about fifteen years after Martin and his unnamed companion withdrew to their island retreat that a hermit first established himself on an island off the Adriatic coast of Italy. Bonosus was, like Rufinus, a friend of Jerome's from his school days who had been introduced by him to the Aquileian community of ascetics.⁴⁵⁸ What little we know about him comes from Jerome's letters. When Jerome left Aquileia in the early 370s, Bonosus apparently did not go with him, since in writing to Chromatius, Jovinus, and Eusebius in 374, Jerome indicates that before being informed by his correspondents, he was unaware that Bonosus had established himself as an island hermit.⁴⁵⁹ It is difficult to say with any degree of certainty whether Martin and Bonosus were the first examples of island eremitism known to their contemporaries.⁴⁶⁰ The fact that Sulpicius and Jerome make no such claim suggests that there were others before them, for if either one were the progenitor of this type of asceticism in the Italian context, it would not likely have been overlooked by those who sought to praise them for their self-denying virtue.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁷ *Vit. Mart.*, 6.7.

⁴⁵⁸ For Bonosus, see Jerome, *Epp.* 3.4-5 and 7.3; and Kelly, *Jerome*, 7-8, 10-11, 18, and 25-33.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ep.* 7.3, *CSEL* 54.28: "Bonosus, ut scribitis, quasi filius ἰχθῦος aquosa petiit, nos pristina contagione sordentes quasi reguli et scorpiones arentia quaeque sectamur."

⁴⁶⁰ Peršič points out that Martin's is the first documented instance of this way of life in the west, but argues that there is no reason to believe that he was the first person in the west to attempt it. See "Aquileia Monastica," 263n.26.

⁴⁶¹ Sulpicius notes Martin's diet while on the island: "Hic aliquandiu radicibus vixit herbarum" (*SC* 133.266). Jerome highlights Bonosus' high social rank, praising him for having forsaken both it and those he loved so as to live in solitude and simplicity: "ecce puer honestis saeculo nobiscum artibus institutus, cui opes adfatim, dignitas adprime inter aequales, contempta matre, sororibus et carissimo sibi germano insulam pelago circumsonante navifragam, cui asperae cautes et nuda saxa et solitudo terrori est, quasi quidam novus paradisi colonus insedit" (*Ep.* 3.4, *CSEL* 54.15).

Whatever the case may be, these men were pioneers of a form of asceticism that was especially offensive to elite Roman sensibilities, since uninhabited islands were traditionally places of exile for those convicted of political crimes.⁴⁶² Writers like Sulpicius and Jerome must have relished the fact that a Bonosus could turn such a place into a new Eden, but Rutilius Namatianus articulated an older point of view, shared by pagans and many Christians, when he sharply criticized a group of ascetics living on the island of Capraria and complained of the foolish choice made by a young aristocrat (a friend of his, no less!) to become an ascetic and retreat to the island of Gorgona.⁴⁶³

As we proceed by sea, Capraria rears itself:
the island reeks with men who shun the light.
They are called *monachoi*—the name is Greek—because
They want to live alone, without a witness.

They fear both Fortune's gifts and Fortune's punishments:
they hug the very misery they dread.
What stupid madness of a perverse mind is this,
to fear that happiness will cause them harm?

...

The wave-girt isle of Gorgon rises from the sea,
with Pisa and Corsica on either side.
I shun its cliffs, memorials of recent loss.
A citizen was lost to living death.

⁴⁶² For the typical elite Roman attitude to island retreats, see Cameron, *Last Pagans of Rome*, 211-213.

⁴⁶³ Like Gallinaria, these islands are in the Ligurian Sea. In the past, it has been assumed that Rutilius' hostility to asceticism is an indication that he was a pagan. More recently, however, Alan Cameron cites a number of reasons why we may question this appraisal of his religious commitment. He points to the fact that his invective against Stilicho is balanced in the newly discovered fragment by praise for the Christian patrician and future emperor Constantius (III); that his criticism of the Jews is apparently borrowed from Seneca, who was out of fashion among pagan literati in the late empire but admired by Christians; that his optimism about Rome's future after the sack of Rome was shared with Christians such as Orosius, and thus should not be taken as an aggressive reply to Augustine's thesis in the *City of God*; that there are good reasons to his attack on Jews as an overt attack on Jews, not a covert attack on Christians; and that his choice words for the island hermits reflect traditional aristocratic attitudes toward the type of self-denial in which they engaged as well as their choice of abode. In the end, he concludes that Rutilius probably was a pagan, but not a particularly aggressive one, and that many Christians would have agreed to an extent with his scornful attitude toward island hermits. See *Last Pagans of Rome*, 207-218.

Not long ago our friend, a youth of noble birth,
appropriately wed, with ample means,
went mad, abandoning the world and the human race
for exile in this filthy den, the fool!

This wretch believes divinity can feed on filth.
He does himself more harm than the gods he spurned.
Is not this sect, I ask you, worse than Circe's drugs?
While *she* changed human bodies, *they* change minds.⁴⁶⁴

The fact that this was over half a century after Martin had retired to Gallinaria to escape the reach of Auxentius demonstrates that this kind of asceticism caught on in spite of the conservative attitudes of Rutilius and those like him. Indeed, Ambrose, writing ca. 386, mentions those who “hide themselves there [sc., on islands near the coast]” and “seek to escape from the world with all its inducements to intemperate living with a firm purpose to live in continence and thereby avoid the dubious conflicts of this life.”⁴⁶⁵ Letters of Jerome from ca. 399 and ca. 406 likewise provide evidence of the popularity of this most unconventional of the various forms of asceticism taking root in and near fourth-century northern Italy.⁴⁶⁶ Already by

⁴⁶⁴ *De reditu suo* 1.439-446 and 515-526, in *Rutilius Namatianus. Sur son retour*, ed. Étienne Wolff (Paris: Belle Lettres, 2007), 23 and 25-26: “Processu pelagi iam se Capraria tollit;/squalet lucifugis insula plena viris./Ipsi se monachos Graio cognomine dicunt,/quod soli nullo vivere teste volunt./Munera fortunae metuunt, dum damna verentur./Quisquam sponte miser, ne miser esse queat?/Quaenam perversi rabies tam stulta cerebri,/dum mala formides, nec bona posse pati? ... Assurgit ponti medio circumflua Gorgon/inter Pisanum Cynaicumque latus./Adversus scopulus, damni monumenta recentis:/perditus hic vivo funere civis erat./Noster enim nuper iuvenis maioribus amplis,/nec censu inferior coniugiove minor,/impulsus Furiis homines terrasque reliquit/et turpem latebram credulus exul agit./Infelix putat illuvie caelestia pasci/seque premit laesis saevior ipse deis./Num, rogo, deterior Cercaeis secta venenis?/Tunc mutabantur corpora, nunc animi.” (trans. Martha Malamud, in *Rutilius Namatianus' Going Home: De reditu suo* [New York: Routledge, 2016], 55-56 and 57-58; cf. 26-28).

⁴⁶⁵ *Exameron* 3.5.23, *CSEL* 32/1.74: “Quid enumeram insulas, quas velut monilia plerumque praetexit, in quibus ii qui se abdicant intemperantiae saecularis inlecebris fido continentiae proposito eligunt mundo latere et vitae huius declinare dubious anfractus?”

⁴⁶⁶ In *Ep.* 77.6, he praises Fabiola, a twice-married noblewoman who, after the death of her second husband, underwent public penance and distributed her wealth to the poor. Concerning her generosity to ascetics, he writes, “Etruscum mare Vulscorumque provinciam ac reconditos curuorum litorum sinus, in quibus monachorum consistunt chori, vel proprio corpore vel transmissa per fideles ac sanctos viros munificentia circuibat” (*CSEL* 55.44). On Fabiola, see *PLRE* 1.323 and *PCBE* 2.734-735. In *Ep.* 118.5, Jerome praises the generosity of Julian, a senator from Dalmatia whom he credits with supporting island hermits off the coast of his native province: “extruis monasteria, multas a te per insulas Dalmatiae sanctorum numerus sustentatur; sed melius faceres, si et ipse sanctus inter sanctos viveres” (*CSEL* 55.443). On Julian, see *PLRE* 2.637.

the time Rutilius wrote, in fact, the island monastery of Lérins was also on its way to becoming the most important island monastic center in Late Antiquity.⁴⁶⁷

This survey of Italian asceticism in the late fourth century between Rome and the Alps reveals that, although it was not as fully developed as in the east, the ascetic movement had taken firm root and was bearing much fruit in Italy—in the variety of ascetic practices and traditions, in the geographical diffusion of those who had committed themselves to the life of perfection, and perhaps also in the numbers of those who had taken up this form of life. This first flowering of western asceticism was, moreover, merely the precursor to the birth and steady growth of various forms of the consecrated life in Gaul and North Africa.⁴⁶⁸ Italy—northern Italy, in particular—served as a beachhead through which the ideas and practices of the east, brought to Italy by such figures as Athanasius, Ambrose, and Jerome spread to these other parts of the western empire. It remains for us, then, to explore further the link between ascetic discipline and the episcopal office in northern Italy.

Holy Bishops in Northern Italy: Asceticism and Episcopal Authority

We have already seen in this chapter that two distinct attitudes toward the intersection between asceticism and clerical authority emerged at Rome and in northern Italy during the last decades of the fourth century. In the north, the pioneering work of bishop Eusebius of Vercelli and of the presbyter Chromatius of Aquileia and his family, as well as the writing and practices of Ambrose of Milan did much to create an expectation that bishops would be chosen from among either the never-married or those who, like Ambrose's correspondent Paulinus of Nola

⁴⁶⁷ On Lérins, see Patrick Geary, *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 143-146; and Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 83-140.

⁴⁶⁸ The best-known examples are undoubtedly Martin of Tours, discussed above in connection with his activities in Italy early in his career, and Augustine of Hippo.

(himself an honorary member of the clergy of Milan), had adopted marital continence as part of a radical break with their previous way of life, and had done so prior to entering any clerical office.⁴⁶⁹ Let us therefore turn to look at the evidence that Ambrose was not alone among north Italian bishops of the late fourth and early fifth centuries in being an ascetic himself and championing asceticism for bishops. The following section will argue that we have reason to believe that Chromatius, Vigilius, Gaudentius, Maximus, and Peter Chrysologus all practiced asceticism, and that they probably preferred ascetic to non-ascetic bishops.

We begin with Chromatius, whose see was the second most important in northern Italy, after the imperial residence of Milan, was himself an ascetic, and probably the moving spirit behind the circle of ascetics centered on his family's home in Aquileia. But Chromatius' asceticism was not incidental to his own perception of his authority as a cleric. On the contrary, evidence from his *Tractatus in Mathaeum* shows that he regarded sexual renunciation as an intrinsic part of the clerical lifestyle. The relevant passage comes from *Tractatus* 3, which deals with Matt. 1:24-25, where the evangelist relates the aftermath of the dream in which an angel appears to Joseph to reassure him of Mary's fidelity: "And Joseph, arising from the dream, did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took unto him his wife. And he did not know her until she bore a son: and he called his name Jesus." Commenting on the important detail of the couple's pre-marital abstinence, Chromatius, like many ascetic exegetes of his day, insists that it should be taken to mean that the couple never consummated their marriage at all.⁴⁷⁰ In the context of the debate over virginity in the late fourth century, this interpretation was normally

⁴⁶⁹ Paulinus, *Ep.* 3.4, cited in Trout, *Paulinus of Nola*, 116.

⁴⁷⁰ *Tr.* 3.1, *CCL* 9A.208: "Sed de hoc quod dictum est ab evangelista: *Et non cognovit eam donec peperit filium*, solent aliquanti homines stulti quaestionem movere, existimantes post nativitatem Domini sanctam Mariam Ioseph fuisse coniunctam."

used to make a point about Mary's virginity, either *post partum* or *in partu* (or both).

Chromatius makes the standard point about Mary's *post partum* virginity, but what is noteworthy in connection with the present discussion is that he sees significance in Joseph's abstinence as well.⁴⁷¹ He cites two significant Old Testament figures who, like Joseph, abstained from sexual activity after hearing the word of God. The first he mentions here is Noah; the next is Moses. Joseph was "a just man," about whom it was not right that he "be thought to have known holy Mary after the labor that gave birth to the Lord."⁴⁷² The depiction of Joseph as following a precedent set by two prophets, and as a "*vir iustus*," is important here, for it indicates what kind of purpose Chromatius attributed to the element of sexual renunciation in male asceticism.⁴⁷³

We have seen that for Siricius, the purpose of this renunciation was primarily to ensure ritual purity. Like the Levites of the Old Testament, those who served at the altar under the

⁴⁷¹ For Mary's virginity, see the passage cited in the previous note, as well as another from a bit further down (*CCL* 9A.208): "Absit enim ut post tanti mysterii sacramentum, post dignationis dominicae nativitatem Maria virgo virum cognovisse credatur, cum in lege veteris testamenti illa Maria prophetissa soror Moysi vel Aaron visis signis caelestibus post Aegypti plagas, post rubri maris divisionem, post gloriam Domini praecedentem et in columna ignis ac nubis aspectam, viri nescia virgo permanserit, ita nec credi fas est ut haec Maria evangelica virgo Deo capax, quae Deum gloriae non in nube conspexit, sed portare virginali utero meruit, virum cognovisse credatur."

⁴⁷² *Tr.* 3.1, *CSEL* 9A.208: "Noe Dei colloquio dignus effectus, abstinentiam sibi de cetero coniugalis necessitatis indixit. Moyses post auditam Dei vocem de rubo a consortio coniugali abstinuit et credi fas est ut Ioseph vir iustus sanctam Mariam post partum dominicae nativitatis cognovisse credatur." Chromatius' predecessor Fortunatianus (s. 340/42-ca.360) interpreted the significance of Joseph's being a "*vir iustus*" in a similar way: "Sed quicumque sanae mentis sunt et spiritales, sic sentire non debent [sc., that the use of the word 'donec' implies that Joseph and Mary had marital relations after the birth of Jesus], ut potuisset Ioseph vir iustus, qui et visiones angelorum videbat et, quid ageret, angelo monente discebat, Mariam contingere, de qua didicerat filium dei natum, cui etiam ut nomen Iesum inponeret, id est 'salvator,' ab angelo didici. Quin fieri poterat, ut homo iustus Ioseph, qui custos positus Mariae invenitur, qui signum, quod per prophetas fuerat dictum in populo futurum, tenebat, ut hic Mariam libidinis causa temptaret?" See *Commentarii in evangelia* (*CSEL* 103.125).

⁴⁷³ Fortunatianus, by contrast, makes no mention of Noah or Moses, nor does he focus on the message communicated by the angel as an indication of Joseph's holiness, but on the appearance of the angel. See *CSEL* 103.125: "Angelos enim sanctis et pudicis viris apparuisse manifestum est. Igitur nisi Ioseph in sanctimoniae itinere gressus firmiter habuisset constitutos, numquam puto eum angelorum visiones videre potuisse et, quid agere deberet, eorum insinuatione didicisse." It may also be noted that for Chromatius, Noah's, Moses', and Joseph's sexual renunciation was part of their response to having heard from God. For Fortunatianus, by contrast, Joseph's being visited by the angel was, as it were, a reward for his holiness, a holiness manifested in his renunciation of his marital rights over Mary.

Christian dispensation needed to be pure, and therefore deacons and presbyters (and, of course, bishops) needed to abstain so as to be always ready to participate in the liturgy. And those who exhorted others to continence must themselves also be continent. These concerns, shared by Ambrose, are entirely absent from Chromatius' exegesis of this text. Rather, the focus is on the manner in which the reception of a message from God precipitated a cessation of marital relations in the lives of Noah and Moses, and led Joseph not to consummate his marriage. Chromatius describes Noah as "*Dei colloquio dignus effectus*," and relates that Moses began to abstain "*post auditam Dei vocem*." Hearing from God meant an end to this particular activity for both of these men; it was no longer appropriate for those who had been granted the privilege of being God's spokesmen. Joseph, having heard from an angel in a dream, is placed in the same category (but as one who had never had marital relations in the first place).⁴⁷⁴ The obvious implication for Chromatius' hearers is that they, as members of the clergy, who have a divine message to communicate, must follow their example.⁴⁷⁵ This rationale for clerical continence is thus placed on a different basis from that of Siricius. The bishop of Aquileia makes no mention of the fact that Moses was a Levite, which would have been an easy point to make to further his case. Instead, his exegesis of this passage connects clerics' sexual renunciation to their function as preachers and teachers, whereas for Siricius it was connected primarily to their sacramental functions. The fact that this is the only place in Chromatius' surviving writings where he gives a rationale for clerical sexual renunciation means that we cannot rule out the possibility (indeed, the probability) that he also regarded this practice as important in light of clerics' sacramental

⁴⁷⁴ A weakness in Chromatius' exegesis is the fact that, whereas Noah and Moses were generally regarded as prophets who not only heard from God but also proclaimed a message from him, Joseph was not generally regarded in the same way. Thus he does not seem to fit the pattern Chromatius claims to find.

⁴⁷⁵ That Chromatius' *Tractatus* were aimed at an audience that was substantially (but not entirely) made up of clerics will be argued in chap. 6, pp. 396-417.

functions. But it is nevertheless significant that he offers here a justification that is not offered by either Siricius or Ambrose.

Thus Ambrose and Chromatius, bishops of the two most influential north Italian sees, both regarded sexual renunciation as a central part of clerical identity. Having established that this is so, we are not surprised to discover that several of their episcopal contemporaries who have left some literary remains possessed a similar attitude. We turn next to Vigilius of Trent, whose episcopate lasted from an unknown date before 397 until probably sometime in the early fifth century.⁴⁷⁶ He is known to us from two letters he wrote—one to Simplicianus of Milan in 397 and another to John Chrysostom in 398—in which he narrated the martyrdom of three members of the clergy of Trent who were murdered by pagans in the isolated Val di Non, a rural zone within Trent's episcopal jurisdiction where they were engaged in evangelistic work.⁴⁷⁷ In his description of the martyrs, he notes that their life “was remarkable in its solitude as much as in its conduct. For all of them, free from the yoke of marriage, have now presented their unsullied souls to God as sacrificial offerings.”⁴⁷⁸ This statement is significant when we consider the clerical rank held by each of them. Sisinnius was a deacon, Martyrius was a lector (whose career in the civil service before joining the clergy of Trent suggests that he was probably

⁴⁷⁶ For a discussion of the difficulty in establishing the dates of his episcopate, see the Appendix, pp. 568-569.

⁴⁷⁷ Both have been published with an introduction by Enrico Menestò under the title “Le due lettere di S. Vigilio,” in *I martiri della Val di Non e la reazione pagana alla fine del IV secolo. Atti del Convegno. Trento, 27-28 marzo 1984*, ed. Antonio Quacquarelli and Iginio Rogger (Trent: Istituto Trentino di Cultura, 1985), 151-170. See also the text, Italian translation, and commentary in Luigi F. Pizzolato, *Studi su S. Vigilio di Trento* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2002), 141-214. A superior edition of *Ep. 2* has been published by Ralph W. Mathisen in *People, Personal Expression, and Social Relations in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 114-119. This incident and the letters written by Vigilius to publicize it will be discussed also in chap. 3 below, pp. 231-234.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ep. 1*, Menestò, p. 159, ll. 18-22: “Quorum vita, ut summa rerum fastigia relegam, propter scientiae notitiam, fuit tam solitudinis quam propositi singularis. Nam omnes liberi nexu coniugii, Deo immaculatas animas, ut nunc hostias, praestituerunt.”

older than the average lector), and his brother Alexander was a doorkeeper.⁴⁷⁹ Of the three, only Sisinnius would have been required to be continent had he been a member of the Roman clergy. The other two are conspicuous for their *propositum*—an indication of their ascetic lifestyle—which they shared with Sisinnius even while they occupied the lower offices of lector and *ostiarius*.⁴⁸⁰ That they did so shows that Vigilius likely preferred ascetic candidates for church office, at least for the type of work that these three were doing.

Continuing west from Trent, we come to Gaudentius of Brescia. We possess only three of his letters, none of which sheds any light on his administration of the church of that city.⁴⁸¹ We do know, however, that he was a lifelong celibate himself, an ascetic scholar and traveler who could only be cajoled into returning to Italy from his pilgrimage in Asia Minor to be ordained bishop by threats of excommunication at the hands of the bishops of the region of his

⁴⁷⁹ Sisinnius: *Ep.* 2.5 (ed. Mathisen, p. 117); Martyrius: *Ep.* 1 (ed. Menestò, p. 159 l. 35); Alexander as *ostiarius*: *Ep.* 1 (ed. Menestò, p. 161 l. 82).

⁴⁸⁰ As Danuta Shanzer pointed out while reading this letter with Kent Navalesi and me, *propositum* often denotes an ascetic lifestyle in the writings of Latin theologians and churchmen. See, for example, the passage from Ambrose's *Exameron* 3.5.23 that was cited above (*CSEL* 32/1.74): "Quid enumeram insulas, quas velut monilia plerumque praetexit, in quibus ii qui se abdicant intemperantiae saecularis inlecebris fido continentiae proposito eligunt mundo latere et vitae huius declinare dubios anfractus?"; and Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini*, 10.2, *SC* 133.272-274: "Eadem in corde eius humilitas, eadem in vestitu eius vilitas erat; atque ita, plenus auctoritatis et gratiae, inplebat episcopi dignitatem, ut non tamen propositum monachi virtutemque desereret." See *TLL* 10.2.2073 (*propositum* 2.A).

⁴⁸¹ One of these letters, preserved as *Tr.* 18, is an explanation of the Parable of the Unjust Steward in Luke 16; another, *Tr.* 19, is a defense of the Nicene view of Christ; the third is the *Praefatio ad Benivolum* that Gaudentius appended to the fifteen sermons (*Trr.* 1-15) that he collected for the benefit of this prominent layman. The circumstances surrounding his action are as follows: It was customary for bishops to supplement the Lenten catechetical instruction with "mystagogical catechesis," which focused on the meaning of the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, the former of which the neophytes had just undergone, and the latter of which they would have witnessed for the first time at the Easter Vigil. On these practices, see William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1995), 324-339; and Paul L. Gavrilyuk, *Histoire du catéchuménat dans l'église ancienne* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2007), 309-312. Benivolum had missed them on account of a serious illness, and Gaudentius acceded to his request for written transcripts out of a desire to ensure that the text Benivolum read (he had gotten his hands on unauthorized copies made by shorthand writers) was accurate. See *Praef. ad Beniv.* 7 and 9-11.

sojourns.⁴⁸² Had he not been waylaid in this fashion, it is possible that he might have followed a path similar to that of his friend Rufinus of Aquileia, who dedicated to Gaudentius his translation of the *Clementine Recognitions*.⁴⁸³ But even if we lack the breadth of sources in his case that we possess in relation to Ambrose, it is nonetheless possible to reconstruct something of his attitude about the relationship between a bishop's ascetic practices and his authority within his community. In his *Tractatus* 8, a sermon on the miraculous changing of the water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee delivered not long after Easter, he discusses what this Gospel text teaches about marriage and virginity. He first offers a defense of marriage, claiming that Christ's presence at the wedding is an endorsement of the institution and of the command to "Increase and multiply and fill the earth." According to Gaudentius, "this displeases the wretched Manichaeans."⁴⁸⁴ He goes on to say, however, that "[Christ] taught that virginity is better since He thought it more worthy to be born from it."⁴⁸⁵ He also affirms Mary's *virginitas in partu*, which establishes the pattern for the purest form of Christian life, stating that, "conceived without corruption He is born without injury to maternal integrity. And therefore the Apostle, that vessel of election, invited others to this good which he had followed, saying to the

⁴⁸² *Tr.* 16.2, *CSEL* 68.137: "Sed beatus pater Ambrosius ceterique venerandi antistites sacramento, quo temere vos ipsos obligastis, adstricti tales ad me epistolas cum vestra legatione miserunt, ut sine damno animae meae ultra iam resistere non valerem, cui ab Orientalibus quoque episcopis, nisi meum ad vos reditum pollicerer, salutaris communio negaretur."

⁴⁸³ The prologue he attached to the translation is in *CCL* 20.281-282.

⁴⁸⁴ *Tr.* 8.7-8, *CSEL* 68.62: "*Crescite et multiplicamini et implete terram*. Quod Manicheis perditis adeo displicet constitutum." Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of Gaudentius are taken from Stephen L. Boehrer, "Gaudentius of Brescia: Sermons and Letters." Ph.D. Dissertation. Catholic University of America, 1965.

⁴⁸⁵ *Tr.* 8.9, *CSEL* 68.62: "Et tamen virginitatem docuit esse meliorem, dum magis per eam nasci dignatur."

unwed: *It is good for them if they so remain even as I.*⁴⁸⁶ He thus seeks a middle way between Jovinian and his supporters on the one hand, and the extreme ascetics on the other.

Gaudentius goes on to offer an exegesis of the Pauline saying that “Both he who gives his virgin in marriage does well, and he who does not give her does better” (I Cor. 7:38). A natural reading of the text would take these words to be addressed to fathers who must decide whether to give their daughters in marriage or commit them to a life of virginity. Instead, he takes them as though they had been spoken “to each person, both to man and to woman, that each has the choice proposed by the same saint. He can either keep his virgin, that is, his flesh, born virgin, in integrity, choosing the better and free part, or, recognizing his condition if he cannot contain himself, he can give his virgin in marriage.”⁴⁸⁷ Gaudentius apparently balks at accepting these words in the literal sense because they would in that case seem to grant fathers too much control over the choices made in this regard by their daughters (and their sons, for that matter) regarding their bodies:

I do not wish that parents or relatives of virgins, whether of boys or girls, deceive themselves concerning what has been said of the freedom of the will. We have stated that they are not able to govern other minds. Because it is known to be a matter of the will they are certainly not able to command perpetual continence. They are, however, able to encourage the will toward what is best. And they have the responsibility to admonish, to exhort, to cherish, and to long to bind their children to God rather than to the world; this so that from the progeny of their seed they might offer either worthy ministers for the divine altar in the order of the clergy or enlarge the number of the holy women, girls given to chastity. And in so supplying the Church of God with such nourishment they might receive a deserved beatitude.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁶ Tr. 8.10-11, CSEL 68.62-63: “Dum sine detrimento integritatis maternae nascitur sine corruptela conceptus. Ideoque vas electionis apostolus ad istud bonum, quod consecutus fuerat, ceteros invitabat dicens innupti[i]s: *Bonum est illis, si sic permanserint sicut ego.*”

⁴⁸⁷ Tr. 8.12, CSEL 68.63: “Quod ego arbitror non parentibus virginum fuisse a beato apostolo dictum, quos constat alienae voluntatis arbitrio dominari non posse, sed unicuique hominum, tam viro quam feminae, optionem fuisse ab eodem sancto propositam, ut virginem suam – hoc est carnem suam, virginem natam – aut integritati conservet, meliorem partem liberamque eligens, aut agnita condicione nuptui eam, si se non continet, tradat.”

⁴⁸⁸ Tr. 8.13, CSEL 68.63-64: “Parentes autem vel consanguinei quique virginum, tam puerorum quam etiam puellarum, nolo sibi de supra dicta libertate arbitrii blandiantur, quod alienis mentibus eos dominari non posse

On the grounds of “the freedom of the will (*voluntatis arbitrio*),” then, Gaudentius argues that young men as well as women ought to be left free to make up their own minds about whether they will embrace virginity or marriage, and not be pressured into a state for which they are not suited. Their families are, however, free to use all manner of persuasion to attempt to convince them to embrace what Gaudentius has made clear is the better choice. In the case of young men, as this passage indicates, he believed that opting for virginity would make them ideal candidates for the higher offices of the ministry, who would serve at the altar.

The statement that parents who persuade their children to remain virgins would “offer worthy ministers for the divine altar” indicates that Gaudentius shares the concern of Siricius and Ambrose for the ritual purity of deacons, presbyters, and bishops, who must at least be continent out of respect for the holiness of the sacraments. But this passage also shows that he was in agreement with Ambrose in holding virgins to be ideally suited to become clerics *qua* virgins. To begin with, he makes no mention of the prospect that married men who embraced continence might also be qualified to join the clergy. To make such a stipulation here might be viewed as an unnecessary digression that would distract from his main point, but nonetheless he might be expected in a context like this to make it clear that such individuals were also qualified. But more importantly, he conceives of the conduct of the young men and the young women he is talking about here to run on parallel tracks.⁴⁸⁹ Both, in other words, prepare themselves for their role in the church—in the clergy as well as among “the number of the holy women” through

tractavimus. Imperare quidem perpetuam continentiam non possunt, quia res esse noscitur voluntatis, voluntatem tamen in melius nutrire possunt et debitores sunt, ut moneant, ut hortentur, ut faveant, ut pignora sua deo magis gestiant obligare quam saeculo, ut de propinquis seminis sui vel in cleri ordine dignos altari divino ministros exhibeant vel in sanctarum numero feminarum puellas castimoniae dicatas enutrient, ut ecclesiam dei talibus nutrimentis ornantes beatitudinem debitam conseauantur.”

⁴⁸⁹ Note the “vel...vel” construction.

“chastity (*castimonia*),” by which he obviously means virginity. Thus for Gaudentius, the ideal cleric was a lifelong virgin rather than a man who had embraced continence after a period of living in “conjugal liberty” with his wife.⁴⁹⁰

We now move along to Maximus of Turin. There is unfortunately no single passage in his extant sermons that clearly indicates his preference for virginal as opposed to merely continent clerics. Instead, in order to show that he was basically of the same mind as Ambrose, Chromatius, Vigilius, and Gaudentius, it is necessary to appeal to the cumulative effect of a number of separate passages that paint a picture of Maximus’ overall view of sexuality. The first of these comes from Sermon 89, delivered after his return from a church council. This sermon, referred to at the very beginning of this chapter, contains a short reflection on the nature of the episcopal office, likening bishops to bees, a comparison he believes is apt in part “because, like the bee, [bishops] display bodily chastity, offer the bread of heavenly life, and exercise the sting of the law.”⁴⁹¹ The metaphor, based on the common belief in antiquity that bees reproduced asexually, is creative, but it does not indicate anything about Maximus’ ideas concerning the type of ascetic renunciation in which bishops should engage, other than that he probably agreed with both his Roman and his north Italian contemporaries that even if they were married, bishops should be continent. The word “*castitas*” implies nothing beyond this.

But when we turn to Sermon 50A, we do find the first of several passages that are helpful for determining whether Maximus held views similar to those of the other north Italian bishops we have considered. These texts do not deal with clerical authority *per se*, but rather with the

⁴⁹⁰ In 8.7 (*CSEL* 68.62), he had used the phrase “*licentia coniugalis*” when referring to the divine command to increase and multiply.

⁴⁹¹ *CCL* 23.364: “quia sicut apes castitatem corporis praeferunt cibum vitae caelestis exhibent aculeum legis exercent.”

nature of human sexuality. This sermon, delivered during Lent, touches on, among other things, the rationale for the Lenten fasts Maximus enjoins on his listeners. He depicts these exercises as an imitation of Christ, who in his fasting for forty days in the wilderness fulfilled the purpose which Adam failed to fulfill in the garden:

I think that this is the reason for fasting—that since the first Adam, when he was in paradise, had forfeited the glory of immortality through his gluttonous intemperance, Christ, the second Adam, might restore the same immortality through his abstinence. ... The Savior did this so that He might purge our crimes by taking the same path on which they had been committed.⁴⁹²

Maximus goes on to associate the origins of human sexuality with this transgression, showing that in his mind there was an inseparable link between the failure of Adam and Eve to abstain from indulging the desires of the belly and their subsequent failure to restrain their sexual urges:

[Christ] repairs by abstaining what the man had perpetrated by eating, and by fasting He despises the same woman whom the man had known by eating. For Adam would not have known Eve except that he was provoked by intemperance; but as long as they abided in undefiled abstemiousness they abided in unstained virginity as well, and as long as they fasted from forbidden food they fasted also from shameful sins. For hunger is a friend of virginity and an enemy to lasciviousness, but satiety drives out chastity and feeds wantonness.⁴⁹³

The lessons for his listeners are twofold. The first is quite obvious: Those seeking to live chastely must be aware of the link between these two types of appetite, so that by controlling the one (for food), they can hope for greater success in controlling the other (for sex).

⁴⁹² Sermon 50A.2, *CCL* 23.202: “Arbitror itaque causam hanc esse ieiunii, ut quia primus Adam in paradiso constitutus per intemperantiam gulae gloriam immortalitatis amiserat, eandem immortalitatem secundus Adam Christus per abstinentiam repararet; et quia contra mandatum dei gustans de interdicta arbore peccatum mortis inciderat, nunc secundum mandatum ieiunans domini vitae iustitiam mereretur. Hoc enim agit salvator, ut isdem vestigiis quibus admissa fuerant delicta purgentur” (unless otherwise noted, all translations of Maximus are those of Boniface Ramsey in *ACW* 50).

⁴⁹³ Sermon 50A.2, *CCL* 23.202-203: “Hoc est ut quia homo manducando deliquerat corrigat abstinendo; vel quia epulando mulierem cognoverat, nunc eandem ieiunando despiciat. Adam enim Evam nonnisi intemperantia provocante cognovit. Quamdiu autem mansit in illis intemerata parcitas, mansit et inpolluta virginitas; et quamdiu ieiunaverunt ab interdictis aepulis, tamdiu et a pudendis ieiunare peccatis. Famis enim amica virginitatis est inimica lasciviae; saturitas vero castitatem prodigit nutrit inlecebram.”

The other lesson, however, is more fundamental, for these words indicate that not only did Maximus regard the virginal state as superior to the married state (a position he held in common with most Christian clerics of his day), but rather, as shown by his exegesis of the early chapters of Genesis depicting the paradisiacal state of the human race, he seems to have believed that sexual relations were a postlapsarian phenomenon, not a part of the original created order. This contention was an important part of the encratite tradition that inspired many aspects of early Christian asceticism; but it did not enjoy universal acceptance among Maximus' contemporaries, not even among those who were ascetics.⁴⁹⁴ Jerome had caused a scandal by seeming to imply in his polemic against Jovinian that marriage was inherently sinful, and thus a result of the fall.⁴⁹⁵ But Augustine, for example, in seeking to refute Manichaean ideas about the essential sinfulness of marriage and procreation, found in these same texts from early Genesis affirmation for his view that, whereas sexuality may have been corrupted by the Fall, it existed independently of the rebellion of the first humans.⁴⁹⁶ Maximus seems closer to Jerome on this point, but in fact his way of approaching this matter, as many others, has most likely been shaped largely by Ambrose.

It was in Ambrose that Maximus found the notion that Christ's fasting reversed the effect of Adam's gluttonous eating of the fruit in paradise.⁴⁹⁷ And it was in Ambrose that he found a

⁴⁹⁴ On encratism, see Brown, *The Body and Society*, 92-101.

⁴⁹⁵ See, for example, *Adversus Jovinianum* 7, PL 23.229: "Si bonum est mulierem non tangere, malum est ergo tangere: nihil enim bono contrarium est nisi malum. Si autem malum est, et ignoscitur, ideo conceditur, ne malo quid deterius fiat. Quale autem illud bonum est, quod conditione deterioris conceditur? Nunquam enim subiecisset, unusquisque uxorem suam habeat, nisi praemisisset, propter fornicationem autem. Tolle fornicationem, et non dicet, unusquisque uxorem suam habeat. Velut si quis definiat: Bonum est triticeo pane vesci, et edere purissimam similam. Tamen ne quis compulsus fame comedat stercus bubulum, concedo ei, ut vescatur et hordeo. Num idcirco frumentum non habebit puritatem suam, si fimo hordeum praeferatur?"; cf. *Ep.* 49.3.

⁴⁹⁶ See *De civitate Dei* 12.22 and 13.13, 15.

⁴⁹⁷ In *Lucam* 4.6-7, CCL 14-107-108: "In deserto esurit, ut cibus primi hominis, quem praevaricatione gustaverat, ieiunio domini solveretur. Nostro periculo Adam scientiae boni et mali famem soluit, nostro emolumento famem iste

rather jaded view of the human body, and hence of sexuality.⁴⁹⁸ Maximus' statements on these matters do not prove anything about his view of episcopal authority in general, but they do at the very least strongly suggest that he believed that whereas marriage was permissible, the superiority of virginity in principle implied that chastity in the case of a bishop meant something different from what it meant for a layman—the rejection of marriage altogether.

The second place in Maximus' writings that suggest his view of the intersection between asceticism and episcopal authority is Sermon 57, based on the story of Susanna in the Book of Daniel.⁴⁹⁹ The narrative centers around chaste Susanna, falsely accused of adultery by two corrupt elders of Israel whose advances she rejects. Angered by her refusal to let them have their way with her, the elders put Susanna on trial and she is condemned to death on the basis of their testimony. But just as she is taken off to be executed, youthful Daniel speaks up in her defense. At his urging, the body of elders allows Daniel to cross-examine the two wicked elders, and under this pressure their testimony is revealed to be fiction. Susanna is thus vindicated. In his sermon on this text, Maximus draws comparisons between Susanna and Christ, both of whom were falsely accused and were silent before their accusers.⁵⁰⁰ Moreover, he notes the differences between Pilate and Daniel, both of whom recognized the innocence of the defendant. Only

suscepit. ... Convenit recordari quemadmodum de paradiso in desertum Adam primus eiectus sit, ut advertas quemadmodum de deserto ad paradisum Adam secundus reverterit."

⁴⁹⁸ Ambrose's view had, in turn, been heavily influenced by Philo and by Neoplatonic philosophy. On this, see Moorhead, *Ambrose*, 57-59.

⁴⁹⁹ Daniel 13:1-64, part of the Greek but not the Hebrew version of the book.

⁵⁰⁰ Serm. 57.1-2, *CCL* 23.228-229: "Mirum forsitan videatur vobis, fratres, cur dominus apud praesidem Pilatum a principibus sacerdotum accusetur et taceat, nec nequitiam eorum sua responsione convincat, sum utique ingestam accusationem nonnisi refellere soleat subsequuta defensio. ... Sed quid de Christo loquar? Susanna mulier inimicos suos tacuit et vicit."

Daniel, however, had the courage to act on his knowledge.⁵⁰¹ As we would expect, Maximus also praises Susanna's chastity, which "was present at her trial, and ... defended her in the garden; in the one it did not permit her purity to be sullied, in the other her innocence to be condemned."⁵⁰² Susanna's chastity, then, seems to take on personal qualities, both refuting the lascivious elders in the garden and prevailing against the false accusers at her trial. Of course, none of this is surprising in the least. But Maximus goes on also to praise Daniel's sexual rectitude, comparing it to that of Susanna: "Purity, then, deserves well from God since it merits a virgin judge. For chastity is sure of victory when it is to be judged by virginity. No one but a pure man dared to hear the case of purity; chastity merits such a judge, in whose presence modesty is not jeopardized."⁵⁰³ The narrative itself says nothing explicit about Daniel's being a virgin; at most it is merely implied in what it says about his youth.⁵⁰⁴ But as we saw with Ambrose and Chromatius, Levites, righteous men and prophets from the Old Testament (and the New, for that matter) can easily serve as types of the ministers of the church, the virtues of the former serving as examples for the conduct of the latter. Maximus never makes this connection explicitly, but it is not hard to imagine that the virgin Daniel who exercises here "the sting of the law" is in his mind a prototype of the ideal Christian cleric. In light of his view of the origin of human sexuality, it seems probable, even if certainty eludes us.

⁵⁰¹ Serm. 57.3, *CCL* 23.230: "Daniehel ergo melius quam Pilatus; ille peccantis populi revocavit errorem, hic autem furentis synagogae sacrilegium confirmavit."

⁵⁰² Serm. 57.2, *CCL* 23.229: "Castitas enim Susannae adfuit in iudicio, quae eam defendit et in paradyso; ibi enim pudori eius consuluit hic saluti; ibi ne macularetur pudicitia, hic ne innocentia damnaretur. Castitas ergo Susannae et praesbyteros inpudicos convincit in paradiso, et in iudicio falsos accusatores obtinuit" (trans. Ramsey, slightly modified).

⁵⁰³ Serm. 57.2, *CCL* 23.229: "Multum igitur de deo pudicitia consequitur, cum iudicem virginem promeretur. Secura enim est de victoria castitas, cui est iudicatura virginitas. Pudicitiae autem causam nisi vir pudicus audire non debuit; talem enim arbitrum meretur castimonia, apud quem non periclitetur verecundia."

⁵⁰⁴ The New Revised Standard Version of v. 45 calls him "a young lad."

The last north Italian bishop to whose views on sexuality and episcopal authority we turn is Peter Chrysologus. Peter had perhaps read Maximus' pithy Sermon 89, cited in the preceding discussion, in which the bishop of Turin compares bishops to bees.⁵⁰⁵ In any case, he found it advantageous to describe the church in similar terms while preaching at the ordination of a bishop. In his sermon that day, he echoed Maximus on many points:

Let no one be surprised if the holy Church, the virgin and mother, propagates numerous offspring with heavenly fruitfulness, generates her shepherds on her own, and gives birth on her own to her rulers, since a bee, which does not know intercourse, is unacquainted with lewdness and free from immorality, provides a pattern of purity, an example of chastity, and a sign of virginity. The bee conceives solely through her mouth from the dew that comes from the heavens, gives birth through her mouth, molds chaste offspring with her mouth, forms her leaders with her mouth, and generates and produces her kings herself with her mouth. Thus the Church, like the bee, in being subject to her own progeny can manifest charity, demonstrate obedience, hand down an ordered way of life, establish a discipline for conduct, and show her affection for her glorious work.⁵⁰⁶

One important difference between the way in which Maximus and Peter make use of this literary *topos* is that whereas Maximus characterizes bees as chaste, Peter holds them to be "signs of virginity (*ad virginitatis insigne*)," underscoring the fact that virginity was for Peter a key symbol of purity and of God's power to accomplish his purposes apart from the normal patterns of nature, a power demonstrated in the way the church produced its leaders. The fact that Peter takes the image to a place to which Maximus does not take it may suggest something about

⁵⁰⁵ The idea of bees as asexual was a commonplace in ancient Latin literature. As pointed out by William B. Palardy, the translator of Peter's sermons for *FC* 109 and 110, the locus classicus for the image was Vergil's *Georgics*, 4.197-202. Other Christian contemporaries of Peter had also taken over this image. See, e. g., Ambrose, *Hexameron*, 5.21.66-72; *De virginibus*, 1.8.40-44; and Prudentius, *Cathemerinon*, 3.71-75. All cited in *FC* 110.198n.3. Cf. also Gaudentius, *Tr.* 19.35.

⁵⁰⁶ Serm. 130A.1, *CCL* 24B.801: "Nemo miretur si sancta ecclesia, si virgo materque numerosas suboles caelesti fecunditate diffundet, ipsa sibi pastores generet, pariat ipsa rectores, quando apes concubitus nescia, obscoenitatis ignara, corruptionis expers, ad formam pudicitiae, ad castitatis exemplum, ad virginitatis insigne, quae solo rore caelesti ore concipit, ore parturit, ore germina casta componit, ore sibi duces format, ore sibi reges ipsa generat et producit, ut proprio subiecta pignori caritatem doceat, oboedientiam monstret, vitae ordinem tradat, agendis rebus instituat disciplinam, gloriosi operis ostendat affectum" (trans. Palardy, *FC* 110.198).

Peter's view of the clergy. However, it should be emphasized that whereas Maximus compares bees to bishops, Peter compares them to the church: "*Nemo miretur si sancta ecclesia... quando apes...*" Thus what he says about bees is at most suggestive of his ideas about the intersection between sexual renunciation and episcopal authority. To get a more complete picture, we have to look elsewhere in his sermons.

We find one suggestive passage in Sermon 113, one of the few sermons by any of this group of bishops on a Pauline text.⁵⁰⁷ Commenting on the apostle's exhortation in Romans 6 to "walk in newness of life," Peter urges his hearers:

let [the Christian] know himself, let him have dominion over the elements, since he used to serve the elements up until this time on account of ignorance; let him give his own property away for glory, he who formerly in his foolishness used to steal the property of others; let the one who used to practice illicit acts of the flesh hold with disdain even the bodily acts that are permitted...⁵⁰⁸

The exhortation to "disdain even the bodily acts that are permitted" is at the very least an invitation to his hearers to embrace continence within marriage (the sacrifice of licit intercourse for the sake of a higher purpose); it may be a call to forego marriage altogether. The words themselves can be taken either way, and nothing in the context requires one or the other interpretation.

⁵⁰⁷ Chromatius' Sermon 12 is based on Rom. 5:7-12. Gaudentius makes many references to Paul's letters in his surviving writings, but the first fifteen Tractatus are sermons based either on Exodus or the Gospel of John; none is based on a Pauline text. Most of Ambrose's exegetical treatises—essentially edited versions of his sermons—are based on the Old Testament. As is the case with Chromatius, most of Maximus' sermons are based on one of the Gospels. But Peter's sermons 108-120 (12 in all, since Sermon 119 is spurious) are based on either Romans or I Corinthians. Assuming that the difference in the composition of the corpora of the different bishops is not attributable to pure chance, the most logical explanation for it is that Peter's episcopate came after a renaissance of Pauline studies had swept through the western church during the late fourth and early fifth centuries. This phenomenon will be discussed in chap. 7.

⁵⁰⁸ Sermon 113.6, CCL 24A.692: "intellegat se, et dominetur elementis, quia elementis hactenus per ignorantiam serviebat; largiatur sua per gloriam, qui prius turpiter furabatur aliena; et qui carnis exercebat illicita, contemnat etiam licentias corporales." (trans. Palardy, FC 110.148).

Another possible clue as to Peter's view comes from Sermon 44, in which he interprets the "counsel of the ungodly" in Psalm 1:1 as follows:

[The counsel of the ungodly] has expelled man from a regime of life to an exile on earth where he must die, and driven him from the delights of paradise to the troublesome labors of the world. It has brought woman from the glory of virginity to painful travail in the midst of groans. Therefore she has anguish before she rejoices, and pays the penalty of guilt before she exults over the birth of her child.⁵⁰⁹

In this passage, he associates Paradise (the "regime of life" enjoyed by the first humans before their "exile on earth") with virginity, and the post-fall state not only with the pain that accompanies childbearing, but apparently with childbearing *per se*.⁵¹⁰ If this interpretation is correct, it implies that Peter regarded virginity as a symbol of the original state of the human race and that, like Maximus, he seems to have believed that human sexuality was a result of the Fall. The corollary of this view in terms of clerical authority is that a virgin cleric best exemplifies the ultimate goal toward which redeemed humanity strives. Again, however, nothing in these words absolutely requires us to take them as an endorsement of the notion that those who had embraced continence before entering the clergy made the best clerics and bishops.

A statement that is perhaps more telling can be found in Sermon 92, where Peter, contrasting the old and new covenants, explains to his hearers that "The Law was the gateway of faith, the herald of grace, the forerunner of the Gospel, the tutor of religion in its infancy. To the priesthood it permitted as a concession the chastity of legal marriage, in order to announce that

⁵⁰⁹ Sermon 44.3, *CCL* 24.247-248: "Impietatis consilium perduxit ad inferna angelum de supernis, nuntium caelestis secreti in diabolum commutavit, hominem de regione vitae ad mortalis habitaculi transmisit exilium, de paradisi deliciis aerumnosos saeculi pepulit ad labores, mulierem de virginitatis gloria gementis conscios deiecit ad partus. Inde antequam det pignora, dat dolores; et solvit ante de reatu poenam, quam sobolis gaudeat de processu" (trans. George E. Ganss, *FC* 17.96).

⁵¹⁰ Cf. Sermon 148.4, *CCL* 24B.921: "Adgreditur dolis feminam, virginemque ut vetitum degustaret inducit. Inducta virgo inducit virginem mox maritum."

the glory of perpetual virtue would come in the priesthood of grace.”⁵¹¹ In this contrast between the Israelite priesthood under the old covenant and the Christian priesthood under the new, Peter comes closer than he does anywhere else to explicitly endorsing the Ambrosian notion that virgins are best suited to serve as clerics. Proponents of a married (and sexually active) clergy regularly appealed to the example of the Levites in the Old Testament to support their view that there was no conflict between marriage and service in the clergy. Siricius countered this argument by appealing to the fact that the Levites served in the Temple for a fixed time, during which they were to preserve their ritual purity by abstaining from intercourse, and after which they were free to have marital relations until their next time of service arrived. But, he contended, because the Christian priesthood had no such fixed period of service, its members needed to be pure at all times so as to be ready at any time to participate in the sacraments.⁵¹²

There is reason to believe that Peter is here articulating a position that is somewhat different from that of Siricius. For Siricius, the Old Testament practice was appropriate for its time because the continuation of the priesthood, which was the exclusive prerogative of the Levites, required procreation.⁵¹³ For Peter, however, the permissiveness of the old covenant was rather a “concession” to the weakness of human nature, which cannot easily attain to the high

⁵¹¹ Serm. 92.3, *CCL* 24A.570: “Lex fidei ianua, gratiae nuntia, evangelii praevia, paedagogus religionis infantiae. Remisit in sacerdotio legalis coniugii castitatem, ut in pontificatu gratiae venturam perpetuae virtutis gloriam nuntiaret” (trans. Palardy, *FC* 110.92).

⁵¹² Siricius, *Ep.* 1.7.8-9, *PL* 13.1138: “Plurimos enim sacerdotes Christi atque levitas, post longa consecrationis suae tempora, tam de coniugibus propriis, quam etiam de turpi coitu sobolem didicimus procreasse, et crimen suum hac praescriptione defendere quia in veteri Testamento sacerdotibus ac ministris generandi facultas legitur attributa. ... Cur etiam procul a suis domibus, anno vicis suae, in templo habitare iussi sunt sacerdotes? Hac videlicet ratione, ne vel cum uxoribus possent carnale exercere commercium, ut conscientiae integritate fulgentes, acceptabile Deo munus offerrent.”

⁵¹³ *Ep.* 1.7.9, *PL* 13.1138: “Quibus [sc. Levitis] expleto deservitionis suae tempore, uxorius usus solius successionis causa fuerat relaxatus; quia non ex alia, nisi ex tribu Levi, quisquam ad Dei ministerium fuerat praeceptus admitti.”

calling of virginity, which he believed was the optimal choice for Christians.⁵¹⁴ But what he means by “perpetual virtue (*perpetua virtus*)” is somewhat ambiguous. Clearly it means one of two things: either post-marital continence, as Siricius required of all Roman deacons and presbyters, or lifelong virginity, as Ambrose and other north Italians believed was ideal. But the broader context of this passage suggests that Peter had something like the Ambrosian ideal in mind. This sermon is on the priest Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist, and in it Peter outlines what he regards to be the stark contrast between the power of the old covenant versus that of the new to enable sinful humanity to achieve the pinnacle of virtue. In referring to the concession afforded to Zachariah to have relations with his wife (and thus beget the Baptist), Peter describes the Old Testament economy as the “*legis adolescentia*.” His entire discussion emphasizes the limited role of the Mosaic Law, which was to restrain sin, not to transform human nature: “The Law, brothers, prohibited what was illicit, it did not deny what was licit; it held within the home, it was unable to grant anything above the home; it governed nature, it did not elevate the human being above nature.”⁵¹⁵ This transformation could only take place through the grace brought by Christ, and so the “priesthood of grace,” on account of its “perpetual virtue,” would show forth the power of the redemption wrought by Christ to elevate human nature above the mere avoidance of sin and into the realm of genuine obedience.

⁵¹⁴ He expresses his opinion on the matter—one he shared with the majority of the bishops of not only his generation, but the two preceding generations—quite clearly in Sermon 143.3, *CCL* 24B.872: “Quia semper est angelis cognata virginitas. In carne praeter carnem vivere non terrena vita est, sed caelestis. Et si vultis scire, angelicam gloriam adquirere maius est quam habere. Esse angelum felicitatis est, virginem esse virtutis. Virginitas enim hoc obtinet viribus, quod habet angelus ex natura. Angelus ergo et virgo divinum est officium, non humanum.” The difficulty Peter ascribes to such an achievement must be understood in the light of his view of the pervasive corruption of human nature after the Fall and thus of the absolute necessity of divine grace in order to live a virtuous life. These issues are explored at length in chap. 7, pp. 485-495.

⁵¹⁵ Sermon 92.3, *CCL* 24A.570: “Lex, fratres, illicita prohibuit, licita non negavit; intra domum tenuit, supra domum conferre nil potuit; naturam rexit, supra naturam hominem non erexit” (trans. Palardy, *FC* 110.92).

It would thus be in keeping with Peter's emphasis on the contrast between the old and new covenants to interpret his reference to "*perpetua virtus*" in the stronger sense—that is, as implying that the grace of Christ enabled Christian priests not only to embrace continence within marriage, but to forego marriage altogether. The interpretation seems likely, especially when taken together with the other passages adduced from Peter's sermons. However, it would not do to insist on it absolutely. His words can be understood in the weaker sense, also, as referring to post-marital continence rather than virginity on the part of the clergy.

Other Ascetic Bishops in Northern Italy

The previous section presented evidence that in addition to Ambrose of Milan, Chromatius of Aquileia, Vigilius of Trent, Gaudentius of Brescia, Maximus of Turin, and Peter Chrysologus regarded virginity and the foregoing of marriage as central to the way they exercised their authority as bishops.⁵¹⁶ We saw also that in Vercelli (at least in the time of Eusebius), Milan, Aquileia, and Trent, the practice of asceticism reached farther down into the lower ranks of the clerical hierarchy. This final section will look at evidence for the presence of ascetic bishops in other, mainly smaller, north Italian sees, starting from the middle of the fourth century until the middle of the fifth. Moving back to the foundational period will highlight the fact that the broader context in which these more prominent bishops lived and worked had been populated for quite some time by a significant number of bishops who are likely to have been ascetics. We will look first at those who became (or probably became) bishops before or around the same time as Ambrose. Then we will gradually move into the main period with which our study is concerned, ending with those whose tenure occurred around the mid-fifth-century.

⁵¹⁶ Keeping in mind, of course, the caveats expressed with regard to Maximus and Peter.

We begin with **Eusebius of Vercelli**, who has already been mentioned in this chapter as the first bishop of that city, and as the first bishop in the west to organize his clergy into a community of ascetics.⁵¹⁷ He died ca. 371, and was succeeded by **Limenius**, who was also an ascetic, as Ambrose indicates in his letter to the church of Vercelli.⁵¹⁸

We have already met **Zeno of Verona** (s. ca. 362-ca. 380) in this chapter, one of the first champions of Mary's *virginitas in partu*.⁵¹⁹ We can be fairly confident that Zeno himself was an ascetic, since his innovative Mariological views were typically held in his day only by those belonging to the minority who were zealously pro-ascetic and were not upheld as the teaching of the church until the councils held at Rome and Milan in 393.⁵²⁰

Filaster of Brescia had been a presbyter of the church of Milan (perhaps serving the minority Nicene community), expelled by Ambrose's predecessor, the Homoian Auxentius.⁵²¹ He was bishop of Brescia by September 381, for he was present at the Council of Aquileia in that capacity. In a sermon delivered on the fourteenth anniversary of his death, his successor Gaudentius indicates that he embraced an ascetic mode of life.⁵²²

Exsuperantius of Tortona is probably the same person as Exuperantius, a member of the clergy of Vercelli who went into exile with Eusebius in 355.⁵²³ He had become bishop of Tortona by 381, for he was present at the Council of Aquileia in that capacity. His suffering with

⁵¹⁷ PCBE 2.692-697.

⁵¹⁸ Ep. 14.1-2 extr. coll.; PCBE 2.1306-1307.

⁵¹⁹ PCBE 2.2376-2377.

⁵²⁰ On these councils, see Duval, *L'affaire Jovinien*, 81-95.

⁵²¹ PCBE 2.817-818.

⁵²² Tr. 21.5, CSEL 68.186: "Exercens namque continentiam singularem pervigil in scripturis sanctis dei sapientiam concupivit, portionem suam Christum reputans dominum, in quo omnes thesauri sapientiae caelestis absconditi."

⁵²³ PCBE 2.729-730.

Eusebius is mentioned by Pseudo-Maximus of Turin; the fact that he was a member of the clergy of Vercelli indicates that he shared Eusebius' ascetic lifestyle.⁵²⁴

Several members of the circle of ascetics centered on the household of Chromatius of Aquileia also went on to become bishops. One of these was **Heliodorus of Altinum**, who traveled to the east with Jerome to pursue the ascetic life, but returned in order to pursue a clerical career in Italy.⁵²⁵ As the letters he and his nephew Nepotianus received from Jerome indicate, however, he did not give up his ascetic purpose when he returned.⁵²⁶ He had become bishop of Altinum by 381, as evidenced by the fact that he was present at the Council of Aquileia in that capacity.

Another of these was Chromatius' brother **Eusebius**, whose see is unknown. Rufinus, however, mentions in his *Apologia contra Hieronymum*, written in 401, that he had become a bishop.⁵²⁷ Still another was **Jovinus**, who had been archdeacon of Aquileia and became bishop of an unknown see by 381, as evidenced by the fact that he was present at the Council of Aquileia in his episcopal capacity. He is mentioned by Rufinus in the same passage from his *Apologia*.⁵²⁸ Both were still alive at the time Rufinus wrote. The fact that three members of this circle of ascetics (besides Chromatius) were advanced to the episcopal office shows that it was a veritable cradle of bishops.

⁵²⁴ Ps.-Maximus, Sermon 7.1, *CCL* 23.24: "qui fuit eius [sc., Eusebii] minister in sacerdotio comes in martyrio particeps in labore, in cuius vultibus sanctum quoque Eusebium videre nos credimus, et quasi in quodam speculo bonitatis illius imaginem contuemur."

⁵²⁵ *PCBE* 2.965-966.

⁵²⁶ *Epp.* 14, 52 (esp. §4), and 60.

⁵²⁷ 1.4; *PCBE* 2.697-698.

⁵²⁸ Sotinel, "Le recrutement des évêques," 203. *PCBE* 2.1152-1153.

It is unclear whether Bassianus of Lodi (s. 374-409) was an ascetic. According to an anonymous tenth-century *Vita*, he was the son of a city prefect of Syracuse, was converted to Christianity while a student at Rome, and as a young man fled to Ravenna, where he joined the clergy. During the 370s, the bishop of Lodi died and Bassianus was chosen to succeed him. He died around 409, after an episcopate of 35 years.⁵²⁹ That he may have been an ascetic is suggested by the fact that he was with Ambrose near the end of the latter's life, an obvious indication that the bishop of Milan considered him a close ally. The others whom Paulinus names as having been with Ambrose at this time were deacons of the church of Milan, and Honoratus, the recently elected bishop of Vercelli, all of them ascetics. Paulinus credits Bassianus with informing him that as Ambrose lay on his deathbed, the bishop saw Jesus come to him and smile at him.⁵³⁰

Sabinus of Piacenza was also a close ally of Ambrose and a convinced pro-Nicene who had delivered the synodical letter produced by a Roman church council held between 368 and 372 to bishops Athanasius of Alexandria and Basil of Caesarea.⁵³¹ A deacon of Milan before becoming bishop of Piacenza, he had attained to this office by 381, as evidenced by the fact that he was present at the Council of Aquileia in this capacity. Six letters sent to him by the bishop of Milan survive. Two of these refer to books that Ambrose sent to him asking for criticism.⁵³² Another contains a lengthy discussion of the teaching of Apollinaris of Laodicea on the

⁵²⁹ *Vita sancti Bassiani*, 2-5 (background and conversion), 7 (flight to Ravenna), 12 (election as bishop), and 23 (length of episcopate and the year of his death). *Acta Sanctorum, Ianuarii Tomus II*, 220-227.

⁵³⁰ Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, 993-994; and *PCBE* 2.269-270. For the episode related to the death of Ambrose, see Paulinus, *Vita Ambrosii*, 47, *PL* 14.46: "In eodem tamen loco sicut referente sancto Bassiano episcopo Laudensis Ecclesiae, qui ab eodem audierat, didicimus cum oraret una cum supradicto sacerdote, viderat Dominum Jesum advenisse ad se, et arridentm sibi: nec multos post dies nobis ablatum est."

⁵³¹ *PCBE* 2.1970-1973.

⁵³² *Ep.* 32 [Maur. 48] and *Ep.* 37 [Maur. 47].

Incarnation of Christ.⁵³³ Two others contain discussions of items of interest to ascetics. In one, Ambrose discusses his interpretation of the paradise of Genesis 2-3, on which he had written a book early in his episcopate.⁵³⁴ He goes on to reflect on the dangers of sensual pleasure, and closes the letter by exhorting his fellow bishop to flee from such things.⁵³⁵ In the other, Ambrose opens by passing on to Sabinus the news that the Aquitanian aristocrat Paulinus had adopted an ascetic life and was planning to establish himself in Nola.⁵³⁶ He closes the letter with another reflection on the dangers of luxury and sensual pleasure.⁵³⁷ As with Bassianus, none of these considerations affords certainty about the matter, but the discussion of such topics with a non-ascetic seems out of place. Whatever the case may be, our survey up to this point shows that many north Italian bishops whose episcopates occurred during the foundational period of our study were certainly or probably ascetics.

With **Honoratus of Vercelli**, who after an initial controversy succeeded Limenius as bishop of Vercelli, we come to those bishops who took up their office near or after the end of

⁵³³ *Ep.* 39 [Maur. 46].

⁵³⁴ The *De paradiso*, CSEL 32/1.263-336.

⁵³⁵ *Ep.* 34.11 [Maur. 45], CSEL 82/1.235: “Nunc intellego, qua causa *dominus* Iesus *insufflavit in faciem* hominis – ibi enim sensus omnis, ibi sedes adque inlecebra delectationis, in oculis auribus naribus adque in ore –: ut sensus nostros adversus delectationem fortiores faceret. Haec ergo nobis sicut serpens astutiam infudit; non enim delectatio, sed labor et diuturna meditatio cum dei gratia dat perfectam prudentiam.”

⁵³⁶ *Ep.* 27.1 [Maur. 58], CSEL 82/1.180: “Paulinum splendore generis in partibus Aquitaniae nulli secundum, venditis facultatibus tam suis quam etiam coniugalibus in hos sese induisse cultus ad fidem comperi, ut se in pauperes conferat, quae redegit in pecuniam et ipse pauper ex divite factus tamquam deoneratus gravi sarcina domui, patriae cognationi quoque valedicat, quo inpensius deo serviat, elegisse autem secretum adfirmatur Nolanæ urbis, ubi tumultum fugitans aevum exigit.”

⁵³⁷ *Ep.* 27.16 [Maur. 58], CSEL 82/1.186-187: “Figura autem illa: quia in Aegyptiis confidit, qui luxuriis deditus est, mancipatus lasciviae. Nemo autem se luxui committit, nisi qui recedit a praeceptis dei veri. Ubi autem coeperit quis luxuriari, incipit deviare a fide vera. Ita duo maxima committit crimina, obprobria carnis et mentis sacrilegia. Ergo qui non sequitur dominum deum suum, ingurgitat se luxuriae ac libidini, pestiferis corporis passionibus. Qui autem se ingurgitaverit adque immerserit volutabris, perfidiae laqueos incurrit. *Sedit enim populus manducare et bibere* et fieri sibi deos poposcit. Unde docet dominus quoniam qui duobus istis flagitiorum generibus dederit animam suam, exiit indumento non vestis laneae, sed vividae virtutis, cuius amictus non temporalis, sed aeternus est.”

Ambrose's life.⁵³⁸ As we have seen at the beginning of this chapter, Ambrose supported Honoratus precisely because he was an ascetic. As a junior member of the clergy of Vercelli, he had accompanied Eusebius into exile in 355. The precise date of his installation is unknown, but presumably it was not long after Ambrose wrote the letter ca. 396; Paulinus of Milan relates that Honoratus attended Ambrose on his deathbed in April 397, giving him the viaticum.⁵³⁹

Felix of Bologna was also with Ambrose during his last days. He was a deacon of the church of Milan who had been a protégé of Ambrose and, in light of the latter's preference for virgin clerics, was unlikely to have been married. The date of his election as bishop of Bologna is unknown, but he had taken up that office before Paulinus of Milan wrote the *Vita Ambrosii* in 412/413, at which time he was still alive.⁵⁴⁰

Simplicianus of Milan was Ambrose's immediate successor, taking up the episcopate from 397 until his death in 400 or 401.⁵⁴¹ When introducing him to the audience of his *Confessions*, Augustine writes: "*Audieram etiam, quod a iuventute sua devotissime tibi viveret; iam vero tunc senuerat et a longa aetate in tam bono studio sectandae vitae tuae multa expertus, multa edoctus mihi videbatur: et vere sic erat.*"⁵⁴² The context of this passage—his struggles to come to grips with Catholic Christianity on an intellectual level—makes it clear that Augustine's main interest here is to highlight Simplicianus' erudition and familiarity with the philosophical problems he was working through. But the phrases "*a iuventute sua devotissime tibi viveret*" and "*sectandae vitae tuae*" seem to imply that as a young man he had chosen not to get married so as

⁵³⁸ For Honoratus, see *PCBE* 2.1005-1006.

⁵³⁹ *Vita Ambrosii* 47.5.

⁵⁴⁰ *PCBE* 2.773.

⁵⁴¹ Cesare Pasini, "Simpliciano," in *DCA* 6.3454-3460; and *PCBE* 2.2075-2079.

⁵⁴² 8.1.1, *CCL* 27.113.

to dedicate himself to a life of scholarship as a member of the clergy, first at Rome and then later at Milan.

Gaudentius of Novara was the first bishop of that city, which had previously been under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Vercelli.⁵⁴³ According to his eighth-century *Vita*, he was consecrated by Simplicianus of Milan and governed the church there for twenty years, meaning that his episcopate fell somewhere between the years 397 and 421.⁵⁴⁴ Born in Ivrea, before becoming bishop he had been a catechist in Novara along with Laurentius, who was martyred during the course of this work. He accompanied bishop Eusebius of Vercelli during part of his exile. His affiliation with a church under Vercelli's authority, along with his willingness to join his bishop in the east, are perhaps indications of an ascetic commitment, though by no means do they constitute definite proof.

Venerius of Milan was Ambrose's second successor, overseeing the church of Milan from 400/401 until some point between 404 and 407.⁵⁴⁵ He had previously been a deacon of Milan, and was among those present at Ambrose's death. Because of his history in the Milanese church during the time of Ambrose, he is likely never to have been married.

Theodulus of Modena had been a *notarius* in the church of Milan during the time of Ambrose, and was one of those who had been entrusted with the task of bringing relics from Milan to Rouen ca. 395. The nature of the office of *notarius* is unclear, but the responsibilities

⁵⁴³ *PCBE* 2.891; Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, 1034-1035; and Lorenzo Dattrino, "Gaudenzio di Novara," in *DPAC* 2.1436.

⁵⁴⁴ Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, 1034, characterizes the work as "anything but contemptible."

⁵⁴⁵ *PCBE* 2.2263-2264.

he was given indicate that he occupied an important place in the church of Milan, and thus that he may never have been married.⁵⁴⁶

Marolus of Milan, who succeeded Venerius, is known to us primarily through the poem written by Ennodius of Pavia early in the sixth century praising the bishops of Milan. According to Ennodius, Marolus, originally from Upper Mesopotamia, was celebrated for his ascetic virtues.⁵⁴⁷

Petronius of Bologna stood out among the north Italian bishops of the fourth and fifth century mainly for his aristocratic birth (he was the son of a praetorian prefect), a distinction he shared only with Ambrose and Marcellus, bishop of an unknown (but likely north Italian) see.⁵⁴⁸ According to Gennadius of Marseilles, he had adopted an ascetic lifestyle from his youth.⁵⁴⁹ He is possibly the author of two surviving sermons.⁵⁵⁰ He became bishop of Bologna perhaps around 425 and died before 450, dates coinciding approximately with those of Peter Chrysologus' episcopate.

⁵⁴⁶ *PCBE* 2.2185.

⁵⁴⁷ Ennodius, *Carmen* 80, *De venerabilis Maroli successione*, *CSEL* 6.583:

Marolus, extremae potator Tigridis undae,
Qui iubar in madidis viderat hospitiiis,
Quem labor in proprio Syriae solidaverat axe,
Oditur vatem dotibus innumeris,
Pervigil intentus ieiunus providus ardens:
Quod morem tenuit sat fuit officio.
Os tenerum quotiens gustus contingit honesti,
Transit ad affectum quod fuit imperii.
Terra potens olim patribus fundata beatis
Nobilibus mundum partibus inradiat.

See also *PCBE* 2.1413-1414.

⁵⁴⁸ Sotinel, "Le recrutement des évêques," 204; cf. *PCBE* 2.1375-1376 (Marcellus 3).

⁵⁴⁹ *De viris inlustribus*, 42.

⁵⁵⁰ G. Morin, "Deux petits discours d'un évêque Petronius, du Ve siècle," *Revue bénédictine* 14 (1897): 3-8.

Conclusion

We have seen in this chapter that the teaching of Ambrose of Milan regarding both female asceticism and the sexual purity of the clergy transformed virginity from a way of life to which a high-minded Christian might aspire into a powerful symbol for the church, and that he elevated the virginity of Mary in particular—both *post partum* and *in partu*—to make it a key element in the divine plan of redemption. The practical effect of these theological positions on his thinking about the leadership of the church was that virgins became the ideal candidates for clerical office, especially for episcopal office—an innovation in the conception of the Christian ministry more radical than that formulated by the bishops of Rome who were Ambrose's contemporaries. Although he did not insist absolutely that all members of the clergy of Milan must be virgins and ascetics, we have seen that he strongly favored such individuals for high positions in the church.

But Ambrose was not the only trailblazer in northern Italy at this time. As we have seen, it was not the bishop of Milan, but Eusebius of Vercelli who was the first to impose a “monastic” routine on his clergy. Shortly after he began this experiment, we see the first signs that a similar experiment was taking place in Aquileia, albeit not led by the bishop, but by Chromatius, a presbyter who would eventually become bishop of that city. Ambrose may not have conceived of the idea of importing the model of ascetic clergy from the east, but he was the most important western spokesman in his generation for fusing asceticism and episcopal authority. His influence was such that other churches in northern Italy, in particular Aquileia, Trent, and Brescia, followed the lead of Milan in choosing for themselves ascetic bishops in the persons of Chromatius, Vigilius, and Gaudentius, respectively. It is probable that Maximus of Turin and Peter Chrysologus, the other north Italian bishops of this period whose writings have survived,

followed this pattern as well. A significant number of less well-known north Italian bishops between ca. 370 and ca. 450 also seem to have been ascetics, many of them having been chosen for this office after a time of formation in the clergy of Vercelli, Milan, or Aquileia—the major centers of clerical asceticism in northern Italy. It is thus somewhat misleading to label this feature of the life of north Italian Christianity in this period as “Ambrosian,” a term suggesting that a single individual was responsible for what was in fact a region-wide phenomenon that predated the accession of the influential bishop of Milan. But Ambrose does at the very least deserve credit for articulating in writings that were widely read both during and after his lifetime the impulses that were bubbling under the surface in these churches of the Po Valley. And for that reason, therefore, we are justified in naming this distinctive element in north Italian Christianity in the late fourth and early fifth century for this champion of the fusion of the ascetic life with the public service represented by life in the Christian clergy. It turned out that in spite of Jerome’s doubts about the feasibility of such a fusion, the ascetic bishop who was devoted to theological learning was a workable model for episcopal authority, at least in this particular context.

CHAPTER 3: THE PRIMACY OF THE LOCAL: EPISCOPAL AUTHORITY AND THE CULT OF THE SAINTS

“And in that the Lord climbed into the boat in the midst of the storm and the wind died down, and those who were in the boat came and prostrated themselves before him, it is understood to have signified that when our Lord and Savior had put the storm of persecution to flight, he would return to the disciples until his church had come, in which he established holy Peter himself as the first of the apostles, to whom he especially entrusted his sheep, saying, *Feed my sheep*.”
—Chromatius of Aquileia, *Tractatus in Mathaeum* 52.8⁵⁵¹

“Now, because the well of the holy lessons is deep ... I will entrust our common Father, Ambrose, so that following the little dew of my sermon, he will inundate your hearts with the mysteries of the divine writings. ...and, as a successor of the apostle Peter he will be the voice of all the surrounding priests.”
—Gaudentius of Brescia, *Tractatus* 16.9⁵⁵²

Determining the criteria according to which leaders and those who exercise authority are to be chosen is a task that every human institution must face. We saw in chapter 2 that the emergence of the ascetic movement and of the ascetic ideal in fourth-century Christianity gave the bishops of northern Italy new ways in which to define their authority as leaders of their communities. The attempt to fuse this ideal onto existing expectations for the behavior of the bishops represented an alternative to a vision of episcopal leadership that was becoming mainstream in the Christian west at this time. According to this model, articulated by the bishops of Rome Damasus (s. 366-384) and Siricius (s. 384-399), a man who had lived in the world, married, raised children, and engaged in public life, was as good a choice to lead the

⁵⁵¹ CCL 9A.459: “In eo autem quod per tempestatem ascendit Dominus in naviculam et ventus cessavit, vel hi qui in navicula erant venerunt et adoraverunt eum, id intellegitur significatum quia Dominus et Salvator noster fugata tempestate persecutionis rursum ad discipulos usque ad ecclesiam suam esset venturus, in qua ipsum sanctum Petrum primum apostolorum constituit, cui oves suas peculiariter commendavit dicendo: *Pasce oves meas*.”

⁵⁵² CSEL 68.139: “Nunc vero, quoniam sanctarum lectionum puteus altus est et ego hauritorium verbi non habens aquam vivam sitientibus vobis interim ministrare non possum, obsecro communem patrem Ambrosium, ut post exiguum rorem sermonis mei ipse inriget corda vestra divinarum mysteriis litterarum. Loquetur enim spiritu sancto, quo plenus est, et flumina de ventre eius fluent aquae vivae et tamquam Petri successor apostoli ipse erit os universorum circumstantium sacerdotum” (trans. Stephen L. Bohrer, “Gaudentius of Brescia: Sermons and Letters,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1965, p. 187).

church as an ascetic. But according to the model that prevailed in northern Italy, not only bishops, but even members of lower clerical orders, must pursue a lifestyle fundamentally different from that of lay Christians. And thus we saw that two different answers were formulated in response to the question, What kind of person makes for a good bishop? That given by the churches of northern Italy—an ascetic—constituted one of the distinctive features of the ecclesial culture of this region.

But there was another important question about episcopal authority at this time that likewise required a definite answer: Which bishops should exercise authority over neighboring bishops, and on what grounds? All over the empire, the church's authority structures were becoming more fixed and precisely defined, as some bishops emerged as metropolitans and patriarchs.⁵⁵³ In answer to this question, the north Italian churches again formulated a creative and pioneering response. As Alan Thacker observes, the hierarchy among bishops and their churches that developed in northern Italy at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century “was intimately bound up with the promotion of the cult of the martyrs.”⁵⁵⁴ The purpose of this chapter, then is to examine how the bishops of Milan, Aquileia, Brescia, and Turin used the cult of the martyrs to carve out a privileged place for their churches in the north Italian hierarchy.⁵⁵⁵ Our analysis will accomplish two goals. First, it will clarify the shape of the ecclesiastical hierarchy that emerged in northern Italy at this time. Second, and more important,

⁵⁵³ For a discussion of the way in which these empire-wide developments played out in northern Italy, see chap. 1 above, pp. 66-75.

⁵⁵⁴ “Popes, Patriarchs and Archbishops and the Origins of the Cult of the Martyrs in Northern Italy,” *Saints and Sanctity* 47 (2011): 51-79.

⁵⁵⁵ In addition to Rome during the episcopate of Damasus, Thacker examines the activities of Ambrose in Milan and Chromatius in Aquileia. This chapter will thus expand on his analysis mainly by bringing Gaudentius, Vigilius, and Maximus into view.

it will show how these churches' deployment of the cult of the martyrs, which Thacker has described in the case of Milan as "revolutionary," constituted yet another distinctive feature of their attitude toward episcopal authority, on top of their embrace of asceticism as a desirable quality for bishops.⁵⁵⁶

The fourth- and fifth-century trend toward a clearer definition of status distinctions among churches was nowhere more pronounced than at Rome. Beginning with Damasus, the bishops of Rome began to pursue a more proactive agenda aimed at making their church the final arbiter for the Christian world as a whole in both doctrine and discipline.⁵⁵⁷ The exercise of such authority naturally demanded the formulation of an adequate theoretical foundation, which was eventually articulated by Leo I (s. 440-461) more fully than by any of his predecessors. But around the year 400, both the clarity of Leo's theorizing and the political circumstances that made his theory compelling were a long way off. For the time being, the bishop of Rome had to be content with being nothing more than *primus inter pares*.

Several features of the governing structures of the church in the late fourth century made any attempt on the part of the bishops of Rome to aggrandize their authority difficult if not impossible. First, late antique bishops derived their power mainly from local sources. They were typically elected by the clergy and people of their city and consecrated by three

⁵⁵⁶ Thacker, "Popes, Patriarchs and Archbishops," 61.

⁵⁵⁷ Charles Pietri, *Roma Christiana. Recherches sur l'Église de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie de Miltiade à Sixte III (311-440)* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1976), 1.729-872. This was an incredibly difficult task, for as Dennis Trout points out in summarizing the results of recent research, the bishop of Rome's authority at the beginning of Damasus' episcopate did not even reach into every area of Christian life within the city itself. The households of lay aristocrats were largely beyond his reach, as was much of Christian life in Rome's suburbs. In this period, therefore, much of the bishop of Rome's ability to wield authority depended on his personality more than on the institutional levers of power he could pull. See *Damasus of Rome: The Epigraphic Poetry—Introduction, Texts, Translations, and Commentary*, ed. Dennis Trout (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 9-10.

neighboring bishops.⁵⁵⁸ The ability of Auxentius of Milan (s. 355-374) to remain secure in office until his death in spite of efforts to unseat him on the part of Hilary of Poitiers, Eusebius of Vercelli, and Damasus of Rome, and in spite of the existence of a Nicene faction within the Christian community of Milan, is a testament to the ability of bishops to hold on to their sees even in the face of highly motivated opposition.⁵⁵⁹ Second, although the emergence of some centers as metropolitan and patriarchal sees represented an increasing centralization of authority at levels above that of the city, the creation of these new governing structures was no guarantee that supreme jurisdiction would be accorded any single church. Third, as we also saw in chapter 1, the presence of the emperor in a city other than Rome tended to increase the prestige and thus the authority of the bishop of that city. To cite the most obvious example, it was Ambrose's unique personal traits combined with the status of Milan as the main residence of the western emperors during his episcopacy that thrust his city into the ecclesiastical limelight for a quarter of a century. The city's star faded only when Honorius transferred the court from there to Ravenna.⁵⁶⁰ When Valentinian III began the process of transferring the court back to Rome during the 440s, the presence of the emperor in the old capital—where he had not been on a

⁵⁵⁸ Even Ambrose, who had an uncanny knack for finding himself in cities just at the time they needed to elect a new bishop, recognized that he could not foist his favored candidate on an unwilling church. His interventions in churches such as Sirmium, Aquileia, and Vercelli (achieved by letter, see *Ep. 14 extr. coll.*) may bear the superficial appearance of being impositions, but it is more likely that his presence had the effect of consolidating a majority of local opinion behind a candidate of whom Ambrose approved and who already enjoyed considerable local support. For the normal method of electing bishops in Late Antiquity, see Roger Gryson, "Les élections épiscopales en Occident au IV siècle," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 75.2 (1980): 257-283; Pierre Maraval, *Le christianisme. De Constantin à la conquête arabe*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2005), 172-173; and Andreas Thier, *Hierarchie und Autonomie. Regelungstraditionen der Bischofsbestellung in der Geschichte des kirchlichen Wahlrechts bis 1140* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2011), 63-97. See also Harold Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 399-400.

⁵⁵⁹ On the failure of Auxentius' opponents to unseat him, in spite of numerous attempts, see Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 731-736; Neil B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 22-31; and Daniel H. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Arian-Nicene Controversy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 76-83.

⁵⁶⁰ For the circumstances surrounding this transfer, see chap. 1 above, p. 54 and n.161.

regular basis since the third century—had an effect on the church Rome analogous to that produced by the frequent presence of emperors in Milan during the fourth century, and by the arrival of Honorius in Ravenna in 402.⁵⁶¹ Valentinian issued a law in 445 that cemented the status that the church of Rome was to enjoy as the see of Peter and the home of the Christian emperor.⁵⁶²

The edict reads in part:

Therefore, since the primacy of the Apostolic See has been confirmed by the merit of Saint Peter, who is the first of the episcopal crown, by the dignity of the City of Rome and also by the authority of a sacred synod [i. e., canon 6 of Nicaea 325], no illicit presumption may strive to attempt anything contrary to the authority of that See; for the peace of the churches will finally be preserved only if the Church universal acknowledges its ruler. ... We decree that both the bishops of Gaul and those of the other provinces shall not be permitted to attempt anything contrary to the ancient custom, without the authorization of the venerable Pope of the Eternal City.⁵⁶³

Although it was aimed at clarifying the precise shape of the church's structures of authority, this piece of legislation left certain questions unanswered. For example, What was "the ancient custom" the bishops of Gaul were not permitted to violate? Were there any limits to the "authority of that See" against which the "illicit presumption" of a renegade bishop might raise itself? In short, exactly what was meant by the "primacy" that Valentinian accords the bishop of Rome in this edict? That he used such language to describe the authority rightfully exercised by

⁵⁶¹ In chap. 1 above, pp. 70-75, I argued that Ravenna's elevation to metropolitan status was the effect—albeit delayed—of the emperor's presence in the city.

⁵⁶² *NVal* 17.

⁵⁶³ "Cum igitur sedis apostolicae primatum sancti Petri meritum, qui princeps est episcopalis coronae, et Romanae dignitas civitatis, sacrae etiam synodi firmasset auctoritas, ne quid praeter auctoritatem sedis istius illicita praesumptio adtemperare nitatur (tunc enim ecclesiarum pax ubique servabitur, si rectorem suum agnoscat universitas) ... hac perenni sanctione censemus, ne quid tam episcopis Gallicanis quam aliarum provinciarum contra consuetudinem veterem liceat sine viri venerabilis papae urbis aeternae auctoritate temptare" (*Codex Theodosianus*, vol. 2, *Leges Novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes*, ed. Theodor Mommsen and Paul M. Meyer, 104-105; trans. Clyde Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions*, trans. [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952], 530-531).

the church of Rome can be understood in light of the fact that every late antique bishop believed that, in one sense or another, the bishop of the “Eternal City” should enjoy a certain primacy either over or among the other churches. But this primacy could and did mean different things to different people, especially during a period that has been called, albeit with some exaggeration, “the anarchy of the church.”⁵⁶⁴

In light of the fluid nature of the church’s governing structures in the fourth century (especially in the west), it was natural for bishops to seek to inculcate in their supporters a Christian identity rooted in local and particular loyalties as a way to bolster their own authority as well as the place of their church within the universal church. This could be done with the cult of the martyrs in at least two ways. Bishops could both elevate local martyrs to prominence and appropriate universal martyr cults in such a way as to promote the interests of their own church. The north Italian bishops of our period used both strategies. In this section, we will look at the independent reception of the cult of Peter and Paul throughout the Latin west as an exercise in understanding bishops outside of Rome could use a cult of martyrs whose relics were the heritage of the Roman church in a way that, perhaps ironically, tended to bolster the autonomy and distinctive identity of local churches. Some scholars have assumed that the fortunes of the cults of Roman saints outside of Rome are a barometer of sorts for the eagerness with which these churches identified themselves with the church of Rome and its claims to authority.⁵⁶⁵ However valid these observations may be with regard to later periods, they do not apply at this

⁵⁶⁴ A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire: A Social, Administrative, and Economic Survey* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1964), 2.888.

⁵⁶⁵ See, for example, Paul Perdrizet, *Le calendrier parisien à la fin du moyen âge d’après le Bréviaire et les livres d’heures*, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1933), 163, cited in Stephen Wilson, “Introduction,” in *Saints and their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History*, ed. *idem* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-53, at 32.

early stage. The Feast of Peter and Paul may have had “obvious universal importance,” but care must be taken not to overestimate or misinterpret this importance.⁵⁶⁶ Analysis of the evidence from northern Italy and elsewhere in the Christian west during the fifth century will show that interest in Peter and Paul was nearly universal among the western churches of the fifth century, but that interpretations of their significance varied widely.

Because we can only appreciate what the sermons of north Italian and other bishops on Roman saints have to say about the city and the church of Rome by comparing them with the way in which a strong proponent of universal Roman authority in the church uses them, we will begin by looking at a set of sermons on this theme delivered by bishop Leo. By beginning here, it will become apparent that the other sermons we will go on to examine communicate nearly as much about the topic at hand by what they do not say as by what they do. Let us first look at Leo’s vision of Roman primacy as this was articulated in his sermons on Peter and Paul, as well as in a sermon he delivered on the anniversary of his episcopal ordination in which Peter looms large. From there we will go on to consider the independent reception of their cult on the part of bishops and churches elsewhere. Finally, we will examine the importance of other martyr cults in formulating north Italian Christian identity, and the variety of ways in which the cult of relics functioned in northern Italy to articulate the structures of authority among bishops that were crystallizing in Late Antiquity.

Defining Roman Primacy in the Fifth Century: Leo on Peter and Paul

Leo was bishop of Rome for more than twenty years in the middle of the fifth century, the latest in a long succession of bishops of Rome who were seeking to transform their see from

⁵⁶⁶ Annie-Marie Palmer, *Prudentius on the Martyrs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 262.

being an informal center of unity to the undisputed head of all the churches.⁵⁶⁷ The poet Prudentius, writing in the early fifth century, had celebrated the way in which the tombs and relics of Peter and Paul (and indeed Lawrence, too, whom he dubbed heavenly Rome's "perpetual consul") marked Rome out as the capital of a Christianized empire.⁵⁶⁸ Leo's sermons on Peter and Paul echo Prudentius on many points, but his most important contribution to the ideology of the Christian empire was a new conception of Roman primacy in the church, a conception formulated on a purely juridical basis, according to which the bishop of Rome is the legal heir of St. Peter. As heir to the Prince of the Apostles, the bishop of Rome not only occupied the same office, but also possessed the same legal authority as Peter.⁵⁶⁹

Leo's two extant sermons for the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul are 82 and 83. They show that he used the occasion to press the claims of St. Peter's see to leadership over the whole church, a logical choice in light of the fact that his audience on this day would have been swelled with visitors.⁵⁷⁰ He begins Sermon 82 by attempting to place this particular feast in a different category from other feasts that celebrate events of universal significance. "The holiness of our one faith," he asserts,

⁵⁶⁷ Klaus Schatz outlines evidence dating back as early as the beginning of the second century that Rome 1) possessed a "general religious and spiritual significance," 2) was a "privileged locus of tradition," and 3) took special responsibility for the care of the entire church. See *Papal Primacy, from its Origins to the Present*, trans. John A. Otto and Linda M. Maloney (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1996), 4-17. The process whereby her bishops sought to give her a new and more carefully defined role in the church is traced in outline on pp. 28-38. For a more detailed treatment of the same theme during the same period, see Erich Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums* (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr, 1930), 1.58-102, 196-256, 296-343, 366-388, and 423-461.

⁵⁶⁸ See *Peristephanon liber*, Hymns 2 (on Lawrence) and 12 (on Peter and Paul). For this characterization of Lawrence, "quem Roma caelesti sibi/legit perennem consulem," see 2.559-560.

⁵⁶⁹ Walter Ullman, "Pope Leo I and the Theme of Papal Primacy," *Journal of Theological Studies* 11 (1960): 25-51; see also Bernard Flusin, "Les structures de l'église impériale," in *Le monde byzantin. Tome 1: L'empire romain d'orient, 330-641*, ed. Cécile Morrisson (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2004), 122-123; and Susan Wessel, *Leo the Great and the Spiritual Rebuilding of a Universal Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 285-297.

⁵⁷⁰ Paulinus of Nola, for example, refers to his presence at Rome for the Feast of Peter and Paul in the year 400. See *Ep.* 20.2

demands that, whatever is recalled to mind as done for the world's salvation, it should be celebrated everywhere with like festivity. Yet today's feast must be revered with a special celebration of its own for our city, beyond the respect it deserves from the rest of the world. Where the death of the leaders of the apostles has been covered with glory, there should be the chief place of joy on the day of their martyrdom.⁵⁷¹

Not surprisingly, this feast is for Leo not simply a universal feast, reminding all Christians of the identity they shared as members of the universal church. It is particularly important for the city of Rome for two reasons. First of all, Rome's prestige is enhanced by virtue of its being the final resting place of Peter and Paul. The second reason is related to Rome's political position in the old secular order as well as in the new spiritual order. The presence of Peter and Paul has allowed Rome to retain her honored position as ruler of the world, but now in a different manner. Even though Rome's political sway has become a thing of the past, her spiritual sway over the nations lives on. Whereas in the past, Rome's military conquests had made her the mistress of the world, now in the present day, her spiritual power, entrusted to the Roman church, can be construed as the true successor and heir of Rome's legacy of political rule. The nature of this transition from Rome as pagan mistress of an earthly empire to a Christian mistress of a spiritual empire, greater than its earthly predecessor, is the main theme of this sermon.⁵⁷² The way in

⁵⁷¹ Leo, Sermon 82.1, *CCL* 138A.508: "unius fidei pietas exigit ut quidquid pro salute universorum gestum recolitur, communibus ubique gaudiis celebretur. Verumtamen hodierna festivitas, praeter illam reverentiam quam toto terrarum orbe promeruit, speciali et propria nostrae urbis exultatione veneranda est, ut ubi praecipuorum apostolorum glorificatus est exitus, ibi in die martyrii eorum sit laetitiae principatus." Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of Leo's sermons are those of Jane Patricia Freeland and Agnes Josephine Conway, *St. Leo the Great: Sermons*, *FC* 93 (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1996).

⁵⁷² Thus Leo picks up a theme from Prudentius' *Contra orationem Symmachi*, 2.61-66, where the poet depicts Rome's conversion to Christianity as her most important achievement. There is a difference, though, for whereas Leo downplays the importance of her political and military achievements in comparison with the glory that accrues to her for accepting Christianity, what Prudentius regrets about Rome's past is not its successes, but its paganism: "vis decorare tuum, ditissima Roma, senatum?/suspende exuvias armis et sanguine captas,/congere caesorum victrix diademata regum,/frange repulsorum foeda ornamenta deorum:/tunc tibi non teris tantum victoria parta/sed super astra etiam media servabitur aede." Cf. 1.590, where he speaks of the conversion to Christianity as an extension of Rome's rule to the heavens: "iam super astra poli terrenum extendere regnum." But Leo would surely have agreed that "patriae sua gloria Christus" (Prudentius, 2.772). See also *Peristephanon*, 2.1-20, esp. 9-12, and 413-484.

which Leo describes the spiritual rule of the church is indicative of his vision for Roman primacy.

He argues that through Peter and Paul, Rome has risen to a greater height of glory than that which she enjoyed as the center of a world empire. These two shepherds, as “twin” apostles, serve as the perfect antitypes to Romulus and Remus, “of whom the one, who gave you your name, defiled you with the murder of his twin brother.”⁵⁷³ The foundation on which Romulus and Remus had founded the city was one of violence. Peter and Paul, by contrast, have re-founded the city, so that now “as ‘a holy nation, a people set apart, a priestly and royal city,’ [Rome] might be made head of the world through the sacred throne of blessed Peter.”⁵⁷⁴ This re-founding of the city cleansed it of the pollution of the blood of the murdered Remus and rendered the city “holy” and “set [it] apart,” so that Leo can now say to it that “you hold eminence more widely by your reverence for God than in earthly rule. Although grown larger by many victories ... nevertheless what the labors of war have subjected to you is less than what the peace of Christ has subdued.”⁵⁷⁵ In stark contrast to the violence of Romulus and of the period of Rome’s ascent to the status of a world empire, the rule of Christian Rome is pacific in nature. Moreover, the role that Leo envisions for the bishop of Rome makes it seem as though for him, the Popes are the replacement for the emperors—not in the sense that they exercise temporal

⁵⁷³ Sermon 82.1, *recensio* β, CCL 138A.509: “quorum qui tibi nomen dedit fraterna te caede foedavit.” Cf. Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.7, where he describes Romulus’ murder of Remus. Leo was not the only fifth-century Christian author to point out the fact that Rome’s founding was tarnished by fratricide. See also Augustine, *City of God*, 3.6 and 15.5.

⁵⁷⁴ Sermon 82.1, CCL 138A.509: “ut *gens sancta, populus electus, civitas sacerdotalis et regia*, per sacram beati Petri sedem caput totius orbis effecta.”

⁵⁷⁵ Sermon 82.1, CCL 138A.509: “latius praesideres religione divina quam dominatione terrena. Quamvis enim multis aucta victoriis ius imperii tui terra marique distenderes, minus tamen est quod tibi bellicus labor subdidit quam quod pax christiana subiecit.”

power, but in the sense that they occupy the same legislative and appellate position in the church that the emperor did in imperial politics.

Leo continues to develop this contrast between Rome's former, earthly rule and her present, spiritual rule, in the remainder of the sermon. He goes on to assert that "divine Providence prepared the Roman Empire," which was evident in the way in which Roman rule brought all the peoples of the world close together, so that "a general proclamation would quickly reach all the people whom the government of the city was protecting."⁵⁷⁶ But when the apostles were sent out into all the earth with the gospel, "blessed Peter, chief of the order of the apostles, was assigned to the citadel of the Roman Empire. The light of truth, which was revealed for the salvation of all nations, would then pour itself out more effectively from the head itself through the whole body of the world."⁵⁷⁷ Under this new arrangement, Rome is still the "*caput*" of the world. Roman leadership continues, just as under the pagan empire, but the nature of this leadership has changed. Whereas before Rome had conquered, it now gives the world the gift of truth and salvation. Rome is the source from which blessings flow, just as under the empire, but now these blessings flow "more effectively" than before from the head to the body as a whole.

Leo's Sermon 83 elaborates on the political themes so central to Sermon 82 by drawing explicitly on certain concepts of Roman law to articulate the way in which Roman primacy in the

⁵⁷⁶ Sermon 82.2, *recensio* β, CCL 138A.510-511: "Romanum regnum divina providentia praeparavit ... et cito pervios haberet populos praedicatio generalis, quos unius teneret regimen civitatis." A similar point had been made by Prudentius in *Contra orationem Symmachi*, 1.287-290: "felices, si cuncta Deo sua prospera Christo/principe disposita scissent, qui currere regna certis ducta modis Romanorumque triumphos/crescere et inpletis voluit se infundere saeculis!" Cf. 2.587-633. But such observations had become commonplace on the part of Christian writers by Leo's day, and can be traced at least as early as Origen. See *Contra Celsum*, 2.30.

⁵⁷⁷ Sermon 82.3, CCL 138A.512: "Petrus, apostolici ordinis princeps, ad arcem Romani destinatur imperii, ut lux veritatis quae in omnium gentium revelabatur salutem, efficacius se ab ipso capite per totum mundi corpus effunderet."

church ought to be understood.⁵⁷⁸ He begins this sermon by enjoining his hearers to rejoice because Christ “was pleased to choose beforehand for this city blessed Peter, the chief of the apostolic order.”⁵⁷⁹ Throughout this sermon, Leo articulates his vision for the relationship between the bishop of Rome and the other bishops by stressing Peter’s leadership among the apostles and the special connection between Peter and Christ that it indicates.⁵⁸⁰ The authority structures within the apostolic order thus naturally serve as a model for the authority structures that ought to prevail in the church in Leo’s time. In constructing this model, he refers to two specific instances in the Gospel narratives. The first is Peter’s confession of Christ as the Son of the living God at Caesarea Philippi and Christ’s subsequent entrusting to Peter of the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

When the Lord wanted to know what the disciples felt, the first in dignity among the apostles was the first to confess the Lord. When he had said, “You are Christ, Son of the living God,” Jesus replied to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon, son of John, since flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven’ ... [And] just as my father has revealed my divinity to you, so I make known to you your own prominence. “That you are Peter,” that is to say, although I am the indestructible rock, I “the cornerstone who make both things one,” I “the foundation on which no one can lay another,” you also are rock because you are made firm in my strength. What belongs properly to my own power you share with me by participation.⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁸ This theme, as has already been pointed out, is treated at length in Walter Ullman, “Leo I and the Theme of Papal Primacy.” See also Wessel, *Leo the Great and the Spiritual Rebuilding of a Universal Rome*, 285-297.

⁵⁷⁹ Serm. 83.1, CCL 138A.519: “apostolici ordinis primum huic civitati dignatus est praerogare.”

⁵⁸⁰ Wessel, *Leo the Great*, 289-90.

⁵⁸¹ Serm. 83.1, CCL 138A.519-520: “At ubi quid habeat discipulorum sensus exigitur, ille primus est in Domini confessione, qui primus est in apostolica dignitate. Qui cum dixisset: *Tu es Christus Filius Dei vivi*, respondit ei Iesus: *Beatus es, Simon Bariona, quia caro et sanguis non revelabit tibi, sed Pater meus qui est in caelis* ... sicut tibi Pater meus manifestavit divinitatem meam, ita ego notam tibi facio excellentiam tuam. *Quia tu es Petrus*, id est, cum ego sim inviolabilis *petra*, ego *lapis angularis, qui facio utraque unum*, tamen tu quoque *petra* es, quia mea virtute solidaris, ut quae mihi potestate sunt propria, sint tibi mecum participatione communia.”

Peter is the first to confess Christ's divinity, and because he has shown this *excellencia*, Christ elevates him to the chief rank and grants him to share by *participatio* the authority that properly belongs to him as the Son of God.

It is to elaborate on the nature of this special connection that Leo draws on the categories of Roman law, and in so doing makes his unique contribution to ecclesiology.⁵⁸² In his discussion of Christ's entrusting to Peter of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, in particular, he points to the concept of *privilegium*.⁵⁸³

Certainly, the right to use this power was conveyed to the other apostles as well. ... Yet not without purpose is it handed over to one, though made known to all. It is entrusted in a unique way to Peter because the figure of Peter is set before all the rulers of the Church. Therefore, *this privilege of Peter* resides wherever judgment has been passed in accordance with his fairness. There cannot be too much severity or too much lenience where nothing is bound or loosed outside of that which blessed Peter has loosed or bound.⁵⁸⁴

Leo's point in claiming that this privilege "resides wherever judgment has been passed in accordance with his fairness" and that Peter's binding and loosing is neither too strict nor too lenient seems to be that Peter's jurisdiction is superior to that of the other apostles. The power of the keys is given to them by Christ *via* Peter, and so their exercise of this power must be carried out in submission to Peter. The clear implication for the government of the universal church of this understanding of the relationship between Peter's use of the keys to bind and loose and that of his fellow apostles is that the bishop of Rome has the authority to overturn the binding and

⁵⁸² Wessel, *Leo the Great*, 290; and Ullman, "Pope Leo I and the Theme of Papal Primacy," 32-45.

⁵⁸³ For a precise definition of the concept, see the entry in Adolf Berger, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1953; 1991), 651.

⁵⁸⁴ Sermon 83.2, *CCL* 138A.520-521: "Transivit quidem etiam in alios apostolos ius istius potestatis, sed non frustra uni commendatur quod omnibus intimetur. Petro enim ideo hoc singulariter creditur, quia cunctis Ecclesiae rectoribus Petri forma proponitur. Manet ergo Petri privilegium, ubicumque ex ipsius fertur aequitate iudicium, nec nimia est vel severitas, vel remissio, ubi nihil erit ligatum, nihil solutum, nisi quod beatus Petrus aut solverit aut liga[rit]" (emphasis added). Cf. Sermon 4.3, *CCL* 138.19-20, where these same words reappear verbatim.

loosing—i. e., the juridical decisions—of all other bishops. In other words, Leo draws on the concept of *privilegium* to argue that the church of Rome possesses universal appellate authority throughout the entire church.⁵⁸⁵

Peter not only possesses the privilege of the keys to a greater degree than his fellow apostles, but he is also the source from which they draw their strength, as Christ is the source from which Peter draws his strength. In the final section of the sermon, Leo discusses the passage from Luke 22, when Christ's arrest and passion are drawing near, in which "he said [to Peter]: 'Simon, Simon. Behold, Satan has obtained his request to sift you (all) like wheat. I, however, have begged for you that your faith not fail. Once you have converted, strengthen your brethren, lest you (all) enter into temptation.'"⁵⁸⁶ This commission indicates that "the Lord took special care of Peter and prayed especially for Peter. ... In Peter, therefore, the fortitude of all is reinforced, for the aid of divine grace is ordered in such a way that the firmness given to Peter through Christ is conferred upon the apostles through Peter."⁵⁸⁷ Peter is thus the conduit through which the strength of Christ, which enables them to withstand temptation, is conveyed to the rest of the apostles. For this reason, Peter exercises not only a universal jurisdiction by virtue of the

⁵⁸⁵ It was nothing new for the bishops of Rome to lay claim to such authority, for in 340/341 a Roman council, presided over by bishop Julius, had overturned the judgment of the Council of Antioch of 338/39 against Athanasius of Alexandria. But the eastern bishops who had condemned Athanasius naturally disagreed that the bishop of Rome had jurisdiction over the case. See Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1.199-208; and Timothy D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 58-62.

⁵⁸⁶ Sermon 83.3, CCL 138A.521: "*Simon, inquit, Simon, ecce Satanas expostulavit ut vos cribraret velut triticum. Ego autem rogavi pro te ne deficiat fides tua, et tu aliquando conversus confirma fratres tuos, ne intretis in temptationem.*" Cf. Sermon 4.3, CCL 138.20, where Leo says the same, with the wording of the Gospel text being only slightly different.

⁵⁸⁷ Sermon 83.3, CCL 138A.521: "*et tamen specialis a Domino Petri cura suscipitur, et pro fide Petri proprie supplicatur...* In Petro ergo omnium fortitudo munitur, et divinae gratiae ita ordinatur auxilium, ut firmitas quae per Christum Petro tribuitur, per Petrum apostolis conferatur." Cf. Sermon 4.3, CCL 138.20, where the same words appear verbatim.

fact that the keys were entrusted specifically to him, but also a universal care by virtue of the fact that it is through him that Christ strengthens all the apostles.

Leo's use of Roman legal concepts to explain the position of the see of Rome within the universal church is also evident in Sermon 3, one of several in his collection that he delivered on the anniversary of his own episcopal ordination. On account of the close association between the apostle Peter and the bishop of Rome, it was natural on this occasion for Leo to reflect on the relationship between the office of the *princeps apostolorum* and the one that he himself occupied. And so, one of the themes of this sermon is Leo's own weakness and unworthiness to occupy his lofty position. Yet he urges his audience: "Regard him [sc., Peter] as present in the lowliness of my person. Honor him." From there, he continues to elaborate on the meaning of the paradoxical connection between the apostle and his successor: "In him continues to reside the responsibility for all shepherds, along with the protection of those sheep entrusted to them. His dignity does not fade even in an unworthy heir."⁵⁸⁸ He goes on to express his desire that his "brothers and fellow bishops" would do well to "redirect the reverence of this service, at which they have seen fit to be present, to the one whom they know to be not only the ruler of this see but the primate of all bishops."⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁸ Sermon 3.4, *CCL* 138.13: "ut in persona humilitatis meae ille intellegatur, ille honoretur, in quo et omnium pastorum sollicitudo cum commendatarum sibi ovium custodia perseverat, et cuius dignitas etiam in indigno herede non deficit."

⁵⁸⁹ Sermon 3.4, *CCL* 138.13-14: "Unde venerabilium quoque fratrum et consacerdotum meorum desiderata mihi et honoranda praesentia hinc sacratior est atque devotior, si pietatem huius officii quo adesse dignati sunt, ei principaliter deferunt quem non solum huius sedis praesulem sed et omnium episcoporum noverunt esse primum." Freeland and Conway translate "consacerdotes" as "fellow priests," but since it would seem unnecessary to lecture the Roman clergy as to the prerogatives of the bishop of Rome with regard to other bishops, it made more sense to me to interpret him as addressing other bishops. Indeed, Paulinus of Nola mentions in his *Ep.* 20.2 that Anastasius had invited him to Rome for the anniversary of his ordination in the year 400, a special honor that was normally given only to bishops.

In these sermons, therefore, Leo has defined the nature of Peter's relationship to the other apostles much more precisely than in any of the other sermons we will consider below. This relationship is significant to Leo because he takes it as a universally valid model for the relationship between Peter's successor and the successors of the other apostles—that is, between the bishop of Rome and all other bishops. Leo's main contribution to the theory of Roman primacy is the basis he articulates for asserting that the model of Peter and the other apostles was appropriate not only for the first generation of the church, but also for all time. The concept of *privilegium* was an important component of his justification of Petrine primacy, but the ground for the universal validity of this model was, again, Leo's idea that the bishop of Rome was Peter's heir.⁵⁹⁰ The significance of this logic for the theory of Roman primacy lies in the fact that in Roman law “legally, there is no difference between the heir and the deceased: the latter is literally continued in the former.”⁵⁹¹ As such, the heir inherits all the powers and privileges of the deceased. Therefore, just as Peter was a universal judge with a responsibility for the care of the universal church, so is his successor, the bishop of Rome. And so, “the papal *principatus* could well be construed as identical with the Petrine *principatus*.”⁵⁹² Like many of his Roman forebears, Leo was an empire-builder.

Dressing Rome's Saints in Provincial Garb: The Independent Reception of the Cult of

Peter and Paul in the Latin West

Early in the fifth century, no bishop of Rome had yet managed to articulate the nature of Roman primacy in the church with the precision and verve displayed by Leo in the sermons that

⁵⁹⁰ Articulated especially, as we have seen, in Sermon 3.

⁵⁹¹ Ullman, “Pope Leo I and the Theme of Papal Primacy,” 34.

⁵⁹² Ullman, “Pope Leo I and the Theme of Papal Primacy,” 40.

have just been discussed. In any case, whatever Leo's predecessors might think their proper role in the universal church might be, they could not exercise their authority outside of the Suburbicarian diocese (made up of central and southern Italy) without the cooperation of the other churches.⁵⁹³ One question, therefore, that has interested students of the church's history during this period is the extent to which churches outside of Rome and its traditional area of jurisdiction accepted the growing Roman claims to primacy.⁵⁹⁴ The churches of northern Italy, located as near to Rome as other churches over which she exercised metropolitan jurisdiction, but not themselves under this jurisdiction during the late fourth century, present a paradigm case. Much attention has been paid in particular to the way in which the strong leadership Ambrose exercised over the Milanese church enhanced the prestige of that see, even to the point that it rivaled that of Rome.⁵⁹⁵ Ambrose's achievement in elevating the status of Milan, as well as his relationships with other north Italian bishops, naturally raises the question of the way in which churches like Brescia, Aquileia, and Turin envisioned their relationship with Rome.

⁵⁹³ For Rome's traditional authority over the *suburbicaria loca*, see Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1.887; and Flusin, "Les structures de l'église impériale," 124-125.

⁵⁹⁴ For the resistance of (some of) the bishops of Gaul to Roman attempts to intervene in local ecclesiastical affairs, see Ralph W. Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), *passim*.

⁵⁹⁵ Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1.782-785, 2.887-88, and 897-909; Neil B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 278-281. Ambrose's reputation became so great that, as Schatz notes, for a time appeals were often made both to Rome as well as Milan. See *Papal Primacy*, 32-33. One noteworthy case where an appeal was made to both Damasus and Ambrose was that concerning Priscillian. In his history of the papacy, Caspar even devotes a chapter to Ambrose, a tribute to the way in which he dominated the church politics of his age. See *Geschichte des Papsttums*, 1.257-295. The Council of Turin, probably held in 398, also represented a high-water mark of Milanese influence. See Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 11-18, and "The Council of Turin (398/399) and the Reorganization of Gaul ca. 395/406," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 6.2 (2013): 264-307, esp. 292-295. The fact that Ambrose possessed a robust sense of independence from Rome's authority did not, however, entail a complete rejection of Roman leadership. Indeed, collaboration between Ambrose and his counterparts in Rome, as well as Ambrose's pursuit of an agenda that was in many ways congenial to Rome, both indicates an acknowledgement of Roman leadership of the churches of Italy, and shows that the strong leadership of a bishop outside of Rome did not necessarily threaten Rome's preeminence. In the same passage cited above, McLynn notes Ambrose's role as "a point of contact between St. Peter's city and its northern satellites" and his "usefulness to Rome."

Unfortunately, little evidence exists that would enable us to answer the question directly.⁵⁹⁶

However, a number of sermons produced by these bishops at the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century demonstrate that the reception of the cult of Sts. Peter and Paul in these communities was independent from that of Rome.

Careful examination of the sermons delivered on the Feast of Peter and Paul by Gaudentius and Maximus, as well as by Augustine of Hippo and by one of the Eusebius Gallicanus preachers—near contemporaries from other parts of the Latin west—shows that these saints could take on an identity marked by local, provincial flavor just as easily as they could don the toga and go down to the Forum. In this way, preachers could mobilize their memory to serve a variety of agendas, most of which had nothing to do with the city of Rome or its church. Rather, this feast came to be used as an occasion for addressing issues of local concern or for teaching the audience a type of theology that was characteristic either of the preacher or of the local context in question. Only rarely did these preachers use the opportunity to build up the reputation of the Roman church.⁵⁹⁷ In fact, there is some evidence that this occasion could even

⁵⁹⁶ The best type of evidence for answering questions about the relative authority of different churches is letters. But with the obvious exception of Ambrose, very few have survived from the north Italian churches of Late Antiquity. The significance of this lacuna in our evidence can be gauged by considering how much historians depend on Leo's letters to reconstruct his vision of papal primacy. See, for example, Ullman, "Pope Leo I and the Theme of Papal Primacy," *passim*.

⁵⁹⁷ A parallel to this concern for local affairs (in this case political rather than religious affairs) was found among the fifth-century aristocracy of Gaul. Happy though they were to take advantage of whatever the imperial authorities could offer them, in their writings they nonetheless continually invoked imperial neglect of Gallic interests. These manifestations of a common resentment indicate (positively) a shared sense of identity among these aristocrats that also (negatively) set them apart from aristocrats in other parts of the empire. At the same time, Gallic aristocrats became increasingly isolated from Italy, as indicated by the paucity of evidence for Gauls studying in Rome, visiting Rome for reasons other than official business, or even maintaining social ties with Italian aristocrats through the exchange of letters. See Ralph W. Mathisen, *Roman Aristocrats in Barbarian Gaul: Strategies for Survival in an Age of Transition* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 18-26. The point I wish to make here is that just as a common concern for local affairs bound the aristocrats of fifth-century Gaul together, so also is there evidence that a concern for matters that were of particular concern at the local level bound together the "clerical aristocracies" of the northern Italy, North Africa, and Gaul. The concern for missionary expansion found in the sermons of Gaudentius and Maximus fits well with other evidence for the growth of the north Italian church in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. In particular, Claire Sotinel has pointed out that the normal prohibition on clergy transferring from one see to another was set aside in a number of cases in Italy during this period so as to strengthen a newer church by

be exploited to articulate an alternative to the increasingly lofty claims the bishops of Rome were making at the very same time.

The joint veneration of Peter and Paul likely dates from the middle of the third century, during the persecution in which Bishop Sixtus I and the deacon Lawrence lost their lives.⁵⁹⁸ The cult of the two apostles, therefore, was well established in Rome by the late fourth century. A long tradition of Latin exegesis stretching back to the late second century stressed the significance of Peter's confession of Christ at Caesarea Philippi and Christ's entrusting to Peter of the keys of the kingdom of heaven.⁵⁹⁹ What is more, Roman leadership of and care for her sister churches in one form or another can be traced back at least as far.⁶⁰⁰ At the same time, however, it is important not to read too much into the presence of this cult in such diverse places as Rome, northern Italy, Africa, and Gaul. "Romanization" took more than one form in the fourth-century church, and although the adoption of the cults of Peter and Paul might conceivably indicate a posture of submission to a particular view of Roman primacy, it might

giving it an especially well qualified bishop. See "Le recrutement des évêques en Italie aux IV^e et V^e siècles: essai d'enquête prosopographique," in *Vescovi e pastori in epoca teodosiana: In occasione del XVI centenario della consacrazione episcopale di S. Agostino, 396-1996* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1997), 193-204, at 201-202.

⁵⁹⁸ This is the theory of Charles Pietri, who rejects the argument of Duchesne and others for a translation of Peter and Paul's relics in 258, but nonetheless suggests that the persecution under the emperor Valerian (r. 253-260) had a decisive impact on the emergence of the cult. See *Roma Christiana*, 1.368-380.

⁵⁹⁹ Among the issues for which this episode was considered significant were the power of bishops, exemplified by Peter, to absolve sins and the revelatory power of Peter, the first to confess faith in Christ's divinity. See Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 272-277, where he relates these issues, respectively, to late second-century debates over the appropriate level of severity in the church's penitential practices, and to fourth-century debates over the teaching of Arius. In addition, he shows how both eastern and western exegetes of the third and fourth centuries elevated Peter to a special dignity. He goes on (277-282) to discuss the iconographic evidence from the third and fourth centuries for a special appreciation of the figure of Peter. Other key texts are Luke 22, where Jesus assures Peter that he has prayed for him, that his faith may not fail, and instructs him to strengthen his brothers after having been restored; and John 21, where Jesus reinstates Peter after his denial and instructs him to feed his sheep.

⁶⁰⁰ See p. 190n.567.

also indicate nothing more than a desire to borrow a feature of Roman Christianity, such as an idea about the relationship of *Romanitas* and *Christianitas*.

The use of the Latin language in the liturgy of the church of Milan is a case in point. Under the guidance of Ambrose, this church embraced all the more firmly a Roman cultural identity by completing the process whereby Latin became the exclusive liturgical language.⁶⁰¹ However, at the same time that Ambrose and his church were defining themselves as Christian Romans and Roman Christians, the independent streak he displayed during his tenure indicates also that this “Romanization” of the Milanese church had much more to do with a desire to identify that church with a particular language and culture than it had to do with indicating a desire to fall in line behind the leadership of the church of Rome.⁶⁰² It likewise reflected the way in which Romanization could arise from local circumstances, as the reforms initiated by Ambrose likely represented a defiant response to the threat of barbarian invasion and domination.⁶⁰³ In a similar way, the fact that a given church celebrated the feast day of Roman

⁶⁰¹ The notion of what constitutes a Roman identity in the late fourth century is obviously complex and debatable. Here, I simply mean a combination of some or all of the following traits: A preference for the use of the Latin language in daily life; loyalty to the Roman Empire and the Roman emperors; interest in the canon of Latin literature or ascription of high status to those who knew it; (by the late fourth century) adherence to Nicene Christianity; embracing the behaviors and outlook of one of the Roman social classes; engagement in economic activity necessary for the maintenance of a Roman way of life, such as agriculture in a rural setting, artisanal labor or commerce in an urban setting, navigating the Mediterranean, etc. For the liturgical developments mentioned here, see Maura K. Lafferty, “Translating Faith from Greek to Latin: *Romanitas* and *Christianitas* in Late Fourth-Century Rome and Milan,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 11.1 (2003): 21-62. She argues that during the tenure of Damasus, the church of Rome adopted Latin as its liturgical language so as to identify the church more closely with traditional Roman culture and thus hasten the conversion of the senatorial aristocracy to Christianity. In Milan, on the other hand, Ambrose’s adoption of a Latin liturgy was motivated by a desire to consolidate the church’s sense of identity as a Roman institution as over against the barbarians.

⁶⁰² According to Pietri, the restoration of Nicene control over episcopal sees in northern Italy did not, paradoxically, buttress the position of the bishop of Rome in this region, since at the very same time Ambrose emerged as an energetic proponent of the Nicene “reconquest” whose efforts secured the adhesion of Liguria and the entire Po Valley to the Nicene cause. Pietri therefore calls this section of his massive study “La montée de l’autorité milanaise.” See *Roma Christiana*, 1.748-754.

⁶⁰³ Ambrose’s concern over the presence of Goths among the troops stationed in Milan during the 386 basilica controversy will be discussed briefly in chap. 5 below, pp. 339-343.

saints did not necessarily imply that it accepted any particular model of Roman primacy.⁶⁰⁴ Let us take a look at the sermons, beginning with northern Italy and moving from there to North Africa and Gaul.

Northern Italy

We possess sermons given by two north Italian bishops on the Feast of Peter and Paul: Gaudentius of Brescia and Maximus of Turin. Gaudentius' *Tractatus* 20 emphasizes mainly the universal appeal of the cult of Sts. Peter and Paul, and does so in two ways. The first is his assertion that "all the churches" are celebrating the anniversary of their martyrdom on this day.⁶⁰⁵ The second is his description of the universal mission accorded to these two apostles: "they cast the nets of saving doctrine throughout the entire sea of this age."⁶⁰⁶ This emphasis could be taken as an attempt to bolster the prestige of Rome or to encourage the hearers to look to Rome as a source of authority, but it seems more likely that Gaudentius is claiming Peter and Paul for the universal church rather than simply for Rome. Rome itself is only mentioned once in this sermon, and only as the place where Peter and Paul died.⁶⁰⁷ His main concern is to emphasize the universal relevance of these two saints, to insist on their unity, and to enjoin his

⁶⁰⁴ Ambrose's lack of deference to Roman authority is perhaps illustrated supremely by the fact that the Council of Aquileia (381), at which he was the prime mover, "ended up presenting itself as the spokesman of Italy and even of the west. The autonomy and the freedom of initiative that these bishops assumed imply a somewhat restrictive conception of primacy." See Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1.753. Ambrose's hesitation to identify Rome as the "*sedes apostolica*," preferring the older term "*sedes Petri*," likewise bears witness to the limitations of the willingness of the Milanese church during his episcopate to accept Roman primacy on Roman terms. See Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 2.1506. By the same token, the high regard in which Ambrose was held by his fellow bishops in northern Italy and the leadership they expected of him made it possible for him to act in much the same way as a metropolitan bishop, even though he did not formally possess such a title. See McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 276-90.

⁶⁰⁵ *Tr.* 20.4, *CSEL* 68.181-182: "quorum passionis natalem hodie per universum mundum omnes ecclesiae debito honore concelebrant."

⁶⁰⁶ *Tr.* 20.8, *CSEL* 68.182: "Etenim per totum mare saeculi huius salutaris doctrinae retia tetenderunt."

⁶⁰⁷ *Tr.* 20.4, *CSEL* 68.182: "In hoc enim die apud urbem Romam ambos pro Christi nomine Neronis crudelitas interfecit, domini iustitia coronavit."

hearers to imitate their lives and seek their patronage.⁶⁰⁸ Peter and Paul are ecumenical saints, connecting the Christians of Brescia with their coreligionists everywhere in a universal faith.

Maximus delivered at least three sermons on the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul that are extant, Sermons 1, 2, and 9.⁶⁰⁹ In them he focuses on two major themes: the conversion of the Roman Empire, so that pagan Rome has been replaced with Christian Rome (Sermon 1), and Peter and Paul as missionaries, sent out to evangelize the entire world (Sermons 2 and 9).

At the beginning of Sermon 1, Maximus depicts the two apostles as partners, each of whom (not just Peter) possesses a key: “the one [sc. Paul] of knowledge, and the other [sc. Peter] of power.”⁶¹⁰ He continues by describing their death together in the imperial capital, “so that Rome would lack neither.”⁶¹¹ Their connection with Rome is thus significant to him, and he goes on to flesh out this significance: “But where did they suffer martyrdom? In the city of Rome, which holds the leadership and the chief place among the nations, so that where the head of superstition had been, there the head of holiness might rest, and where the princes of the peoples used to live, there the princes of the churches might remain.”⁶¹²

The language Maximus uses here to describe what Rome was before welcoming Peter and Paul, and what it now is after receiving them, is part of the *Roma christiana* motif that

⁶⁰⁸ For saints as patrons of their devotees, see Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 54-68.

⁶⁰⁹ On Maximus’ sermons on Peter and Paul, see Rita Lizzi, *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche nella città tardoantica* (Como: Edizioni New Press, 1989), 185-187.

⁶¹⁰ Sermon 1.1, *CCL* 23.2: “Ambo igitur claves a domino perceperunt, scientiae iste ille potentiae; divitias immortalitatis ille dispensat, scientiae thesauros iste largitur.” Unless otherwise specified, the English translations of are those from *The Sermons of Maximus of Turin*, trans. and ed. Boniface Ramsey, *ACW* 50 (New York: Newman Press, 1989).

⁶¹¹ Sermon 1.2, *CCL* 23.2: “ne alteri Roma deesset.”

⁶¹² Sermon 1.2, *CCL* 23.3: “At in quo tandem loco martyrium pertulerunt? In urbe Romana, quae principatum et caput obtinet nationum, scilicet ut ubi caput superstitionis erat, illic caput quiesceret sanctitatis; et ubi gentilium principes habitabant, illic ecclesiarum principes morarentur.”

characterizes much late antique Christian writing about Rome, including Leo's Sermon 82, and so it is worth looking at it a bit more closely. He notes pagan Rome's political role by characterizing it as "*principatus et caput nationum*." The word *principatus* is significant in this connection. Its semantic range includes senses such as "first place" and "leadership," but also "supremacy," "dominion," and "sovereignty."⁶¹³ The *nationes* are the various peoples who made up the Roman Empire.⁶¹⁴ Farther down, Rome is said to be the place "*ubi gentilium principes habitabant*," which is clearly a reference to Rome's role as the imperial residence in former ages, especially before the emperors were Christians.⁶¹⁵ Maximus then refers to Rome's religious role by characterizing it as "*caput superstitionis*." Not only was pagan Rome the mistress of the world in a political sense, but she was also the source—or at least the chief center—of religious error.

But now that Peter and Paul have become associated with the city of Rome, her role in the world takes on a new face, and she adopts a new identity. In terms of religion, Rome is now the "*caput sanctitatis*." False worship has given way to the truth of Christianity, and now the city is characterized by its holiness rather than by its error. On the political level, Rome is now the place where "*ecclesiarum principes morarentur*." But precisely who are the *ecclesiarum principes* for Maximus? There are, of course, two possibilities. Either they are the bishops of Rome, or they are Peter and Paul. But because this is a sermon about Rome's *saints*, drawing a parallel between the old emperors of Rome and the bishops of Rome would seem out of place. It is more likely, then, that Maximus regards Peter and Paul as the Christian replacement for the old

⁶¹³ Charlton T. Lewis, *A Latin Dictionary for Schools* (New York, Cincinnati, and Chicago: American Book Company, 1916), 809. See also *TLL* 10.2.1300-1305.

⁶¹⁴ On "natio," see *TLL* 9.1.132-38, esp. 135-137.

⁶¹⁵ "Gens" often carries the connotation of "pagan." See *TLL* 6.2.1866-1872, esp. 1869-1872.

Roman emperors. The rule that these secular and pagan figures used to possess has now given way to the rule of these two apostles as Rome's heavenly patrons. But that is as far as it goes for Maximus, for whereas he had characterized pagan Rome's political role as *principatus*, this word does not find a parallel in the second half of this statement, where Maximus speaks of Christian Rome. Of course, it would be an argument from silence to say that Maximus is intentionally attributing to Rome a less dominant role in the order of the Christian church than the one she enjoyed in the political order of the earthly empire. But on the other hand, given the fact that Maximus depicts both pagan and Christian Rome as *caput* (first of *superstitio* and then of *sanctitas*) and as the abode of *principes* (first of pagan and earthly ones and then of Christian and heavenly ones), his failure to apply to Christian Rome the pregnant term *principatus*, with its connotation of legal and administrative supremacy, may well be deliberate.

The positive significance that Maximus attaches to Peter and Paul's connection with Rome can be seen in what he says immediately after these comments. He goes on to proclaim: "As the Lord illumined the region of the east with His own suffering, so He deigned to illumine the region of the west—lest it be inferior—by the blood of the apostles who were acting in His place."⁶¹⁶ Maximus' concern lest the west should appear inferior to the east is a reference to the tradition that the west, as the region of the setting sun, was associated with evil.⁶¹⁷ But his words here illustrate that in his mind, the fact that Peter and Paul came to Rome, and remain there, means that these saints are not the sole possession of the city of Rome, but of the west as a whole.⁶¹⁸ In light of the aggressive claims that Leo would make for Rome a generation later, the

⁶¹⁶ Serm. 1.2, *CCL* 23.3: "cum dominus orientis regionem propria inlustraverit passione, occidentis plagam, ne quid minus esset, vice sui apostolorum sanguine inluminare dignatus est."

⁶¹⁷ Boniface Ramsey, *ACW* 50.270n.6.

⁶¹⁸ On the significance of this passage, see also Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1557-1558. In his brief discussion of the significance of Rome as the place of Peter and Paul's martyrdom, Pietri reads Maximus' sermon in the light of the

language that Maximus uses to describe the status of Rome seems to be careful and circumscribed. He does not go so far as to call the city of Rome itself the “*caput sanctitatis*,” but only the place where the “*caput sanctitatis*” has come to be.⁶¹⁹ What makes Rome holy for Maximus is, again, the presence of Peter and Paul.⁶²⁰ Leo, on the other hand, conceives of the city of Rome itself as “*caput*,” and claims that she has become so precisely “through the sacred throne of blessed Peter,” with the result that her spiritual rule is more widely diffused now than her earthly rule was before.⁶²¹

Gaudentius’ *Tractatus* 20 and Maximus’ Sermon 1 thus present Peter and Paul as symbols of the ideology of Christian imperial Rome. This ideology is linked to the city of Rome insofar as Rome was the ancient capital and the symbol of Rome’s cultural and political dominance over the *oikoumene*. But Gaudentius’ and Maximus’ use of it has very little, if anything, to do with the church of Rome, its bishop, or its proper place in the church’s authority structures.⁶²² The theme of Maximus’ Sermons 2 and 9, by contrast, is not political, but related to the church’s task of bringing the peoples of the world into its fold. In Sermon 2, he makes a

Rome-Babylon analogy drawn by the Apocalypse of John. But Maximus nowhere refers to this biblical typology in this sermon, a fact that serves to weaken Pietri’s assumption that Maximus is interested in Rome as anything other than a symbol for a more general reality. After highlighting Rome’s role as the *caput superstitionis* that has become the *caput sanctitatis*, Maximus’ emphasis quickly shifts to the east-west antithesis (see n. 563, above), with Rome serving as the archetypal city of the west (which other city could, after all?) and the apostles serving as a God-sent example for the faithful: “et licet illius [sc., Domini] passio nobis sufficiat ad salutem, tamen etiam horum martyrium nobis contulit exemplum” (CCL 23.3).

⁶¹⁹ Serm. 1.2, CCL 23.3: “ut ubi caput superstitionis erat, illic caput quiesceret sanctitatis”

⁶²⁰ Walter Ullman points out that “the presence of Peter in Rome and his martyrdom there has played its not insignificant role in maintaining the papal claim to primacy. But what needs emphasizing is that all this says as yet nothing about the precise link between Peter’s powers and the pope’s powers or about the nature of this link. See “Leo I and the Theme of Papal Primacy,” 26.

⁶²¹ See n.574 above.

⁶²² As we have seen, this is in contrast to Leo’s conception of Christian Rome, in which the role of the city and its bishop was central.

reference to “see[ing] the throngs of the nations hasten to the Christian faith.”⁶²³ The theme is the same in Sermon 9, where Maximus cites Psalm 18 (19)—“Their sound has gone out through the whole earth, and their words to the ends of the world”—and applies it to the universal fame enjoyed by the apostles, in particular the unique gifts with which they blessed the church.⁶²⁴ Three times in this sermon Maximus indicates that the people who benefit from the care God exercises for the church through Peter and Paul are the *populi*.⁶²⁵ In their lives as well as in their deaths, Peter and Paul not only exemplify God’s care for the universal church, but the missionary zeal that Maximus desired to inculcate in his listeners.

Maximus and Gaudentius were not the only churchmen in the late fourth and early fifth century whose sermons on the Feast of Peter and Paul are extant. The sermons of two other preachers from two churches outside of Italy have also survived: the Eusebius Gallicanus collection (fifth century) contains one sermon delivered on this feast day, and we have no less than eight sermons by Augustine of Hippo (s. 395-430) that were delivered on the Feast of Peter and Paul. Let us then look first at Augustine’s sermons and then at the one from the Gallic collection.

North Africa

Augustine’s sermons on Sts. Peter and Paul are numbered 295-299C, a numbering which reflects the fact that some of them have been rediscovered and edited only recently, and were

⁶²³ Sermon 2.3, *CCL* 23.7: “Cum enim videmus gentilium turbas ad fidem christianitatis adcurrere, simul cum apostolis gratulamur.”

⁶²⁴ Sermon 9.1, *CCL* 23.31: “In omnem terram mirabilium Petri virtus exit, et in fines orbis terrae epistularum Pauli verba penetravit.”

⁶²⁵ In Sermon 9.1, *CCL* 23.32: “Bonum vas, de cuius plenitudine substantia vitae *populis* semper erogatur et plenum est! ... Petra ad firmitatem ne labantur sustentat *populos*, vas ad custodiam ne temptentur operit christianos.” In Sermon 9:2, *CCL* 23.33: “Quae epistolae tamquam ubera ecclesiarum *populos* enutriunt ad salutem.”

thus unknown to the medieval and early modern scholars who assigned the standard numbers to his sermons.⁶²⁶ The issues that come to the fore in them are among the issues he addresses in some of his major works—the controversies over the Donatists and over the teachings of Pelagius, on the one hand, and the matter of the survival of the Roman Empire in *tempora christiana* on the other. These questions were especially urgent in Augustine’s immediate context at the time when these sermons were given, and so they illustrate the willingness of preachers in Late Antiquity to use the feast day of these Roman saints to deal with local issues that demanded their attention. In these sermons, Peter and Paul are portrayed as examples of faithful Christians willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to bear witness to their faith.⁶²⁷ They are held up as divinely chosen instruments for spreading the teachings of Christ throughout the world.⁶²⁸ Peter emerges in Augustine’s sermons as the one who, although he is weak and rash when he relies on himself, is nonetheless made strong and bold when he relies on Christ, and is empowered to feed Christ’s sheep and to lay down his life for them.⁶²⁹ He is lauded as a true

⁶²⁶ Sermm. 295-299 are found in *PL* 38.1348-1376. Sermm. 299A is found in St. Augustin, *Vingt-six sermons au peuple d’Afrique*, ed. François Dolbeau, Collection des études augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 147 (Paris: Institut des Études Augustiniennes, 1996). Sermm. 299B and 299C are found in *Miscellanea Agostiniana*, vol. 1: *Sancti Augustini Sermones post Maurinos Reperti*, ed. G. Morin (Roma: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1930), 516-527. All of these sermons have been recently translated for *The Works of St. Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century* (New York: New City Press, 1991-2012). These sermons are found in vol. 3.8.

⁶²⁷ Sermm. 295.7, *PL* 38.1352: “Ecce ostendit illi Dominus quae illum oporteret pati pro nomine ejus. Post exercuit illum in labore. Ipse in vinculis, ipse in plagis, ipse in carceribus, ipse in naufragiis. Ipse illi procuravit passionem: ipse perduxit ad istum diem.” Sermm. 299.8, *PL* 38.1373: “Ideo magni martyres, quia quod valde durum est, pro regno coelorum fortiter susceperunt, et cogitantes promissa tolerarunt molestias. Videte Dominum dicentem, *Majorem hac charitatem nemo habet, ut animam suam ponet quis pro amicis suis.*”

⁶²⁸ In many of Augustine’s sermons on Peter and Paul, he adduces Ps. 18 (19):5: “In omnem terra exivit sonus eorum, et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum”—and takes it as a prophecy referring to the ministry of these two apostles. See Sermm. 295.1, 298.1, 299.1, and 299C.2. Augustine was not the only preacher in the west in the late fourth and early fifth century to take this verse in this way. Both Maximus of Turin (Sermm. 9.1) as well as the author of Eusebius Gallicanus Sermm. 33.2 apply it to Peter and Paul’s evangelistic mission.

⁶²⁹ Sermm. 296.2, *PL* 38.1353: “Talis ergo Petrus, amans Dominum, et volens mori pro domino, secutus est; et inventum est quomodo praedixerat medicus, non quomodo praesumpsit aegrotus. Interrogatus ab ancilla, negat semel, bis, tertio. Respicitur a Domino, flet amare, tergit lacrimis pietatis sordes negationis.” Sermm. 296.4, *PL* 38.1354: “Nunc vero Dominus Jesus Christus, quia servo commendat oves, quas sanguine comparavit; idoneitatem servi in passione sanguinis quaerit. Tanquam diceret: Pasce oves meas, commendo tibi oves meas. Quas oves? Qua

shepherd who humbly acknowledges that his sheep are not his own, but the Lord's, in contrast to the Donatists, who rashly assert that the sheep under their care belong to them.⁶³⁰ Paul emerges as the one who exemplifies most vividly the power of divine grace to make a shepherd out of a wolf, a humble preacher of the faith out of a proud persecutor.⁶³¹ God's grace in Paul first converts an enemy of Christ into a servant of Christ, and then awards him a crown of victory which is in reality nothing more than a reward for merits that are a gift of grace.⁶³² Those who are familiar with the contours of Augustine's theology and ecclesiastical career will not be surprised to find any of these themes appearing in his sermons. That they appear in his sermons

semi sanguine meo. Mortuus sum pro eis. Amas me? Morere pro eis. Et quidem servus ille hominis homo pecuniam redderet pro consumptis ovibus: Petrus sanguinem reddidit pro ovibus conservatis."

⁶³⁰ Sermon. 295.5, *PL* 38.1350-51: "Attendite, fratres mei: *Pasce*, inquit, *oviculas meas, pasce agnos meos. Pasce oves meas* numquid dixit, Tuas? Pasce, bone serve, oves dominicas, habentes dominicum characterem. ... Ergo pasce oves ejus, ablutas Baptismo ejus, signatas nomine ejus, redemptas sanguine ejus, *Pasce*, inquit, *oves meas*. Nam haeretici servi mali et fugitivi, quod non emerunt dividentes sibi, et de furtis peculia tanquam propria facientes, suas oves sibi videntur pascere."

⁶³¹ Sermon. 295.6, *PL* 38.1351-1352: "Veniat et de Saulo Paulus, de lupo agnus; prius inimicus, postea apostolus; prius persecutor, postea praedicator. ... Vas aliquid portare debet, vas inane esse non debet. Vas implendum est: unde, nisi grata?"; Sermon. 299C.3, *Miscellanea Agostiniana* 1.523: "Denique Ananiae dominus loquens, quando illum mittit ad Saulum baptizandum, audivit ab ipso Anania: Domine, audivi de isto homine, quod ubique persequitur servos tuos. Tamquam diceret: Quid ovem mittis ad lupum? ... Huius ergo lupi ovis Ananias audierat, et inter manus pastoris tremebat: sed a lupo terretur, a pastore autem consolatur, confirmatur, conservatur. De ipso lupo audit res incredibiles, sed veritate loquente veras et fideles."

⁶³² Sermon. 297.4.6, *PL* 38.1361-1362: "Bonum certamen certasti, cursum consummasti, fidem servasti: reddet coronam debitam his meritis tuis. Sed ut reddatur tibi corona tua, Dei dona sunt merita tua. Ecce bonum agonem certasti, cursum consummasti. Vidisti enim aliam legem in membris tuis, repugnantem legi mentis tuae, et captivum to ducentem in lege peccati, quae est in membris tuis: unde tibi vincere, nisi ex hoc quod sequitur? *Miser ego homo, quis me liberabit de corpore mortis huius? Gratia Dei, per Iesum Christum Dominum nostrum*. Ecce unde pugnasti, ecce unde laborasti, ecce unde non defecisti, ecce unde vicisti. Videte pugnatem: 'Quis nos separabit a charitate Christi? Tribulatio? an gladius? Sicut scriptum est, Quoniam propter te mortificamur tota die, deputati sumus ut oves occisionis.' Ecce infirmitas, labor, miseria, pericula, tentationes. Unde Victoria certantium? Audi quod sequitur: *Sed in his omnibus supervincimus per eum qui dilexit nos*. Cursum consummasti: quo ducente, quo regent, quo iuvante? Quid hic dicis? *Cursum*, inquit, *consummavi*; sed *neque volentia, neque correntis, sed miserentis est Dei*. Fidem servasti verum est. Primo quam fidem? quam tibi ipse dedisti? Falsum est quod dixisti, *Sicut unicuique Deus partitus est mensuram fidei*? Nonne tu alloqueris quosdam concertatores tuos, et in huius vitae studio tecum laborantes atque correntes, quibus dicis, *Vobis enim donatum est pro Christo*? Quid donatum est? *Non solum ut credatis in eum, sed etiam ut patiamini pro eo*. Ecce utrumque donatum est, et credere, et pati pro Christo."

on the Feast of Peter and Paul only serves to underscore the fact that the memory of these saints could be harnessed to promote many different agendas.

Augustine's Sermon 296 contains some of his earliest publicly articulated thoughts on the sack of Rome by the Visigoths in 410, an event that is significant for Augustine insofar as the questions concerning the destiny of Rome that it raised prompted him finally to write the *City of God*. The sermon was delivered in June of 411 in Carthage, the metropolitan see of North Africa where Augustine was attending the *collatio* with the Donatists over which the imperial commissioner Marcellinus presided.⁶³³ It begins in a very similar manner to Augustine's other sermons on these two saints, with a reflection on Christ's command to Peter to feed his sheep; on Peter's over-confidence fall, repentance, and restoration; and Peter's willingness to lay down his life for his faith.⁶³⁴ Eventually, however, he comes to the sack of Rome, an event that must have been on the minds of all who were gathered in Carthage for the imperially sponsored debate. As he begins to address the issue, he summarizes the reason why the city's capture came as a shock to so many.

“Peter's body lies in Rome,” people are saying. “Paul's body lies in Rome, Lawrence's body lies in Rome, the bodies of other holy martyrs lie in Rome; and Rome is griefstricken, and Rome is being devastated, afflicted, crushed, burnt; death stalking the streets in so many ways, by hunger, by pestilence, by the sword. Where are the memorials of the apostles?”⁶³⁵

⁶³³ *The Works of Saint Augustine*, vol. 3/8: *Sermons 273-305A on the Saints*, ed. and trans. Edmund Hill (Hyde Park, New York: New City Press, 1994), 213. On the *collatio*, see Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 330-334.

⁶³⁴ Serm. 296.1-4.

⁶³⁵ Serm. 296.6, *Miscellanea Agostiniana* 1.404-405: “Iacet Petri corpus Romae, dicunt homines, iacet Pauli corpus Romae, Larentii corpus Romae, aliorum martyrum sanctorum corpora iacent Romae: et misera est Roma, et vastatur Roma: affligitur, conteritur, incenditur; tot strages mortis fiunt, per famem, per pestem, per gladium. Ubi sunt memoriae apostolorum?”

His response to this despairing reaction to the sack of Rome calls into question the triumphalist assumptions that in Augustine's mind led many Christians to take the wrong perspective on the fortunes of the empire. It likewise foreshadows one of the central arguments that would characterize his *City of God*, for he asks his hearers to consider whether the apostles, and indeed Christians in general, "were promised an earthly felicity or an eternal."⁶³⁶

In the following section of the sermon Augustine argues that, as far as Christians are concerned, the sack of Rome should be no stumbling block to belief that God is just and good. He chides his listeners for doubting because some have died who were going to die anyway, and because a city was sacked that was going to waste away in any event.⁶³⁷ Rome is mere "timbers and stones." Peter's body may be there, but much more significant than the presence of the apostle's body in Rome is his reign with Christ in heaven. Christians should lift their hearts up there and seek their true home. He goes on after this for several more paragraphs, reiterating his point that Christians should not cling to earthly things, pointing out that they can say in response to the accusations of the pagans that Rome was burned twice during the centuries of pagan religion, and that while Christianity is blamed for the disaster that has befallen Rome, the widespread rejection or ignorance of the gospel is the more likely culprit.⁶³⁸ And Christians, rather than complaining or lamenting the supposed loss of frivolous amusements, should praise God for his discipline.⁶³⁹ Their true treasure, after all, is in heaven.

⁶³⁶ Serm. 296.6, *Miscellanea Agostiniana* 1.405: "utinam in te essent memoriae apostolorum, utinam tu cogitares apostolos! Videres utrumnam eis terrena felicitas promissa fuerit, an aeterna."

⁶³⁷ Serm. 296.7, *Miscellanea Agostiniana* 1.405: "Doles ergo, et ploras, quia ruerunt ligna et lapides, et quia mortui sunt morituri? Damus aliquem mortuum semper victurum: doles quia ceciderunt ligna et lapides, et quia mortui sunt morituri? Si sursum habes cor, ubi habes cor? quid ibi mortuum est? quid ibi cecidit?"

⁶³⁸ Serm. 296.8-11.

⁶³⁹ Serm. 296.12, *Miscellanea Agostiniana* 1.409: "Tu delicatus filius dominicus, et recipi vis, et flagellari non vis; ut tu fluas, ille vero mentiatur. Debit ergo apostolorum memoria, per quam tibi praeparatur caelum, servare tibi in

Thus Augustine's discussion of the city of Rome does not revolve around the question of the status of Rome's church in the ecclesiastical politics of the early fifth century. Instead, he sees that the sack of Rome offers him the opportunity to direct his hearers' love away from the delights of the present world and toward what is eternal. Christians' love of the earthly city must not interfere with their love of heaven or interfere with their heavenward pilgrimage. The Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, then, has become for him an opportunity to address in a homiletic context a theme that he would shortly afterward begin to develop in the *City of God*.⁶⁴⁰ It is a fascinating window into Augustine's mind—one that unfortunately does not shed much light on his vision of the relationship between his church and the church of Rome, but does illustrate once again the way in which bishops could and did make use of this feast day to address pressing local problems.⁶⁴¹

Gaul

The tendency to take advantage of the opportunity offered by this feast could also be found in Gaul. One sermon in the Eusebius Gallicanus collection, Sermon 33, was written for the Feast of Peter and Paul. This collection is a set of (mostly) anonymous sermons written and (originally) delivered in Gaul during the fifth century and compiled in the sixth. These sermons are the work of many different contributors, collected to serve as a resource for preachers who

terra theatra insanorum semper? Ideo mortuus est Petrus et repositus, ut lapis de theatro non cadat? Excudit deus delicias de manibus puerorum indisciplinatorum.”

⁶⁴⁰ In that work, Augustine articulates more fully his notion of sin as disordered or misdirected love. See, for example, 14.28, where he states that the defining characteristic of the residents of the two cities is the love they possess for either the earthly or the heavenly city, and 15.22, where he defines virtue as “rightly ordered love.”

⁶⁴¹ Strictly speaking, the problem Augustine addresses in Sermon 296 was not specific to North Africa, since the sack of Rome was on people's minds throughout the empire. But the arrival of refugees from Rome in North Africa made the question of the meaning of this event particularly pressing for the North African church. In any case, this sermon illustrates the way in which the feast of Peter and Paul could be used as an occasion to address an issue unrelated to Roman primacy.

for whatever reason were not up to the task of composing their own sermons. The work of Lisa K. Bailey has shown, however, that in spite of this diversity of authorship, the collection as a whole has a number of unifying characteristics. For example, it displays a typically Gallic understanding of the issue of free will and grace, it devotes special attention to local saints, and it emphasizes the role of the laity in penance.⁶⁴²

The attention paid to local saints in the collection is especially significant for our purposes. These sermons as a whole tend to see local and urban loyalties as key rallying points for a communal Christian identity. A universal sense of Christian identity is, of course, not denied, but the stress is decidedly on more immediate institutions such as the family and the city.⁶⁴³ Because other contemporary preachers had used it for this purpose, we might well expect that a sermon on the Feast of Peter and Paul—a cult celebrated throughout the Christian world—would present a preacher in Gaul with the opportunity to remind his hearers that in spite of the fact that their sense of identity as Christians was in large part formed by their connection to local saints who bore witness to the faith in cities like Lyon and Arles, they were nonetheless part of a worldwide body stretching from one end of the Roman world to the other.⁶⁴⁴ But Sermon 33 has very little to say by way of encouraging its listeners or readers to consider themselves part of a broader Christian community.⁶⁴⁵ Like other sermons on these saints that we have examined, this

⁶⁴² For the theology of grace in this collection, see Lisa K. Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success: The Eusebius Gallicanus Collection and the Power of the Church in Late Antique Gaul* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 77-80; for local saints, see *eadem.*, "Building Urban Christian Communities: Sermons on Local Saints in the Eusebius Gallicanus Collection," *Early Medieval Europe* 12.1 (2003): 1-24; for the role of the laity in penance, see *eadem.*, "'Our Own Most Severe Judges': The Power of Penance in the Eusebius Gallicanus Sermons," in *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2007), 201-211.

⁶⁴³ Bailey, "Building Urban Christian Communities," 6-12.

⁶⁴⁴ See, for example, Leo, Sermon 82.1; Maximus, Sermon 1.2, 2.3, and 9.1; and Augustine, Sermon 295.1, 298.1, 299.1, 299C.2.

⁶⁴⁵ There is, however, a brief reflection on the lives and significance of Peter and Paul at the beginning of the sermon, in which the writer refers to them as the "christianorum principes," evoking the traditional title by which the

sermon reflects a concern that was characteristic of its local context. While Maximus stressed the evangelistic mission of the church and Augustine often spoke about unmerited grace on the Feast of Peter and Paul, the writer of this sermon took the opportunity to address the Christian's need to pursue virtue and avoid vice in ways that are very much in line with the Gallic approach to sin, grace, and penance.

Most Gallic theologians in the early fifth century regarded Augustine's teaching of unmerited grace as opening the door to laxity and license, and taught instead that eternal life was the reward for the Christian's striving, self-mortification, and suffering.⁶⁴⁶ In keeping with this characteristic emphasis, the main theme of Sermon 33 is Christians' responsibility for their moral own development. The preacher develops the theme by likening this process to the recovery of health, aided by "two doctors [sc., the apostles]" who, having fallen from heaven, opened "a health workshop" and "knew how to bring aid of a different kind to various sorts of feebleness."⁶⁴⁷ And since faith alone did not suffice for salvation, they also cured carnal desires "with the consolations of chastity," and "began to winnow out" from the souls of others "malice,

Roman emperors were known and thus calling to mind the worldwide political community formed by the empire and implicitly drawing the parallel between the ecumenicity of the empire and that of the church. The preacher goes on to point out how, according to the New Testament, "Electi duo praecipui ad duorum populorum salutem – Petrus ad Iudaeorum, Paulus ad gentium." Their universal mission is directed toward the two basic divisions of the human as envisioned by the Bible. And so "erogant per omnem terram, pii dispensatores, *argentum igne examinatum*, sapientiae aurum, fidei margaritam; aperiunt et gratuitum per cuncta dispergunt thesaurum salutis aeternae" (CCL 101.377). By gesturing to the fact that these benefits of the two apostle-martyrs are poured out on all people, the writer underscores the ties that bind his hearers to their fellow Christians in other lands. But that is as far as it goes. The apostles represent the universal church, not the city of Rome. In fact, the name of the old capital is not even mentioned in the sermon.

⁶⁴⁶ For the Gallic theology as articulated by John Cassian, see Rebecca Harden Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency: The Semi-Pelagian Controversy* (Macon, Georgia: Macon University Press, 1996), 78-114. For both Cassian and Vincent of Lérins, see Ralph W. Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul*, 122-140. For the overall approach of the Eusebius Gallicanus preachers to issues of sin, grace, and penance, see Bailey, "Our Own Most Severe Judges," 205-211.

⁶⁴⁷ Sermon 33.3, CCL 101.378: "Putares duos medicos caelo lapsos qui, officinam sanitatum aperientes, diverso nossent genere variis opem ferre languoribus." All translations of this sermon are my own.

pride, and wrath, as well as the darts of diverse kinds of sins.” In short, “*they cured* with divine aid *all feebleness and every sickness*.” The result of all this labor was that, “Having mingled the goblet of heavenly antidote in due proportion, [the apostles] began to give them a forgetfulness of present things and a desire for future things.”⁶⁴⁸ The emphasis is once again on the practical effect of grace in the life of the believer, likened to the curative powers of the physician. The use of the term “desire (*desiderium*)” is also significant. The salient feature of grace, in the view of this preacher, seems to be its power to reorient the affections of those it touches.

This preacher’s lack of interest in the church of Rome is also illustrated by his treatment of the familiar theme of Peter as having been entrusted with the keys of the kingdom of heaven. In this regard, he makes the surprising claim that “we can all have within ourselves *the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, and indeed that we are carrying a double strength, a double effect, and a twin power.” The “twin power” refers to the fact that every Christian has the potential ability either to open or to close the doors of the kingdom of heaven, depending on the moral choices he makes in this life. “Faith, humility, patience, and chastity like good keys open the door of God. But I would also say that pride, wrath, and lust are also not undeservedly called keys, for they close the kingdom of the heavens.”⁶⁴⁹ In other words, it is not so much the church and the ordained ecclesiastical hierarchy that control the keys of the kingdom; it is every believer, who

⁶⁴⁸ Sermon 33.3, CCL 101.378-379: “aliorum interiores venas, carnalium incentivorum febribus aestuantes, †praedicata sanctitate†, castitatis refrigeriis irrorabant; ex aliorum visceribus, malitiae, superbiae, iracundiae sagittas, ac diversorum iacula peccatorum a diabolo inflictas, evellebant, *curantes* adiutorio divinitatis *omnem languorem et omnem infirmitatem*. . . et, temperato poculo caelestis antidoti, oblivionem praesentium et futurorum desiderium propinabant.”

⁶⁴⁹ Sermon 33.4, CCL 101.379: “Quantum autem arbitror: omnes in nobis habere possumus *claves regni caelorum*, et quidem duplicem vim gerentes, duplicem habentes effectum et geminam potestatem. Fides, humilitas, patientia, castitas quasi bonae claves aperiunt dei portam. Sed et superbiam, iracundiam, cupiditatem non immerito claves esse dixerim; nam claudunt regna caelorum.” By contrast, Leo stresses in Sermon 3.2-3, 4.3, and 82.2 and 3 that the keys were given to the apostles, and to Peter in particular.

by choosing to cultivate either virtue or voice opens or closes the door to the kingdom of heaven.⁶⁵⁰

The examples of Gaudentius, Maximus, Augustine, and the Eusebius Gallicanus preacher therefore illustrate the way in which preachers in the late antique west believed they could use Sts. Peter and Paul and their feast day to deal with issues that had a particular resonance in their local contexts, or to articulate a theological stance that was characteristic of their church. To be sure, churchmen normally took advantage of the opportunity presented by the feast of these saints to remind their congregations of their membership in a universal body. But they preferred to spend most of their time on this occasion giving their attention to other matters that in their minds were more pressing, matters that were of purely local interest.

The Cult of Relics and the Assertion of Identity in Northern Italy

These sermons on Peter and Paul illustrate only one way in which bishops in northern Italy and elsewhere could mobilize the cult of the saints to assert a Christian identity rooted in local and particular loyalties, such as city and region. The important role that the memory of saints and martyrs—and their relics—played in late antique Christianity created other opportunities for bishops to articulate a peculiar identity for their churches over against that of the imperial capital, whose bishops were seeking to exert their influence outside of their traditional zone of jurisdiction in the late fourth century. Two ways of using the cult of the saints to assert a local identity that stand out in the sources from northern Italy during this period are the acquisition (*via* travel or *inventio*), giving, or taking of relics, and the construction of *basilicae apostolorum* to house collections of relics. The giving and receiving of relics marked a

⁶⁵⁰ For the way in which this theme fits with Gallic notions of the authority of the clergy, see Lisa K. Bailey, “Our Own Most Severe Judges,” *passim*.

church's position in the more complex ecclesiastical hierarchy that began to emerge in the west toward the end of the fourth century. A church's unique mix of relics could itself also function as a marker of identity, a demonstration of its prestigious links with neighboring churches, often under the same metropolitan jurisdiction, as well as with the wider world. The sermons delivered on the Feast of Peter and Paul, discussed above, show how bishops could deploy the power of preaching to shape the identity of their churches in such a way as to set them apart from their coreligionists elsewhere in the empire. But the spoken word of the sermon was not the only way in which they might attempt to achieve this objective.⁶⁵¹

The power of the example provided by the saints was not the only gift that they gave to late antique bishops eager to infuse their followers with a viable Christian identity tied to their immediate location. Peter Brown's work on the cult of the saints has highlighted, among other things, the role played by relics in the negotiation of relations of authority in late antique Christianity.⁶⁵² Relics were objects associated with departed saints and holy people through which they were able to transmit their sanctity, spiritual power, or both.⁶⁵³ A relic could be an article of clothing or other item that belonged to a saint, something the saint had touched during his or her lifetime (or that had touched another of the saint's relics), or even a body part. Relics were believed to be charged with power to heal and to exorcise evil spirits. They were meeting places of heaven and earth, a fact demonstrated by the supernatural power that emanated from

⁶⁵¹ Although, as we will see, the genre through which we typically learn of the way in which bishops used means other than the sermon to mobilize the cult of the saints was still the sermon.

⁶⁵² See, generally, *The Cult of the Saints*, as well as "Relics and Social Status in the Age of Gregory of Tours," in *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 222-250.

⁶⁵³ On the beliefs of late antique Christians about relics, see Raymond van Dam, "Relics," in *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World*, ed. G. W. Bowersock, Peter Brown, and Oleg Grabar (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 667-668.

them.⁶⁵⁴ That is why those who acquired them—by discovery, gift, exchange, or theft—and were able to deploy and control their power enjoyed a considerable advantage in showing that they were superior to their rivals.⁶⁵⁵ An extension of the earlier form of the cult of the saints, centered on the tombs of the martyrs, the cult of relics—infused with spiritual power and also mobile—created new possibilities for enterprising bishops to define their communities’ place in the universal church.⁶⁵⁶

Late antique bishops believed that it was imperative for them to secure control over the relics of the saints in order to maintain their authority within their Christian communities. Their concern was that the power of the saints and their relics not be “privatized,” lest some alternative locus of authority emerge from within their community to rival that of the bishop.⁶⁵⁷ Michael Roberts has noted how the construction of basilicas, open to the public for the display of relics, served to strengthen the authority of the bishop and the institutional church.⁶⁵⁸ Northern Italy in the late fourth and early fifth century is noteworthy in this regard for the way in which the bishops of even small and apparently insignificant churches sponsored the construction of such

⁶⁵⁴ Brown, “Relics and Social Status,” 225.

⁶⁵⁵ Referring to sixth-century Gaul, Brown writes that relics “did not merely heal and bless: they answered the question of the precise *merita* of those who stood, with far less unambiguous security, at the head of the Christian communities of the Gallic towns.” In northern Italy in the late fourth and early fifth century, the concern was less about the merits of the individual incumbent of the see, however, and more about the worthiness of his cause or the prestige of the see itself. See “Relics and Social Status,” 242.

⁶⁵⁶ For the cult of relics as an outgrowth of the “tomb cults” characteristic of the earliest period of the history of Christian devotion to the martyrs, see Stephen Wilson, “Introduction,” in *Saints and their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore, and History*, ed. Stephen Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 4.

⁶⁵⁷ On this concern, see Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 36-37. Mark Humphries points out that wealthy individuals who were members of their churches posed one potential challenge to the leadership of the bishops. See *Communities of the Blessed: Social Environment and Religious Change in Northern Italy, AD 200-400* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 165-166. If there was any alternative to the “public ownership” of the relics of the martyrs as envisioned by the bishops of this generation, it was private ownership by such elite Christians who were not members of the clergy.

⁶⁵⁸ *Poetry and the Cult of the Martyrs: The Liber Peristephanon of Prudentius* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 16.

basilicas. In addition to the *basilica apostolorum* constructed by Ambrose in Milan, edifices with a similar purpose could be found in Como, Lodi, Aquileia, Turin, and Brescia.⁶⁵⁹ All of these churches were in the hands of close allies of Ambrose; with the exception of Aquileia, all of these churches fell within Milan's immediate sphere of influence; and Como became a bishopric during the episcopate of Ambrose.⁶⁶⁰ Just as north Italian Christianity developed a precocious taste for ascetic bishops, so also in its appreciation for the power of the saints and their relics, the churches of this area were early bloomers.⁶⁶¹ These bishops and their congregations were among the first to discover the way in which the saints and their relics could serve as a tool for urban renewal and the restoration of a sense of civic harmony at a time when the conversion of the senatorial class presented potential challenges to the bishops' authority from within their congregations.⁶⁶²

But bishops in this period had another important reason to want to control the saints and their relics, or at least to deny control over them to others, for in addition to competing with non-clerical authorities within their churches, they were also competing for authority among themselves. The rivalry among bishops in which the relics of the martyrs might be enlisted could be of more than one type. The more benign type was the mere contest for prestige among bishops seeking to define the jurisdiction of their sees in ways that were advantageous to

⁶⁵⁹ For the Milanese structure, see McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 229-235; for Como, Lodi, Aquileia, and Turin, see Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 2.1556; for Brescia, see Gaudentius, *Tr.* 17, discussed in greater detail below.

⁶⁶⁰ Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1.748-749. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Bassianus was the first bishop of Lodi (Laus Pompeia); however, it is not known whether he was consecrated by Ambrose as Felix of Como was, since he first appears already as a signatory of the *Acta* of the Council of Aquileia in 381. See Lanzoni, *Le diocesi d'Italia*, 2.993-994; and *PCBE*, 1.269-270.

⁶⁶¹ In Humphries' estimation, the cult of the saints in northern Italy was "already well developed by the opening years of the fifth century." See *Communities of the Blessed*, 54.

⁶⁶² For the ability of the cult of the saints to function in this way in an urban context, see Lizzi, *Vescovi e strutture*, 134-135.

themselves. In such a case, no theological issue was at stake in the outcome, although the losing side in such a struggle would suffer a loss of pride and damage to its prestige—a serious enough matter in itself. The impressive growth of the authority of the church of Milan during the 380s is one example of such a contest.⁶⁶³ By contrast, however, this competition might also involve a bitter struggle between representatives of competing creeds.⁶⁶⁴ Here, the stakes could be quite high.

One of the most famous instances in the fourth century in which relics were discovered took place in the context of just such a struggle. Just over two months after his successful standoff with the court of the emperor Valentinian II over the use of a Milanese basilica for the court's (Homoian) Easter services, Ambrose, still vulnerable to a counterattack from the emperor and his resentful advisers, was able to consolidate his victory through the discovery of the relics of Sts. Gervasius and Protasius.⁶⁶⁵ At this time, Ambrose was ready to consecrate the *Basilica Ambrosiana*, which he himself had built as the place where he would be buried. But, as he

⁶⁶³ And in this contest, as Charles Pietri points out, the church of Milan managed to encroach on areas of church life—and on churches—that were traditionally the purview of Rome. See *Roma christiana*, 2.897-901.

⁶⁶⁴ Even in the absence of a theological animus, however, the stakes could be quite high, for as Mark Humphries points out, “the prominence of a particular see in terms of its sacred heritage could serve to justify its leadership over a number of other ecclesiastical centres in its vicinity.” See “Inventing Apostles: North Italian Bishops and their Past in the Early Middle Ages,” *Medieval History* 4 (1994): 187-198, at 189. Cf. *idem*, *Communities of the Blessed*, 54.

⁶⁶⁵ He narrates the dramatic events of both the standoff and the discovery of the relics in letters to his sister, *Epp.* 76 and 77 [Maur. 20 and 22]. At the end of *Ep.* 76, Ambrose relates the threats breathed out Calligonus, Valentinian's *praepositus cubicula*, after the court backed down over the matter of the basilica. For a detailed treatment of these episodes, see McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 181-219, esp. 196 (for Calligonus' threats) and 212-215 (for the discovery of the relics of Gervasius and Protasius); and (for the *inventio* of the bodies of the martyrs) Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 218-223. In chap. 5, Ambrose's attempts in his *Sermo contra Auxentium* (*Ep.* 75A) as well as *Ep.* 76 to shape his people's memory of the standoff over the basilica will be discussed in greater detail. See below, pp. 322-343. For a survey of Ambrose's use of the cult of the martyrs during his episcopacy, which unfortunately does not include a discussion of his use of relics as gifts, see Ernst Dassman, “Ambrosius und die Märtyrer,” *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 18 (1975): 49-68.

explains in a letter to his sister, he needed to obtain relics to place beneath the altar.⁶⁶⁶ Under divine guidance, he goes on to relate, he discovered the bodies of Gervasius and Protasius, the first martyrs native to Milan, who “now cause the church at Milan, barren of martyrs now the mother of many children, to rejoice in the glory and examples of their suffering.”⁶⁶⁷ The discovery of their remains had an immediate and powerful effect on the balance of power between Ambrose and his church on the one hand and Valentinian II’s government on the other, as it “gave Ambrose and the Nicene Church divine ratification which strengthened their opposition to the authority of the court.”⁶⁶⁸ This event shored up popular support for Ambrose’s policy of resistance, for he now had “defenders ... who can fight back but are not wont to attack. ... soldiers, that is, who are not of the world, but soldiers of Christ.”⁶⁶⁹ The bishop shrewdly connected his discovery to his recent conflict with the court by having the martyrs’ bodies translated to the *Basilica Ambrosiana*, whereby they “became inseparably linked to the communal liturgy in a church which had been built by the bishop and where that bishop presided. ... Now the presence of the martyrs was identified with the Nicene faith, and their *potentia* served as bulwarks against the Homoian position.”⁶⁷⁰ In his *Confessions*, Augustine, at that time a successful yet inwardly conflicted young *rhetor* who would be baptized by Ambrose

⁶⁶⁶ *Ep.* 77.1 [Maur. 22], *CSEL* 82/3.127: “Nam cum basilicam dedicassem, multi tamquam oro interpellare coeperunt dicentes: ‘Sicut in Romana basilicam dedices.’ Responsi: ‘Faciám si martyrum reliquias invenero.’”

⁶⁶⁷ *Ep.* 77.7, *CSEL* 82/3.131: “qui sterilem martyribus ecclesiam Mediolanensem iam plurimorum matrem filiorum laetari passionis propriae fecerunt et titulis et exemplis.”

⁶⁶⁸ Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 218.

⁶⁶⁹ *Ep.* 77.10, *CSEL* 82/3.132: “Cognoscant omnes quales ego propugnatores requiram qui propugnare possint, impugnare non soleant. Hos ego acquisivi tibi, plebs sancta, qui prosint omnibus, noceant nemini. Tales ego ambio defensores, tales milites habeo hoc est non saeculi milites sed milites Christi.”

⁶⁷⁰ Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 221.

the following Easter, affirms the bishop's favored interpretation of their discovery as a divine gift to the Nicene cause, even at the same time that he bears witness to their miraculous cures:

For many years you had kept them from corruption, hidden away in your secret treasury, out of which at the right moment you produced them to restrain the fury of a woman, indeed a lady of the royal family. ... Moreover, a citizen who had been blind many years and was well known in the city, heard the people in a state of tumultuous jubilation so that he might touch with his cloth the bier on which lay your saints, whose "death is precious in your sight." When he did this and applied the cloth to his eyes, immediately they were opened.⁶⁷¹

The timing of this discovery, the plausibility of the miraculous cures attributed to the bodies of the martyrs, together with Ambrose's ability to take advantage of the situation, produced a powerful weapon that he could deploy to blunt the assaults and harassments of the anti-Nicenes of northern Italy, who were concentrated in the court and the armed men at their command. After the summer of 386, no more trouble came from that quarter. The "soldiers of Christ" had emerged victorious, and in so doing they demonstrated the power of saints and their relics in the context of theological controversy.⁶⁷² This *inventio* and, more importantly, the *translatio* that immediately followed, was significant in the development of the cult of the martyrs in northern Italy not only because it "advertised the martyrs' power to intervene on earth on behalf of their clients," but also because "it promoted in a new way the distribution of corporeal or secondary relics. Indeed, it is difficult to show that such relics were at all a significant element in Christian

⁶⁷¹ *Confessions* 9.7.16, CCL 27.142: "quae per tot annos incorrupta in thesauro secreti tui reconditas, unde opportune promeres ad coercendam rabiem femineam, sed regiam. Cum enim propalata et effossa digno cum honore transferrentur ad Ambrosianam basilicam, non solum quos immundi vexabant spiritus confessis eisdem daemonibus sanabantur, verum etiam quidam plures annos caecus civis civitatisque notissimus, cum populi tumultuante laetitia causam quaesisset atque audisset, exiit eoque se ut duceret suum ducem rogavit. Quo perductus impetravit admitti, ut sudario tangeret feretrum pretiosae in conspectu tuo mortis sanctorum tuorum. Quod ubi fecit atque admovit oculis, confestim aperti sunt." The translation is that of Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁶⁷² Ambrose was keen, however, to highlight the purely defensive nature of this weapon: "impugnare non soleant," as he stresses in writing to Marcellina (*Ep.* 77.10). He also likens Gervasius and Protasius to the angelic army that protected the kingdom of Israel from the onslaught of the Syrians, but were invisible (at first) to Elisha's servant (77.11).

cult before this date.”⁶⁷³ Not only that, Ambrose developed a new theology of relics, according to which “the saints themselves came visiting when relics were sent.”⁶⁷⁴

It was thanks in no small part to this lucky find and Ambrose’s ability to make the most of it that his influence on the early emergence of the cult of the martyrs in northern Italy was decisive. Imitating his older contemporary Damasus of Rome, who was the first of that city’s bishops to mobilize the cult of Peter and Paul with a view to expanding Rome’s influence, Ambrose used the cult of relics to bolster the independence of northern Italy vis-à-vis Rome.⁶⁷⁵ One strategy for doing so involved promoting a pair of martyrs associated with his city, and describing them in classicizing terms as having taken up their heavenly abode among the stars, similar to the terms in which his Roman counterpart had lauded Peter and Paul.⁶⁷⁶ But Ambrose did not only use the cult of relics to increase the importance and prestige of the see of Milan, he also used *inventiones* at crucial moments in his episcopate to recover from an apparent deterioration of his own authority. Examples of such instances are the immediate aftermath of

⁶⁷³ Thacker, “Popes, Patriarchs and Archbishops,” 59.

⁶⁷⁴ Thacker, “Popes, Patriarchs and Archbishops,” 59.

⁶⁷⁵ On the novelty of Damasus’ use of the cult of Peter and Paul, see Pietri, “Concordia apostolorum et renovatio urbis (Culte des martyres et propagande pontificale),” *Mélanges d’archéologie et d’histoire de l’École Française de Rome* 73 (1961): 275-322; and *Roma Christiana*, 2.1537-1596, esp. 1554-1555, 1570, and 1596; and Trout, “Damasus and the Invention of Early Christian Rome,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33.3 (2003): 517-536. J. M. Huskinson highlights the way in which Damasus and the other bishops of Rome employed visual media to promote the cult of the two apostles. See *Concordia Apostolorum: Christian Propaganda at Rome in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries—A Study in Early Christian Iconography and Iconology*, BAR International Series 148 (Oxford: B. A. R., 1982), esp. 9, 34, 36, 81-82, 84, 89, 90, 109-110, and 119. For Ambrose’s conscious imitation of Damasus, see Humphries, *Communities of the Blessed*, 54-55 and 149.

⁶⁷⁶ Rita Lizzi, *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche*, 90, referring to Ambrose, *Ep.* 77.4-5 and Damasus’ *elogium* to Peter and Paul from the Church of S. Sebastiano, which can be found in Trout, *Damasus of Rome: The Epigraphic Poetry—Introduction, Texts, Translations, and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 121.

the 386 basilica crisis, during the usurpation of Eugenius in 393, and after Theodosius' victory over the usurper the following year at the Battle of the Frigidus.⁶⁷⁷

Ambrose's use of the cult of relics to enhance the prestige of the church of Milan went beyond the acquisition of new saints and relics through the discovery of their remains at opportune moments. He also promoted the authority of the church of Milan through the strategic granting of relics as gifts to other churches whose bishops were allies of his. The practice of translating relics, however, which involved not only exhuming the dead, but transporting and in some cases mutilating them, was of dubious legality and therefore controversial in Ambrose's day.⁶⁷⁸ The church of Rome, more reserved in its attitude toward the bodies of its saints, did not permit them to be divided, at least in Late Antiquity.⁶⁷⁹ This conservatism toward the traffic in martyr relics afforded Ambrose and the churches of northern Italy yet another opportunity to distinguish themselves from Rome by embracing a distinct—and very visible—ecclesiastical practice. It also opened the door for the church of Milan to extend its influence in a way that Rome could not (or would not), for the granting of relics as gifts to allied churches associated

⁶⁷⁷ Lizzi, *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche*, 91. See also Dassmann, "Ambrosius und die Märtyrer," 57-58. As Eugenius approached Milan, Ambrose went on a conveniently-timed tour of episcopal sees held by his allies. It took him first to Bologna, whose bishop at that time may have been Eustaxius, where he uncovered the relics of Saints Agricola and Vitalis. Like Gervasius and Protasius, they had been unknown before Ambrose made the discovery. See Paulinus of Milan, *Vita sancti Ambrosii* 14, 29, and 32-33; and Humphries, "Inventing Apostles," 188. Bishop Eustaxius' name appears sixth on a fourteenth-century episcopal list, leading the editors of the *PCBE* to qualify him as "probably an authentic bishop of Bologna" whose episcopate fell between that of Eusebius (who had been bishop at the time of the Council of Aquileia) and that of Felix (a deacon of Milan who became bishop of Bologna shortly after Ambrose's death in 397). See *PCBE* 2.712.

⁶⁷⁸ At the very least, Roman law required imperial permission in order to move a corpse. See Gillian Clark, "Translating Relics: Victricius of Rouen and Fourth-Century Debate," *Early Medieval Europe* 10.2 (2001): 161-176, at 164-166, 169-170.

⁶⁷⁹ As a result of this Roman policy, the only relics of Peter and Paul to be found outside of Rome—including those sent to Ambrose by Damasus—were contact relics. See Dassmann, "Ambrosius und die Märtyrer," 53; Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1.606-607 and 2.1555-1556; and Huskinson, *Concordia Apostolorum*, 46-47.

them more closely with the interests of the Milanese church. Ambrose gave such gifts not only to other bishops in northern Italy, but also in Gaul and southern Italy.⁶⁸⁰

One recipient of the relics of Milan's martyrs was Victricius, bishop of Rouen, a city on the northern coast of Gaul. To mark the occasion of their arrival in his city, Victricius composed a short work *In Praise of the Saints*, a sermon-cum-theological treatise, which he sent to Ambrose after the delivery of the relics.⁶⁸¹ The idiosyncratic theological rationale he provides to justify Christian devotion to the martyrs need not concern us here.⁶⁸² Rather, we are interested in why Ambrose would send the relics of John the Baptist; the apostles Andrew and Thomas; the evangelist Luke; the Milanese martyrs Gervasius, Protasius, and Nazarius; Proculus and Agricola from Bologna; Euphemia; Antonius from Piacenza; Saturninus and Torianus from Macedonia; and Mucius, Alexander, Datysus, Chindeus, Ragota, Leonida, Anastasia, and Anatoclia, to a destination that lay at such a great distance.⁶⁸³ The choice to make such a gift to Victricius is best understood as an extension of Ambrose's approach to his relationship with his episcopal allies in northern Italy, which was characterized by the desire to establish a network of bishops who were staunchly pro-Nicene, were committed to asceticism, shared an appreciation for the power of the saints and their relics, and were eager to guard the church's independence from the

⁶⁸⁰ Thacker, "Popes, Patriarchs and Archbishops," 59, echoes these points about the visibility of Ambrose's innovations in the use of relics and about his use of martyr relics as gifts to cement Milan's status as the patron of other churches.

⁶⁸¹ For the text, see *CCL* 64.69-93. For a translation with introduction, see Gillian Clark, "Victricius of Rouen: *Praising the Saints*," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 7.3 (1999): 365-399.

⁶⁸² Such a justification was rendered necessary by the fact that some churchmen in the late fourth century objected to the devotion to relics as an innovation. Their views were articulated especially by Vigilantius of Calagurris. See Clark, "Translating Relics," 171-173 (for the objections) and 174-175 (for Victricius' unique argument in their favor); and David G. Hunter, "Vigilantius of Calagurris and Victricius of Rouen: Ascetics, Relics, and Clerics in Late Roman Gaul," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 7.3 (1999): 401-430.

⁶⁸³ Victricius, *De laude sanctorum* 6 and 11.

imperial government.⁶⁸⁴ When we consider Victricius in his Gallic context, Ambrose's desire to form an alliance with him makes sense. Victricius's style of episcopal leadership was in the Ambrosian mold. As an ascetic (he was a strong ally of Martin of Tours, whose asceticism aroused resistance among the more traditional bishops of Gaul) and an enthusiastic supporter of the cult of relics, he was something of an outlier in late fourth-century Gaul, where more conservative bishops were skeptical of the claims made on behalf of ascetic bishops and the relics of the saints they promoted.⁶⁸⁵ This skepticism was rooted in the fractious nature of Gallic ecclesiastical politics. As one who had been influenced by the more outward-looking anti-Felician faction that emerged at the time of the Priscillian affair, Victricius was naturally inclined to cultivate links with like-minded bishops outside of Gaul.⁶⁸⁶ The fact that his conception of episcopal authority made him a minority in his context can only have strengthened this impulse to seek support wherever he could find it. But on account of their shared outlook, Ambrose and Victricius were natural allies. The gift of relics was a shrewd investment, one that benefited them both. It was for similar reasons that Ambrose made a gift of relics also to Paulinus of Nola.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸⁴ Gillian Clark also locates Victricius in Ambrose's "ascetic networks" that also included Martin of Tours, Sulpicius Severus, and Paulinus of Nola. The attitude of Ambrose, Rufinus of Aquileia, and Peter Chrysologus toward imperial authority will be discussed in chap. 4. The significance of the pro-Nicene position of Ambrose and his north Italian episcopal allies will be explored in chap. 5.

⁶⁸⁵ On Victricius, see Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul*, 45-48; and Hunter, "Vigilantius of Calagurris and Victricius of Rouen."

⁶⁸⁶ The Felician and anti-Felician factions emerged in Gaul during the 380s out of a disagreement over the handling of the case of Priscillian, the Spanish bishop accused by many of his fellow bishops in Spain of heresy and convicted of sorcery and executed under the civil law during the reign of Magnus Maximus. Felix, bishop of Maximus' capital at Trier, was the acknowledged leader of the faction that supported the imperial government's involvement in the case. The anti-Felicians included among their ranks Martin of Tours, who resented what he regarded as the intrusion of the state into the church's internal affairs. See Sulpicius Severus, *Vita sancti Martini* 20 and *Dialogues* 11-13; and (on the Felician schism) Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 11-18.

⁶⁸⁷ Of relics of Gervasius and Protasius. See Paulinus, *Ep.* 32.17; cf. *Carm.* 27.436. As we saw in chap. 2, Paulinus' asceticism was likely one of the factors that led bishop Siricius of Rome to snub him when he visited the city. Thus

The significance of Ambrose's actions was not lost on his north Italian colleagues, such as Chromatius of Aquileia, Gaudentius of Brescia, and Vigilius of Trent, whose patronage of the martyrs and their relics served to enhance the prestige of their sees as well as to articulate more precise structures of authority among the north Italian churches.⁶⁸⁸ Let us now therefore turn to look at the evidence from the writings of these north Italian bishops—two sermons of Chromatius, the two letters of Vigilius of Trent, and Gaudentius' *Tractatus* 17—to reconstruct how they did this.⁶⁸⁹

We begin with Chromatius' Sermon 26, the text that is chronologically the earliest of those we are considering.⁶⁹⁰ This sermon was delivered on the occasion of the dedication of the *basilica apostolorum* in the town of Concordia, which lay about 45 miles west of Aquileia and was the birthplace of Rufinus.⁶⁹¹ Coinciding with the dedication of the basilica was (rather

in his case, as in that of Victoricius, we witness the combination of an asceticism and a relic devotion more along Ambrosian than Roman lines.

⁶⁸⁸ Humphries singles out Chromatius as an imitator of Ambrose. See *Communities of the Blessed*, 55. According to Rita Lizzi, "It is very probable that that Ambrose's sermons [on Gervasius and Protasius] were heard, or at least known, by the bishops of the other sees of northern Italy, such is the emphasis with which each of them propagated the cult of the martyrs in their own sermons, closely following the tones and arguments employed by Ambrose." See *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche*, 90. The following discussion will highlight the ways in which Gaudentius and Vigilius used the relics of the martyrs to promote their sees.

⁶⁸⁹ Often using rhetoric echoing that of Ambrose, as Lizzi points out, *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche*, 91.

⁶⁹⁰ According to Joseph Lemarié, the earliest possible date for the sermon is 389-390, and he seems to prefer to date it early in Chromatius' episcopate since it may have influenced the sermon that Gaudentius preached on a similar occasion (*Tr.* 17—more on it below). See also *SC* 154.106 and *CCL* 9A.119. This sermon is also discussed by Giuseppe Cuscito, "Cromazio di Aquileia e la chiesa di Concordia," in *Portogruaro e Concordia, AAAd* 24 (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1984), 69-88; and Claire Sotinel, *Identité civique et christianisme. Aquilée du IIIe au VIe siècle* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2005), 205-208. In Cuscito's judgment, Chromatius' sermons as a whole "bear witness to the intensity of the martyr cult and to the persistence of their memories in the early Christian community of Aquileia." See "I martiri aquileiesi," in *Aquileia e il suo patriarchato. Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Udine 21-23 ottobre 1999)*, ed. Sergio Tavano, Giuseppe Bergamini, and Silvano Cavazza (Udine: Deputazione di Storia Patria per il Friuli, 2000), 33.

⁶⁹¹ Sermon 26.1, *CCL* 9A.119: "Ornata est igitur ecclesia Concordiensis ... et basilicae constructione..." All translations of Chromatius' sermons are my own.

appropriately) the consecration of the town's first bishop.⁶⁹² The new structure had been built "in honor of the saints," and was set to house relics of several prominent holy men, including a few of the apostles.⁶⁹³ Near the beginning of the sermon, Chromatius mentions the fact that the church of Concordia marked the occasion by making a gift of relics to Chromatius and the church of Aquileia: "We have received the relics of the saints from you; you have received from us the zeal of devotion and the competition of faith."⁶⁹⁴ The phrase "*fidei aemulatio*" most likely refers to Concordia's elevation to an episcopal see, giving it greater autonomy in its relationship with Aquileia and allowing it entry into the competition for status and prestige among (episcopal) churches. He thus characterizes the affair as an equal exchange, in which both sides gained: relics for episcopal status.⁶⁹⁵ But in fact, the church of Concordia lost nothing, Chromatius goes on to assert, for "A share was given in order that you, too, might have the whole in part, and we might not lose anything of what had been given."⁶⁹⁶ Part of a relic, in other words, possessed the same power as the whole, so in fact the exchange was all to the benefit of Concordia.⁶⁹⁷

⁶⁹² Serm. 26.1, *CCL* 9A.119: "...et summi sacerdotis officio."

⁶⁹³ Serm. 26.1, *CCL* 9A.119: "Perfecta est basilica in honorem sanctorum, et velociter perfecta." And Serm. 26.2, *CCL* 9A.119: "Multa sunt quidem merita sanctorum apostolorum <quorum> reliquiae hic habentur."

⁶⁹⁴ Serm. 26.1, *CCL* 9A.119: "Nos a vobis reliquias sanctorum accepimus; vos a nobis studium devotionis <et> fidei aemulationem."

⁶⁹⁵ This interpretation depends on taking *aemulatio* in the sense of "competition" or "rivalry" rather than the flatter sense of "imitation." That Chromatius meant it this way is indicated by what he says next: "Bona ista contentio est, et religiosum certamen, ubi non de avaritia saeculi contenditur, sed de munere gratiarum."

⁶⁹⁶ Serm. 26.1, *CCL* 9A.119: "Data est portio, ut et vos totum in portione haberetis, et nos nihil de eo quod datum fuerat amitteremus..."

⁶⁹⁷ This belief about the effectiveness of partial relics was widely accepted among late antique Christians. Cf., for example, Gaudentius, *Tr.* 17.35, and Victricius of Rouen, *De laude sanctorum* 9.30-31.

We have seen in chapter 1 that even though it is unclear what Aquileia's formal status was until 442, when a letter of bishop Leo of Rome refers to it as a metropolitan see, it was nevertheless very influential in northeastern Italy and Illyricum already in the middle of the fourth century.⁶⁹⁸ Thus we ought not be surprised at its use of the giving and receiving of relics to articulate the lines of authority that existed between these two churches, with Aquileia being able to extract a form of ecclesiastical tribute from its less prestigious neighbor in exchange for recognition of the status to which it could rightly lay claim on account of the comparatively impressive collection of relics it possessed.⁶⁹⁹ Claire Sotinel observes that the acquisition of these relics for the church of Concordia, through an avenue that remains unfortunately mysterious for the modern historian, illustrates the way in which a church that had not yet even been granted a bishop could nonetheless exercise initiative in obtaining relics.⁷⁰⁰ The fact that its elevation to the level of an episcopal church coincided with the giving of relics to Aquileia suggests that the gift was the "price of admission" to the higher status and greater autonomy that went with having a bishop.⁷⁰¹

⁶⁹⁸ See above, pp. 69-70.

⁶⁹⁹ "Extract" is perhaps too strong, but the way that Lemarié puts the matter vindicates my choice to characterize this as a payment of ecclesiastical tribute: "Lors de l'arrivée des reliques à Concordia, l'Église d'Aquilée crut devoir en réclamer une partie." See SC 154.107. The source of Concordia's collection is an interesting question, but ultimately unknowable in its details. Chromatius indicates at the end of §1 of this sermon that they had been the personal possession of the new bishop, but this of course only takes us one step closer to the original source. The two possibilities are Milan and (as was the case for many of Gaudentius' relics) the east. See SC 154.104-105. Unfortunately, the sermon is incomplete, breaking off just as Chromatius is telling the story of how the relics of the apostle Thomas were brought back to the west from India. Perhaps if we possessed the end of the sermon, we would know more about the journey taken by his relics, if not any of the others'.

⁷⁰⁰ Sotinel and Lizzi are agreed that the source the relics is unknown, and that they did not come from Milan, but directly from the east. See *Identité civique*, 206; and *Vescovi e strutture*, 149. For the initiative shown by the church of Concordia, see *Identité civique*, 208.

⁷⁰¹ In her discussion of the provenance of the relics, which she believes to have been obtained by a private party, Sotinel says the following about the fate of the relics after their arrival in the upper Adriatic: "The relics acquired by someone (or 'someones') have an entire community as their destination, the community that will become the church of Concordia; and this community in turn, by depositing the relics there and asking to keep a part of them, comes within a more institutional community, the church of Aquileia. We would like to know if this deposit in Aquileia

One particularly violent incident that took place during the late fourth century also serves to illustrate the way in which the transfer of relics signaled a church's position in the emerging hierarchy. Vigilus, as we have seen, became bishop of Trent at an unknown date before 397.⁷⁰² The location of his see, along the upper Adige as it flowed down the Alps from its source in Rhaetia I and II, meant that it was on the front lines of the church's missionary activity in the late fourth century.⁷⁰³ On May 29 of 397, the inter-religious conflict caused by this activity led to the death of three members of Vigilus' junior clergy who were organizing the church's work in the Val di Non, "located about twenty-five stades away from the city [of Trent]," on the opposite side of the Adige, a place that was "isolated as much by its treacherousness as by its geography on account of the narrow passes."⁷⁰⁴ Our sources for these events are the two letters written by

always enters into the initiatives of the Christians of Concordia or results from demands formulated by Chromatius, which would allow us better to clarify the logically unequal (but necessarily hierarchical?) links between the episcopal see and the community of Concordia." See *Identité civique*, 207. In this deposit, might we be witnessing a strategy whereby Chromatius forestalled the emergence of a private, non-institutional authority of the sort generally feared by bishops? If this is the case, the partition of the relics and the creation of Concordia as an episcopal see could be viewed as the result of a negotiation of some kind that served Chromatius' interests by transferring the relics to ecclesiastical possession, and served the interests of Concordia by allowing that Christian community entry into the ranks of episcopal churches.

⁷⁰² 381 is the *terminus post quem* because the bishop of Trent who signed the Acta of the Council of Aquileia was one Abundantius. See *PCBE* 2.1-2 and 2296-2297. Ambrose wrote *Ep.* 62 [Maur. 19] to Vigilus soon after he became bishop, which Otto Faller, the editor of his letters for the *CSEL*, dates to 385. For the *terminus ante quem*, see the Appendix, pp. 568-569.

⁷⁰³ For a survey of the expansion of Christianity in this region during the last quarter of the fourth century, see Rita Lizzi, "Ambrose's Contemporaries and the Christianization of Northern Italy," *Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990): 156-173.

⁷⁰⁴ Both Lizzi and Ralph W. Mathisen date the events to 397; in the judgment of the editors of the *PCBE*, they took place "probably in 398." See Lizzi, *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche*, 81-82; and Mathisen, ed., *People, Personal Expression, and Social Relations in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 1.142; and *PCBE* 2.2296. For a thorough discussion of the events and their background, see Lizzi, *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche*, 59-80. See also Humphries, *Communities of the Blessed*, 181-182. The descriptions of the valley are from Vigilus' *Ep.* 2.2, trans. Mathisen in *People, Personal Expression, and Social Relations in Late Antiquity*, 1.141-147, at 143.

Vigilius, as well as a *Tractatus* of Gaudentius of Brescia and two sermons by Maximus of Turin.⁷⁰⁵

In his Letter 1, written to bishop Simplicianus of Milan, Vigilius gives a brief description of each of the three martyrs and then proceeds to recount how each of them was, one after the other over the course of two days, apprehended by a mob of angry pagans and beaten to death. Their bodies were then burned on a pyre made of the rafters of the (undoubtedly) rudimentary church the three had built there.⁷⁰⁶ At the end of the letter, he mentions that a church was being built on the site of their murders, the purpose of which was obviously to preserve the memory of their sacrifice, and almost certainly also to house their relics.⁷⁰⁷ Their relics would be among the most widely circulated of any north Italian saint or group of saints, and the destinations they reached illustrate the relations of authority that connected the young Christian community of the Val di Non with its counterparts in many other places in the Po Valley.

Vigilius' Letter 2 was written to John Chrysostom, who became bishop of Constantinople at the end of 397 or the beginning of 398.⁷⁰⁸ Like his letter to Simplicianus, this one contains an account of the martyrdom of the three clerics (somewhat more detailed, resulting in a letter that is slightly longer). It also indicates that Vigilius sent relics of the three martyrs along with the

⁷⁰⁵ A Latin edition of the letters has been published by Enrico Menestò, "Le lettere di San Vigilio," in *I martiri della Val di Non e la reazione pagana alla fine del IV secolo*, ed. Antonio Quacquarelli and Iginio Rogger (Trent: Istituto Trentino di Cultura, 1985), 151-170. As mentioned in the previous note, Mathisen has recently published a translation of *Ep. 2* in vol. 1 of *People, Personal Expression, and Social Relations in Late Antiquity*; an edition appears in the second volume (2.114-119).

⁷⁰⁶ Menestò, "Le lettere di San Vigilio," 159-161, ll. 23-90.

⁷⁰⁷ Menestò, "Le lettere di San Vigilio," 161, ll. 90-92: "Reverentiae autem voto cogitamus tenuare grandia, ut id loci basilica construatur, ubi primum gloriosae testimonium meruerunt."

⁷⁰⁸ For the date of Chrysostom's accession, see J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom – Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (London: Duckworth, 1995), 106.

letter.⁷⁰⁹ The gift of relics illustrates the way in which a minor see could strengthen its connection with one of the most important churches of the Roman world. But the choice of Constantinople (in addition to Milan) is interesting, for a similar gift could just as easily have been sent to Rome. Yet Vigilius does not appear to have done so. In order to explain this choice, the gift should perhaps be seen as an outgrowth of the affinity that existed between the ascetic style of episcopal leadership characteristic of north Italian Christianity around the year 400 and the type of episcopal leadership that prevailed in many parts of the east, of which John was an archetypal representative.⁷¹⁰ This affinity is further illustrated by the way in which, after his deposition and exile in 404, John appealed for support to such north Italian churchmen as Chromatius, Gaudentius, and Venerius.⁷¹¹ As we have seen in chapter 1, the reputation of the

⁷⁰⁹ He confesses, however, to a certain amount of apprehension as to the exact quantity of relics that he should send: “cui [sc. Iacobi, an envoy from Constantinople who was to bear the letter and the gift back to John] ego satis timidus, nec parum prudens, cauta mecum dispensatione luctatus, quo minus distributor idoneus pene dum vereor denegavi quod semper debet ut quis feneretur expendi feceram. confiteor multorum privato timore iacturam, nisi ad Iacobum respexissem, sancto Iohanni per quaedam alimenta reverentiae traditurum, ut delegato amore per religiosa vocabula martyres deferentur et iterum sanguine iungeretur non peregrina germanitas” (Mathisen, *People, Personal Expression and Social Relations*, 2.115).

⁷¹⁰ Part of Vigilius’ rationale lies in the prominence of the see of Constantinople. His reference to the “primatus” enjoyed by that church in the first sentence of *Ep.* 2 leaves no doubt. However, John was also a celebrated ascetic; indeed, his criticisms of the luxury of the imperial court were one of the factors that led to his deposition and exile. On John’s embrace of the ascetic life as a young man, see Sozomen, *HE* 8.2, and Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 16-18. For the liberty of speech he exercised with regard to the luxuries of the wealthy, and for his provocative sermon against the empress Eudoxia, see Sozomen, *HE* 8.8 and 20, and Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 238-240. We saw in the previous chapter that in reporting the martyrdom of these three clerics, Vigilius underlines their ascetic lifestyle. See above, pp. 158-159.

⁷¹¹ As the bishop of a minor frontier see, Vigilius probably could not have done much to aid John in his distress. Having become bishop during the 380s, it is also just possible that he had died some time between writing this letter to John and John’s needing his help. The bishop of Constantinople’s letters to Chromatius, Venerius, and Gaudentius are 155, 182, and 184, respectively. They can be found in *PG* 52.702-705, 714-715, and 715-716. That John would have chosen to write to the bishops of Aquileia and Milan can be explained simply by reference to their great prestige. But the fact that their bishops, as was argued in the last chapter, were ascetics probably meant that John believed he would find them sympathetic to his plight. His decision to write to Gaudentius, whose see did not enjoy the same prestige as the others in northern Italy to which Chrysostom appealed, requires us to take into account two important traits of its bishop. First, Gaudentius was an ascetic, like John and like Chromatius and (so we have argued) like Venerius of Milan. Second, he had contacts in the east by virtue of his travels there (probably in the 390s—see the Appendix, p. 570), and thus John may have believed he had some leverage with influential eastern churchmen.

churches of Aquileia and Milan among the churches of the east meant that prominent eastern bishops who were in danger of losing their sees on account of finding themselves on the losing side of a doctrinal quarrel could be expected to appeal to them for help.⁷¹² But that John included Brescia on the list of western churches whose bishops he believed could and would come to his aid, even though it did not enjoy the same prestige as Milan and Aquileia, is best explained by the fact that Gaudentius was an ascetic with connections in the east.⁷¹³ And indeed, he was among the western bishops who answered John's call by traveling to Constantinople as part of the delegation sent by emperor Honorius to ask his brother Arcadius, Augustus of the East, to recall John.⁷¹⁴

The relics of the Val di Non martyrs also served to strengthen the bonds that held together the network of north Italian bishops and churches that are the focus of this study. Their cult made its way not only to Milan, as attested by Vigilius' first letter, but also to Turin and Brescia. Sermons by Maximus and Gaudentius demonstrate the use to which their cult was put in these new contexts. Maximus makes for an especially interesting case study, for the story he tells about the three martyrs—particularly regarding the motivation of those who killed them—differs substantially from what Vigilius tells us. Whereas Vigilius emphasizes the tranquil methods of evangelization they employed, Maximus portrays their death as violent blowback

⁷¹² In the context of the discussion of the elevation of Milan, Aquileia, and Ravenna to metropolitan status. See chap. 1 above, pp. 66-75.

⁷¹³ Gaudentius refers to his travels in the east in two of his *Tractatus*. In *Tr.* 16.2, he describes the circumstances surrounding his election as bishop of Brescia, mentioning the fact that he was in the east when he received word that the clergy and people of his city had sworn on oath that they would accept none other as the successor of Filastrius. In *Tr.* 17, which we will look at in more detail below, he tells the story of how during his journey to the east he obtained certain relics whose significance could be measured by the fact they once belonged to Basil of Caesarea.

⁷¹⁴ That Gaudentius was part of the delegation is attested by Palladius, *Dialogus de Vita Chrysostomi* 4.

against the aggressive nature of their missionizing.⁷¹⁵ According to his version of events, which “aptly highlighted those details that best met his ‘operational’ aims,” it was rather their constant rebukes and reproaches that sparked a violent reaction on the part of the offended pagans.⁷¹⁶ Maximus wrote two sermons about them: 105 and 106.⁷¹⁷ In them, he does not change any of the facts regarding the manner of their death as reported by Vigilus. However, he does place the emphasis on the persistence of the martyrs in attempting (albeit nonviolently) to prevent the pagans of the Val di Non from carrying out their lustral procession, thus describing their approach “not so much as a passive acceptance of pagan aggression, but as an active testimony of *fides*.”⁷¹⁸ The purpose of Maximus’ particular emphasis is not far to seek, however. Sermons 106 through 108 consist mainly of exhortations to the landowners among his hearers to stop “conniving” with the “idolatry” that takes place on their property and to get on with the unpleasant task of suppressing it.⁷¹⁹ The typical Christian landowner in the early fifth century, it

⁷¹⁵ Vigilus, *Ep.* 1, Menestò, 159, ll. 16-18: “Parati ad omnia, libenter omnia sustinentes, nulli dantes occasionem, gloriam meruerunt.” *Ep.* 2.2, Mathisen, 2.116: “ad quem cum Christi primum militia conscendisset, tubis saepe excita truculenta gentilitas, aemulo furore belli clangoribus inflammavit. Verum unum genus pugnae sanctorum fuit perfectum: omnia sustinere, lacessitos cedere, patientes ferre, passuros privata mansuetudine furorem publicum refrenare, vincere detrectando.” For a discussion of the differences between Vigilus’ and Maximus’ versions of the martyrdoms, see Lizzi, *Vescovi e strutture*, 59-70, and “Ambrose’s Contemporaries,” 169-172.

⁷¹⁶ For this characterization of Maximus’ reception of the cult of the Val di Non martyrs, see Lizzi, “Ambrose’s Contemporaries,” 169.

⁷¹⁷ *CCL* 23.414-418.

⁷¹⁸ Lizzi, “Ambrose’s Contemporaries,” 169. Cf. Maximus, *Serm.* 105.2, *CCL* 23.414: “ac sancti viri arguerent eos erroresque eorum manifestantes rationabili castigatione convincerent” and *Serm.* 106.1, *CCL* 23.417: “hoc praecipue in eorum passione eorum laudavimus, quod dum sacrilegis resistunt, esse martyres meruerunt; et dum eorum superstitionibus contradicunt, palmam iustitiae sunt adepti. Non enim ea causa morti addicti sunt ab his, cur christiani essent, sed propterea magis ad poenam rapti sunt, quod increparentur sacrilegi, cur christiani devotique non essent. ... increpaverunt eos constanter fideliter obiurgarunt.”

⁷¹⁹ The usefulness of these martyrs for Maximus’ purpose is evident in the way in which, over the course of *Sermm.* 105-108, less and less attention is paid to the martyrs (the main subject in *Serm.* 105 and mentioned again in 106) and more and more is paid to the response he expects of his hearers (which comes into focus already in *Serm.* 106, only to move to the center of the preacher’s concerns in *Sermm.* 107 and 108 (in which the martyrs themselves are not even referred to).

seems, preferred to take the “see no evil, hear no evil” approach to the performance of non-Christian rites on his property. Maximus, for his part, has a maximalist interpretation of their obligations, and the relevance of the Val di Non martyrs lies for him precisely in the fact that they refused to remain silent in the face of what, in Maximus’ view, they had a “responsibility” to stop.⁷²⁰

As far as Maximus was concerned, the power of the Val di Non martyrs lay more than anything else in their example. If the church of Turin possessed any of their relics, he makes no mention of them, choosing instead simply to hold up their conduct as worthy of imitation.⁷²¹ Maximus himself seems to provide a clue that would explain this choice, for he states in Sermon 12, delivered on the Feast of Saints Octavus, Adventus, and Solutor of Turin, that “All the martyrs, therefore, are to be very devoutly honored, but the ones whose relics we possess are to be especially venerated by us. For they all help us by their prayers, but these help us also by their suffering.”⁷²² As he goes on, he refers to the way in which the practice of burying the dead

⁷²⁰ Maximus draws a stark contrast between the conduct of the martyrs and the connivance of the Christian landowners in Sermon 106.1, *CCL* 23.417: “Nam cum perspicerent in regione sua gentiles homines adueto sacrilegio quod lustrum vocant funestis circuituionibus loca universa polluer[e], et innocentes quosque vel absentes si non conscientia, vel coniventia maculare – maculat enim coniventia eum qui, cum contradicendo prohibere potuit ne fieret, ut fieret quasi dissimulando permisit.” Cf. Sermon 106.2, *CCL* 23.417: “Ergo, fratres, quia habemus exemplum, imitemur sanctos viros si non passionis martyrio vel certe christianitatis officio! ... Ceterum si videntes haec tacemus silemus et patimur, reos nos statuimus si non operatione sceleris at tamen dissimulationis adsensu. ... Solent enim plerique miseri dicere: ‘Nescio, non iussi; causa mea non est, non me tangit.’ Sed haec, ut dixi, loquitur miser quisque vel trepidus. Negat enim si iussisse fieret qui noluit iubere ut non fieret.” Cf. also Sermon 107.1, *CCL* 23.420: “Quisquis enim intellegit in re sua exerceri sacrilegia nec fieri prohibet, quodammodo ipse praecepit. Tacendo enim et non arguendo consensum praebuit immolanti.”

⁷²¹ His eagerness to do so suggests that a martyr cult could flourish—albeit in a limited fashion—even in the absence of his or her relics.

⁷²² Sermon 12.2, *CCL* 23.41: “Cuncti igitur martyres devotissime percolendi sunt, sed specialiter hi venerandi sunt a nobis quorum reliquias possidemus. Illi enim nos orationibus adiuvant, isti etiam adiuvant passione.” In Sermon 16.2-3, also delivered on a saint’s feast day (albeit one that is not named), Maximus explains to his audience that he has a strong belief in the didactic power of a noble deed: “Melius ergo docemur facto quam voce. Denique sancti martyres etsi voce tacent, factorum virtute nos edocent; etsi lingua silent, martyrii passione persuadent. Unde quamvis disertus orator facundia sua me doceat, id tamen quod utile est mihi melius disco exemplo sanctorum quam adsertione verborum. Citius mihi persuadent oculi quod cernunt, quam auris potest insinuare quod praeterit. Auditui enim cito inreperit oblivio, oculorum autem historia semper inspicitur. Quis enim non omnibus horis momentisque conspiciat, quemadmodum tunc beati martyres propter nomen Christi diversis subiacuere suppliciis et de ipsis

near the bodies of the martyrs offered special protection to Christians, “for inasmuch as the underworld feared them punishment would not touch us, and while Christ shed His light on them shadowy gloom would flee from us. Sleeping with the holy martyrs, we have escaped the shadows of hell—not by our own merits but nonetheless as sharers in holiness.”⁷²³ The presence of the martyrs’ bodies is what makes this protective power available to their earthly clients, for “whoever is joined to a martyr will not be held by the gate of the underworld. For the gate of hell does not hold the martyrs because the kingdom of paradise receives them.”⁷²⁴

Thus Maximus is more apt to appeal to the power of a saint’s example if no relics are at hand to exercise this other sort of power, whereas the power of relics shows itself in that “those obsessed by unclean demons are set free.”⁷²⁵ Indeed, he goes on, “Everyone knows that these and other more powerful wonders are done by the saints”—provided, that is, that the relics, which are the instruments through which the saints work such power, are present.⁷²⁶ On this basis, therefore, we can conclude that whereas news of the martyrdom of Sisinnius, Martyrius, and Alexander travelled freely enough within the community of north Italian bishops, the same cannot be said of their relics. Maximus’ decision to appeal to the power of their example rather

poenis quodammodo triumphabant? Quanto enim plura patiebantur, tanto se victoriosissimos esse credebant. Victoria enim est martyris iudicium persequentis, sicut scriptum est: *Et vincas cum iudicaris*. Cum iudicatur enim martyr et condemnatur, tunc vincit atque prosternit. Tali enim iudicio non est addictus ad mortem sed absolutus ad requiem; ac per hoc manifestissima ratione vicisse est non perisse. Constat igitur sanctos martyres plus passione docere quam voce, quamquam et ipsa passio sine voce non sit” (CCL 23.60-61).

⁷²³ Sermon 12.2, CCL 23.42: “dum illos tartarum metuit, nos poena non tangat; dum illis Christus inluminat, a nobis tenebrarum caligo diffugiat. Cum sanctis ergo martyribus quiescentes evadimus inferni tenebras si non propriis meritis at tamen consortii sanctitate.”

⁷²⁴ Sermon 12.2, CCL 23.42: “quisque sociatur martyri tartari ianua non tenetur. Martyres enim inferni porta non possidet, quoniam eos paradysi regna suscipiunt.”

⁷²⁵ Sermon 12.2, CCL 23.42: “Cernimus enim ab his frequenter obsessos inmundissimis daemonibus homines liberari.” In addition to that of the Val di Non martyrs, one instance where he appeals purely to a saint’s example is Sermon 4 on Lawrence (§§1 and 3).

⁷²⁶ Sermon 12.2, CCL 23.42: “Haec et alia potiora mirabilia per sanctos fieri omnibus notum est.”

than to the power of their intercession demonstrates with reasonable certainty that his church did not possess any of their ashes, recovered from the ruins of the church that was put to the torch by their persecutors. But the fact that relics did not spread as quickly as news did not prevent the church of Brescia from obtaining a sampling of them, whose martyrdom Gaudentius briefly recounts in a sermon that makes mention of all the relics in the collection of Brescia.⁷²⁷

That Brescia was able to obtain relics of the Val di Non martyrs whereas Maximus was only able to invoke the memory of their heroism may be attributed to geography (Brescia is on the way from Trent to Milan) or to the fact that the church of Brescia was more established (and perhaps wealthier) than that of Turin.⁷²⁸ But perhaps the most outstanding way in which the cult of the Val di Non martyrs demonstrated the power of relics to define a church's place in the ecclesiastical hierarchy is in the way Simplicianus of Milan was able to translate the arrival of their relics in Milan into a continuation of the high status the city had enjoyed during the long tenure of his influential predecessor.⁷²⁹ Although his episcopate was brief (397-400/401), the outcomes of three church councils that were held in Carthage (397), Turin (398/399), and Toledo (400) during this short period demonstrate that, even after the death of Ambrose, Milan under Simplicianus' guidance was able to hold on for just a while longer to its privileged ecclesiastical

⁷²⁷ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 17.13. This sermon will be discussed in greater detail below.

⁷²⁸ Turin had only been elevated to an episcopal see around the time of Ambrose's death, and Maximus was probably its first bishop. He is, at any rate, the first attested bishop of Turin. See Lanzoni, *Le diocesi d'Italia*, 2.1046-1047; and *PCBE* 2.1469-1470. Gaudentius' predecessor as bishop of Brescia, Filaster, had come to occupy that office no later than 381, since he is among the signatories of the *Acta* of the Council of Aquileia in that year. See *Gesta Concilii Aquileienseis* 1, *CSEL* 82/3.327. In his *Tr.* 21.8, *CSEL* 68.186-187, Gaudentius depicts Filaster as having taken charge of an existing church, not as the founder of a new one: "Brixia eum rudis quondam, sed cupida doctrinae promeruit, scientiae quidem spiritalis ignara, studio tamen discendi laudabilis." Lanzoni lists Filaster as the seventh bishop of Brescia, and locates Clatheus/Clateus, the city's first bishop, chronologically "immediately after the peace granted to the church by Constantine or, perhaps, even before." See *Le diocesi*, 2.961-963.

⁷²⁹ On the connection between the gift of the relics of the Val di Non martyrs and Milan's ability to maintain its position, see Lizzi, *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche*, 92-93.

position, which was the main catalyst that produced the distinctive north Italian ecclesiastical culture of the late fourth and early fifth century.⁷³⁰ The arrival of the relics of these martyrs, it seems, reaffirmed Simplicianus' commitment to—and ability to undertake—an Ambrosian style of leadership that made full use of the potential offered by the cult of relics to symbolize Milan's prestige and influence and to cement her links with other churches—in this case a subordinate church.⁷³¹

Like the church of Concordia and her mother church at Aquileia, the church of Brescia under the leadership of Gaudentius obtained a collection of martyr relics that served not only to underscore the city's new Christian identity, but also to display its prestige and position in the hierarchy of early fifth-century north Italian Christianity.⁷³² The difference between Brescia and the two aforementioned churches, however, lay in the wide variety of relics in the hands of the church of Brescia, the result of Gaudentius' travels in the east and of the close relationship the church of Brescia enjoyed with that of Milan. The bishop put all fifty of the relics possessed by his church on display on the occasion of the consecration of that city's *basilica apostolorum*.⁷³³ This was no doubt intended to be a festive event. Many episcopal guests from neighboring churches had been invited and expected to attend. Unfortunately for Gaudentius, however, "the

⁷³⁰ On these councils, see Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 2.973-978 (Turin), 2.1058-1062 (Toledo), and 2.1158-1159 (Carthage). On the Council of Turin, see also Mathisen, "The Council of Turin (398/399)."

⁷³¹ Vigilius signals his subordinate position at the end of the letter when he greets Simplicianus "speciali servitio" and expresses his wish that Simplicianus' grief over the death of the martyrs may serve to spread their fame: "quaeso, ut moerorem meum Domino commendare digneris. Denegare non potui, quod tuum in nobis erat, gloriosius fieret suscipientis merito, non gratia largientis" (*Ep.* 1, Menestò, 161, ll. 97-102).

⁷³² Gaudentius' concern for the Christian identity of Brescia is indicated in the words he uses to praise Benivolus at the beginning of the *praefatio* he attached to the small collection of sermons he was sending to the retired palatine official, in which he closely associates the privileged among the residents of Brescia with the people of God: "Nam sicut honoratorum nostrae urbis, ita etiam dominicae plebis deo adnuente dignissimum caput es" (*CSEL* 68.3).

⁷³³ On this sermon, see Lizzi, *Vescovi e strutture*, 132-137.

boldness of the barbarians has kept away the greatest portion of the assembly today so that other holy bishops, whom we had believed would be present, did not come.”⁷³⁴ This reference to barbarian activity most likely refers to one of the occasions on which a barbarian army entered northern Italy during Gaudentius’ episcopate—401-402 (Alaric and the Visigoths), 405-406 (Radagaisus), and 408-412 (Alaric again).⁷³⁵

Because this sermon was delivered at the dedication of Brescia’s *basilica apostolorum*, it served mainly to advertise Brescia’s extensive collection of relics, which was indeed impressive in comparison with that of any other north Italian church of the time, with the possible exception of Milan.⁷³⁶ It consisted of relics of several figures from the New Testament, local martyrs, and one very significant collection that Gaudentius had brought back from the east. The full list is as follows: John the Baptist,⁷³⁷ Andrew;⁷³⁸ Thomas;⁷³⁹ Luke the Evangelist;⁷⁴⁰ Gervasius, Protasius, and Nazarius;⁷⁴¹ Sisinnius, Martyrius, and Alexander;⁷⁴² and the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, in Cappadocia.⁷⁴³ The occasion also afforded Gaudentius the opportunity to introduce to his

⁷³⁴ *Tr.* 17.2, *CSEL* 68.141: “importunitas barbarorum maximam partem celebritatis diei hodierno subtraxerit, ne ceteri sancti antistites, quos interfuturos credidimus, advenirent.”

⁷³⁵ For these expeditions into Italy, see chap. 1 above, pp. 51-52.

⁷³⁶ If all of the relics mentioned in Victricius *De laude sanctorum* originated from Milan, it would mean that that city’s collection was also quite extensive, for in addition to those sent to Rouen, it also included contact relics of Peter and Paul obtained from Rome. See above, p. 226n.683; and Huskinson, *Concordia Apostolorum*, 46-47.

⁷³⁷ *Tr.* 17.3-4.

⁷³⁸ *Tr.* 17.5.

⁷³⁹ *Tr.* 17.6.

⁷⁴⁰ *Tr.* 17.10.

⁷⁴¹ *Tr.* 17.12.

⁷⁴² *Tr.* 17.13.

⁷⁴³ *Tr.* 17.14.

hearers some of the saints that were less likely to be familiar to them, or to point to some aspect of their sanctity that in his view may not have been sufficiently appreciated. Thus Gaudentius says of Thomas, whose reputation evidently suffered in Late Antiquity as it does now, that

if he had been unbelieving, as is the opinion of some, Christ would not have deigned to appear to him after His resurrection. ... He wished only to show in him that all later believers, such as we, people similar to Thomas who was absent when Christ appeared to the apostles, are to tender an undoubting faith in their response, and are not to demand to see in the flesh Him whom they have learned from the testimony of the apostles to have risen after the passion of the cross and to have been seen. ... that he was absent, that he eagerly sought both to see and to touch the Lord, all pertained to our salvation so that we might most clearly know the reality of the Lord's resurrection. The blessed Thomas, providently reprov'd for his needful curiosity, confirmed this resurrection saying to Him: *My Lord and my God*.⁷⁴⁴

A responsible bishop would quite naturally seek to put the martyrs whose relics he possessed in the best possible light if there was any question about their character during their earthly pilgrimage.

But Gaudentius spends even more time relating the story of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, whose relics he had obtained on his way through Cappadocia while traveling to Jerusalem.⁷⁴⁵ Because these saints were neither apostolic nor local, they were bound to be unfamiliar to many of his listeners, and because they represented four-fifths of the saints whose relics composed

⁷⁴⁴ *Tr.* 17.7-9, *CSEL* 68.142-143: "qui utique si iuxta opinionem quorundam infidelis fuisset, Christus illi post resurrectionem suam non fuerat apparere dignatus. Scriptum est enim: *Quoniam invenitur ab his, qui non temptant eum, apparet vero illis, qui fidem habent in ipsum*. Quod autem dixit illi salvator: *Noli esse incredulus, sed fidelis*, et: *Quia vidisti, credidisti; beati, qui non viderunt et crediderunt*, informare in eo voluit omnes postea credituros, ut populus noster Thomae similis, qui absens erat, quando apparuit Christus apostolis, relationi eorum indubitata fide commodet nec exigit in carne conspiciere, quem testimonio apostolorum post passionem crucis resurrexisse et visum fuisse dedicerit. Neque enim postquam regressus ad caelos solis in hoc mundo virtutibus praesens est, debet cottidie pro cuiuscumque voluntate singulis universisque credentibus corporeus apparere. Sufficiat nobis, quod sancti Thomae curiositas ambiguitatis futurae scrupulo satisfecit. Quod enim absens fuit, quod avidius et videre et attrahere dominum perquisivit, totum nostrae procurabatur saluti, ut evidentius nosceremus resurrectionis dominicae veritatem, quam beatus Thomas ob necessariam curiositatem providenter reprehensus adfirmat dicens ei: *Dominus meus et deus meus*" (trans. Stephen L. Boehr, "Gaudentius of Brescia: Sermons and Letters." Ph.D. Dissertation. Catholic University of America, 1965, pp.192-193).

⁷⁴⁵ *Tr.* 17. 14, *CSEL* 68.144: "cum per urbes Cappadociae Hierosolymam pergerem."

Brescia's collection, he had good reason to do so.⁷⁴⁶ More than half of the sermon is therefore devoted to making their sufferings known to Gaudentius' audience of north Italian bishops.⁷⁴⁷ These martyrs were soldiers serving in the army of one of the persecuting emperors of the early fourth century when he issued an edict demanding that all his subjects sacrifice to the gods.⁷⁴⁸ They of course refused, and the attempts of the emperor to coax, flatter, cajole, and threaten them were to no avail.⁷⁴⁹ Finally, the emperor ordered that they be stripped and exposed overnight (it was March in Lesser Armenia) so that they might die of cold.⁷⁵⁰ However, to induce them to change their mind, the emperor ordered that they be placed near a bathhouse, "*sub conspectu eorum fumantibus*," in which they could warm themselves if only they agreed to the emperor's demand.⁷⁵¹ One of the forty gave in to the temptation, but his place was taken by a pagan soldier

⁷⁴⁶ The earliest written source attesting the existence of these martyrs is Basil of Caesarea's Homily 19 (*PG* 31.507-526), which Gaudentius follows at many points. See Hippolyte Delehaye, "The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste," *The American Catholic Quarterly Review* 24.93 (1899): 161-171, at 163. For a brief commentary on this sermon, see Jean Bernardi, *La prédication des pères cappadociens. Le prédicateur et son auditoire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), 83-84. See also pp. 303-307 for a brief overview of Gregory of Nyssa's three sermons on these martyrs. Basil had been bishop from 370 to 379, and according to Bernardi (p. 83), Basil's Homily 19 seems to date from this period rather than from his years as a presbyter. It appears also to have been delivered at the inauguration of a *martyrium* dedicated to them, and that his listeners were unfamiliar with their story (p. 84). But Basil and Gregory were not, for their mother had established the cult of the Forty Martyrs on their family estate when Gregory, at any rate, was still quite young. Her action was probably responsible for the popularity of their cult in Cappadocia, and may even have spurred a revival of interest in it at Sebaste, where her youngest son Peter eventually became bishop. See Bernardi, *La prédication*, 304. The cult of these martyrs quickly spread to Constantinople, and it was Gaudentius who introduced their cult and their relics to the west (see Delehaye, "The Forty Martyrs," 170).

⁷⁴⁷ Gaudentius' familiarity with these martyrs might also have been supplemented by what he learned about them from Basil's nieces, who gave him their relics (mentioned in § 15).

⁷⁴⁸ The emperor is not named, but Gaudentius' reference to the "*feralia edicta sacrilegi regis ... ut omnis populus sacrificare daemoniis cogeretur*" (*Tr.* 17.19, *CSEL* 68.146) means that the possibilities are Diocletian or one of his successors—Galerius, Maximinus, or Licinius.

⁷⁴⁹ *Tr.* 17.20-21.

⁷⁵⁰ According to the *Acta Sanctorum* (Mart. 2.3.12-16), their feast day is March 10. According to Bernardi, two of Gregory of Nyssa's sermons in praise of the Forty are dated to March 9, the third to March 10. See *La prédication des pères cappadociens*, 303.

⁷⁵¹ *Tr.* 17.22-23.

who, on seeing an angel descend to give heavenly rewards to the sufferers, stripped himself naked, declared himself a Christian, and rushed to join the thirty-nine.⁷⁵² The order was then given for the bodies of the forty to be burned, and the ashes thrown into the river, but not before “religious hands” were able to steal or buy a portion of them.⁷⁵³

Having told the story of how the martyrs died and how their relics were recovered, Gaudentius has nearly come to the end of his sermon. What he says by way of conclusion, however, indicates perhaps more than anything else in the sermon the message he wishes his guests to take away from the occasion. “We have therefore both these forty and the aforementioned ten saints, who have been gathered from various parts of the earth, which is why we have perceived that this basilica, which is dedicated to their merits, should be called the ‘Council of the Saints.’”⁷⁵⁴ He presents the ten and the forty as the two “halves” of the collection, which together illustrate Brescia’s connection with her sister churches in northern Italy, as well as with the universal Christian community, including in parts of the empire that are far distant from Brescia’s immediate vicinity. His stress in this sermon is thus on the ecumenical nature of the collection, an ecumenicity that puts Brescia on the (spiritual) map, a fitting position for a church whose bishop was an experienced traveler who knew not only Latin but also Greek; a church that boasted a retired *magister memoriae* as its “*caput*” and kept close links with the illustrious see of Milan.⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁵² Tr. 17.26-29.

⁷⁵³ Tr. 17.32-34, esp. 34, CSEL 68.150: “non defuerunt religiosae manus, quae partem reliquiarum vel furto eriperent vel pretio compararent.”

⁷⁵⁴ Tr. 17.37, CSEL 68.150: “Habemus ergo et hos Quadraginta et praedictos decem sanctos ex diversis terrarum partibus congregatos, unde hanc ipsam basilicam eorum meritis dedicatam Concilium sanctorum nuncupari oportere decernimus” (translation mine).

⁷⁵⁵ Gaudentius’ facility in Greek is indicated by his use of Basil of Caesarea’s homily on the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste. The retired *magister memoriae* is Benivulus, mentioned in n.732 above. While holding this post, Benivulus had been asked in early 386 to draft a law that would aid the court of emperor Valentinian II in seizing a

Conclusion

We have seen in this chapter that the cult of the martyrs and their relics had a variety of functions in north Italian Christianity in the late fourth and early fifth century. First, the use to which bishops like Maximus of Turin, Gaudentius of Brescia, and their contemporaries in other parts of the Christian world put the cult of Saints Peter and Paul allowed them to assert a local identity and pursue priorities that were pressing in their local contexts. The independent reception of the cult of these apostolic saints and martyrs showed that they belonged to the universal church as much as they belonged to Rome, and was crucial in helping the churches of northern Italy to define themselves over against the church of Rome at precisely the time that Damasus and his successors were seeking to increase their authority throughout Italy. These churches could also foster their own peculiar identity by cultivating the memory and entrusting themselves to the protection of a different set of saints from those whose cults were prominent in Rome. There was bound to be overlap between Roman and north Italian saints, since Peter and Paul were so central to the fusing of Roman (in the broad sense) and Christian identity that their appeal was universal. But the spread of the cult of Gervasius, Protasius, and Nazarius to Brescia, and the interest of Maximus and Gaudentius in the Val di Non martyrs illustrate the way in which these bishops promoted the cult of local saints as a means of highlighting the “sacred

basilica in which to hold its (Homoian) Easter services. He refused on grounds of conscience and resigned. Gaudentius, as a militant pro-Nicene, was proud of the association of the honorable civil servant with his church, and this element in his context should be kept in mind when reading any of his writings. This incident, as well as Gaudentius’ depiction of it, will be discussed in chap. 5 below. The close links between Brescia and Milan are illustrated by the fact that two of the 21 *tractatus* in Gaudentius’ collection were delivered either in the presence of the bishop of Milan or in Milan itself, which is situated roughly 45 miles west of Brescia. *Tr.* 16, his ordination sermon, was delivered at Brescia with Ambrose (§9: “communem patrem Ambrosium”) in attendance, and at the beginning *Tr.* 20, *CSEL* 68.181, his sermon for the Feast of Peter and Paul, he refers to the “venerabilis antistes Christi, communis autem pater,” who “compulit excusantem, ut iterum dilectionem vestram tractatu mei sermonis alloquerer,” which is most likely Ambrose, or at any rate his successor.

heritage” of their own place.⁷⁵⁶ The inclusion of the feast days of these saints in the liturgical calendar of these churches placed a unique stamp on the rhythm of their civic life. In a similar way, the construction of *basilicae apostolorum* in many episcopal sees in northern Italy allowed their bishops to position themselves as the facilitators of the *renovatio urbis* that their presence in the city alone could provide. We have only discussed Brescia’s basilica, but that is merely because it is only in this case that we have a sermon describing its collection. The size and cosmopolitan nature of its collection is probably its only distinctive characteristic compared to those of most other north Italian churches.⁷⁵⁷

The cult of the saints also gave the north Italian church as a whole a means whereby lines of authority could be delineated at a time when new layers of ecclesiastical administration were being created. In this context of the crystallization of a more complex church hierarchy, the acquisition, the giving, and the taking of relics were acts charged with significance, as they allowed a church to signal where it fit in this set of arrangements. In this respect, northern Italy was different from other churches only insofar as it embraced this tool earlier than they did, and insofar as we have literary evidence that allows us to understand something of the relationships among the churches that were articulated in this way. The acquisition of relics might demonstrate the initiative of which a church that had not yet become an episcopal see was capable, as in the case of Concordia. The giving of relics might indicate that a church had a lower place in the hierarchy than the recipient church, as was the case in Concordia’s gift of relics to Aquileia and Trent’s gift to Milan. By contrast, however, a prominent and influential see, like Milan, might give relics as an act of patronage in an attempt to spread its own influence,

⁷⁵⁶ Humphries, *Communities of the Blessed*, 55.

⁷⁵⁷ As was pointed out in the discussion of Concordia (see above, pp. 228-230), that church also had relics of saints from the east. But the size and diversity of Brescia’s collection was undoubtedly greater.

as in Ambrose's gift to Victricius of Rouen, a strategy that might be expected to prove particularly effective in light of the fact that the Roman church steadfastly refused to divide the bodies of its famous apostolic pair. This process was no doubt playing out in many parts of the Roman world during this period. But the evidence from northern Italy perhaps illustrates the point more clearly than that from other regional churches. The buildings these bishops constructed and the sacred contents they placed in them—gathered as they were from across the world—served to highlight these churches' independent sense of identity. Like the bodies of their bishops, weakened by fasts and denied the joys of the flesh, they marked northern Italy off from Rome and its suburbicarian satellites as a zone where an alternative conception of episcopal authority prevailed.

CHAPTER 4: “SERVING THE ONE, SO THAT THEY MAY REIGN OVER ALL”:

AMBROSE, RUFINUS, AND PETER CHRYSOLOGUS ON THE VIRTUOUS

EMPEROR

The two previous chapters have shown that the Christian bishops of northern Italy in the late fourth and early fifth century thought a lot about how to assert and legitimize their authority—over their own churches as well as vis-à-vis other churches. They sought to present their ascetic self-denial as an indispensable component of their authority over their own supporters, and to control the burgeoning cult of the martyrs and their relics in order to define their churches’ position in the emerging hierarchical relations among churches, as well as to fend off challenges from potential (non-clerical) rivals within their communities. Bishops, however, were not the only authority figures in late antique society who had to devise new ways of legitimizing their authority and of identifying new constituencies on whom they could rely for support. Constantine’s patronage of the church had given the bishops, as the leaders of this institution, a new prominence in Roman society. They and other politically-minded churchmen in turn took advantage of their newfound visibility and influence to publicize a Christian vision of what made a ruler virtuous.⁷⁵⁸ Just as the various philosophical schools had traditionally competed to define the nature of virtue itself and to articulate how virtue best applied in the realm of politics, so also toward the end of the fourth century Christian bishops took over the role of philosophers in spelling out what was expected of rulers.

⁷⁵⁸ On this, see Harold Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 72-110; *idem*, “The Church, Society, and Political Power,” *Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 2, *From Constantine to c. 600*, ed. Augustine Casiday and Frederick W. Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 403-428; and Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).

The qualities of the ideal ruler had been an important topic of philosophical reflection since the days of the Greek city-states.⁷⁵⁹ Philosophers in the ancient world had long taken advantage of their privilege of “free speech” (*parrhēsia*) to admonish autocratic rulers on their moral duties as those who wielded great power.⁷⁶⁰ As a result, rulers had always needed to conform to one degree or another to the expectations created in their subjects by the ideas of the philosophers and by the freedom they enjoyed in expressing them. By Late Antiquity, Roman emperors legitimized their authority by fighting barbarians, issuing laws, and rewarding their aristocratic supporters with high office and lofty titles. They used an elaborate court ceremonial, developed by Diocletian in the late third century, to show that they were no ordinary members of the human race.⁷⁶¹ The custom of commissioning panegyrics was a means by which emperors could enlist the spoken word to show how they lived up to their subjects’ expectations.⁷⁶²

Christian bishops in the fourth century began to influence this set of expectations in two significant ways. First, they altered the traditional image of the virtuous sovereign by placing at its center the traditional Roman virtue of *pietas* in the newer, narrower sense of religious

⁷⁵⁹ On the origins of philosophical reflection on political matters and rulership, see Janet Coleman, *A History of Political Thought: From Ancient Greece to Early Christianity* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2000). On the tradition of philosophers exercising *parrhēsia*, see Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 81-84; and *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire in the Fourth Century: Select Orations of Themistius*, trans. and ed. Peter Heather and David Moncur (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), 4-5.

⁷⁶⁰ On this concept, which Peter Brown characterizes as “an infinitely precious social elixir” in the context of the authoritarian political system of the late empire, see *Power and Persuasion*, 65-68.

⁷⁶¹ These changes are described very succinctly by Simon Corcoran, “Before Constantine,” in *The Cambridge Guide to the Age of Constantine*, ed. Noel Lenski (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 43.

⁷⁶² On late antique panegyrics, see Sabine MacCormack, “Latin Prose Panegyrics: Tradition and Discontinuity in the Later Roman Empire,” *Revue des études augustiniennes* 22.1 (1976): 29-77; and *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyrici Latini*, ed. C. E. V. Nixon and Barbara Saylor Rodgers (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994); and *Latin Panegyric*, ed. Roger Rees (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 223-386.

devotion.⁷⁶³ Second, they devised a much more effective “enforcement mechanism” than their pagan predecessors had been able to establish. Because the bishops did not merely represent a constituency of imperial elites, as did the philosophers and *rhetors* whose traditional duty it was to hold up to princes a mirror of virtuous conduct, but were in charge of an institution, they could mount an effective resistance to an emperor who chose not to heed their advice.⁷⁶⁴ As Peter Brown has pointed out, “no philosopher had ever possessed a basilica that could house an audience of three thousand.”⁷⁶⁵ Bishops could activate this resistance by inducing their followers to engage along with them in civil disobedience. This is what Ambrose, for example, did during the basilica controversies of 385 and 386.⁷⁶⁶ The unwillingness of their followers to accept a bishop other than the one who had been canonically elected made it difficult, though not impossible, for the ruler simply to replace an Ambrose or a John Chrysostom with someone who would be more pliable.⁷⁶⁷ In most circumstances, bishops were simply too well entrenched to be forced out of office or made to go away. Those in authority were thus obliged to let them speak.

This chapter will focus on three north Italian churchmen—Ambrose, Rufinus, and Peter Chrysologus. Ambrose and Peter were bishops, whereas Rufinus was an ascetic theologian and

⁷⁶³ Drake, “Church, Society, and Political Power,” 407-410.

⁷⁶⁴ Drake, “Church, Society, and Political Power,” 409-410.

⁷⁶⁵ *Power and Persuasion*, 112.

⁷⁶⁶ Because these controversies took place in the context of a struggle for authority between bishop Ambrose and the “Arian” court of emperor Valentinian II, they will be discussed in chap. 5 as part of the north Italian bishops’ multifaceted response to that form of Christianity.

⁷⁶⁷ As Drake points out, John Chrysostom’s exile created unrest in the church of Constantinople that was only resolved when the imperial government agreed that he should be made a saint. See “Church, Society, and Political Power,” 411. For the rules governing episcopal elections in Late Antiquity, see Jean Gaudemet, *L’église dans l’empire romain (IVe-Ve siècles)* (Paris: Sirey, 1959), 330-337; Peter Norton, *Episcopal Elections 250-600: Hierarchy and Popular Will in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 52-80; and Andreas Thier, *Hierarchie und Autonomie: Regelungstraditionen der Bischofsbestellung in der Geschichte des kirchlichen Wahlrechts bis 1140* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 2011), 15-139.

historian who was ordained a presbyter by Chromatius of Aquileia.⁷⁶⁸ But although these individuals did not all hold the same ecclesiastical office and presented their ideas about the ideal Christian ruler in different literary genres, when their individual visions are set side by side, a common and distinctive north Italian approach to the question of the proper exercise of imperial authority does nevertheless emerge. Eusebius of Caesarea was the founder of the ideology of the Christian empire, and as such is an indispensable reference point for considering the significance of any other Christian reflection on the nature and purpose of politics and rulership in Late Antiquity. Like Eusebius, the three figures discussed in this chapter illustrate a Christian reception of the ancient pagan tradition of reflection on kingship. Their reception, however, is independent of that of Eusebius and as such differs from him on several points. For the purposes of establishing a useful *comparandum*, we will spend much time in this chapter looking at figures whose context was the foundational period of our study, but the lengthy discussions of Rufinus and Peter Chrysologus will bring us into the fifth century.

Ambrose's views on kingship were formed in the context of his interactions with several emperors on matters of policy that he deemed to be of vital interest for the church. On two occasions, for example, he successfully resisted the attempts of Valentinian II's court to secure the use of a basilica in Milan. He strong-armed Theodosius I into rescinding his order that the bishop of Callinicum in Upper Mesopotamia underwrite the rebuilding of that city's synagogue, which had been burned down by an enraged mob of the bishop's followers. And he brought Theodosius to heel over an indiscriminate massacre of 7,000 citizens of Thessalonica. His own writings, whether letters or orations pronounced at the funerals of these emperors, offer an

⁷⁶⁸ That Rufinus was a presbyter of the church of Aquileia is mentioned by Gennadius, *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis* liber 17.

indispensable aid in interpreting the principles that underlay these confrontations and determined what he sought to achieve through them.⁷⁶⁹

Rufinus is an especially interesting case study in the adaptation of the Eusebian ideal to the conditions of northern Italy in the early fifth century, the time at which he translated (with some revisions) the ten books of Eusebius' *Church History* and added two of his own covering the period from the Council of Nicaea through the death of Theodosius I (325-395). Although Rufinus was not a bishop and spent most of his adult life in the east, his project of translation/revision and continuation should be placed in the north Italian context, since it was undertaken at the behest of and dedicated to Chromatius of Aquileia.⁷⁷⁰ The fact that Chromatius was involved in the production of this text as Rufinus' host both before and after its writing suggests that the views expressed in it by Rufinus at least roughly mirrored those of Chromatius.

The third north Italian churchman who will be discussed in this chapter, Peter Chrysologus, was bishop of Ravenna during roughly the second quarter of the fifth century.⁷⁷¹ The fact that Peter was the bishop of the city in which the imperial family then resided meant that he could not avoid expressing himself on the matter of kingship, and he articulated an ideal of kingship whereby the Christian ruler derived his (or her) legitimacy by adhering to the true faith. We will reconstruct Peter's vision of the virtuous emperor by referring to a dozen or so of his sermons in which he treats of themes that typically been dealt with in the Greco-Roman tradition of philosophical reflection on kingship. But before coming to the contributions of these

⁷⁶⁹ Ambrose's political writings have been collected and translated by J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz in *Ambrose of Milan: Political Letters and Speeches* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005).

⁷⁷⁰ As indicated by the Prologue he appended to the two books that were his original work. See *CCL* 20.267-268.

⁷⁷¹ Ca. 426/430-ca. 450. For the dates of Peter's episcopate, see chap. 1 above, p. 67n.197.

three ecclesiastical figures, we must first say something about this more established tradition of thinking about kingship as it stood in the mid-to-late fourth century.

Reflection on Kingship: Preserve of the Philosophers

Bringing the insights of philosophy to bear on the art of politics and government was already an ancient tradition in the late fourth and early fifth century. Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics* were the headwaters of a tradition of reflection on the nature of human society and the difficulties involved in managing commonwealths and preventing them from succumbing to the darker side of human nature. The challenge of theorizing about the state was perhaps the philosophical problem that interested the Romans the most. It is the one to which they gave the most reflection, and their far-flung and long-lived empire gave them more opportunity than any other ancient civilization to test their theory in practice. Cicero's *De republica* was a repository for much of the political wisdom garnered in the course of the Roman Republic's long history.⁷⁷² The Roman Empire, which united the entire Mediterranean basin for the first and only time in history under the rule of a single state, presented an unprecedented opportunity for its rulers either to rule well, and ensure peace, order, and a modicum of prosperity for a considerable portion of the earth's inhabitants, or to rule badly, and plunge much of the world's population into disorder and violence.

This unique set of circumstances helped to sustain the tradition of political philosophy throughout the imperial period, calling forth works such as Seneca's *De clementia*, written for his young protégé Nero (r. 54-68), and Dio Chrysostom's four *Discourses on Kingship*, written

⁷⁷² Janet Coleman, *A History of Political Thought*, vol. 1, *From Ancient Greece to Early Christianity* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2000), 275-284.

for Trajan (r. 98-117).⁷⁷³ These philosophers made use of the traditional privilege of *parrhēsia* to offer their patrons frank advice on the art of governing. Dio is particularly significant in this regard, for he joined to his rhetorical prowess a willingness to endure the hardship of self-imposed exile rather than associate with a tyrant, and was thus celebrated in the ancient world as being both a philosopher and a sophist.⁷⁷⁴ His golden tongue, which allowed him to express his ideas in a subtle and aesthetically pleasing manner, gained him a hearing before the emperor Trajan early in the second century.⁷⁷⁵ His commitment to philosophy dictated that he not flatter the emperor, but instruct him frankly as to the duties of the true king.

There were two important reasons why philosophers in the Roman world had the privilege and the duty of speaking frankly to those in power. First, these men typically came from the same social background as the educated notables who traditionally dominated politics at both the local and the empire-wide level, not only during the Principate but also under the Dominate. They shared their *paideia*—the calm and collected disposition and the ability to

⁷⁷³ Seneca, *De clementia*, in *Moral Essays*, vol. 1, trans. John W. Basore (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1928). The discourses of Dio Chrysostom discussed in this chapter are the first four in his collected works, published in *Discourses 1-11*, trans. J. W. Cohoon (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1932).

⁷⁷⁴ Philostratus places Dio among those “philosophers who expounded their theories with ease and fluency,” and indicates that such were known to the ancients as sophists in addition to those who were renowned merely for their oratorical ability. See *Lives of the Sophists*, 486, trans. Wilbur C. Wright (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961). Philostratus praises Dio for not indulging in flattery in his praise of well-governed cities, pointing out that he “did not seem to extol them, but rather to guide their attention to the fact that they would be ruined if they should change their ways.” Likewise, he expresses admiration for Dio’s unwillingness to stay at Rome during the reign of Domitian, and choosing instead to “hid[e] himself from [men’s] eyes and ears, and occup[y] himself in various ways in various lands, through fear of the tyrants in the capital at whose hands all philosophy was suffering persecution.” During this period of retirement, he supported himself by working at menial tasks while continuing his studies of Plato and Demosthenes. See *Lives of the Sophists*, 487-488.

⁷⁷⁵ For a rather fanciful account of Dio’s relationship with Trajan, see Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists*, 488. He reports Trajan as professing not to know Greek, and thus as being unable to understand Dio. However, Wright cites evidence from Cassius Dio and Pliny the Younger that indicates that Trajan in fact did know Greek. See *LCL* 134.21n.5. On the ebb and flow (mostly flow) of the knowledge of Greek in the western half of the Roman Empire between the first and fifth centuries, see Henri-Irénée Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), 258-262.

speak well that were the product of the classical education pursued by Greco-Roman elites throughout antiquity.⁷⁷⁶ But what set them apart from these elites was their distinctly different, “philosophical,” manner of life. This life of self-denial allowed them to be perceived as being aloof from the normal ties of friendship and patronage, as those who “had found freedom from society.”⁷⁷⁷ Because of this independence, philosophers were able to speak more freely to the powerful than could those who, though no less adept at the art of rhetoric, might easily be regarded as morally compromised by their search for and participation in power.⁷⁷⁸ The lack of political ambition that characterized the ideal philosopher is what allowed him to play an important political role as the spokesman of virtue.

The later second and third centuries did not produce any treatises or discourses on kingship of the stature of those published by Seneca and Dio, but during these years philosophers continued to reflect on the nature of virtuous kingship and to take advantage of the privilege of *parrhēsia* they had traditionally enjoyed. Philostratus’ *Lives of the Sophists* bears witness to the fact that those who were skilled in public speaking often spoke before the emperor on behalf of their cities during the second and third century.⁷⁷⁹ The greater power wielded by the emperors in

⁷⁷⁶ Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, 95-101; and Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, *passim*.

⁷⁷⁷ Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 62.

⁷⁷⁸ Peter Heather and David Moncur point out that Themistius, a philosopher who sought not only to comment on but also to participate in politics, was faulted by his opponents for allegedly crossing the line that separated the genuine philosopher from the sophist. See *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire in the Fourth Century: Select Orations of Themistius*, ed. Peter Heather and David Moncur (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), 104-107.

⁷⁷⁹ Philostratus’ work includes biographies of a number of sophists who lived in the period before the Roman Empire, but who were involved in politics in one way or another. These include Critias, Isocrates, and Aeschines. But he includes a number of stories of the way in which later sophists interceded before various emperors on behalf of their cities: Nicetes of Smyrna before Nerva: 512; Scopelian of Clazomenae before Domitian: 520, 521; Polemo of Laodicea before Hadrian: 531; Herodes Atticus before Hadrian: 548; Alexander of Seleucia before Antoninus Pius: 570-571; Aristeides of Mysia before Marcus Aurelius: 582-583; Apollonius of Athens before Septimius Severus: 601. Philostratus also records other interactions between sophists and emperors, such as the honors and privileges bestowed on Polemo by Trajan and Hadrian (532-533); Polemo’s haughty behavior toward Antoninus Pius (534); Marcus Aurelius’ rendering a favorable decision to Smyrna after reading a speech by the then-deceased Polemo (539-540); the compliment given to Marcus Aurelius by the philosopher Lucius (557); the charge of treason

the wake of Diocletian's reform of imperial ceremonial, which made the emperor less directly accessible to his subjects, ensured that in the later empire this privilege was more vital than ever to the functioning of the imperial government. That is why the fourth century was, in some ways, a golden age for the production of texts on kingship. The discourses of the philosophers Themistius (ca. 317-ca. 390) and Synesius of Cyrene (ca. 373-ca. 414) illustrate the reception of this tradition by both pagan and Christian philosophers at the end of the fourth century.⁷⁸⁰

Themistius was a pagan philosopher and rhetor who was adlected to the Senate of Constantinople by Constantius II, and who delivered orations before the emperors Jovian, Valens, and Theodosius.⁷⁸¹ Synesius was a student of the Alexandrian mathematician and philosopher Hypatia who later became bishop of Cyrene.⁷⁸² Eunapius' *Lives of the Philosophers*, written in the late fourth or early fifth century, likewise contain many anecdotes about the interactions of late antique philosophers (mostly pagans) with the emperors.⁷⁸³

Another set of texts that survives from the tail end of the third and throughout the fourth century is a series of panegyrics delivered before a number of emperors by Gallic *rhetors*, who

lodged against Herodes Atticus by Marcus (559-561); Alexander of Seleucia's appointment by Marcus as Imperial Secretary for the Greeks (571); Marcus' desire to hear Hermogenes of Tarsus declaim (577-578); Marcus' desire to hear Adrian of Tyre declaim while at Athens (588-589); and Antipater of Hierapolis' rebuke of Caracalla for having assassinated his brother Geta (607).

⁷⁸⁰ For the Greek text of Themistius, see *Themistii Orationes quae supersunt*, ed. H. Schenkl, G. Downy, and A. F. Norman (Leipzig, 1965-1974). For Synesius, see "On Kingship," in *The Essays and Hymns of Synesius of Cyrene*, trans. Augustine Fitzgerald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 108-147. For the Greek text, see *Opusculs*, vol. 2. Paris: Belles Lettres, 2008.

⁷⁸¹ Heather and Moncur, eds., *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire*, ix.

⁷⁸² Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 136-139.

⁷⁸³ Sopater put to death by Constantine: 462-463; Ablabius put to death by Constantius: 464; Eustathius' embassy to King Sapor of Persian on behalf of Constantius: 465; the role played by Maximus of Ephesus and other philosophers in the education of Julian: 473-475; Maximus and Priscus at Julian's court and accompanying him on his Persian expedition: 477-478; Maximus fined heavily and tortured by Valentinian and Valens: 478; Prohaeresius of Armenia befriended by Constans: 492; Nymphidianus of Smyrna appointed Imperial Secretary by Julian: 497.

were renowned for their oratorical skill.⁷⁸⁴ Imperial panegyrics might strike modern readers as mere formalities, more exercises in flowery rhetoric and flattery than real checks on power. Nevertheless, Harold Drake points out that “such praise can be as much a means of control as of criticism, and is frequently more effective,” for even a monarch who was disinclined to follow the advice given in such discourses publicly committed himself to adhering to it merely by listening to what was said.⁷⁸⁵ What Erasmus wrote in defense of the panegyric he composed for Prince Philip of Burgundy in 1504 applies equally well to the panegyrics of Late Antiquity: “No other way of correcting a prince is so efficacious as presenting, in the guise of flattery, the pattern of a really good prince. Thus do you instill virtues and remove faults in such a manner that you seem to urge the prince to the former and restrain him from the latter.”⁷⁸⁶ Until the second half of the fourth century, “the pattern of a really good prince”—the *speculum principis*—was provided almost exclusively by philosophers. We therefore begin our discussion of the theme by further examining the thought of Dio Chrysostom and Synesius of Cyrene as two outstanding representatives of the Hellenistic tradition of philosophical reflection about kingship, which regarded the ruler as “the ensoulment of cosmic order” who because of his rationality and virtue “could rule others because he could rule himself.”⁷⁸⁷

Dio and Synesius on Kingship: Virtues, Vices, and Grave Dangers

⁷⁸⁴ *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyrici Latini. Introduction, Translation, and Historical Commentary with the Latin Text of R. A. B. Mynors*, ed. C. E. V. Nixon and Barbara Saylor Rodgers (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994).

⁷⁸⁵ Drake, “Church, Society, and Political Power,” 407.

⁷⁸⁶ Ep. 179.42-45, cited in Lester K. Born, “The Perfect Prince According to the Latin Panegyrists” *The American Journal of Philology* 55.1 (1934): 20-35, at 35.

⁷⁸⁷ Glenn F. Chesnut, *The First Christian Histories*, 2nd ed. (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1985), 143-144.

Central to Dio's vision of the virtuous ruler were the four cardinal virtues—prudence, justice, temperance, and courage. He identifies them as defining marks of the good king from the outset of his *First Discourse on Kingship*, where he speaks of the ideal ruler as one who is “a brave but also a law-abiding ruler, one who needs not only high courage but a high sense of right also.”⁷⁸⁸ He extols the great value for the ruler of the soul that is “just and prudent and temperate and humane.”⁷⁸⁹ The cardinal virtues reappear again and again throughout the work.⁷⁹⁰ Dio also highlights the desirability of clemency, warning that a ruler should not punish “more severely than custom or fairness allowed.”⁷⁹¹ Yet two of these virtues stand out especially for Dio, who notes approvingly that Homer “clearly takes for granted himself that pre-eminently kingly virtues are two—courage and justice.”⁷⁹² Also important for Dio is that the ruler be restrained by the law, a feature of his theory of kingship that is understandable in the light of his personal history during the reign of Domitian.⁷⁹³ The centrality of this restraint is evident in the very definition of government which he gives, as “the lawful ordering of men” and “oversight over men in

⁷⁸⁸ 1.5.

⁷⁸⁹ 1.6.

⁷⁹⁰ Prudence: 1.26; 2.70; 3.6-7; 3.58; Justice: 1.16; 1.35; 1.45; 2.26; 3.5; 3.7; 3.10; 3.32; 3.58; 3.60; 4.40; Temperance: 3.7; 3.10; 3.32; 3.58; 3.85; 4.21; Courage: 2.26; 2.56; 2.65; 2.77; 3.7; 3.10; 3.32; 3.58; 3.135; 4.24. Synesius, by contrast, singles out prudence as the preeminent kingly virtue, stating in *De Regno* 3 that “All virtues are a king's adornment, but prudence is the most kingly of them all. Take to yourself this one, I counsel you, for an associate, and you will straightway have them all as comrades in your tent, and on the battlefield as well.”

⁷⁹¹ 1.7. Dio also refers frequently to “kindness,” “kindliness,” “gentleness,” and “humanity.” See 1.18; 1.20; 1.34; 1.39; 2.26; 2.67; 2.74; 2.77; 3.5; 4.24.

⁷⁹² 2.54, where Dio cites *Iliad* 3.179. Cf. Chesnut, *First Christian Histories*, 152-153, where he discusses the centrality of justice in Plutarch's vision of the virtuous ruler.

⁷⁹³ 1.4; 1.5; 1.13; 1.40; 1.43; 1.75; 1.82; 2.71; 2.75; 3.5; 3.33; 3.39-40; 3.45; 3.48. At 3.10 Dio asks, “who [must exercise] a keener sense of justice than he who is *above the law* (*meizoni tôn nomōn*)” (emphasis added), but in the light of the overwhelming evidence that Dio believed the king was equally subject to the law in theory, this phrase should be taken in the sense of, “in charge of administering the law.”

accordance with law.”⁷⁹⁴ Immediately after propounding this definition, he clarifies his notion of the proper relationship between the ruler and the law by contrasting it with two perversions of that relationship. The first is monarchy, which is “an irresponsible government where the king’s will is law.”⁷⁹⁵ The other is tyranny, “the arbitrary and lawless exploitation of men by one regarded as having superior force on his side.”⁷⁹⁶

The ancient tradition of reflection on kingship also sought to answer the question of what the ultimate source was of rulers’ rightful authority. In Dio’s view, they “derive their powers and their stewardship from Zeus.”⁷⁹⁷ But this was not necessarily true in any given case, for as he says earlier in the same discourse, “not every king derives his scepter or this royal office from Zeus, but only the good king, and ... he receives it on no other title than that he shall plan and study the welfare of his subjects.”⁷⁹⁸ Dio thus makes a distinction between what on the one hand he calls a “true king” (1.33), “a king, not in word maybe, but in reality” (4.72), and on the other hand those whose vices disqualify them from bearing this lofty title, “even though all the world, both Greeks and barbarians, men and women, affirm the contrary, yea, though not only men admire and obey him, but the birds of the air and the wild beasts on the mountains no less than men submit to him and do his bidding.”⁷⁹⁹ St. Paul’s assertion in Romans 13 that the civil authorities were “ministers of God” who derived their authority from him became an important

⁷⁹⁴ 3.43.

⁷⁹⁵ 3.43.

⁷⁹⁶ 3.44. Cf. 3.34, where he defines tyranny further as that form of government “where one man’s high-handed use of force is the ruin of others,” grouping it with two other degenerate forms of government: oligarchy and the rule of demagogues backed by the mob. Synesius articulates a similar contrast in a clever turn of phrase, stating in *De Regno* 3 that “while the law is his conduct for a king, his own conduct is law for the tyrant.”

⁷⁹⁷ 1.45.

⁷⁹⁸ 1.13.

⁷⁹⁹ 1.14.

text in the history of Christian reflection on political authority, and Dio's belief that royal authority was vested ultimately in the king of the gods suggests that there was a great deal of continuity between pagan and Christian thought on this point.⁸⁰⁰

What we have seen thus far shows that for Dio, the ideal ruler possessed the four cardinal virtues in full measure—especially courage and justice—and was restrained by the law in the exercise of his power. His authority was likewise not a mere human construct, but of divine origin. The ancient philosophical tradition he represents sought, however, to illuminate not only the virtues characteristic of a good ruler and the source of his authority, but also to point out those vices and traps that were most deleterious to just rule. On this matter, we will draw from both Dio Chrysostom and Synesius of Cyrene. Dio mentions the dangers related to the king's anger in a number of places in his *Discourses on Kingship*. Near the beginning of the *First Discourse*, while listing in summary fashion “the characteristics and disposition of the ideal king,” he warns that such a ruler “is not to become licentious or profligate, stuffing and gorging with folly, insolence, arrogance, and all manner of lawlessness, by any and every means within his power, *a soul perturbed by anger*, pain, fear, pleasure, and *lusts of every kind*...”⁸⁰¹ Anger is thus for Dio a “lust” that “perturb[s]” the soul—a fall from reason that results in behavior quite out of keeping with the self-control of a ruler and more proper to the nature of those “beings devoid of intelligence and reason” over whom he is called to rule.⁸⁰² In the *Second Discourse*, Dio explicitly connects anger to a failure of reason when, in a lengthy passage in which he likens good and bad kings to “gentle” and “savage” bulls, he describes the latter as those who are

⁸⁰⁰ See, for example, *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 10; Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 4.36.6 and 5.24.1-2; Ambrose, *Ep.* 90.1 [Maur. 25]; John Chrysostom, *Homily 23 on Romans*; and Augustine, *Ep.* 153.

⁸⁰¹ 1.11-13, emphasis added.

⁸⁰² 1.20.

“insatiate of pleasures, insatiate of wealth, quick to suspect, *implacable in anger*, keen for slander, *deaf to reason* ... too stupid for education...”⁸⁰³ The true king, then, is he who “subordinates himself to reason and intelligence,” just as the bull, “of all unreasoning animals the best and best fitted to have dominion ... nevertheless accepts the dominion of his superior [i. e., of man].”⁸⁰⁴ For Dio, then, human nature was like an untamed beast that needed to be taught manners and decorum—in short, to be subordinated to reason—through a rigorous process of education.⁸⁰⁵

Synesius’ philosophical training bequeathed to him many of the same presuppositions as Dio with respect to human nature and the best means for subduing the passions.⁸⁰⁶ In keeping with the classical tradition, he begins his description of the ideal king by arguing that his most important moral duty is to establish the mind as the monarch over the many disparate parts of the soul whose very diversity is a source of moral disorder and danger.

It is this [i. e., mind] that I desire to reign in the king’s soul, destroying the mob rule and democracy of the passions. So from his hearth would this man be a king using the natural beginning of authority, he who by taming and domesticating the unreasoning parts of the soul, has made them subservient to reason, marshalling their multitude under one intelligent leadership.⁸⁰⁷

His understanding of humans’ interior geography leads him thus to conclude that for the king, it is “a necessity that his inner life should be passed undisturbed and that a divine calm should

⁸⁰³ 2.75, emphasis added.

⁸⁰⁴ 2.70.

⁸⁰⁵ Cf. 4.139.

⁸⁰⁶ Brown likens Synesius’ views on the resurrection of the body to those of Origen, a feature of his theological and philosophical outlook that made him an outlier in the context of the early fifth century. See *Power and Persuasion*, 138-139.

⁸⁰⁷ Synesius, *De regno* 6.

extend even to his countenance.”⁸⁰⁸ Synesius’ language suggests that, like Dio, he regarded human nature as beastly and in need of the sort of training—understood as submission to reason—that might make it suitable for domestic use.

In addition to anger, both Dio and Synesius also single out flattery as a grave danger to a ruler’s self-perception and thus his ability to judge right from wrong in particular cases. Now, an important aspect of the philosopher’s *parrhēsia* in addressing the powerful was that he be seen as not flattering them. That is why, scattered throughout Dio’s *Discourses*, we find protestations that he is addressing Trajan “in all simplicity without flattery or abuse,” and that his discourse “commends him in so far as he is like [the good king], while the one who is unlike him it exposes and rebukes.”⁸⁰⁹ Dio makes Flattery, “servile and avaricious,” the opposite of Friendship, and condemns it for being “no less ready for treachery than any of the others [sc., Cruelty, Insolence, Lawlessness, and Faction], nay rather, zealous above all things to destroy.”⁸¹⁰ These protestations are especially strong in the *Third Discourse*, where he praises Trajan for “delight[ing] in truth and frankness rather than in flattery and guile,” and for “suspect[ing] irrational pleasures just as you do flattering men.”⁸¹¹ To defend himself against the charge that he is simply ingratiating himself with the emperor rather than discharging his duty to speak with “truth and frankness,” Dio points to his conduct under the reign of Domitian.

If, in bygone days when fear made everyone think falsehood a necessity, I was the only one bold enough to tell the truth even at the peril of my life, and yet am lying

⁸⁰⁸ *De regno* 6. In this general connection, cf. what Brown says about Ambrose’s confrontation with Theodosius as a philosopher rather than as a bishop in *Power and Persuasion*, 110-111.

⁸⁰⁹ 1.15.

⁸¹⁰ 1.82.

⁸¹¹ 3.2-3.

now when all may speak the truth without incurring danger—then I could not possibly know the time for either frankness or flattery.⁸¹²

In Dio's view, flattery is the perversion of a positive good—praise, “a thing most beautiful and just”—whereas flatterers “do much more harm than those who debase the coinage: for whereas the latter cause us to suspect the coinage, the former destroy our belief in virtue.”⁸¹³ To debase the coinage of virtue, as the flatterer does, is for Dio not simply a violation of good taste, nor is it even a mere transgression of the general principle that says that lying is bad. It is not only bad, but supremely unwise, because “for downright folly the flatterer outdoes all, since he is the only perverter of the truth who had the hardihood to tell his lies to the very persons who know best that he is lying.”⁸¹⁴ Flattery is no ordinary offense, for the flatterer “corrupts at the same time that he praises.”⁸¹⁵

But Dio's treatment of flattery and its dangers is not simply an analysis of the vice and its baneful effects. His discourse also serves as a means of control, of the sort to which Drake refers, for in the midst of his discussion of the vice itself, he also comments on the sort of person who listens to the words of flatterers. “[I]t seems to me,” he says, “that the flatterer fails worst just where he is most confident that he is succeeding—namely, in pleasing those whom he praises. Nay, he is odious rather than pleasing to them unless they be utter fools.”⁸¹⁶ Along the same lines, in his *Fourth Discourse*, when speaking of the courageous and of cowards, Dio commends the former as those to whom “truth and frankness are the most agreeable things in the

⁸¹² 3.12.

⁸¹³ 3.18.

⁸¹⁴ 3.19.

⁸¹⁵ 3.24.

⁸¹⁶ 3.20.

world,” and condemns the latter as those who are pleased by “flattery and deceit.”⁸¹⁷ The intended effect of Dio’s rhetoric is to make the ruler ashamed to listen to the vain praises of flatterers, preferring instead the sincere criticism of a true friend who addresses him with *parrhēsia*—someone, indeed, like Dio himself. Dio’s protestations that he is not engaging in flattery as he addresses Trajan are thus a subtle form of flattery—or praise, depending on the way in which they are taken. In any case, they operate on the basis of Dio’s distinction between praise, which is a genuine good, and flattery, which is the corruption of that good.

Synesius’ *Discourse on Kingship* makes use of distinctions between good things and perversions of those things that is similar to that of Dio.⁸¹⁸ Unlike Dio, however, he does not make flattery a perversion of praise; rather, praise is a negative category that is opposed to *parrhēsia* itself. “Freedom of speech should be of great price in the ears of a monarch. Praise at every step is seductive, but it is injurious.”⁸¹⁹ He likens it to poison coated in honey and to the “artful seasonings” of cookery, which “by summoning up false cravings, is injurious to our bodies...”⁸²⁰ It is likewise with his treatment of flattery. Whereas Dio had opposed praise and flattery to each other, Synesius makes friendship the opposite of flattery. After discussing the benefits a king ought to derive from his friends—that through their advice “he will see with the eyes of all, will hear with the ears of all, and will take counsel from those opinions of all which

⁸¹⁷ 4.15.

⁸¹⁸ Indeed, Dio had influenced Synesius, as he had other fourth-century *rheto*rs. See George Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 234.

⁸¹⁹ *De regno* 1.

⁸²⁰ *De regno* 1.

tend to one conclusion”—he goes on to speak of the dangers of flattery.⁸²¹ “We must if possible,” he warns,

employ all the weapons in the court for the purpose that flattery may not secretly slip in wearing the mask of friendship, for by this one thing is royalty plundered, however vigilant the guards. For flattery enters, unless the place be thoroughly defended, far within the treasure-chamber, and attacks the most lordly possession of kings, the soul itself; and the more easily, that love of his comrades is not the least virtue in a monarch.⁸²²

Thus for Synesius, it is not praise that flattery perverts, but friendship. Its danger derives precisely from the fact that it mimics something so necessary to kings, and threatens not the king’s material wealth, but that disposition of soul that is so crucial to his success.

Thus Dio, the pagan philosopher, and Synesius, the philosophically trained Christian who became a bishop, shared two fundamental assumptions about the virtuous ruler. First, in keeping with the mainstream of the classical tradition, they believed that rationality was the key to virtue. Rational behavior was virtuous behavior and vice versa. Second, they believed that education—intellectual training with a view to fostering this rationality—was the type of formation most necessary for those who would rule. That they shared this basic framework illustrates the fact that many late antique Christians—even Christian bishops—who were trained in philosophy shared a cultural and intellectual *lingua franca* with their pagan counterparts. In northern Italy, by contrast, there emerged from the end of the fourth century a specifically Christian tradition of reflection on kingship that in several significant ways amounted to a departure from the classical tradition represented here by the works of Dio and Synesius. This newer tradition, which certainly owed an important debt to and shared certain assumptions with that in which Dio and

⁸²¹ *De regno* 7.

⁸²² *De regno* 8.

Synesius stood, also drew from ideas about human nature and virtue that were particularly Christian. As we will see, these churchmen found in the incarnate Christ the supreme model of virtue. But Christ was for them not only the model of virtue, but its source; and virtue could be fostered in the ruler (as it could in anyone else) only insofar as he cleaved to the church. The outlook of the churchmen whose ideas we are about to consider was profoundly shaped by three historical events: the Incarnation, the establishment of the Christian church by Christ and the apostles, and the Christianization of the Roman Empire beginning in the time of Constantine. In this way, therefore, political theory and historiography overlapped with one another in these individuals' reflections on the nature and purpose of politics.

The increasing prominence enjoyed by Christian bishops during the fourth century allowed them to challenge the monopoly on formalized speech and the “theatrical style of local politics” that civic notables had previously enjoyed.⁸²³ In their role as the leaders of the most sophisticated non-governmental administration the world had yet seen, as the “hinges” that linked the local churches to the universal church and vice-versa, the bishops were able to exert an influence on the expectations placed upon the Christian emperors that was quite out of proportion to their numbers. The powers that accrued to the office they shared allowed the entire “corps of bishops” across the Roman Empire to enjoy a prestige that neither alternative Christian authorities (such as martyrs and apologists) nor traditional civic notables could hope to match.⁸²⁴ The bishops of cities that served as imperial residences even had the opportunity to address the emperors and their families directly in the context of the liturgy, at which Christian emperors

⁸²³ Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 72-73.

⁸²⁴ I borrow this sociological reading of the source of the bishops' authority from Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops*, 107-109.

might be expected to be present.⁸²⁵ But the funerals of emperors also offered an opportunity for bishops to expound on the traits of the virtuous ruler. Let us therefore turn to the funeral oration Ambrose gave for Theodosius I in 395.

Ambrose on the Duties of the Christian Emperor

Ambrose's theory of the Christian empire comes through most clearly in his *De obitu Theodosii*, where he brings together many characteristic themes that can be found elsewhere in his writings. The address was delivered on February 25, 395—forty days after the emperor's death on January 17—and Ambrose took advantage of the occasion to hold Theodosius up as the model Christian and thus the model Christian ruler.⁸²⁶ But the occasion also offered the bishop the chance to situate Theodosius' reign in a broader historical context. Toward the end of the discourse, he tells the story of how Helena, the mother of Constantine, went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and located the True Cross. This narrative may have been an addition that was only part of the published version of the address, which Ambrose included in Book 10 of his letters, and seems to suggest that Helena was the true founder of the Christian empire.⁸²⁷ We will see that this funeral oration shows us what virtues Ambrose believed it necessary for a Christian ruler to possess. In addition, by identifying Helena rather than Constantine as the real founder of the Christian empire, it illustrates his use of historiography to shape his contemporaries' ideas

⁸²⁵ This was the case for both Ambrose and Theodosius as well as for John Chrysostom and Eudoxia. See Ambrose, *Ep. extra coll.* 1, which contains a transcript of the sermon he preached in the presence of Theodosius regarding the Callinicum synagogue, and the comments in McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 303-309; and J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom – Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (London: Duckworth, 1995), 239 and 241.

⁸²⁶ The date of February 25 is according to the reckoning of Roy J. Deferrari, in *Funeral Orations by Saint Gregory Nazianzen and Saint Ambrose*, trans. Leo P. McCauley et al., FC 22 (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1953), 303.

⁸²⁷ Liebeschuetz and Hill speculate that Ambrose may have regarded Constantine's legacy as being tainted by his execution of his son Crispus and his baptism by an Arian bishop. See *Ambrose: Political Letters and Speeches*, 175-176.

about authority and virtue. In this respect, therefore, Ambrose's purpose and method in this discourse are quite similar to those of Rufinus in his translation and continuation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, to which we will turn shortly. In our discussion of the *De obitu Theodosii*, reference will occasionally be made also to his other funeral address for an emperor, the *De obitu Valentiniani*.

Ambrose's moral outlook is characterized by a fusion of traditional Roman and Christian values. In the summer of 392, he had delivered a funeral address on the death of Valentinian, whom he praises for his courage, his dispensation of justice, and his clemency toward would-be usurpers, even as he depicts the young emperor as a model of *pietas*, understood both in the traditional sense of dutifulness and the newer sense of dutifulness to the Christian religion.⁸²⁸ The *De obitu Theodosii*, by contrast, places greater emphasis on Theodosius' specifically Christian virtues. In chap. 12, he refers to him as "a pious emperor, a merciful emperor, a faithful emperor."⁸²⁹ These three virtues are central to Ambrose's summary of Theodosius' exemplary character, so let us take each one in turn.

Pietas is understood primarily in the newer sense, for the deceased emperor "has been admitted by right of piety into the tents of Christ, into that heavenly Jerusalem," and his sons Arcadius and Honorius are now "heirs" of this piety.⁸³⁰ Ambrose praises Theodosius' mercy as the quality that inculcated restraint in the emperor's exercise of power. "It is a great thing," he says, "to find any man whatsoever who is merciful, or who is worthy of trust, how much more so is it to find an emperor whom power drives on to revenge but whom compassion yet calls back

⁸²⁸ Courage: 2 and 22; Dispensation of justice: 16 and 37; Clemency: 18 and 34.

⁸²⁹ *CSEL* 73.377: "imperatoris pii, imperatoris misericordis, imperatoris fidelis."

⁸³⁰ 2, *CSEL* 73.371: "in tabernacula Christi iure pietatis adscitus, in illam Hierusalem supernam. ... quos pietatis suae reliquit heredes." Cf. 11, 12, 17, and 35.

from vengeance.”⁸³¹ So as to flesh out this point, Ambrose relates that “we have often seen men quaking as he was rebuking them. Yet when they had been convicted and had given up all hope, they were acquitted of the charge. For he wished to overcome them, not to crush them, a just judge and not a hanging judge, who never denied pardon to one admitting guilt.”⁸³² This quality was desirable in an emperor, in Ambrose’s view, because “it is better in a moment of anger to win praise for mercy rather than to be roused by rage to retribution.”⁸³³ As we have seen, the classical tradition regarded the ruler’s anger (*ira* or *iracundia*—Ambrose and Peter use both terms) as a danger because it made rational thought and judicious conduct more difficult. For Ambrose, the problem with anger was that it posed a danger to the ruler’s *misericordia* or *clementia*. But rather than give in to his anger and take vengeance on his enemies, Theodosius was a ruler “who spared his opponents, who loved his enemies [as a Christian was, of course, duty-bound to do], who pardoned those who entreated him, who did not allow those who contested his rule to perish.”⁸³⁴ Ambrose thus draws a parallel between Christ and Theodosius not unlike the one he had drawn between Christ and Valentinian.⁸³⁵ If Christ is the ultimate source of imperial rule, so Christ, who asked his Father to forgive those crucifying him, is the model for that rule—a theme to which we will return in our discussion of Peter.

⁸³¹ 12, *CSEL* 73.377: “Si magnum est misericordem aut fidelem quemcumque hominem invenire, quanto magis imperatorem, quem potestas ad ulciscendum inpellit, sed revocat tamen ab ultione miseratio?”

⁸³² 13, *CSEL* 73.378: “Saepe trementes vidimus, quos obiurgabat, et convictos sceleris, cum desperassent, solutos crimine. Vincere enim volebat, non plectere, aequitatis iudex, non poenae arbiter, qui numquam veniam confitenti negaret.”

⁸³³ 14, *CSEL* 378: “Satis est in indignatione laudem clementiae repperire quam ira in ultionem excitari.”

⁸³⁴ 17, *CSEL* 73.380: “qui servavit hostes, qui dilexit inimicos, qui his, a quibus est appetitus, ignovit, qui regni adfectatores perire non passus est.” Ambrose had also praised Valentinian for the clemency he showed to those who posed potential threats to his rule. See *De obitu Valentiniani* 18 and 34.

⁸³⁵ See *De obitu Valentiniani* 32, 35, 39, and 58.

Ambrose likewise extols the faith of Theodosius, which “did away with the worship of idols and suppressed their ceremonies,” referring to Theodosius’ legislation that banned all pagan sacrifice outright.⁸³⁶ His faith also made him “mighty” and secured many victories over the empire’s enemies, an assertion that combined one aspect of traditional Roman imperial ideology with exclusive faith in the Christian God.⁸³⁷

The triad of *pietas*, *misericordia/clementia*, and *fides* is thus a very significant component of Ambrose’s concept of the virtuous emperor. But these qualities are not at the very center of it. That place is occupied by the peculiarly Christian virtue of humility. In several places, he extols Theodosius’ humility, which enabled him to submit to Christ’s authority (which was the foundation of his own), just as Christ’s humility enabled him to submit to the cup of suffering that was his lot, and the pathway whereby he was elevated to the loftiest height of authority at the right hand of God the Father.⁸³⁸ That the virtue of *humilitas* is closely connected in Ambrose’s mind to that of mercy can be seen by the fact that he describes Theodosius as “a merciful man, humble in power, endowed with a pure heart and a gentle disposition.”⁸³⁹ Possessing such a disposition explains why Theodosius “valued a critic more than a flatterer,” a statement that is significant for two reasons. First, it is what enabled him to undergo the

⁸³⁶ 4, *CSEL* 73.373: “omnes enim idolorum fides eius abscondit, omnes eorum ceremonias oblitteravit.” Cf. chap. 38. The laws Ambrose refers to are found in *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.7-12. In the same vein, Ambrose had praised Valentinian for declining a petition of the Senate to restore the Altar of Victory to the Senate House and the traditional subsidies to the state cults. See *De obitu Valentiniani* 19.

⁸³⁷ 7, *CSEL* 73.375: “Recognoscitis nempe, quos vobis Theodosii fides triumphos adquisiverit ... et iam certe senior aetate, sed validus fide”; 8, *CSEL* 73.375: “Theodosii ergo fides fuit vestra victoria.”

⁸³⁸ Christ’s path through humiliation to glorification is articulated nowhere more clearly than Paul’s hymn to Christ in Phil. 2:6-11. However, Ambrose never explicitly refers to this New Testament text in his discourse.

⁸³⁹ 33, *CSEL* 73.388: “virum misericordem, humilem in imperio, corde puro et pectore mansueto praeditum.” Humility was also closely connected for Ambrose to the other two members of the *pietas-misericordia-fides* triad, as illustrated by what he says in chap. 12, *CSEL* 73.377: “Quid praestantius fide imperatoris, quem non extollat potentia, superbia non erigat, sed pietas inclinet?”

humiliation of performing public penance over the massacre at Thessalonica.⁸⁴⁰ Second, it shows that for Ambrose, humility makes a ruler immune to flattery, the second grave danger the classical tradition had identified.

The *De obitu Theodosii* is noteworthy, however, not only for the qualities he demands of the virtuous ruler, but also for the story he tells in it about Helena, the mother of Constantine. Near the end of the discourse, he apparently takes a detour from his main subject—the virtues of Theodosius—and narrates the discovery of the True Cross by the empress mother.⁸⁴¹ J. H.W. G. Liebeschuetz has suggested that this portion of the discourse “presents Helena rather than Constantine as the founder of the Christian empire, or at any rate as the recipient of an emphatic signal from God sanctioning the Christian empire.”⁸⁴² Furthermore, he argues that two major complications in the biography of Constantine led Ambrose to present Helena in this way. First, Constantine had executed his oldest son, Crispus. Second, he had been baptized on his deathbed by Eusebius of Nicomedia, who was a sympathizer of Arius.⁸⁴³ “The message of the Helena episode,” he writes, “is that God wills future Roman emperors to be orthodox Christians.”⁸⁴⁴

⁸⁴⁰ As will be seen below, Synesius and Peter also speak of the danger of flattery, though for different reasons. The “critic” to whom Theodosius preferred to listen is, of course, Ambrose himself, who demanded that he do penance over the massacre. See chap. 34, *CSEL* 73.388: “qui magis arguentem quam adulantem probaret. Stravit omne, quo utebatur, insigne regium, deflevit in ecclesia publice peccatum suum, quod ei aliorum fraude obrepserat, gemitu et lacrimis oravit veniam. Quod privati erubescunt, non erubuit imperator, publicam agere paenitentiam, neque ullus postea dies fuit, quo non illum doletet errorem.” Ambrose connects Theodosius’ penance to his *humilitas* even more explicitly in chap. 27, *CSEL* 73.385: “Bene hoc dicit, qui regnum suum deo subiecit et paenitentiam gessit et peccatum suum confessus veniam postulavit. Ipse per humilitatem pervenit ad salutem. Humiliavit se Christus, ut omnes elevaret. Ipse ad Christi pervenit requiem, qui humilitatem fuerit Christi secutus.”

⁸⁴¹ Such a digression is not, however, out of place in a discourse on an emperor, which is by its very nature a form of historiography. By making these comments on the origins of the regime, Ambrose demonstrates that he had an intuitive understanding of the way in which collective memory oriented people to their proper place in the present.

⁸⁴² Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose of Milan*, 175.

⁸⁴³ Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose of Milan*, 176.

⁸⁴⁴ Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose of Milan*, 176.

While it is no doubt correct to say that Ambrose believed God preferred the empire to be ruled by orthodox Christians, his support for the regime of the “Arian” Valentinian II between 383 and 387 over against the pro-Nicene Magnus Maximus, at the very same time that he was opposing its attempts to secure the use of a basilica for its own use, shows that theological orthodoxy was not Ambrose’s highest priority in determining whether or not to support an emperor.⁸⁴⁵

Moreover, it should be remembered that the story he tells about Helena is a story about the *inventio* of relics, and should therefore be read in the light of Ambrose’s own actions as someone who also unearthed holy people and holy objects that had long been hidden.

We have seen in chapter 3 that the cult of the relics gave bishops in northern Italy—and Ambrose in particular—the opportunity to strengthen their moral authority and to wield it in support of causes they valued. Ambrose’s *inventio* of the bodies of saints Gervasius and Protasius in the late spring of 386, not long after the second round of the basilica crisis, allowed him to vindicate the Nicene cause by giving the church of Milan a pair of martyrs where they had not previously had any of their own. The miracles wrought by the saints validated Ambrose’s claim to authority over the contested basilica and demonstrated the superiority of the Nicene confession over against the Homoianism of the court.⁸⁴⁶

The apparent digression about Helena showcases the discovery of a relic by a member of the imperial family (one not implicated in the actions that disqualified Constantine from playing the role he assigns her), a historical event that Ambrose then mobilizes to shape his audience’s

⁸⁴⁵ Neil B. McLynn attributes his support for Valentinian during these years to his desire to have “access to the machinery of government” and thus to be in a position to prevent that enactment of any legislation or policy he deemed detrimental to the interests of the church. See *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 161.

⁸⁴⁶ On Ambrose’s *inventio* of the relics of Sts. Gervasius and Protasius in Milan, and of other saints in other cities in Italy, see chap. 3 above, pp. 221-224.

attitudes about imperial authority. The story he tells of Helena's location of the True Cross and the nails by which Christ had been affixed to it, as Liebeschuetz states, makes Helena a more central character than her son in the founding of the Christian empire. Just as the discovery of relics served to consolidate Ambrose's authority as the legitimate bishop of Milan over against Auxentius of Durostorum, the Homoian bishop who served the court, and to boost his authority as a bishop to his fellow bishops in northern Italy, so also Helena's discovery of these relics of Christ himself served to consolidate the authority of the new dynasty and especially of the new politico-religious dispensation it inaugurated: "the holy object on the bridle is the foundation of the belief of emperors. From this came faith, in order that persecution should end and true religion take its place."⁸⁴⁷ The discovery of relics thus provided a catalyst for the emergence of a new, reformed political order in which Christianity would be the dominant religious force. In Ambrose's view, the significance of this discovery transcends the dynasty to which the one who discovered it belonged. It signaled the end of one period of history, characterized by the rule of unbelieving emperors and stigmatized by the fact that in it the church was persecuted, and its replacement by one in which the true religion would reign supreme.

The story about Helena is also significant insofar as it depicts a woman as the instrument by which the vindication of the authority of the new order is accomplished. On several points, Ambrose draws a parallel between the Virgin Mary and Helena that has the function of making Helena the mother of the Christian empire just as Mary was the mother of Christ, the true king from whose authority that of the emperor ultimately derived. The first instance of this analogy is

⁸⁴⁷ Ambrose does not clearly explain what the "object on the bridle" was. He does explain, however, that Helena had had the bridle itself made out of one of the nails that held Christ to the cross. See chap. 47, *CSEL* 73.396: "Quaesivit clavos, quibus crucifixus est dominus, et invenit. De uno clavo frenum fieri praecipit, de altero diadema intexuit; ... Utroque usus est Constantinus et fidem transmisit ad posteros reges. Principium itaque credentium imperatorum *sanctum* est, *quod super frenum*: ex illo fides, ut persecutio cessaret, devotio succederet."

where Ambrose casts the story of Helena's discovery of the True Cross as a defeat for Satan in the same sense in which the cross itself—or, to be precise, the death of Christ it symbolized—had been a defeat for Satan. He imagines Helena taunting Satan with the following words while searching for the cross on which Christ had hung:

Mary defeated you, when she gave birth to the conqueror, when without any impairment to her virginity she brought Him forth, who was crucified to conquer you, who died to subject you. You will be defeated again today, when a woman uncovers your snares. The holy one bore the Lord, I shall search for His cross. She gave proof of His birth, I shall give proof of His resurrection. She caused God to be seen among men; I shall raise the divine banner from the rubble to be a remedy for our sins.⁸⁴⁸

Ambrose goes on to narrate the discovery of the cross, and then returns to this same comparison: “just as previously Christ had visited a woman in the person of Mary, so now the Spirit visited a woman in the person of Helena. He taught her what being a woman she did not know, and led her on to a path that could not be known by any mortal.”⁸⁴⁹ He thus attributes the discovery of the cross to divine revelation, and in so doing places Helena alongside Mary as one who had been either “visited,” “taught,” or “led” by God and thus made into an instrument through which a piece of knowledge crucial in God's providential plan was made known to the wider world.

Ambrose further explains the significance of the discovery and of the revelation given to Helena in the following section of the discourse, where he asserts that “Mary was visited to set Eve free: Helena was visited so that emperors should be redeemed.”⁸⁵⁰ Just as obedient Mary

⁸⁴⁸ 44, *CSEL* 73.394: “Vicite te Maria, quae genuit triumphatorem, quae sine inmunditione virginitatis edidit eum, qui crucifixus vinceret te et mortuus subiugaret. Vinceris et hodie, ut mulier tuas insidias depraehendat. Illa quasi sancta dominum gestavit, ego crucem eius investigabo. Illa generatum docuit, ego resuscitatum. Illa fecit, ut deus inter homines videretur, ego ad nostrorum remedium peccatorum divinum de ruinis elevabo vexillum.”

⁸⁴⁹ 46, *CSEL* 73.395: “quia iam feminam visitaverat Christus in Maria, spiritus in Helena visitaret. Docuit eam, quod mulier ignorabat, et deduxit in viam, quam mortalis scire non poterat.”

⁸⁵⁰ 47, *CSEL* 73.396: “Visitata est Maria, ut Evam liberaret, visitata est Helena, ut redimerentur imperatores.”

served as an antitype to disobedient Eve, so pious Helena served as an antitype to all the impious emperors who had previously ruled the empire. By functioning in this way as antitypes, these women made possible the undoing of the destruction wrought by their faithless counterparts. In the following section, Ambrose avers that the “nail” that Helena had forged into a diadem to be worn by the emperors symbolized that, in effect, the empire has been refounded on a new religious basis, for “this nail of the Roman empire, which rules the entire globe, ... adorns the forehead of princes so that men who used to be persecutors might become preachers,” and “so that power rules, but here is just government, not unjust enactment.”⁸⁵¹ These words show that Ambrose regarded the empire’s pre-Christian past as a time during which justice was trampled on because the true religion was not permitted to serve as the foundation of the state. The obvious implication is that it must henceforth play the role that had so long been denied it. What could be the purpose of the bridle constructed of the nail that held Christ to the cross, Ambrose asks, but “to curb the arrogance of emperors, to check the wantonness of tyrants, who bray like horses at stud because they have got away with adultery without being punished?” But the advent of the Christian empire sets a new standard for the behavior of emperors, and so the “terrible abuses ... committed by the Neros, the Caligulas and the rest” must cease.⁸⁵² The bridle—a device used to restrain animals—is the symbol of the higher moral standard characteristic of the new dispensation.

⁸⁵¹ 48, *CSEL* 73.396-397: “Bonus itaque Romani clavus imperii, qui totum regit orbem ac vestit principum frontem, ut sint praedicatores, qui persecutores esse consueverant. ... ut potestas regat sitque iusta moderatio, non iniusta praeceptio.”

⁸⁵² 50, *CSEL* 73.398: “Sed quaero: Quare *sanctum super frenum*, nisi ut imperatorum insolentiam refrenaret, conprimeret licentiam tyrannorum, qui quasi equi in libidines adhinnirent, quod liceret illis adulteria inpune committere? Quae Neronum, quae Caligularum ceterorumque probra conperimus, quibus non fuit *sanctum super frenum*!”

In his *De obitu Theodosii*, therefore, Ambrose begins by praising the deceased emperor for his virtues, similar in some respects to those which philosophers had traditionally considered to be necessary for a virtuous ruler. But it is significant that in the context of a discourse about imperial authority Ambrose discusses at such length the episode of Helena and the True Cross. His inclusion of it in the published version of his discourse indicates the importance that a reimagining of imperial history had in Ambrose's concept of the authority of the Christian emperors. As we turn now to examine Rufinus of Aquileia, we will see another example of how historiography was a useful tool for deconstructing old notions of authority and reconstructing new ones.

“It Is Not Fitting that a Man Should Judge Gods”: Rufinus on the *Pius Princeps*

Rufinus was just entering the most productive period of his life when he returned to Italy from a long sojourn in Palestine in the spring of 397, the same spring in which Ambrose died.⁸⁵³ Upon his return, he set to work on what would become his chief legacy: the translation into Latin of a large body of works by prominent Greek theologians, an ambitious project aimed at an audience of elite western Christians who were eager to absorb the best of what the more established tradition of Greek theology had to offer.⁸⁵⁴ Among these works was the *Church History* of Eusebius of Caesarea, whose long list of literary productions from the late third to the middle of the fourth century had made him perhaps the most significant Christian intellectual of the generation of Constantine. His *Ecclesiastical History*, *Vita Constantini*, *Laus Constantini*, and *Commentary on Isaiah* provided a conceptual framework for imagining how a society ruled

⁸⁵³ He had settled in Jerusalem, at a monastery on the Mount of Olives, some time during the 380s. See Francis X. Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia (345-411): His Life and Works* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1945), 52-53 and 82.

⁸⁵⁴ Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 82-126 and 186-212.

by Christian emperors should be organized. As one scholar has put it, Eusebius' writings gave "official form" to the ideology of a Christian empire.⁸⁵⁵ These works thus constituted one example of the Christian reception of the ancient tradition of reflection on the nature of true kingship, and Eusebius' paradigm could be adopted and/or modified by future Christian intellectuals in response to the needs of their time.⁸⁵⁶

Two features of this Eusebian framework are relevant for our discussion precisely because of the ways in which they were modified by the three north Italian churchmen discussed in this chapter. The first is Eusebius' notion of the Christian emperor as the earthly image of the heavenly monarch, which he articulates at the end of the first chapter of the *Laus Constantini*: "From [God] and by [him] our divinely favored emperor, receiving, as it were, a transcript [*eikōn*] of the Divine sovereignty, directs, in imitation [*mimēsis*] of God himself, the administration of this world's affairs."⁸⁵⁷ In this respect, Eusebius stood squarely within the preexisting Hellenistic tradition of thought about kingship, which held that the ruler was the image of God.⁸⁵⁸ The second noteworthy feature of Eusebius' theory of kingship is his idea of

⁸⁵⁵ Glenn F. Chesnut, *The First Christian Histories*, 4.

⁸⁵⁶ On Eusebius' *Commentary on Isaiah*, see Michael J. Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea's Commentary on Isaiah: Christian Exegesis in the Age of Constantine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), esp. 188-196, where he discusses Eusebius' view of the Roman Empire; and Jeremy M. Schott, "Textuality and Territorialization: Eusebius' Exegeses of Isaiah and Empire," in *Eusebius of Caesarea: Tradition and Innovation*, ed. Aaron Johnson and Jeremy Schott (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013), 169-188.

⁸⁵⁷ *LC* 1, cited in Chesnut, *First Christian Histories*, 160n.85. Cf. Eusebius, *VC* 1.5, where he states that God made Constantine "a representative of his own sovereign power."

⁸⁵⁸ The philosopher Diotogenes had argued that just as the state imitated the order of the world, so the ruler imitated God by virtue of the authority he exercised over the state. Cited in Chesnut, *First Christian Histories*, 145; cf. the entire discussion of Diotogenes on pp. 145-147. Chesnut also points out that both Plutarch the Middle Platonist, Seneca the Stoic, and Philo the Platonizing Jew all held to the notion of the ruler as the embodiment of divine Reason or as a living law, thus demonstrating the way in which such beliefs transcended the different metaphysical views that divided the philosophical schools. See *First Christian Histories*, 155 and 156-159.

the emperor as the chief teacher of piety (*eusebeia*) to his subjects.⁸⁵⁹ Thus he describes how Constantine, “leading his subjects on earth to the Only-Begotten and Savior Logos, makes them suitable for his kingdom.”⁸⁶⁰ In raising up Constantine as Roman emperor, God had “constituted him as a teacher of his worship to all nations, to testify with a loud voice in the hearing of all that he acknowledged the true God, and turned with abhorrence from the error of them that are no gods.”⁸⁶¹ As we will see, the first motif—the notion of the Christian emperor as the image of the heavenly monarch—is largely absent from Rufinus’ continuation of the *Ecclesiastical History*. Developments in the relationship between the Christian church and the Christian emperors during the middle of the fourth century led also to a significant modification in Rufinus of the second motif—the emperor as teacher of *eusebeia*.

Rufinus’ translation of Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History* was, like his translation of Origen’s *Peri Archon*, not just a translation but a revision and adaptation of the text made in the hopes of improving on the one with which he had begun.⁸⁶² In the case of the *Peri Archon*, Rufinus’ aim—based on the premise that Origen’s text had been corrupted by his theological opponents with a view to discrediting him—was to make the Alexandrian master agree with the

⁸⁵⁹ Chesnut, *First Christian Histories*, 162.

⁸⁶⁰ *LC* 2.2.

⁸⁶¹ *VC* 1.5. In this same connection, Eusebius also refers in *LC* 9.18 to three sites in Palestine on which Constantine had churches built so as to signify their importance in salvation history, explaining that the emperor had done so “in order to herald the Saving Sign to all; the Sign that, in turn, gives him compensation for his piety...” The three churches are the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the Eleona on the Mount of Olives, and the Holy Sepulchre complex on Golgotha. See Harold Drake, *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius’ Tricennial Orations* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 172n.26.

⁸⁶² Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 158-185; Françoise Thélamon, “Une oeuvre destinée à la communauté chrétienne d’Aquilée: L’Histoire ecclésiastique de Rufin,” *Aquileia nel IV secolo*, *AAAd* 22 (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1982), 255-271; Torben Christensen, “Rufinus of Aquileia and the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Lib. VII-IX, of Eusebius,” *Studia Theologica* 34 (1980): 129-152; *idem.*, “Rufinus of Aquileia and the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Lib. VII-IX, of Eusebius,” *Historisk-filosofiske Meddelelser* 58 (1989): 1-339; and Mark Humphries, “Rufinus’ Eusebius: Translation, Continuation, and Edition in the Latin Ecclesiastical History,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16.2 (2008): 143-164.

orthodoxy of the late fourth and early fifth century. In the case of the *Ecclesiastical History*, however, Rufinus made no claim of textual corruption. Rather, the problem was with the clarity of many passages of Eusebius' *History* and with certain parts of the Eusebian paradigm for the virtuous Christian ruler. He departed from Eusebius' vision of the Christian ruler particularly as it related to the nature of the relationship between the church and the empire. Rufinus' perspective on this issue was profoundly shaped by the experience of the pro-Nicene party during the middle of the fourth century, when it seemed that imperial support had succeeded in replacing the teaching of the Nicene Creed on the nature of God the Son with a doctrine that was inspired by the moderate subordinationism of the Homoians. It centered mainly on the nature of the emperor's power in the church and of the importance that the emperor subscribe to theologically correct doctrine, not simply to Christianity broadly conceived.⁸⁶³

Rufinus' contribution to discussions of Christian kingship in late antique northern Italy, like Ambrose's use of the story of Helena's discovery of the True Cross, illustrates the way in which the past could be mobilized either to serve or to contest the claims of power. As an ecclesiastical historian, however, Rufinus was working within a tradition that focused as much on the Roman world's bedrock institutional arrangements as on the personal qualities of those who held the reins of power.⁸⁶⁴ As part of this broader concern, Eusebius had shown an interest

⁸⁶³ Harold Drake emphasizes that in the fourth century, the question of whether or not the emperor was a Christian was not the only important question about his religious commitments; the question of what kind of Christian he was also mattered a great deal. He might be, Drake argues, a broad-minded consensus builder, as Constantine and Constantius were, or he might adhere to a particular theological view and seek to make it the official one, as was the case with Theodosius. See *Constantine and the Bishops*, 198-201.

⁸⁶⁴ F. Edward Cranz argued that kingdom (*basileia*) and polity (*politeuma*) were "for Eusebius the two most important social concepts." See "Kingdom and Polity in Eusebius of Caesarea," *Harvard Theological Review* 45.1 (1952): 47-66. Regarding the former, Cranz writes, "It is an image on earth of the archetypal kingship of the Logos in heaven. It is an example of the Logos-mediated kingship of all Christians. And it is a special aspect, first in its pagan and then more fully in its Christian form, of the divine work of restoration by which fallen man is led back to his true nature" (56). Furthermore, "Both [*ecclesia* and empire] are images of the kingdom of heaven, and they may appear as one in the assembly of Constantine and the bishops, or they may be described as the two aspects, rule and teaching, of Christ's kingdom on earth" (59). Regarding polity, which Cranz uses to translate both *politeuma* and

in the church's organizational structures and their relationship with the imperial government.⁸⁶⁵ This is Rufinus' primary concern as well, although the conventions of the genre in which he was working also gave him room to praise emperors for their virtues and achievements or censure them for their vices. He often does so in passing, as for instance when he mentions Constantine's humility and faith or Julian's "unconcealed craze for idolatry," his "madness and folly," and "cunning in deception," and Jovian's "moderation."⁸⁶⁶ He also offers summary evaluations of some of the emperors. For example, he says of Constantius II that he was "of royal nature and mind and carefully cultivated those mainstays of his rule, but he was cleverly deceived into supporting perfidy by depraved priests who used the eunuchs, and he eagerly supported their wicked designs."⁸⁶⁷ Jovian's virtues are summarized in half a sentence as Rufinus credits him for being "emperor, confessor, and averter of the error which had been introduced for evil."⁸⁶⁸ As for the elder Valentinian, he simply writes, "In the West, meanwhile, Valentinian, his religious faith untarnished, was ruling the state with the vigilance traditional to

politeia, he writes, "Polity is a general name for a society seen in terms of its principle of organization. It can also point to the way of life in accord with that principle. ... The concepts of city and polity can, like kingdom, explain the whole nature and destiny of man" (60). He goes on: "The various kingdoms of Eusebius were all images of a single divine exemplar; in like manner the various polities [paradise, Judaism, and *ecclesia*] are all ultimately images of the city of heaven. ... The Christian *ecclesia*, the Christian society on earth, is an image of the divine society of heaven; it too may therefore be called Zion, Jerusalem, the city of God, and the godly polity" (61-62).

⁸⁶⁵ The concern of ecclesiastical historiography for ecclesiastical institutions is illustrated, for example, by Eusebius' inclusion of lists of the bishops who had occupied all the major sees. In the opening chapter of his history, in fact, he mentions concern for this theme.

⁸⁶⁶ Constantine's humility: 10.8; Constantine's faith: 10.8; Julian's idolatry: 10.33; "madness and folly": 10.36; deception: 10.38; Jovian's moderation: 11.1.

⁸⁶⁷ 10.16, *GCS* 9/2.982: "nam Constantius natura et animo regio dum primis illis regni sui fautoribus satis indulget, per eunuchos arte in perfidiam decipitur a perversis sacerdotibus et intento satis studio pravis eorum contentionebus obsecundat." Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of Rufinus' *Church History* are taken from *The Church History of Rufinus of Aquileia, Books 10 and 11*, trans. Philip R. Amidon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁸⁶⁸ 11.1, *GCS* 9/2.1001: "imperator et confessor et male inlati extitit depulsor erroris."

Roman government.”⁸⁶⁹ He describes Gratian thus: “In piety and religious fervor he excelled almost all the previous rulers. He was vigorous in armed combat, physically quick, and intelligent, but his youthful boisterousness went almost too far, and he was too modest for the good of the state.”⁸⁷⁰

These comments can be attributed to Rufinus’ adherence to the generical conventions of ancient historiography, in which evaluating the personal qualities of emperors was natural and expected. However, his interest in the relationship between the church and the emperors—the main concern of specifically ecclesiastical historiography—leads him to spend much of his time discussing those emperors whose relationship with the church stood out for being, at least in his eyes, anachronistic, hostile, or ideal. The prime example of the emperor whose relationship with the church was anachronistic from the point of view of the early fifth-century context was Constantine; the prime examples of hostile emperors were Constantius, Julian, and Valentinian II.⁸⁷¹ Julian’s hostility, motivated by his paganism, is not relevant for our discussion. For Rufinus, what determined whether an emperor’s reign had been a success or a failure was whether he presumed too much on his status as a Christian ruler and attempted to exert too much authority within the church.⁸⁷² In his account, the father and son pair of Constantine and

⁸⁶⁹ 11.9, *GCS* 9/2.1017: “in occiduis vero partibus Valentinianus fide religionis inlaesus vetere Romani imperii censura rem publicam gubernabat.”

⁸⁷⁰ 11.13, *GCS* 9/2.1020: “is pietate et religione omnes paene, qui ante fuerant principes, superabat. Usu armorum strenuus, velox corpore et ingenio bonus erat, sed iuvenili exultatione plus fere laetus quam sufficebat, et plus verecundus quam rei publicae intererat.”

⁸⁷¹ Rufinus’ discussion of Valentinian II is essentially confined to the period when his mother was still alive. As will be seen, he believed that it was Justina’s malign influence that led the boy-emperor to embrace theological error and to oppose bishop Ambrose.

⁸⁷² As Thélamon puts it, “Rufinus is writing an “ecclesiastical history,” one could even say a “clerical history,” so much is his conception founded above all, and almost exclusively, on what the religious comportment of the emperor should be, and especially his relations with the church: the ideal emperor for him is a *religiosus princeps*, a pious emperor.” See “L’empereur idéal d’après l’*Histoire ecclésiastique* de Rufin d’Aquilée,” *Studia Patristica* 10:

Constantius embody two distinct ways of approaching the question of what the proper relationship between the church and the emperor should be, and (stated differently) how the emperor was subject to the church.⁸⁷³ Having looked at how Rufinus characterizes the two representative examples of the Constantinian dynasty, we will also discuss his treatment of Valentinian II—the other archetypal bad Christian emperor—and Theodosius, archetype of the ideal Christian emperor.

Constantine loomed large in Ambrose's and Rufinus' reconstruction of the as yet short history of the Christian empire during the late fourth and early fifth century. But the fact that he had played a decisive role in re-founding the empire along Christian lines did not guarantee that he would be remembered in an unambiguously positive light by later Christian historians. As we have already seen, Ambrose had definite reasons for casting Helena, rather than her son, as the true founder of the Christian empire. Rufinus tells the same story, which he had probably derived from Ambrose's *De obitu Theodosii*, but it serves a rather different function in the context of his treatment of Constantine, which on the whole depicts his contributions to the development of the Christian empire in a positive light, even when it acknowledges certain parts of his record that would have proved embarrassing from the viewpoint of Rufinus and his contemporaries.⁸⁷⁴

Papers presented to the Fifth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 1967, ed. F. L. Cross (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1970), 310-314, at 310.

⁸⁷³ According to Françoise Thélamon, Rufinus' reflections on the ideal emperor centered around the three questions of 1) the virtues of the ideal Christian ruler, 2) what the precise nature of the relationship of the emperor and the church was, and 3) how the emperor is subject to the church. See "L'empereur idéal," 310-314. I conflate the second and third questions because the manner in which the emperor is subject to the church is implied by the answer Rufinus gives to the second question, which is that the emperor is not above the church, but in it.

⁸⁷⁴ The different function is suggested by the change Rufinus makes to Ambrose's narrative, for whereas Ambrose relates that it was Helena who had had the two nails she found along with the cross fashioned into the bridle and the diadem, Rufinus asserts that it was Constantine who, having received the nails from his mother, had them made into a bridle and a helmet. See Rufinus, *HE* 10.8.

Rufinus' first mention of Constantine comes at the very beginning of his continuation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, in the context of his discussion of the Arian controversy. Having informed his readers of the outbreak of the controversy, he proceeds to describe Constantine's response. He emphasizes both the emperor's concern for the church's vitality—"he was making every effort to look after our affairs"—while at the same time being careful to portray Constantine as respecting the proper boundary between the emperor's sphere of responsibility and that of the clergy: "He then, in accordance with the mind of the priests, summoned a council of bishops to the city of Nicaea, and ordered Arius to present himself there to the 318 bishops in attendance and to be judged on the teachings and questions he had brought forward."⁸⁷⁵ Constantine, in other words, placed the power and prestige of the imperial office at the service of the clergy, who alone had the responsibility of judging the teachings and actions of a cleric. His self-effacement in this matter is underscored by the way in which Rufinus downplays the imperial initiative in the calling of the council, which he tells us was done "*ex sententia sacerdotum*." Although not an accurate reflection of the actual circumstances surrounding the convocation of the Council of Nicaea, Rufinus' account is helpful in informing us of his expectations regarding the emperor's deference to the bishops as it related to the church's internal affairs.⁸⁷⁶

⁸⁷⁵ HE 10.1: GCS 9/2.960: "qui omni studio et diligentia curaret quae nostra sunt, pervenit. tum ille ex sententia sacerdotum apud urbem Nicaeam episcopale concilium convocat ibique Arrium trecentis decem et octo episcopis residentibus adesse iubet ac de eius propositionibus et quaestionibus iudicari."

⁸⁷⁶ For the rest of Rufinus' account of the Council of Nicaea, as well as its Creed and canons, see HE 10.2 and 6. Constantine had, in fact, called the Council on his own initiative. See Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 3.6-21; Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops*, 250-258; David Potter, *Constantine the Emperor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 233-238; and Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine: Dynasty, Religion and Power in the Later Roman Empire* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2014), 121-125.

Rufinus goes on to underscore his view of this matter in his description of an *admirabile factum* performed by Constantine during the council. Because the Council of Nicaea was sponsored and attended by the emperor, many clerics brought with them business other than that which Constantine and the ecclesiastical organizers of the council wished to conduct there. Upon their arrival, Rufinus tells us, the bishops were filling the conciliar docket with ecclesiastical lawsuits, perhaps attempts to settle old scores dating back to the time of persecution from which the church had only recently emerged. In response, the emperor shrewdly gathered all the petitions and unceremoniously burned them as the bishops looked on. He chided them for their pettiness:

“God has appointed you priests and given you power to judge even concerning us, and therefore we are rightly judged by you, while you cannot be judged by men. For this reason, wait for God alone to judge among you, and whatever your quarrels may be, let them be saved for that divine scrutiny. For you have been given to us by God as gods, and it is not fitting that a man should judge gods, but only he of whom it is written: God has stood in the assembly of the gods, in the midst he has judged between gods. And therefore put aside these matters and without contention examine those things which belong to the faith of God.” Having spoken thus, he ordered all the petitions containing complaints to be burned together, lest the dissension between priests become known to anyone.⁸⁷⁷

Rufinus puts these words in the mouth of Constantine, but they reflect a concept of relations between emperor and church that does not belong to the historical Constantine, who never would have acknowledged that bishops had authority over him, while God alone had authority over them. These sentiments belong rather to the context of Ambrose and Rufinus, for their outlook

⁸⁷⁷ HE 10.2, GCS 9/2.961: “deus vos constituit sacerdotes et potestatem vobis dedit de nobis quoque iudicandi, et ideo nos a vobis recte iudicamur, vos autem non potestis ab hominibus iudicari. propter quod dei solius inter vos expectate iudicium et vestra iurgia, quaecumque sunt, ad illud divinum reserventur examen. vos etenim nobis a deo dati estis dii et conveniens non est, ut homo iudicet deos, sed ille solus, de quo scriptum est: deus stetit in congregatione deorum, in medio autem deos discernit. et ideo his omissis illa, quae ad fidem dei pertinent, absque ulla animorum contentione discingite. cum haec dixisset, omnes simul querimoniarum libellos iussit exuri, ne innotesceret ulli hominum simultatio sacerdotum.”

on such matters as these had been formed by the experience of the pro-Nicene party during the later years of Constantius' reign, and in light of the basilica controversies of 385 and 386.⁸⁷⁸

As far as the victorious bishops of the pro-Nicene party were concerned, they alone had the right to determine the faith and practice of the church. The threat posed to this victory by the ascendancy—ephemeral, as it turned out—of the Homoian court of Valentinian II in Milan only served to reinforce this outlook in the eyes of churchmen like Ambrose and Rufinus. Thus the proper role of the emperor with respect to the church, as far as Rufinus was concerned, could be described as that of a facilitator, and he writes the history of the Council of Nicaea to fit with this ideology: Constantine calls the bishops together in response to an obvious crisis in the church, and once they have gathered, he sees to it that they address the cause of the crisis and not become distracted by matters that are quite unrelated to its central purpose. Rufinus brings home this point in his description of Constantine's activities after the council was over: "The decision of the council of priests was conveyed to Constantine, who revered it as though it had been pronounced by God and declared that anyone who should try to oppose it he would banish as transgressing divine decrees."⁸⁷⁹ The threat of exile made by Constantine was in keeping with what Rufinus regarded as his proper role vis-à-vis the church—to clear away obstacles to unity and harmony within the church, and to support whatever theological consensus the church achieved.⁸⁸⁰ In this very important respect, therefore, the emperor was subject to the authority of

⁸⁷⁸ The following chapter will examine the effect of these episodes on the outlook of north Italian Christianity on Homoianism, to which they attached the rather imprecise label of "Arianism."

⁸⁷⁹ *HE* 10.5, *GCS* 9/2.965: "defertur ad Constantinum sacerdotalis concilii sententia. ille tamquam a deo prolatam venerator, cui si qui temptasset obniti, velut contra divina statute venientem in exilium se protestatur acturum."

⁸⁸⁰ Cf. Thélamon, "L'empereur idéal," 311-312; and "Rufin historien de son temps," in *Rufino di Concordia e il suo tempo*, *AAAd* 31/1 (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1987) 54n.68.

the bishops and obliged to take whatever actions were necessary to implement their dogmatic decisions.

One more aspect of Rufinus' treatment of Constantine needs to be mentioned before moving on to his remarks about Constantius. His positive attitude toward the first Christian emperor is based on the assertion that as he performed his proper role toward the church, he did so in the service of the Nicene Creed and its supporters. Modern research on the history of the Arian controversy has shown that the theological situation between 325 and Constantine's death in 337 was by no means as cut and dry as Rufinus and other pro-Nicene churchmen writing in the late fourth and early fifth century portrayed it.⁸⁸¹ It seems that Ambrose was aware of this fact, which partly explains why he downplays Constantine's role in establishing the Christian empire. But according to Rufinus' narrative, which was not informed by modern assumptions about the evolution of the church's dogma, the theological position of those who attended the Council of Nicaea was one and the same with the position that had achieved the status of orthodoxy only in the 380s. It represented the consensus of the 320s as having been held continuously by the vast majority of bishops down to Rufinus' own day, and as having come under attack by a few errant bishops who were able to insinuate their way into the good graces of some of the emperors. These emperors in turn, not content to accept the exclusive authority of the bishops to decide such matters, took it upon themselves to intrude into the sacred precincts of dogmatic definition, thus transgressing a boundary that a conscientious emperor like Constantine (in Rufinus' narrative, at any rate) had been unwilling to cross.

⁸⁸¹ On this, see Manlio Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1975), 99-134; R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318-381* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 181-265; and Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 85-104. Timothy Barnes, in particular, notes that the fifth-century church historians Socrates, Theodoret, and Sozomen all portray Constantine as "unimpeachably orthodox." See *Constantine*, 141.

The way in which early Christian historians imagined the past of the church and its relationship with the Roman Empire beginning with the reign of Constantine tended to emphasize the element of continuity over time. They thus tended to gloss over the significant ways in which the church's dogma and its manner of collaborating with the Christian emperors developed, in particular during the fourth century. In his defense of Origen, Rufinus appealed to the third-century historical context in which he operated to excuse his more questionable statements.⁸⁸² But this sensitivity to context is absent from his *Ecclesiastical History*, and thus he depicts Constantine as steadfastly pro-Nicene in his sympathies in spite of the evidence to the contrary. But doing so places him at once in a dilemma, for he knew that after having exiled Arius for his refusal to submit to the majority position formulated at Nicaea, he nevertheless recalled him from exile.⁸⁸³ An explanation for such a misstep must be found that would preserve Constantine's orthodoxy. His solution was to attribute Arius' recall to the bad advice given the emperor by his sister, who had herself fallen victim to the deception of a partisan of Arius who wormed his way into her confidence, all the while hiding his true colors until such time as he should gain her trust.⁸⁸⁴ He locates this event chronologically near the time of Constantine's death, and yet refers to the emperor's stipulation that if Arius was to be rehabilitated, it could be done only with the approval of his bishop Alexander. Alexander died in 328, and Constantine in

⁸⁸² For more discussion on this issue as it relates to Rufinus, see chap. 6 below, p. 434n.1289.

⁸⁸³ Barnes, *Constantine*, 141-142.

⁸⁸⁴ *HE* 10.12, *GCS* 9/2.976-977: "huic [sc. Constantiae] accidit presbyterum quendam venire in notitiam latenter partibus Arrii faventem. sed is primo nihil de his apud sororem principis aperire; ubi vero multa familiaritas copiam tribuit, paulatim sermonem coepit aspergere, invidiam dicens Arrio generatam et pro simultatibus privatis episcopum suum rem contentiose exagitavisse aemulationis stimulo confixum, quod Arrius apud plebem satis carus haberetur. haec atque huiusmodi alia frequentius suggerens, animos Constantiae suos effecit. quae cum diem obitura visitaretur a fratre atque ab eo blande religioseque compellaretur, extremam dicitur ab eo gratiam poposcisse, ut presbyterum in familiaritatem reciperet et quae sibi ab eo pro spe et salute suggererentur, audiret; se quidem iam ex luce discedentem nihil curare, pro fratris vero statu esse sollicitam, ne forte pro innocentium poenis regni sui pateretur excidium."

337.⁸⁸⁵ Thus Rufinus can only depict Constantine as the unwilling victim of deception by bungling his chronology badly.⁸⁸⁶ He is also incorrect to claim that Constantine was willing to defer to the judgment of the bishops as to whether Arius should be received back into communion. In fact, as implied by the synodical letter of the 335 Jerusalem Council, contained in Athanasius' *De synodis*, the emperor requested that the bishops gathered at Jerusalem reinstate him. This they proceeded to do.⁸⁸⁷ We see, therefore, to what degree Rufinus must obscure, massage, overlook, and otherwise do violence to the facts in order to preserve his picture of Constantine as an orthodox emperor who respected the church's independence. The wide gulf between, on the one hand, the situation as we can reconstruct it from the evidence available to us in the modern day and, on the other hand, the situation as reconstructed by Rufinus, allows us to see clearly the ideal he was setting forth: emperors must both show unwavering support for the Nicene Creed and respect the church's authority to manage its own internal affairs.

The *topos* of the perfidious advisor appears once again when we come to Rufinus' discussion of Constantius. Rufinus' short summary of his virtues and vices has already been

⁸⁸⁵ HE 10.12, GCS 9/2.977: "quibus ille monitis a sorore susceptis et fidelem pro se germanae sollicitudinem credens, adcommodavit aurem presbytero, et interim accersiri de exilio Arrium iubet, ut, quemadmodum de fide sentire, exponeret. tum ille fidem conscripsit, quae non quidem sensum nostrum, tamen verba nostra continere professionemque videretur, miratus quidem est imperator et putavit unam eandemque in ipsius et concilii dudum gesti expositione sententiam contineri. tamen in nullo relaxat animi vigorem, sed rursum eum ad concilii remittit examen, quoniam quidem ad dedicationem Hierusolymorum ex omni orbe coire sacerdotes invitabantur, haec ad eos de nomine eius scribens, ut, si expositionem fidei eius probarent et eum vel per invidiam, ut adserebat, tunc circumventum dinoscerent vel nunc ab errore correctum, clementi erga ipsum iudicio uterentur, quando quidem tanta fuerit concilii moderatio, ut non in personam eius, sed in dogmatum pravitatem fuerit lata sententia, si tamen et episcopi Alexandri adcomodaretur adsensus. sed ab his quidem, qui primo coeptis eius faventes cum simulatione subscriperant, facile receptus est. cum vero Alexandriam perrexisset, ibi omne eius frustratur inceptum, quoniam dolis apud ignorantem locus est, scientibus vero dolum intendere non aliud est quam risum movere."

⁸⁸⁶ For the correct chronology, see *The Church History of Rufinus, Books 10 and 11*, trans. Amidon, 49n.23.

⁸⁸⁷ Athanasius, *De synodis* 21.4. Cf. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 22-23.

mentioned.⁸⁸⁸ In describing his interactions with Athanasius (which seem to be a litmus test for whether Rufinus considered an emperor bad or good), he again attributes a ruse, whose purpose was to damage the interests of the pro-Nicene party, to the emperor's "impious counselors," who prompted him to request one church in Alexandria for the use of those who were not in communion with Athanasius. Athanasius evaded the trap by asking in return for the use of a church in Antioch for the small group there that was in communion with him. Their insincerity having been exposed by this clever response, Constantius' advisors asked him not to accept the offer.⁸⁸⁹ The emperor himself gets off easy, for Rufinus credits him with being impressed at Athanasius' ability to think on his feet. Where Rufinus criticizes Constantius directly is in his behavior toward the bishops in the western half of the empire after his victory over Magnentius in the civil war of 353. Having won the war, he "proceeded to wear out the Western bishops and by deception to compel them to assent to the Arian heresy," conflating the cause of Athanasius with that of the Nicene Creed, which was a standard feature of pro-Nicene historiography, then and now.⁸⁹⁰ He goes on to recount Constantius' death in a very matter-of-fact manner, without

⁸⁸⁸ *HE* 10.16, cited above.

⁸⁸⁹ *HE* 10.20, *GCS* 9/2.986-987: "admonitus tamen imperator ab impiis consiliariis 'non est', inquit, 'magnum, Athanasi, quod episcopi poscunt de te, ut unam ex multis quae sunt apud Alexandriam ecclesiis concedas populis eorum, qui tibi communicare nolunt'. tum ille deo sibi suggerente paratum in tempore consilium repperit. 'et quid est', inquit, 'imperator, quod poscenti tibi liceat denegari, qui potestatem omnium habes iubendi? sed unum est quod oro, ut meam quoque petitiunculam libenter admittas'. cumque se omnia, quae vellet, quamvis essent difficilia, promitteret praestaturum, si hoc unum cederet libens, ait Athanasius: 'hoc est quod rogo, ut, quia etiam hic'—nam apud Antiochiam res agebatur—'sunt nostri populi, qui istis communicare nolunt, unam eis tenere concedatur ecclesiam'. aequissimum sibi videri et valde praestandum laetus spondit imperator. sed cum rem detulisset ad eos, quorum consiliis utebatur, neque ibi se velle accipere ecclesiam neque hic dare respondent, quia plus sibi singuli quique quam absentibus consulebant."

⁸⁹⁰ *HE* 10.20, *GCS* 9/2.987: "ipse quoque cum ob vindictam necis fraternae regnumque recuperandum ad occidentis partes venisset et extincto tyranno regni solus arce potiretur, fatigare occidentales episcopos et per deceptionem ad consensum Arrianae haereseos cogere adgreditur, Athanasi prius condemnatione praemissa et velut obicis validissimi obiectione sublata."

taking advantage of the opportunity to heap condemnation upon one whose ecclesiastical policy he criticizes implicitly as well as explicitly throughout his narrative.⁸⁹¹

Rufinus likewise employs little invective in his discussion of Valentinian II, whose attempt to secure a basilica for the use of his court during the Easter season in both 385 and 386 provoked a crisis that pit him against Ambrose and his supporters. The fact that the court's need for a church in which to hold services stemmed from its adherence to the Creed of Rimini of 359 elicits no particularly harsh language from Rufinus.⁸⁹² He saves his verbal fireworks rather for Justina, Valentinian's mother and, so he believed, the true inspiration for the imperial court's shockingly unreasonable demand. He thus writes concerning the aftermath of Gratian's death (again, as with the rehabilitation of Arius, conflating the events of several years' time into a brief space),

Meanwhile his mother Justina, a disciple of the Arian sect, boldly uncorked for her gullible son the poisons of her impiety which she had kept hidden while her husband [sc., Valentinian I] was alive. Thus while residing in Milan she upset the churches and threatened the priests with deposition and exile unless they reinstated the decrees of the Council of Ariminum by which the faith of the fathers had been violated.⁸⁹³

⁸⁹¹ *HE* 10.27, *GCS* 9/2.990: "Sed Constantius imperator, dum Iuliano, quem Caesarem apud Gallias reliquerat, dignationem sibi Augusti sponte praesumpti armis ire obviam parat, vicensimo et quarto post occasum patris imperii sui anno in oppido Ciliciae Mopsocrenis diem functus est." One example of the type of brief commentary Rufinus was apt to make on Constantius' ecclesiastical policy comes in his short discussion of Jovian, of whose rule he approved. He contrasts the latter's healthy concern for ecclesiastical affairs and due respect for the venerable Athanasius with Constantius' unwarranted intrusion and ill treatment of the patriarch of Alexandria: "nec tamen incaute ut Constantius egerat, sed lapsu prodecessoris admonitus honorificis et officiosissimis litteris Athanasium requirit" (*HE* 11.1, *GCS* 9/2.1002).

⁸⁹² On this creed, which was the product of Constantius II's attempts to forge a big-tent theological consensus, see chap. 1 above, pp. 16-18.

⁸⁹³ *HE* 11.15, *GCS* 9/2.1020-1021: "cum interim Iustina mater eiusdem Arrianae haereseos alumna impietatis suae venena, quae vivente viro suppresserat, filio facile decepto fidenter aperuit. igitur apud Mediolanum posita conturbare ecclesiarum statum, comminari sacerdotibus depulsionis exilia, ni Ariminensis concilii decreta, quibus fides partum temerata fuerat, revocarent."

In the attempt to revive “Arianism” in northern Italy in the 380s, then, it is not the adolescent Valentinian but Justina who is the active agent. Rufinus then goes on:

In this war she assailed Ambrose, the wall of the church and its stoutest tower, harassing him with threats, terrors, and every kind of attack as she sought an opening into the church she wanted to conquer. But while she fought armed with the spirit of Jezebel, Ambrose stood firm, filled with the power and grace of Elijah. She went about the churches chattering noisily and trying to rouse and kindle discord among the people, but when she failed, she regarded herself as having been wronged, and complained to her son.⁸⁹⁴

To conceptualize the manner of danger that Justina presented to the church, Rufinus looks to the Book of I Kings in the Old Testament, and likens the situation in Milan in 385 and 386 to the persecution of the prophets of the Lord in the kingdom of Israel under the rule of the wicked Ahab and Jezebel, his foreign wife who corrupted the worship of Yahweh by importing the cult of Baal.⁸⁹⁵

The vivid language employed and the prominent role of the emperor’s mother in the description of the confrontation between the court and the bishop call for some comment. As we have seen, Rufinus’ criticisms of those who intruded in the church’s proper sphere are relatively muted. He often criticizes emperors indirectly by depicting their advisors as wicked or slow-witted, as he had done with the churchmen at the court of Constantius who had demanded precisely what Justina demands here. He appears to be doing the same thing in this case, with one important difference: the offender is a woman, and one whom Rufinus blames for deceiving her son (who is, to be sure, “*facile deceptus*”). If it is out of place for emperors to intrude in the

⁸⁹⁴ HE 11.15., GCS 9/2.1021: “quo bello ecclesiae murum et turrem validissimam pulsabat Ambrosium eumque minis, terroribus atque omni oppugnationis genere fatigans primum sibi aditum debellandae rimabatur ecclesiae. sed quamvis illa Hiezabel spiritu pugnaret armata, resistebat tamen Ambrosius Heliae virtute repletus et gratia. ipsa autem in ecclesiis garrere, strepere, animare et inflammare ad discordiam populos, sed quod minus res ex sententia cederet, iniuriam putare et pro hac apud filium conqueri.”

⁸⁹⁵ The reign of Ahab is chronicled in I Kings 16:29-22:40.

internal affairs of the church by trying to commandeer a church that belonged rightfully (so Rufinus believed, agreeing with Ambrose) under the sole authority of the bishop, it is doubly so for an imperial woman to do so, and to resort to threats and attacks when rebuffed. In this connection we might note the positive light in which Rufinus portrays Helena, to whom he assigns the noble role of shoring up the Christian foundation of her son's rule by unearthing the True Cross and the nails that had held Christ to it.⁸⁹⁶ Rufinus describes Helena as "empress of the world and mother of the empire," and depicts her as offering herself as "servant of the servants of Christ."⁸⁹⁷ Her discovery of the True Cross and her humble attitude toward the clergy furthers the goal of harmony between empire and church and thus serves as an implicit point of contrast with the inappropriate conduct of Justina, which disrupts the harmony between church and empire that is of such great concern to Rufinus.

Justina's complaints to her son, so Rufinus would have us believe, prompted him to take rash action on his mother's behalf, sending a band of armed men to arrest Ambrose at the church where he was holed up with his most loyal supporters, a scheme only frustrated by the presence of those brave souls who "would rather have lost their lives than their bishop."⁸⁹⁸ Rufinus closes his account of the basilica conflict by relating Maximus' invasion of Italy, which in fact came a year and several months after the court had abandoned its efforts to secure a church building for its use in Milan, as if to suggest that the attempted usurpation of episcopal authority on the part of the impious emperor (and empress) led directly to the attempted usurpation of imperial

⁸⁹⁶ *HE* 10.7-8, *GCS* 9/2.969-970.

⁸⁹⁷ *HE* 10.8, *GCS* 9/2.971: "regina orbis ac mater imperii famularum Christi se famulam deputaret."

⁸⁹⁸ *HE* 11.15, *GCS* 9/2.1021: "unde adolescentulus pro contumeliae invidia, quam falso conflaverat mater, accensus armatorum globum ad ecclesiam mittit, confringi ianuas, oppugnari sancta, sacerdotem pertrahi atque in exilium agi protinus iubet. sed tanta fuit perseverantia fidelium populorum, ut animas prius amittere quam episcopum mallent."

authority on the part of Maximus.⁸⁹⁹ Whatever the case may be, it is clear that Rufinus intended this episode to be a warning to any emperor who might be inclined to make a similar attempt.

The last emperor Rufinus discusses in his *Ecclesiastical History* is the one who for him established the standard by which other Christian rulers should be judged.⁹⁰⁰ We will briefly look at five episodes from the life of Theodosius that indicate why Rufinus held him up as a model. The first of these involves his conduct after Maximus' invasion of Italy. In the chapter immediately following his account of the disastrous end to the confrontation between Ambrose and Justina, he writes by way of contrast, "Theodosius, however, kept faith both with the realm and with the memory of Gratian's good character and deeds" by leading an army west and defeating Maximus.⁹⁰¹ In the process of restoring Valentinian II to his rule, Theodosius also brought him back to "the Catholic faith violated by his mother."⁹⁰² In one fell swoop, therefore, he righted two wrongs, one political and the other religious.

The second episode for which Rufinus commends Theodosius is one for which Ambrose had also praised him—displaying the humility necessary to undergo public penance on account of the massacre in Thessalonica. To begin with, Rufinus attributes to demonic influence the command to gather the citizens of the city in the circus and put them to the sword, an element

⁸⁹⁹ HE 11.16, GCS 9/2.1022: "cumque haec in longum diversis machinis et obpugnationibus nequiquam Iustina molitur, Maximus, qui se exuere tyranni infamia et legitimum principem gestiret ostendere, datis litteris impium protestatur inceptum, fidem dei inpugnari et statuta catholicae ecclesiae subrui, et inter haec adpropinquare Italiam coepit. quo Iustina conperto hoste simul atque impietatis conscientia perurgente in fugam versa cum filio exilia, quae dei sacerdotibus praeparabat, prima sortitur."

⁹⁰⁰ Thélamon writes, "The *religiosus princeps* par excellence is henceforth Theodosius, characterized by his pietas, his clemency, his humility, his munificence, his submission to God and to the church, his zeal for the true religion that earns him victory and blessing." See "Rufin, historien de son temps," 54n.68.

⁹⁰¹ HE 11.17, GCS 9/2.1022: "Adfuit tamen Theodosius propter regni fidem bonitatisque ac beneficiorum Gratiani memor."

⁹⁰² HE 11.17, GCS 9/2.1022: "Valentinianoque impia inter haec matre defuncta fidem catholicam, quam ipsa violaverat, et regnum tyrannide depulsa restituit."

that is in keeping with his tendency to attribute the wicked deeds of emperors to the malign influence of some outside source, normally a human counselor. Referring to the indiscriminate nature of the massacre, he criticizes its purpose as being “to satisfy not justice but anger.”⁹⁰³ What stops Rufinus from categorizing one guilty of such an atrocity among the bad emperors, however, is what comes next: “When he was reproved for this by the priests of Italy, he admitted the crime, acknowledged his sin with tears, did public penance in the sight of the whole church and, putting aside the imperial pomp, patiently completed the time prescribed him for it.”⁹⁰⁴ Theodosius followed up this remarkable act of humility by ordering that “the punitive decrees of sovereigns should not be executed until thirty days had elapsed” so as to allow time for his anger to dissipate.⁹⁰⁵

The next item of Theodosius’ legacy for which Rufinus praises him is his concern for the churches. This point in particular illustrates why Rufinus held him up as the model Christian emperor, for he “[drove] out the heretics and [handed] over the churches to the Catholics.” But even in carrying out these coercive acts, “he exercised such moderation ... that, rejecting all motives of revenge, he took measures to restore the churches to the Catholics only insofar as the true faith could make progress once the obstacle to its being preached had been removed.”⁹⁰⁶ It

⁹⁰³ HE 11.18, GCS 9/2.1023: “et vindictam dare non crimini, sed furori.” Rufinus uses the same word, *furor*, to describe Justina’s irrational behavior in 11.16. The choice of this highly charged word indicates that, although Rufinus’ primary concern was with the institutional arrangements of the Christian empire, he was nevertheless interested in the virtue needed by emperors and the vices and dangers that imperiled the proper exercise of political power.

⁹⁰⁴ HE 11.18, GCS 9/2.1023: “ob hoc cum a sacerdotibus Italiae argueretur, agnovit delictum culpamque cum lacrimis professus publicam paenitentiam in conspectu totius ecclesiae exegit et in hoc sibi tempus adscriptum absque regali fastidio patienter implevit.”

⁹⁰⁵ HE 11.18, GCS 9/2.1023: “lege sanxit in posterum, ut sententiae principum super animadversione prolatae in diem tricensimum ab executoribus differrentur, quo locus misericordiae vel, si res tulisset, paenitentiae non periret.”

⁹⁰⁶ HE 11.19, GCS 9/2.1023: “pulsis haereticis ecclesias catholicis tradere idque ea moderatione agere, ut ultione contempta tantum catholicis de ecclesiarum restitutione consuleret, quo fides recta absque praedicationis impedimento proficeret.”

is unclear exactly what Rufinus means here. It is likely that he is simply glossing over the fact that handing churches over from one ecclesiastical party to another was a nasty business, and he preferred to speak in euphemisms rather than give a straightforward description of what it involved. At any rate, Theodosius' settlement of the church's affairs consolidated the victory of the pro-Nicene party—a victory that had been won in spite of opposition from emperors like Constantius II and Valentinian II. Theodosius' action here, like Constantine's in sending Arius into exile, is in Rufinus' telling merely the implementation of a policy decided upon by the bishops. It was for performing such services to the church that Rufinus accords Theodosius the moniker of “*religiosus princeps*.” But it was justified in his mind also by the emperor's willingness to give generously to the church, with the result that “churches in many places were amply furnished and magnificently built. He gave much to those who asked, but frequently offered yet more.”⁹⁰⁷

Theodosius' promotion of the Christian religion did not, however, end with the support he lent to the pro-Nicene party or the legal backing and financial assistance he bestowed upon the church. It was also during his reign that the moribund service offered to the traditional gods “collapsed.”⁹⁰⁸ Unlike Ambrose, Rufinus does not refer to the anti-pagan legislation Theodosius passed. He does, however, discuss in some detail the Serapeum of Alexandria and its destruction.⁹⁰⁹ The inclusion of such an account certainly illustrates his point, but he makes no mention of Theodosius in this connection.

⁹⁰⁷ *HE* 11.19, *GCS* 9/2.1023: “hortatu eius et largitionibus ecclesiae plurimis locis ornatae satis magnificeque constructae, praestare multa poscentibus, sed frequentius ultro offerre.”

⁹⁰⁸ *HE* 11.19, *GCS* 9/2.1023: “idolorum cultus, qui Constantini institutione et deinceps neglegi et destrui coeptus fuerat, eodem imperante conlapsus est.”

⁹⁰⁹ *HE* 11.23. Thélamon suggests that Rufinus' lengthy account of the Serapeum is explained by the familiarity some of his Aquileian readers would have had with the temple on account of the maritime links between Aquileia and

The final noteworthy element in Theodosius' legacy is his manner of preparation for the war against the usurper Eugenius, who had seized power in the west after Valentinian II's death in May 392.⁹¹⁰ As he had done in 388 to face Maximus, Theodosius once again led an army west in 394 to suppress the usurpation and avenge his younger colleague. But in Rufinus' account, the war with Eugenius had a religious element that was entirely absent from the confrontation with Maximus several years previously, for whereas Maximus was a Nicene, like Theodosius and unlike Valentinian (at least until his retreat to Thessalonica and the death of his mother), Eugenius was seen by some Christian commentators such as Ambrose and Rufinus as leading (or attempting to lead) a pagan revival. Thus in his account of the preparations both sides make for war, Rufinus depicts each one as representing a rival religion. In the civil war that took place in the waning months of the year 394, Rufinus indeed saw a clash between the old, pagan religio-political order, and the new, Christian order that had begun to replace it during the reign of Constantine. The preparations necessary in order to fight this battle were rather out of the ordinary:

[Theodosius] made ready then for war by arming himself not so much with weapons as with fasts and prayers; guarded not so much by the night watch as by nightly vigils in prayer, he would go around all the places of prayer with the priests and people, lie prostrate in sackcloth before the reliquaries of the martyrs and apostles, and implore assistance through the faithful intercession of the saints.⁹¹¹

Alexandria. See "Une oeuvre destinée à la communauté chrétienne d'Aquilée: l'*Histoire ecclésiastique* de Rufin," *Aquileia nel IV secolo*, *AAAd* 22/1 (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1982), 255-271, at 262-263.

⁹¹⁰ For a brief narrative of the Battle of the Frigidus, see Charles W. Hedrick, *History and Silence: Purge and Rehabilitation of Memory in Late Antiquity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 45-46.

⁹¹¹ *HE* 11.33, *GCS* 9/2.1037: "Igitur praeparatur ad bellum non tam armorum telorumque quam ieiuniorum

orationumque subsidiis, nec tam excubiarum vigilis quam obsecrationum pernoctatione munitus, circumibat cum sacerdotibus et populo omnia orationum loca, ante martyrum et apostolorum thecas poscebat." Immediately after this description of Theodosius' preparations there follows a description of those on the other side: "at pagani, qui errores suos novis semper erroribus animant, innovare sacrificia et Romam funestis victimis cruentare, inspicere exta pecudum et ex fibrarum praescientia securam Eugenio victoriam nuntiare, superstitiosius haec agente et cum

During the battle, Rufinus tells us, Theodosius prayed to God to grant him a victory, and a violent wind arose in response to the prayer that caused the javelins and other missiles thrown by Eugenius' troops to fall back on themselves. In this way the forces of Theodosius—and Christianity—carried the day, although not without a great deal of bloodshed, as had been prophesied by the seer John of Lycopolis.⁹¹² The defeat of Eugenius and the suicide of his praetorian prefect Nicomachus Flavianus dashed the hopes of the forces of pagan reaction, and the Christian character of the Roman Empire was thus secure.⁹¹³

We have thus seen that Rufinus' continuation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* is significant for showing how history writing could contribute to a new Christian discourse on the proper relationship between the church and the imperial office. The pagan tradition of reflection on kingship focused on the virtues rulers should embody and the vices and perils they must avoid. Ambrose's imperial funeral orations demonstrate a similar concern with the personal qualities emperors needed in order to be successful. But because Rufinus was writing in the genre of ecclesiastical history, recently invented by Eusebius, he was able to explore where the boundary properly lay between the spheres of imperial and episcopal authority. In his view, bishops must reign supreme in the church, determining its doctrine and practice without the interference of emperors, whose proper role was to serve the church's peace and unity by organizing gatherings of bishops, who would themselves hammer out dogmatic definitions and

omni animositate Flaviano tunc praefecto, cuius adsertionibus, magna enim erat eius in sapientia praerogativa, Eugenium victorem fore pro certo praesumpserat." Rufinus goes on to describe the prominent role

⁹¹² *HE* 11.32.

⁹¹³ As mentioned in the introductory chapter, modern scholarship has overturned much of the notion of a "pagan revival" at the end of the fourth century, a construct in which the Battle of the Frigidus plays a prominent role. See Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 93-131.

decide disciplinary matters. These the pious emperor would dutifully enforce by exiling recalcitrant bishops and by granting legal privileges to those who upheld the true faith. But his duties also included the suppression—by waging civil war, if necessary—of challenges to the Christian political order established by Constantine.

Rufinus' gloss on the Eusebian paradigm is thus a much more critical and selective reception of existing Hellenistic ideas about kingship as compared to the father of church history.⁹¹⁴ Whereas for Eusebius, as for earlier representatives of this tradition, the ruler was the earthly image of the heavenly monarch who embodied divine Reason and as such had a direct connection with divinity even if he was not himself divine, Rufinus' Theodosius has no such direct link with God. Thus Rufinus portrays the emperor as having "behaved unpretentiously toward the priests of God, while to all others he showed his kingly spirit in his faith, piety, and generosity."⁹¹⁵ The attitude he attributes here to Theodosius is emblematic of Rufinus' view of the proper relationship between the church and the emperor, according to which the latter is a servant of the former.⁹¹⁶ Practically, this means that, for Rufinus, the emperor has a significant, but limited, function in the Christian empire. He has no special insight into the proper formulation of the church's dogma, as illustrated by the way in which Rufinus has characterized Constantine and Theodosius as "implementers" of the bishops' dogmatic decisions. Instead, he

⁹¹⁴ It should be noted in this connection, however, that Eusebius' ideology was not a mere aping of Hellenistic ideas. As Chesnut points out, Eusebius' notion that God had raised up Constantine to rescue Christians from the persecution—a significant element in his thinking about kingship and in his philosophy of history—was Hebraic in origin, not Hellenistic. See *The First Christian Histories*, 170-174.

⁹¹⁵ *HE* 11.19, *GCS* 9/2.1023: "communem se praebeere erga sacerdotes dei, fide, religione et munificentia cunctis regium animum exhibere." As mentioned above (p. 291), Rufinus depicts Helena's treatment of the clergy in a similar way.

⁹¹⁶ Note the parallel of Theodosius' attitude with that which Rufinus attributes to Helena, cited above, p. 291.

is subject to their teaching authority, just as he can be constrained to perform public penance if his conduct of his official duties falls short of what ought to be expected of a Christian ruler.

The emperor's limited function in Rufinus' conception is also embodied by the role played in his career as emperor by the Egyptian ascetic John of Lycopolis. According to Rufinus, Theodosius was "was so dear to God that divine Providence granted him a special favor: it filled with the prophetic spirit a monk named John in the Thebaid, so that by his counsel and replies he could learn whether it would be better to remain at peace or go to war."⁹¹⁷ Thus, even in spite of his great piety, not only did Theodosius not possess direct access to God that would allow him special insight into church dogma, neither did he possess direct access to divine guidance about the weightiest decision he could make within the proper sphere of his authority. Unlike Eusebius' Constantine, he could be a teacher of *eusebeia* to his subjects only in a very limited sense, for the task of discerning theological truth and the gift of supernatural clairvoyance belonged properly to others, whether they be the official representatives of the church or desert ascetics.⁹¹⁸ Theodosius' relationship with God was special, but it was mediated, either through the institutional church or through holy men. These departures from the Eusebian reception of Hellenistic ideas about kingship thus at least raised the question of whether—and in what form—this entire tradition of thought could be usefully adapted in a Christian context, in which the makers of ideology were bishops who wished to deny to the emperor functions they

⁹¹⁷ HE 11.19, GCS 9/2.1023-1024: "pro quibus in tantum deo carus fuit, ut speciale ei munus contulerit divina providentia. etenim in Thebaidae partibus monachum quondam Iohannem nomine spiritu profetico replevit, cuius monitis atque responsis pacem retinere an bellum gerere esset melius, sciscitabatur." Cf. HE 11.32.

⁹¹⁸ Thélamon is correct when she says that, for Rufinus, this function belongs most often, but not exclusively, to the bishops. See "*Homo dei: L'évêque agent de l'histoire du salut dans l'Histoire ecclésiastique de Rufin d'Aquilée*," in *Vescovi e pastori in epoca teodosiana. In occasione del XVI centenario della consacrazione episcopale di S. Agostino, 396-1996* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1997), 531-549. This feature of Rufinus' historiography illustrates his contention that the emperor's sphere of authority was circumscribed, and that because he was neither an ascetic nor a bishop, he was incapable of exercising certain functions.

believed belonged by right to themselves. For if an emperor could not function as the image of the heavenly king as a teacher of piety or with regard to his uncanny ability to discern when and how to deploy his military strength, it might reasonably be asked in what sense—if any—he might function as the earthly embodiment of any heavenly reality at all.⁹¹⁹ The last north Italian churchman in Late Antiquity who attempted to answer this set of questions was Peter Chrysologus.

Peter Chrysologus and the Christian Emperor's Embodiment of the Virtue of Christ

Peter's position as the bishop of Ravenna, the main residence of the western emperor from 402 until the 440s, made the issues discussed in this chapter a pressing pastoral challenge for him, as it had been for Ambrose. Much of his advice has antecedents in the pagan philosophical tradition, but we will see that the New Testament—in particular those passages from the Gospels about figures like John the Baptist, Herod the Great, or Herod Antipas—also serves as a source for Peter's political ideas. Like Ambrose and Rufinus, Peter envisioned a cooperative relationship between the church and the emperors.

Before proceeding to our exploration of Peter's thought, a word must be said about the form in which it has come down to us. Ambrose's letters and discourses (the latter influenced greatly by the tradition of imperial panegyric) are the main sources for reconstructing his views of the ideal Christian ruler, and Rufinus articulates his in the fruitful genre of ecclesiastical history. Peter, by contrast, articulates his vision of Christian kingship in his 187 surviving sermons. In other words, whereas Ambrose and Rufinus had expressed themselves on this subject by using genres that could be employed by both churchmen and non-churchmen, Peter

⁹¹⁹ Indeed, Chesnut notes the difficulty faced by Constantine and his successors as they “tried to be ideal Hellenistic monarchs in a Christian theological milieu that put enormously greater stress on doctrinal orthodoxy than any pagan cult had ever seen.” See *First Christian Histories*, 162.

did so in precisely that form of communication that was the preserve of those who occupied the episcopal office.

He took full advantage of the possibilities afforded him by this particular literary genre. Many of his sermons were likely preached before the emperor Valentinian III, or at any rate before his family or members of his court and the civil service.⁹²⁰ These were people who sought and exercised power, and were doubtless familiar with the traditional practice of *parrhēsia*. Peter's rhetorical approach to the issue of the emperor's duties is different in some important ways from that of his predecessors in the Hellenistic philosophical tradition. Some of the differences arise from the fact that philosophers and bishops communicated in different physical contexts (audience chambers versus churches), to different audiences (the rulers and their attendants versus the rulers as part of the Christian congregation), using different genres (lengthy and flowery discourses versus comparatively short sermons). For example, none of the sermons in which Peter addresses the duties of kings is completely devoted to this topic.⁹²¹ Late antique Christian sermons were first of all an exegesis of a biblical text. In the course of the exegesis, the preacher would make applications on the basis of what he thought the text allowed for, and/or what he believed were the needs of his audience.⁹²² This practice is easily understood when one takes into account the fact that a bishop's audience—even in an imperial capital—normally consisted of people of varied backgrounds with different needs and interests.⁹²³ But some biblical texts readily lent themselves to discussions of kingship, so when Peter preached on

⁹²⁰ Olivar, *La predicación cristiana Antigua* (Barcelona: Editorial Herder, 1991), 297.

⁹²¹ Olivar's summary of the themes of Peter's sermons bears this out; see *Predicación cristiana*, 299-300.

⁹²² Preaching is discussed at somewhat greater length as one of the duties of late antique bishops in chap. 1 above, pp. 57-60.

⁹²³ On this, see Ramsay MacMullen, "The Preacher's Audience (AD 350-400)," *Journal of Theological Studies* 40 (1989): 503-511.

a Gospel passage that makes mention of one of the Herodians (or John the Baptist, who addressed the powerful with a frankness worthy of any Hellenistic philosopher), he often devoted a considerable portion of the sermon to the theme of political authority.

Another important difference between Peter's approach and that of his classical predecessors arises from the fact that their reflection on kingship was produced in two different genres. The generic conventions with which they worked had been established by famous public speakers like Demosthenes and Cicero, who published their political speeches—speeches which remained popular for as long as classical education existed in the Roman world.⁹²⁴ These conventions, which dictated that a discourse should be long compared to the typical late antique Christian sermon, allowed them to treat the issue systematically.⁹²⁵ This means that in order to synthesize Peter's view of the duties of kings, it is necessary to sift through his sermons. When this is done, however, a picture of Peter's ideal king emerges, and this picture can easily be compared and contrasted with those of his antecedents in the classical tradition, as well as with those painted by Ambrose and Rufinus.

Peter's ideal of kingship is often constructed by appealing both to the positive example of Christ, whose kingly office and rule is an important theme in the New Testament (one that was, moreover, picked up on by Patristic authors), and to the negative example of Herod the Great or Herod Antipas, both of whom figure prominently in the Gospel narratives at key moments in the life of Christ. At other times, Peter uses a generic king as an exemplum of virtuous conduct.

⁹²⁴ George Kennedy notes the popularity of Demosthenes among the Sophists of the Roman Empire in *Classical Rhetoric*, 252-253. Tertullian shows a positive attitude to Demosthenes and Cicero in *Apologeticus* 11 and 15-16, cited in Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, 264.

⁹²⁵ On the length of ancient Christian preaching, see Alexandre Olivar, "La duración de la predicación antigua," *Litúrgica* 3 (1966): 143-184; and *La predicación cristiana*, 670-721. He estimates the average length of Peter's surviving sermons to be roughly a quarter of an hour. See *La predicación*, 696-697.

Illustrations of this kind would have been comprehensible to most any ancient audience, but the frequency with which they show up in Peter's sermons suggest that he consciously chose this image so as to speak frankly about the proper exercise of their authority to the emperor and others who wielded great political influence. We will proceed by exploring some of the more extensive passages in which Peter addresses kingship and by taking note of the key themes that emerge from them. This approach will allow us to determine the extent to which Peter adapted ready-made *topoi* of ideal kingship for Christian use, and the extent to which he drew on sources outside the classical tradition—namely, the Bible and the writings of early Christian theologians—to construct his model of properly exercised imperial authority.

Peter's comments about kingship are found in roughly 20 of his 187 extant sermons. We will begin by looking at a passage from Sermon 85B, apparently preached before the imperial family, whose presence Peter notes:

Standing here is the most pious imperial family, serving the One, so that they may reign over all; bowing their heads to God, so that all nations may bend their necks to them; offering gifts to God alone, so as to obtain tribute from all peoples. They are here, strong in faith, secure in their innocence, prudent in their simplicity, rich in mercy, wealthy in love, awesome in their kindness, and what matters most, reigning thanks to their unchangeable communion; they ennoble the rich but do not despise the poor, since they know that what has been lacking in the poor person is his wealth and not his humanity; they know that he has lost nothing of the image of God, but rather the goods of this world; and they know that they can supply the rest, if the human being, who is the work of God, is to be kept alive.⁹²⁶

These words indicate many things about Peter's understanding of the proper exercise of authority by a Christian emperor. The first sentence in this passage is interesting for two reasons. First,

⁹²⁶ Sermon 85B.3, *CCL* 24A.529: "Astant ecce piissimi principes, uni servientes, ut omnibus dominantur; inclinantes deo capita, ut eis universitas gentium colla submittant; offerentes soli deo munera, ut omnium nationum consequantur tributa. Astant fide fortes, innocentia tuti, simplicitate prudentes, misericordia divites, amore copiosi, bonitate terribiles, et quod super omnia, immutabili communione regnantes; nobilitant divites, sed non despiciunt pauperes, scientes in paupere censum defecisse, non hominem; nec dei imaginis substantiam deperisse, sed saeculi; et se posse conferre reliqua, si homo, qui est opus dei, reservetur ad vitam."

rather than using any of the biblical names for the deity, Peter borrows the Neoplatonic title for God, which may mean two different things: that he is indebted here to the Hellenistic tradition, which held, like Christianity, that kings derived their power from God, or that in order to construct a proper antithesis he needed a word that indicated a singularity in order to contrast with the “all” in the next clause; or some of both.⁹²⁷ Second, it shows the extent to which Peter subscribed to certain aspects of traditional Roman imperial ideology. The emperors “reign over all,” “all nations ... bend their necks to them,” and the emperors “obtain tribute from all peoples,” references to the claim to universal Roman dominion that dated back as far as the second century B. C.⁹²⁸ Peter’s approval of this aspect of traditional imperial ideology is in keeping with the general trend of Christian bishops in the Roman Empire to embrace *romanitas* as fervently as pagan intellectuals had done in the past, only now in a new, Christianized form.⁹²⁹

Peter then goes to list some of the virtues that the ideal king must possess. There are parallels with similar lists in Dio’s *Discourses*, for example, in his call for kings to possess “faith (*fides*),” “innocence (*innocentia*),” “simplicity (*simplicitas*),” “mercy (*misericordia*),” “love (*amor*),” and “kindness (*bonitas*).” There are differences between the virtues highlighted by the two, as Dio makes no mention of innocence, simplicity, or love. But *misericordia* is close kin to *clementia*, to which Seneca had devoted an entire treatise, written for the young Nero. *Bonitas* is

⁹²⁷ In fact, the antithesis in this phrase is double: between “the One” God and “all” nations, and between the emperors “serv[ing]” God and “reign[ing]” over their subject peoples.

⁹²⁸ C. R. Whitaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 32.

⁹²⁹ Perhaps the clearest expression of the assimilation of these two traditions—*romanitas* and *christianitas*—is found in Pope Leo I’s Sermons 82 and 83, discussed in chap. 3, which were delivered on the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul. See above, pp. 189–198. On this theme, see also Susan Wessel, *Leo the Great and the Spiritual Rebuilding of a Universal Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 345–376.

the rough equivalent in Latin to Dio's *hēmeros* or *eunous*.⁹³⁰ Peter's list embodies an area where his Christian vision of kingship overlapped with the classical tradition. But after naming these qualities, he goes on to characterize the ideal ruler's attitude toward the rich and the poor in a way that is specifically Christian. He states that the *piissimi principes* "ennoble the rich but do not despise the poor." We have seen that it was in part by embracing the poor as part of the Christian community that bishops were able to consolidate their authority in the cities of Late Antiquity.⁹³¹ But Peter's concern for the poor is in itself hardly a radical departure from the classical tradition. The dignity of humanity found in all, rich and poor alike, was an important theme in Stoic philosophy.⁹³² But the rationale that he cites for the ruler's attitude toward the poor is a specifically Christian one: "since they know that what has been lacking in the poor person is his wealth and not his humanity; they know that *he has lost nothing of the image of God*, but rather the goods of this world" (emphasis added). Peter's ideology of universal human dignity borrows the language of the creation narrative in Genesis 1.⁹³³ Thus for him, the virtues required by the ideal ruler have much in common with those that Dio or other classical philosophers would have listed. However, by characterizing such a ruler as one whose attitude toward his poor subjects is shaped by the Christian doctrine of the *imago Dei*, Peter seems to be saying that the true king must have specifically Christian beliefs. If this is the case, he stands in agreement with Ambrose and Rufinus, who both held the view that, after Constantine, Roman emperors must be orthodox Christians. So the picture that begins to emerge is of a ruler who

⁹³⁰ Cohoon translates both of these as "kindly." For the former, see 1.20 and 1.34; for the latter, see 1.18, 2.77, and 3.5.

⁹³¹ Brown, *Poverty and Leadership*, *passim*. See also chap. 1 above, pp. 64-65.

⁹³² Coleman, *A History of Political Thought*, 250-251.

⁹³³ Cf. Gen. 9:6.

embodies many of the classical ideals of kingship, but adds to them other virtues that are informed by his Christian convictions. In this regard, then, Peter stands shoulder to shoulder with the other north Italian figures discussed in this chapter, whose ideal Christian rulers possessed a mixture of classical and Christian virtues.

Another list of kingly virtues is found in Peter's Sermon 26, based on Luke 12:41-46, a parable about a servant who has been left in charge of his master's estate while the master is away on a journey. The servant in the parable, noticing the delay in his master's return, begins to abuse his authority. Peter first applies the parable to ecclesiastical officials, but moves from there to apply it also to secular officials, and indeed to people of every station:

The Apostle says: 'There is no power except from God.' If every power is from God, the king also has acquired from God the dignity of his royal authority.

So too the general, the soldier, the rulers of provinces and of cities, all of them are going to render an account: as to whether in no case did they exceed the limits of the power entrusted to them, whether the king guarded justice, maintained fairness, restrained his use of power, did not omit mercy, and kept the weight of his authority in such balance that in no respect did he abuse his power by making any biased or hasty judgment; whether he bore the care of all, attended to the peace of his citizens, and regulated taxation in such a way that neither the soldier lacked what he needed nor was the taxpayer overwhelmed.⁹³⁴

Peter transitions from commenting on the duties of those who hold authority in the church to those who hold authority in the state by citing Paul's statement in Romans 13 that "There is no power except from God." In this Paul and Peter largely agree with the classical tradition's understanding of the relationship between divine and human authority. But unlike Dio, who

⁹³⁴ Serm. 26.5, CCL 24.151: "Apostolus dicit: *Non est potestas nisi a deo*. Si a deo potestas omnis, a deo rex etiam dispensationis regiae adeptus est dignitatem. Sic dux, sic miles, sic provinciarum rectores, sic urbium, rationem reddituri omnes isti: si in nullo creditae potestatis excessere mensuram, si rex iustitiam custodivit, si aequitatem tenuit, si potestatem moderatus est, si misericordiam non omisit, si tenuit sic ponderis sui libram, ut in neutram partem potestatis suae trutina perpensa declinaret; si omnium curam gessit, si civium procuravit quietem, si sic temperavit censum, ut neque militi sufficientia deesset, neque tributarius lassaretur." For the importance in early Christianity of Paul's words in Romans 13 about the divine origin of political authority, see n.800 above.

believed that only the true king derived his authority from Zeus, Peter takes Paul's dictum to mean that "every power is from God," and so, *a fortiori*, "the king also has acquired from God the dignity of his royal authority."⁹³⁵ In the remainder of the sermon, Peter outlines the duties not only of kings, but also of generals, provincial governors, decurions, soldiers, heads of families, and slaves. Before going into the specific duties of those in each station, he summarizes the obligation of all who exercise authority by stating that they will be judged according to whether "they exceed[ed] the limits of the power entrusted to them." The duties entrusted to kings in particular are very much in keeping with classical ideals of kingship. He must first of all "guard justice" and "maintain fairness."

Peter's next criterion for good kingship is whether the ruler "restrained his use of power (*potestatem moderatus est*)."

In the next breath he mentions the exercise of mercy (*miser cordia*) and displaying "balance (*tenere ponderis sui libram*)" in such a way "that in no respect did he abuse his power by making any biased or hasty judgment." So perhaps what Peter is getting at is that a ruler should not punish too harshly, something which "biased or hasty judgment" might easily lead him to do. Dio and Synesius emphasize, as we have seen, that the law should serve as a restraint on the emperor's exercise of power, and that such a restraint is what separates the legitimate sovereign from the tyrant.⁹³⁶ Peter does not explicitly mention this restraining function of the law, but his emphasis on moderation and balance seems intended to foster the type of restraint that Dio and Synesius had in mind. In any case, Peter's

⁹³⁵ Thus for Peter there appears to be no distinction between a true king and one who is so in name only. This might have implications for his thinking about the right of rebellion. In his *Homily 23 on Romans*, John Chrysostom argues that the authority Paul identifies as divinely given is political authority in the abstract, which may or may not apply in any concrete case. This caveat relies on a distinction similar to the one made by Dio. Peter, however, does not broach the subject in any of his surviving sermons, and so we can only speculate as to what his position might have been.

⁹³⁶ See above, p. 257 (for Dio) and p. 258n.796 (for Synesius).

commendation of *misericordia* and his warning against “biased or hasty judgment” call to mind the virtue of *philanthrōpia*, so often praised by Dio.⁹³⁷

We can therefore conclude that for Peter, the virtues that an ideal ruler ought to possess consist of a set of traditional virtues prescribed by philosophers such as Dio, Synesius, and others, and a set of distinctly Christian virtues that were not part of the moral system of the pagan philosophical tradition. Where Peter departs most significantly from the tradition as represented by Dio and Synesius is in his treatment of two themes—anger and flattery—that loom so large in the thought of these two philosophers. Two of the very last sermons in Peter’s corpus contain reflections on these dangers to the virtuous king. That the theme of kingship was not far from Peter’s mind when he delivered them is suggested by the fact that they are both about John the Baptist, and John’s death at the hands of Herod Antipas, who is for Peter a paradigmatic wicked ruler and frequently mentioned in his preaching on the Baptist.⁹³⁸

In Sermon 177, a discussion of the dominical saying that “everyone who grows angry with his brother will be liable to judgment,” Peter speaks of anger in a way that is rather different from the classical tradition’s evaluation of this vice. “Anger, brothers,” he says, “is an ambiguous matter; it is made bad by the way it is used and not by its nature; it is very bad when it is conceived out of hatred, it is wicked when it is produced out of rage, it is very good when it comes from love, and when disciplining another demands it.”⁹³⁹ Whereas for Dio, anger was a “lust” that was inherently disordered, and likewise for Synesius anger was one of the “unreasoning parts of the soul” that needed to be tamed and domesticated like a beast, for Peter

⁹³⁷ See 1.6; 1.20; 2.26; 2.77; and 4.24.

⁹³⁸ See Sermon. 127, 173, 174, 178, and 179.

⁹³⁹ Sermon. 177.3, *CCL* 24B.1075: “Iracundia, fratres, res media est, usu mala fit, non natura; pessima est cum concipitur ex odio, iniqua cum generatur ex ira, optima quando ex amore venit, quando imperat disciplina.”

anger can be destructive or constructive depending on its source and its purpose. “For even a father grows angry with his son, a master with his servant, a teacher with his student, for the purpose of rebuking, but not of having a furious tirade; with the intention of healing, not destroying...” Peter’s very different attitude toward what the classical tradition regarded as a vice is best explained by his use and interpretation of the Bible, for he claims that his estimation of the ambiguous nature of anger is “in conformity with what the prophet says: ‘Grow angry, and do not sin.’ Therefore,” he continues, “anger must be judged, so that, if its impetus is upright, it be approved; if wicked, that it be curbed.”⁹⁴⁰ He then goes on to distinguish anger (*iracundia*) from rage (*ira*) and fury (*furor*). These latter are to be avoided, and because anger can easily give way to these more serious conditions of the soul, anger must be “overcome with charity” before it can metastasize: “because, if your anger remains after the sun sets and extinguishes the light of kindness within you, a night of rage within you is what follows; then the darkness of all kinds of fury follow that, and all this leads you to be completely consumed in desiring your brother’s death...”⁹⁴¹ Ultimately, therefore, what is most important in Peter’s moral calculus is the desire one has with regard to his brother, because in the case of those who harbor rage toward their brother, “even if not in the deed, nevertheless in your desire you have become the murderer of your brother.”⁹⁴² Anger that is born out of a desire to serve the other’s best interests is

⁹⁴⁰ Sermon 177.3, CCL 24B.1075: “Irascitur enim et pater filio, servo dominus, discipulo magister, correptionis studio, non furoris; salutis proposito, non ruinae, iuxta illud prophetae: *Irascimini et nolite peccare*. Iudicanda est ergo iracundia, ut si de pio motu est, adprobetur; si de impio, comprimatur.”

⁹⁴¹ Sermon 177.5, CCL 24B.1076: “Cum irasceris, fratrem cogita, ut vincas iracundiam caritate, quia si manente iracundia occidens sol pietatis in te lumen extinxerit, succedit in te irae nox, succedunt furorum tenebrae, et totum te advota fraternae mortis adducunt.” On the Hellenistic philosophers’ agreement that the desire to harm the original aggressor was a necessary part of anger, and Christian suspicion of this belief, see Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 243-244.

⁹⁴² Sermon 177.5, CCL 1076: “etsi non facto, voto tamen factus es fraticida.”

therefore perfectly legitimate in Peter's view. However, like fire, it must be the servant and not the master of this desire.

The other danger to kings that Peter addresses is that of flattery—in particular, the dangers that flattering tongues posed to the justice that a true king owed his subjects. Indeed, the danger of flattery is precisely the reason why it was necessary in the ancient world (and at all times, for that matter) for there to be a class of people who could address the powerful with *parrhēsia*—the type of frank speech that “bursts the bubble” rulers are perennially tempted to inhabit. The warnings against flattery that are found in the Hellenistic tradition of reflection on kingship are part of a discourse whereby the philosopher-*rhetor* justified his role as the one who was uniquely capable of delivering inconvenient truths to the powerful.

For both Dio and Synesius, the danger of flattery is that it sends a false message to the one who exercises power. It gives him a false self-image, thus blinding him to his faults and making it impossible for him see in what ways his rule could be improved by more nearly approaching the heavenly exemplar whose image he was. By regarding the basic problem in this way, Dio and Synesius are both working within the moral framework generated by the classical view of human nature—plagued more than anything else by a lack of information, fed the wrong data and thus unable to respond properly (i. e., rationally), in accordance with the truth of the situation.⁹⁴³ Peter, by contrast, brings up the issue of flattery in a rather different context and situates the problem it presents in a different framework that assumes a different view of human nature. In Sermon 179, yet another sermon about John the Baptist, he conceives the primary danger presented by flattery to be that it threatens the moral constancy of the one who succumbs

⁹⁴³ For the implications for politics of Augustine's belief that imperfection was man's “inescapable condition” in this life, see Coleman, *A History of Political Thought*, 310.

to it. He presents John as both immune to flattery himself and unwilling to shower it upon anyone else. Commenting on Matthew 11:7 (“What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?”), Peter asks,

If John pursued an ambition for empty glory or greed, he would be flitting about the theaters in cities, to be captivated amid the captive voices of those captivating him, amid the eager hum of flattery. But now in the desert what is there for him to gaze at except heaven? What does he await other than an angel? Whom is he on hand to please except God alone? Whoever has no desire to be praised is unable to be altered. *The one on whom flattery does not have a hold, constancy does.* The one on whom pompous ostentation has no hold, virtue does not forsake.⁹⁴⁴

In this passage, Peter notes three significant characteristics of John: 1) his freedom from worldly ambition, which accounts for 2) his immunity to flattery and 3) his uncompromised desire for God. In these things John is the antithesis to the sort of associate against whom Dio warns, the sort of courtier against whom Synesius implicitly admonishes the sovereign to be on guard. But not only is there an implicit contrast in this passage between John and those captivated by worldly ambition, Peter also presents John as the one who, without the sophistication of *paideia*, has “taken heaven by storm.”⁹⁴⁵ John is the paradigmatic example of the one who, because he is free of worldly ambition, can be unwavering in his moral commitments. Peter goes on to observe that the Gospel writer “has cited a fine example of wavering. A reed, since it is thin in its stalk, without marrow, weak in strength, with no branches, with a poor trunk, and without protection in its height, is swayed by the winds, and shaken by squalls, wherever they blow; it is

⁹⁴⁴ Serm. 179.4, CCL 24B.1087: “Quid existis in desertum videre? Harundinem vento agitatam? Hoc est dicere: Iohannes, si inanis gloriae aut cupiditatis gereret studium, in civitatum caveis, inter captivas captivantium voces, inter avidos adulationum susurros captivandus ipse volitaret. At nunc in eremo quid nisi caelum respicit? Quid nisi angelum expectat? Cui nisi soli deo placiturus adsistit? Qui laudari non desiderat, mutari nescit. Quem non tenuerit adulatio, constantia tenet. Quem non tenuerit pompa, virtus non relinquit” (emphasis added).

⁹⁴⁵ Cf. the self-loathing inspired in Augustine when relating the first time he read the *Life of Anthony*, a very Baptist-like figure. See *Confessions*, 8.7.16-17.

knocked over by being so high and so flexible.”⁹⁴⁶ The reed, for Peter, is an apt metaphor for the morally unstable person. His problem is not that he lacks knowledge of the good, but the strength to commit to the good he is, in fact, able to recognize.

This analysis of the particular problem caused by flattery—that it does not interfere so much with a sober assessment of oneself, but rather that it exposes the moral weakness endemic to human nature—leads Peter to prescribe a different solution to the one recommended by Dio and Synesius. For if human nature is not irrational, but weak, its problems cannot be solved by *paideia*—by subordinating man’s animal nature to reason—as the classical tradition would have it. As we will see in the final chapter, Peter’s view of human nature was heavily indebted to Augustine. For now, let it suffice to point out that in Peter’s view, it was not John’s education that made him successful in the struggle for virtue, but the fact that he “was made steadfast in God, rooted in Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit, made strong by virtue, and most lofty in holiness...”⁹⁴⁷ Thus for Peter, reason is not able to subdue human passions; only when, like John, a man is, as it were, captured by God can he truly be set free to live according to virtue. The lesson for the ruler is rather different from the one offered by Dio and Synesius. Whereas these latter admonished the king not to listen to the voices of flatterers, the advice implied by Peter’s description of John is that the ruler must, by the exercise of piety, strengthen his moral wherewithal. Like Paul, he knows the good that he ought to do, but he lacks the will to carry it

⁹⁴⁶ Sermon 179.5, *CCL* 24B.1087: “Aptum posuit fluctantis exemplum. Harundo stirpe tenuis, medullis vacua, infirma robore, ramis nulla, exilis frutice, altitudine inermis, inclinatur a ventis, et exagitur procellis, quocumque flaverint; flexili proceritate prosternitur.”

⁹⁴⁷ Serm. 179.5, *CCL* 24B.1087: “At Iohannes in deo fixus, radicans in Christo, plenus spiritu sancto, virtute roboratus, altissimus sanctitate.”

out.⁹⁴⁸ To remedy the problem, he needs not reason but grace. To be a just and virtuous ruler, he must be a son of the church.

Conclusion: A New Foundation for Imperial Virtue and Authority

The Christian bishops of the eastern half of the Roman Empire succeeded in supplanting the traditional elites of the cities as the mediators between the emperors and the populations of the cities, a process traced carefully by Peter Brown. The discussion of Ambrose, Rufinus, and Peter in this chapter shows that this role was taken over by churchmen in northern Italy, too. Their achievement in this area was not so much to modify the content of the advice given to rulers—no doubt there were some differences in the specific virtues they recommended as compared to the tradition from which they were drawing—but to put the proper exercise of imperial authority on a new foundation. Whereas the Hellenistic philosophical tradition tended to take for granted the traditional religious foundation of the Roman Empire, Ambrose, Rufinus, and Peter—following Eusebius—believed that that empire had been refounded along Christian lines in the early fourth century and that henceforth its rulers must be Christians. More than that, as different from Eusebius, they insisted that the emperor must be firmly committed to the Nicene view of Christ and deprive all competing forms of Christianity. The Hellenistic philosophical tradition, based on its assumptions about human nature, had prescribed the virtues that earthly rulers, as the image of the divine monarch, must cultivate in order to bring the peace and order of heaven to earth. But the notion of the ruler as the image of the heavenly king is largely absent from the writings of Ambrose, Rufinus, and Peter. Instead, we see Christ—God in the flesh—invoked as the paradigm for virtue and for kingship. Moreover, Peter’s diagnosis of the human condition is quite different from that of the philosophers. The chief moral problem,

⁹⁴⁸ Cf. Rom. 7:18.

and therefore the chief political problem, is not irrationality, but the corruption of human nature by sin. For Peter, it was imperative that the sovereign know this, because it was only on the basis of this knowledge that a workable solution could be constructed: for the sovereign to adhere closely to the church, to be “made steadfast in God, rooted in Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit,” so that he might be unwavering in his commitment to justice. Only in this way would his authority, derived from God, be exercised in a legitimate fashion.

CHAPTER 5: THE NORTH ITALIAN CHURCH AND ARIANISM: RECONQUEST, MEMORY, AND DIFFERENTIATION

“Now a certain Donatus, an African by race but a presbyter of the church of Milan, when seated at a banquet at which were some religious army-men he detracted from the memory of the bishop—although they spurned and avoided his wretched tongue—was suddenly struck with a severe wound. He was raised up by strange hands from the place in which he lay, placed on a litter, and carried thence even to the grave.”

—Paulinus of Milan, *Vita sancti Ambrosii*, 54⁹⁴⁹

The last three chapters have painted a picture of the ideas current in north Italian Christianity in the early fifth century with regard to authority. We have explored the way in which the bishops of these churches thought about the intersection of asceticism and the cult of the saints with their authority as bishops, and the way in which Ambrose, Rufinus, and Peter Chrysologus conceived of the role of the Christian emperor, an important subject for reflection for Christian thinkers in a region that the emperors called home during the main period covered by this study. The present chapter will begin to transition away from the theme of authority to examine the distinctive theological voice of the churches of northern Italy. We move, in other words, from authority to heterodoxy. Our subject in the present chapter is Arianism—or rather, Homoianism, a term that was explained in chapter 1.⁹⁵⁰ It will build on the work of Daniel H. Williams, who showed that the Arian-Nicene conflict did not end with the conciliar decisions of

⁹⁴⁹ “*Vita sancti Ambrosii Mediolanensis Episcopi, a Paulino eius Notario ad Beatum Augustinum Conscripta, A Revised Text, and Commentary, with an Introduction and Translation*,” ed. and trans. Mary Simplicia Kaniecka (Catholic University of America, 1928), p. 98: “Igitur Donatus quidam natione Afer, presbyter tamen ecclesiae Mediolanensis, cum in convivio positus in quo erant nonnulli militares viri religiosi detraheret memoriae sacerdotis,—aspernantibus illis et deserentibus linguam nequam,—subito vulnere percussus gravi. de eodem loco in quo iacebat alienis manibus sublatus, in lectulum positus est atque inde ad sepulcrum usque perductus.”

⁹⁵⁰ See above, pp. 16-18.

381, but continued on the political level until Magnus Maximus' invasion of Italy in the summer of 387.⁹⁵¹

Our consideration of the subject will consist of two parts. Having provided in chapter 1 an overview of the process whereby during the 370s and 380s the churches of northern Italy came to find themselves firmly in the pro-Nicene camp in the context of the long controversy over the status of God the Son, we will discuss the efforts of three north Italian churchmen—Ambrose, Gaudentius of Brescia, and Rufinus of Aquileia—to shape the memory of the last confrontation between pro-Nicene bishops and an “Arian” emperor: the basilica controversies in Milan in the years 385 and 386. Their goal in doing so was to preserve the “siege mentality” that characterized Ambrose’s Nicene community during these crises.⁹⁵² The result was that a militant pro-Nicene stance remained a key feature of the theological identity of the north Italian church well into the fifth century. Second, we will discuss the attempts of Maximus and Peter Chrysologus to nourish a distinctively Nicene sense of identity among their supporters. Although they differed greatly in their levels of intellectual sophistication, it will be argued that these attempts were both responses to the increasing prominence of barbarians in the Roman army, one of the most politically important institutions of the late empire.

This chapter, as has been noted, represents a transition from topics related to the theme of authority toward those that are more theological in nature. It will be evident throughout this discussion, however, that these two spheres are not hermetically sealed the one from the other. On the contrary, the reason that ancient bishops were so zealous about their authority within their communities is precisely because they believed it was their right and duty to define orthodoxy

⁹⁵¹ Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Arian-Nicene Conflict* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

⁹⁵² I borrow the term “siege mentality” from Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 348.

for their churches. In fact, this view of episcopal authority within the church united all sides of the various theological debates of the fourth and fifth centuries, the only difference being the degree to which different Christian thinkers might welcome the intervention of the imperial authorities in the process of dogmatic definition and clarification for the sake of maintaining the church's unity.⁹⁵³ This and the following chapters should therefore be regarded as case studies of the ways in which these bishops leveraged their moral and spiritual authority—which they possessed on account of their ascetic renunciation of sex and other indulgences, their control of the cult of relics, and their ability to define the role of even the emperor himself—to impose a particular vision of theological truth on their supporters.

The Continued Vitality of Western Homoianism

The success of the pro-Nicene forces of northern Italy at the Council of Aquileia in 381 signaled the end of Homoianism's ability to command the loyalty of large numbers of Roman Christians through its control of episcopal sees.⁹⁵⁴ But it was by no means dead, or even moribund.⁹⁵⁵ The creed seems to have survived in the immediate aftermath of the council among high court officials.⁹⁵⁶ Moreover, in the late Roman world, the ability to claim a member of the imperial family as an adherent gave any religion the potential to become a political force. However much Gratian's position may have evolved in the direction of being a convinced pro-

⁹⁵³ On the two main views within fourth-century Christianity regarding the role of the emperors in the calling and management of church councils, see the discussion of Rufinus' portrayal of Constantine and Constantius (chap. 4 above, pp. 280-289) and Theodosius (pp. 293-294). See also chap. 1 above, pp. 34-35.

⁹⁵⁴ On this council as the culmination of a 20-year effort on the part of the pro-Nicene forces of northern Italy to gain control of the churches within Milan's broad sphere of influence, see chap. 1 above, pp. 29-30.

⁹⁵⁵ Homoian documents produced during the 380s have been published as *Scolies ariennes sur le concile d'Aquilée*, SC 267, ed. Roger Gryson (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1980).

⁹⁵⁶ It is in this context that Williams places the episode in Paulinus of Milan's *Vita Ambrosii* 18 in which two "Arian" courtiers die in a carriage accident after demanding a public debate with Ambrose. See *Ambrose of Milan*, 185.

Nicene, his stepmother Justina and half-brother Valentinian II, resident in Sirmium in the early 380s, continued to support the Homoian cause, completely unaffected by the outcome of the recent council. Their religious loyalties became a major political issue when Gratian was murdered in an uprising in 383, and the western empire was divided into two opposing camps.⁹⁵⁷ Magnus Maximus controlled the Prefecture of the Gauls, while Valentinian held onto the Prefecture of Italy and Illyricum. To secure his precarious hold on Italy he moved his court to Milan, where he was forced to contend with Ambrose, who was by now a seasoned bishop and therefore a force to be reckoned with.⁹⁵⁸ He had been in his see for more than ten years, had gained a reputation as a writer and exegete, and was emboldened by his long string of successes in promoting the pro-Nicene cause.⁹⁵⁹ Although Ambrose was loyal to the son of Valentinian I as the legitimate heir to the empire, a clash between bishop and court over their religious differences was practically inevitable.⁹⁶⁰ It came, and when it did it turned out to be a rather drawn out affair. It took the form of two failed attempts on the part of the court to secure for itself a basilica in Milan in which to celebrate Easter and baptize Homoian converts, one in 385 and another the following year, the latter of which nearly resulted in bloodshed.⁹⁶¹

Ambrose managed to get the better of the court in these two standoffs, yet even this political defeat did not spell the end of Homoianism as a living religious force in the western

⁹⁵⁷ On the usurpation of Magnus Maximus, in which Gratian was apparently betrayed to his enemy, see Neil B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 154-155.

⁹⁵⁸ On these developments, see McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 158-160; and Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 195-210.

⁹⁵⁹ Not the least of these successes was the close working relationship he had developed with Valentinian's older half-brother. See McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 156.

⁹⁶⁰ Ambrose's loyalty to the court is best illustrated by the two embassies he undertook to Maximus, resident at Trier. See McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 160-163 (for that of 383) and 217-218 (for that of 386).

⁹⁶¹ On these confrontations, see Ambrose, *Epp.* 75A and 76; as well as McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 170-196; and Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 210-217.

Roman world. Williams' contribution to our understanding of the fortunes of Homoianism at the end of the fourth century is to show that it was this confrontation between the court and the bishop and its aftermath (the invasion of Italy by Maximus in the summer of 387), rather than the Council of Aquileia, that represented Arianism's last stand as a political force.⁹⁶² This argument is certainly a necessary correction to any reconstruction of the history of western Homoianism that overlooks its ability to win and hold adherents among Roman political and military elites into the 380s.⁹⁶³ As such, it prompts us to look for evidence of survival rather than simply to assume that a single church council—and a small one at that—succeeded in destroying an ecclesiastical party that dominated northern Italy and Illyricum as recently as the 360s. However, in ending the narrative at the fall of Valentinian's government, Williams' study risks obscuring two important facts. First, one of the outcomes of the intense struggle of 386 was that the Homoians won for themselves full liberty to practice their religion. This was guaranteed by a law issued in January of that year, and retained in the Theodosian Code.⁹⁶⁴ Second, even though

⁹⁶² Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 218, refers to “the demise of western Homoianism as an ecclesio-political force.” If “ecclesio-political” refers to the specific set of arrangements whereby Valentinian II's court was itself committed to the Homoian Creed of Rimini and actively sought to promote it, then Williams is correct. But such a claim is actually more narrow and limited in scope than at first it may appear. As what follows will make clear, it ignores the context in which, from the late fourth century onward, Homoianism made great strides and in fact grew in importance in Roman society.

⁹⁶³ For understandable reasons, most histories of the Arian controversy that approach the matter from a theological perspective stop at 381. After that date, neither side formulated any new arguments. The strength of Williams' reconstruction is that it takes into account the fact that struggle between Homoians and Nicenes shifted from the arena of theology and ecclesiastical politics to that of imperial politics, with the Homoians enjoying the support of the court over against the Nicenes' dominance of the episcopal sees of the western church.

⁹⁶⁴ 16.1.4: “Imppp. Valentinianus, Theodosius et Arcadius aaa. ad Eusignium praefectum praetorio. Damus copiam colligendi his, qui secundum ea sentiunt, quae temporibus divae memoriae Constanti sacerdotibus convocatis ex omni orbe Romano expositaque fide ab his ipsis, qui dissentire noscuntur, Ariminensi concilio, Constantinopolitano etiam confirmata in aeternum mansura decreta sunt. Conveniendi etiam quibus iussimus patescat arbitrium, scituris his, qui sibi tantum existimant colligendi copiam contributam, quod, si turbulentum quippiam contra nostrae tranquillitatis praeceptum faciendum esse temptaverint, ut seditionis auctores pacisque turbatae ecclesiae, etiam maiestatis capite ac sanguine sint supplicia luituri, manente nihilo minus eos supplicio, qui contra hanc dispositionem nostram obreptive aut clanculo supplicare temptaverint. Dat. X kal. feb. Mediolano Honorio nob. p. et Evodio cons.” Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 218, states that after Maximus' invasion in the summer of 387, “all political patronage of Homoianism was withdrawn never to return, as the defeat of Maximus in the following summer brought the stringent enforcement of anti-heretical laws in the person of Theodosius.” This statement

no imperial court supported anything but the pro-Nicene position from 387 onward, to focus our attention exclusively on the theological persuasion of the imperial family can easily lead us to forget that, by virtue of their role in the late Roman army, Homoian barbarians only became more politically important from the late fourth century onward. With the exception of the Franks, all of the independent barbarian kingdoms established on former Roman soil by ca. 480 were ruled by kings and military elites who professed this brand of Christianity.

This trend that saw the reemergence of Homoianism among the rulers of the western Roman world was only reversed during the sixth century by a long series of massive setbacks to the Homoian cause, setbacks that were by no means inevitable. First, Clovis, king of the Franks, was baptized by a Nicene bishop. This decision made it much easier for the Frankish rulers of Gaul to secure the political support of the Roman elites and to establish a kingdom that soon came to dominate its neighbors in Gaul—the Burgundians and the Visigoths.⁹⁶⁵ Second, the emperor Justinian's military expeditions destroyed the Vandal and Ostrogothic kingdoms

implies that Homoianism, along with other heresies, was suppressed by Theodosius' vigorous action. But no evidence for the suppression of Homoianism exists. Thus by ignoring the continuing validity of the aforementioned law even after 386, Williams' narrative only tells part of the story. The fact of the matter is that Homoian Christians continued to enjoy a rather large sphere of action after the Nicene triumph. In order to reconstruct the situation more accurately, we need to go farther along the path along which Williams leads, by regarding the controversy after 381 as a struggle over political patronage. However, we need to have a broader definition of what constitutes "patronage." Promotion of the Homoian creed by the imperial court is one form, but the creation of a legal space for Homoian activity is another, and it continued to exist long after the Nicene viewpoint fully captured the loyalties of the imperial family.

⁹⁶⁵ Gregory of Tours and Venantius Fortunatus likened the Frankish kings to the Old Testament kings of Israel, whose duty it was to live uprightly and protect and foster the true faith. This attitude was probably representative of the sentiments of most Gallo-Roman aristocrats, for whom such a political expression of their Christianity was by now traditional. See Raymond van Dam, "Merovingian Gaul and the Frankish Conquests," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 1, c. 500-c. 700, ed. Paul Fouracre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 193-231, at 206-207. See also Patrick J. Geary, *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 85-86, who makes the point that converting to Nicene/Catholic Christianity would have made it more likely that Gallo-Roman aristocrats living under the rule of the Visigoths and Burgundians would cooperate with him as he attempted to expand his kingdom at the expense of his Homoian rivals.

between 534 and 554.⁹⁶⁶ Near the end of the century, the Visigothic king Reccared converted to Catholicism; the Council of Toledo of 589 made Catholics of his nobles and of the Visigothic church hierarchy.⁹⁶⁷ Finally, Augustine of Kent, sponsored by Pope Gregory I (s. 590-604), established a Catholic mission to the Anglo-Saxons by the end of the sixth century, and within a hundred years that powerful barbarian people had likewise been brought into the Catholic fold.⁹⁶⁸

At the close of the fourth century, however, the sun was only beginning to rise on the age of “barbarian Europe,” an age in which a barbarian *magister militum* like Ricimer could be said to have “prospered in a Nicene world.”⁹⁶⁹ This world (Italy from the late 450s to the early 470s, in Ricimer’s specific case) was Nicene in the sense that the vast majority of the population had by then been brought into the Nicene church, established by Theodosius I as the imperial church, and supported by his descendants in both halves of the empire. The bitter struggle of the two sides to control the reins of imperial power had ended. So long as emperors still ruled the western provinces, the Nicenes were politically dominant, but the law of 386 had permitted Homoians to carve out for themselves a place in Roman society. Because the army was

⁹⁶⁶ The military success of these expeditions brought welcome relief to the Catholic churches of Africa and Italy. In Italy, churches that had been used by Gothic Christians were reconsecrated for use by the Catholics, a gesture no doubt appreciated by the Catholic bishops, but these churches paid the price for such preferment by the surrender of their independence from the eastern emperor. See John Moorhead, *Justinian* (New York: Longman, 1994), 108 (for the transfer of the churches); and (for the loss of independence) “Western Approaches (500-600),” in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c. 500-1492*, ed. Jonathan Shepherd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 196-220, at 214-215.

⁹⁶⁷ For the conversion of the Visigoths, see Roger Collins, *Visigothic Spain, 409-711* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2004), 64-69.

⁹⁶⁸ The Christianization of the English is, of course, the main theme of Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. See also Ian Wood, “Christianisation and the Dissemination of Christian Teaching,” in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, 1.710-734, at 714-716.

⁹⁶⁹ For the “Arianism” of the Goths, see Maurice Wiles, *Archetypal Heresy: Arianism Through the Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 40-51; for the ability of an “Arian” barbarian military officer to exercise great authority in the twilight of the western empire, see Ralph W. Mathisen, “Ricimer’s Church in Rome: How an Arian Barbarian Prospered in a Nicene World,” in *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity*, ed. Noel Lenski (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2009), 307-325.

increasingly made up of barbarians (and thus of Homoians), the empire needed them and thus had to make peace with their presence. Even if the militant pro-Nicene bishops of northern Italy (and elsewhere in the empire) had asked for its revocation, it would have been quite unwise for any emperor, no matter how much he agreed with the bishops' theology, to rescind Valentinian II's law of January 386. The more peaceful atmosphere created by this legal toleration allowed for cooperation and collaboration between members of these two confessional groups.⁹⁷⁰ However, if a distinctive Nicene identity were to survive in such a context of increasing barbarian political influence, it would fall to the pro-Nicene bishops alone to foster it. This is the very thing they were eager to do.

Valentinian II's defeats in 386 and 387 at the hands of Ambrose and Maximus, respectively, meant the disappearance of his court as a Homoian counterweight to the overwhelming pro-Nicene sentiment among the bishops of northern Italy and the western church more generally. But the religious position of the western emperor became less relevant as his political power was more and more taken over by barbarian generals and kings. The bishops, however, remained unwilling to make any sort of truce with the confessional stance of the barbarians who were increasingly visible in the upper echelons of the army. Every north Italian bishop from the late fourth and early fifth centuries for whom any evidence survives was as hostile to Homoianism as Ambrose had been, as shown by the fact that denunciations of "Arianism" (a term that packed a much stronger emotional charge than the rather bland, technical term "Homoian") abound in their writings. Two main factors underlie this hostility.

⁹⁷⁰ Perhaps the classic example of the potential for such cooperation was the Ostrogothic king Theoderic's rule of Italy (493-526); his religious toleration and good relations with the Catholic bishops of his kingdom are prominent features of his approach to administration. See Moorhead, "Ostrogothic Italy and the Lombard Invasions," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 1, 140-161, at 145-146.

First, Ambrose had bequeathed to the churches of northern Italy a vivid memory of the basilica controversies, casting them as decisive events that shaped the identity of north Italian Christianity as an orthodoxy under siege by powerful and hostile political forces. This memory of them was absorbed and passed on by Gaudentius of Brescia and Rufinus of Aquileia. Second, the increasing military power of the barbarians in the first half of the fifth century created opportunities for interaction between Nicenes and Homoians that these bishops likely regarded as a threat to the Nicene identity of their supporters. Therefore, in order both to preserve their supporters' sense of themselves as a beleaguered minority (although they were in fact a powerful majority) and to distinguish between the Nicene and Homoian understandings of Christ, the north Italian bishops of the first half of the fifth century frequently used "Arianism"—in one way or another—as a tool for establishing the frontier that separated true belief from false, authentic Christianity from a counterfeit.

Remembering Arianism: Shaping Present Identity by Recalling the Past

The present section of this chapter draws on a particular approach to history known as "memory studies." Based on the theoretical work of Maurice Halbwachs and others, this approach does not so much focus on significant historical events in themselves, but on the significance of historical events as powerful forces shaping the identity of those in whose collective consciousness they take hold.⁹⁷¹ It has been applied mainly to traumatic episodes, especially in the twentieth century, such as the Holocaust.⁹⁷² More recently, Takashi Yoshida has applied it to the atrocities that took place during and after the fall of the Chinese capital of

⁹⁷¹ Of Halbwachs' works, see especially *La mémoire collective* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950).

⁹⁷² See, for example, some of the work of Dominick LaCapra: *History and Memory after Auschwitz* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998); and *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

Nanjing to Japanese troops in December 1937.⁹⁷³ Yoshida's study is particularly helpful for the ways in which it describes the power of historical memory. "Nanjing," he writes,

has figured in the attempts of all three nations [sc., Japan, China, and the United States] to preserve and redefine national and ethnic pride and identity, assuming different kinds of significance based on each country's changing internal and external enemies. It has influenced—and in turn been influenced by—foreign policy diplomatic relations among the four governments considered in this study [sc., the three aforementioned nations as well as Taiwan]. Perceptions of it have been used as a barometer of patriotic loyalty, and its memory has been manipulated in order to galvanize such loyalties. It has left its mark on journalism, film, painting, fiction, and museum displays. It has triggered acute controversies among individuals and groups of various political values. It has haunted and influenced the conscience of the world.⁹⁷⁴

Obviously the Nanjing Massacre and the Milanese basilica crises cannot be compared on the moral plane. Nevertheless, the analogy between them holds at one important point: they were both experienced as traumatic events by the side that lacked the power to meet force with force. We may perhaps accuse Ambrose, Gaudentius, and Rufinus of exaggerating the threat posed by the court of Valentinian II, who probably acted with prudence and caution precisely because his own political position was weak. But the fact that they portrayed these events in the way they did means at the very least that their reconstructions were believable for their respective audiences.⁹⁷⁵ Moreover, all three of these writers regarded the basilica crises as a decisive event in the recent history of the church's life, with significant repercussions for the its identity from

⁹⁷³ See Takashi Yoshida, *The Making of the 'Rape of Nanking': History and Memory in Japan, China, and the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

⁹⁷⁴ Yoshida, *The Making of the 'Rape of Nanking'*, 5. A number of other parallels between the reception of the Nanking Massacre and that of the basilica crises might also be mentioned. To take just one example, Yoshida refers (p. 5) to the "process of internationalization" whereby the memory of Nanking was transmitted to the various countries his study considers. Likewise, the Milanese basilica crisis was, if not "internationalized" then "inter-provincialized," as an account of it was reported by Ambrose to his sister at Rome (in *Ep.* 76) and Rufinus' account influenced to one degree or another those of the fifth-century Greek writers of ecclesiastical history, Socrates (*HE* 5.11), Sozomen (*HE* 7.13), and Theodoret (*HE* 5.13).

⁹⁷⁵ LaCapra notes that "Trauma registers in hyperbole in a manner that is avoided or repressed in a complacent reasonableness or bland objectivism." See *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, xi.

that time onward.⁹⁷⁶ As has been done with the Nanjing Massacre, as well as other significant and traumatic events of recent history, they manipulated the memory of these events, as we will see (borrowing from Yoshida's language), to help their supporters understand who their enemies were and to galvanize their loyalties by fostering a "victim consciousness."⁹⁷⁷

That the memory of the basilica controversies preserved by Ambrose and built upon by Gaudentius and Rufinus ever took hold might seem strange with the benefit of 1,600 years of hindsight.⁹⁷⁸ Western Homoianism, after all, lost its political support when Magnus Maximus tried to force a solution to the uneasy standoff between his court and that of Valentinian II. As the defenses of the young Augustus crumbled before the offensive of Maximus in the summer of 387, he was forced to flee to the east and seek Theodosius' aid. This Theodosius granted, in exchange for the hand of Valentinian's sister and a switch of the fugitive emperor's religious loyalty from the Homoian creed to the Nicene. In 388, Theodosius marched west and defeated Maximus. He reestablished Valentinian as ruler of the west.⁹⁷⁹ From then until the middle of the fifth century, both halves of the empire were ruled by a stable dynasty that staunchly supported the Nicene view of the Trinity. During this time, the pro-Nicene party so consolidated its control over the established church throughout the empire that from around the year 400, it is not just a

⁹⁷⁶ LaCapra speaks of the power of "founding traumas" to "become the valorized or intensely cathected basis of identity for an individual or group." See "Writing History, Writing Trauma," 1-42, at 23, in *Writing History, Writing Trauma*.

⁹⁷⁷ Yoshida uses the term in the context of postwar Japanese attitudes toward and self-perceptions arising from the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. See *The Making of the 'Rape of Nanking'*, 55-56.

⁹⁷⁸ It might legitimately be asked whether a memory of the basilica crises ever entered into the collective consciousness of the churches of northern Italy. This depends entirely on how the terms are defined. But we know that the intended audience for one of these narrative reconstructions—Rufinus' *Ecclesiastical History*—was intended for a broad audience that went beyond the elites of the Christian community of Aquileia.

⁹⁷⁹ For these events, see Rufinus, *HE*. 11.14-17; John Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court, A. D. 364-425* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 173-182; McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 292-295; and Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 226-229.

theological judgment, but also a historical judgment, to speak of the Nicene position as “the Catholic faith,” as the so-called Athanasian Creed does.⁹⁸⁰ And even after barbarian chieftains carved the western provinces of the empire up into independent kingdoms, the survival of this Catholic faith was never in doubt.⁹⁸¹

But to appreciate the full significance of the victory over Homoianism is all too easy with the benefit of hindsight. To do so would have been difficult for Ambrose and his allies in the last decade of the fourth century and the first few years of the fifth. True, the enemy they scorned and feared had been defeated both in church councils and in imperial politics, but as the previous chapter showed, Ambrose and Rufinus had learned that imperial power could be safely wielded only by a certain kind of Christian—their own. They had no way of predicting that a descendant of Theodosius, who shared his theological convictions, was to rule the western empire almost uninterrupted until long after they were dead. The two civil wars fought by Theodosius in Italy between the late 380s and early 390s, his death in 395, the accession of his young sons Arcadius

⁹⁸⁰ On the context of this creed, which came not from the pen of Athanasius, but from Gaul in the late fifth or early sixth century, see, J. N. D. Kelly, *The Athanasian Creed* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1964), 35-37 and 109-124.

⁹⁸¹ It is true that the Vandal kings of North Africa, who like most of the barbarians who invaded the empire in the fifth century, subscribed to the Creed of Rimini of 359, used their political and military superiority against the Catholic church in their territory over a period of many decades. King Geiseric's (r. 428-477) actions against the Catholic church took a number of forms. First, during the 440s he confiscated as many church buildings as were necessary to meet the religious needs of the tens of thousands of Vandal warriors and their families. As part of this program, the clerics who had formerly served these churches obviously had to be expelled, and in some cases exiled so as not to be in a position to arouse the opposition of their former flocks. This ecclesiastical policy seems to have mirrored the policy whereby the king had confiscated the landed estates of many of the African nobles in order to redistribute them to his warriors. Second, after the initial round of confiscations and displacements whose purpose was simply to make room for the newcomers, Geiseric exiled bishops who spoke out against his policy and left their sees vacant; in some parts of the kingdom he also prohibited Catholic worship services. Finally, he forbade Catholics to serve in his administration. In light of the fact that the Vandals were a tiny minority in North Africa, stamping out Catholic Christianity was clearly out of the question. Instead, the overall goal of these policies seems to have been to prevent the Catholic church from becoming a strong counterweight to his rule, a state of affairs that would have made his kingdom practically ungovernable. See Christian Courtois, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique* (Paris: Arts et Métiers Graphiques, 1955), 284-293. Moorhead evaluates their policy, at least under Geiseric and his son Huneric (r. 477-484), much more harshly, calling it “a savage persecution, which owed something to the wish of the Vandal state to gain control over the assets of the church and its members. See *Justinian*, 65.

and Honorius, and the three invasions of northern Italy by barbarian armies during the first decade of the fifth century, culminating in the capture of the city of Rome in 410, would have been enough to chasten even the most optimistic observer of the political events of that era. That is why when Ambrose, Gaudentius, and Rufinus wrote accounts of the basilica controversy of 386 during the fifteen or twenty turbulent years between the events themselves and the first few years of the fifth century, the sense of being under siege is palpable.⁹⁸² Ambrose and Gaudentius evoked this conflict in letters—Ambrose writing to his sister in Rome and Gaudentius to Benivulus, who in his capacity as the *magister memoriae* for the court of Valentinian II had experienced it firsthand. Rufinus included a narrative of the basilica controversy in his continuation of Eusebius’s *Ecclesiastical History*.

The purpose of this section is to examine the motivations that led these three pro-Nicene polemicists to evoke the memory of these events in their writings, which in the case of Gaudentius and Rufinus were produced ten to twenty years after the events themselves. For Ambrose, certainly, they were a textbook case of the dangers of an overweening imperial authority that did not understand its proper place in the divinely ordained order. But there is more to be said than this. Indeed, it seems that these writers had an intuitive understanding of the way in which collective memory is an essential element in the formation of group identity. Moreover, they also seem to have understood the way in which a “victim consciousness” can

⁹⁸² As for the chronology, Ambrose’s *Sermo contra Auxentium* (Ep. 75A) was delivered on Palm Sunday in 386 (CSEL 82/3.82); Ep. 76 to Marcellina was written in April of the same year, in other words only a few days after the events it describes (CSEL 82/3.108). For the texts, see CSEL 82/3.82-125. Rufinus translated Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History* and added two books of his own while in Aquileia in 402 or 403. It is unknown at precisely what date Gaudentius compiled fifteen of his sermons (ten making up the series of post-Easter mystagogical catecheses, four on the Gospels, and one on the Macchabean martyrs) and sent them to Benivulus along with the Preface addressed to him. Gaudentius became bishop of Brescia sometime between 387 and 396 (PCBE 2.887), and died no later than 410. Stephen L. Boehrer argues for a date near the end of the range. See “Gaudentius of Brescia: Sermons and Letters,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1965, 6-8. Thus his account may date anywhere from a few years before that of Rufinus to a few years afterward. In any case, it was a moment at which there was every reason to feel anxious about the empire’s future.

reinforce loyalty on the part of their members to groups that have been traumatized by the aggression—real or perceived—of outsiders.

The question before us is therefore how the historiography of Ambrose, Gaudentius, and Rufinus was aimed at shaping the self-understanding of pro-Nicene Christians in northern Italy. A close reading of the texts in which these writers recount the events in question will show that they sought to use them not only as a case study of the abuse of imperial power that attempted to exercise authority outside of its proper sphere (as we saw in chapter 4), but also to cast the church of Milan—the leading church of northern Italy, under the guidance of its heroic bishop Ambrose—in the role of the longsuffering guardian of orthodoxy. In emphasizing the suffering that Ambrose and his church were willing to endure for the sake of defending the Nicene view of the Trinity, these men were attempting to galvanize the loyalty of the churches they governed (or in Rufinus' case, the church for whose benefit he was writing) to the Nicene cause, and to their leaders who championed it. Making loyalty to the Nicene Creed a central aspect of the Christian identity of their audiences would have had the further effect of making them more willing to identify themselves specifically as Nicens over against the Homoian Christians who were present in the north Italian context.

We begin with Ambrose, two of whose letters show us how he sought to preserve the memory of the conflict between Nicene and Arian beliefs that came to a head in 386, in the showdown between himself and the court. Both of them emphasize the power differential between the court and the bishop, thus underscoring the threat posed to orthodoxy by unscrupulous political power as well as the unlikely nature of Ambrose's eventual victory. The first is actually a sermon delivered during the crisis, one which the bishop included in his letter collection on account of its obvious propaganda value. The other he wrote to his sister

Marcellina, a consecrated virgin living in Rome, in reply to a letter she had sent to him and that he had received on March 27, the Thursday before Holy Week 386.⁹⁸³ It describes the basilica controversy of that year, in which Ambrose was instructed by the officials of the court to hand over first the *Basilica Nova*, then the Portian Basilica.⁹⁸⁴

The sermon in question is known commonly as the *Sermo contra Auxentium*, its target being the bishop of the Homoian community of Milan.⁹⁸⁵ The unjustified exercise of coercive power on the part of Valentinian's court is a prominent theme of the sermon; it also situates the present conflict in the context of a long string of attempts by earlier emperors to undermine the church's freedom to define orthodoxy without the interference of the civil magistrate.

Addressing his congregation, he attempts at the beginning of the sermon to frame the conflict properly for them, as a clash between imperial power and ecclesiastical liberty, whose rights are being trampled by the misdirected zeal of the emperor.⁹⁸⁶ He declares that "against weapons, soldiers, Goths, my tears are my weapons, for these are a priest's defense."⁹⁸⁷ "By the law that has been passed," he goes on to say, the emperor has proven "that he is against the faith."⁹⁸⁸

⁹⁸³ On these two letters, see n.982.

⁹⁸⁴ *Ep.* 76.1-3.

⁹⁸⁵ This Auxentius, who had been a disciple of Ulfila, should not be confused with the bishop of the same name who had replaced Dionysius in 355 and held the see until 374. The Auxentius in question here was an easterner, from Durostorum, in Moesia Inferior. See *PCBE* 2.242-244; and Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 202-210. On Ambrose's sermon, see McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 196-207.

⁹⁸⁶ *Ep.* 75A.1, *CSEL* 82/3.83: "sane si me vis aliqua abduceret ab ecclesia, carnem meam exturbari posse non mentem, paratum me esse, ut si ille faceret quod solet esse regiae potestatis, ego subirem quod sacerdotis esse consuevit."

⁹⁸⁷ *Ep.* 75A.2, *CSEL* 82/3.83: "adversus arma milites Gothos quoque lacrimae meae arma sunt, talia enim munimenta sunt sacerdotis" (trans. *NPNF*, ser. 2, 10.430). All translations are taken from *NPNF*, ser. 2, vol. 10.

⁹⁸⁸ *Ep.* 75A.3, *CSEL* 82/3.83-84: "lata lege patefecit, quod impugnat fidem." The law in question is the aforementioned edict of January 23, 386, which had threatened any who interfered with Homoian worship with capital punishment: "etiam maiestatis capite ac sanguine sint supplicia luituri." See *Cod. Theod.* 16.1.4.

Ambrose has thus rhetorically numbered Valentinian II among the persecutors, a theme on which he elaborates in the middle of the sermon by referring to two historical episodes that he believed were formative for the identity of authentic Christianity. Both of these passages cast previous emperors—one pagan and one Christian—as enemies of the authentic church.

The first of these instances is one where Ambrose relates the *quo vadis* story, in which the apostle Peter sees a vision of Christ while leaving the city of Rome.⁹⁸⁹ Peter asks him, “Where are you going?” In reply, Christ says, “I am coming to be crucified again.” Recognizing that the meaning of Christ’s answer was that he was to be crucified again in the person of Peter, the apostle turned around and courageously met his fate.⁹⁹⁰ The story was, again, a reminder of the danger posed by imperial authority when it opposed the true faith. But by telling it in this context, Ambrose also casts himself as the modern-day analog to Peter, thus identifying himself with the martyr who suffered as a victim of Nero’s persecution in the early days of the church’s history. The original purpose of the *quo vadis* story was to give meaning to Peter’s death, which would have been experienced by the first-century Roman church as a traumatic event, by making it part of a larger narrative, according to which the people of Christ were called to share in the sufferings of Christ.⁹⁹¹ By appropriating the story and applying it to his own situation, Ambrose

⁹⁸⁹ *Ep.* 75A.13, *CSEL* 82/3.89-90.

⁹⁹⁰ The story was originally from the apocryphal Acts of Peter, which was written in Greek and translated into Latin. For the text, see *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, ed. Richard Lipsius (Leipzig: Herman Mendelssohn, 1891), 1.45-103. The *quo vadis* story comes from (what would be) §36 of the Latin text, at which point there is a lacuna in *Codex Vercellensis* 158, the sole witness to the Latin text. It survives, however, in a Greek version which is collated with the Latin in Lipsius’ edition. On the history of the text, see Christine M. Thomas, *The Acts of Peter, Gospel Literature, and the Ancient Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 14-39. For an English translation, see *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation Based on M. R. James*, ed. J. K. Elliott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 390-426.

⁹⁹¹ Ambrose’s retelling of the story is noteworthy for its economy of language: “statimque correptus per crucem suam honorificavit dominum Iesum” (*CSEL* 82/3.90). On the death of the apostles in the Apocryphal Acts, see Monika Pesthy, “Cross and Death in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles,” in *The Apocryphal Acts of Peter: Magic, Miracles and Gnosticism*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 123-133. In this chapter, Pesthy focuses mainly on the differences between the passion of Christ as narrated by the canonical Gospels and the passions of the apostles in the Apocryphal Acts, emphasizing the “gnostic” qualities of the latter narratives. She does, however,

was attempting to give a similar meaning to the traumatic events of his own time—the attack on the little band of faithful Milanese Christians overwhelmed (so the bishop would have it) by the *force majeure* of the court, which sought to enforce its tyrannical will with ferocious Gothic soldiers. “You see, then,” he concludes, “that Christ wills to suffer in His servants.”⁹⁹² That was the lesson of this foundational myth of Roman Christianity.

But from Ambrose’s standpoint, that suffering which was the lot of Christ’s servants might also be inflicted by an emperor who claimed to be one of them. The transition to a Christian empire did not necessarily remove the danger that the true church would be persecuted. The characters in the grand drama of the conflict between God’s people and the powers of this world might change, but the basic plot remained the same. *Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose*. And so the other historical episode to which the bishop appealed in order to drive home the lesson about how the genuine church was in constant danger of finding itself in the crosshairs of the powers of this world came from the last years of the emperor Constantius II’s reign, during which he seemed to have succeeded in creating a unified imperial church. Because the *homoousion* of the Nicene Creed was an obstacle to unity, one of his central goals in implementing this policy was to neutralize Athanasius of Alexandria as a figure around whom the supporters of this term could rally. As we have seen, Eusebius of Vercelli and Dionysius of Milan—two prominent north Italian bishops from the foundational period of our study—were deposed for their non-cooperation with this plan.⁹⁹³ Bishop Liberius of Rome also fell victim to

indicate that the authors of these Acts function in the context of a larger narrative of suffering and death, making the point that “the apostle, on the one hand, imitates Christ and on the other hand becomes an example for the martyrs; that is to say, his death constitutes a link between the passion of Christ and the death of the martyrs” (p. 124).

⁹⁹² *Ep.* 75A.14, *CSEL* 82/3.90: “Videtis igitur quod in servulis suis pati velit Christus.”

⁹⁹³ See chap. 1 above, pp. 21-22.

Constantius' policy, which meant that Athanasius lost three key supporters in Italy. Hilary of Poitiers was deposed the following year at a church council meeting in the Gallic city of Béziers and exiled to Phrygia.⁹⁹⁴ Eusebius, Hilary, and Liberius eventually returned to their sees, but Dionysius died in exile, a fact of which Ambrose reminds his listeners in his bid to portray himself as the latest in a long line of victims of unwarranted imperial intrusion into the church's internal affairs: "And I added further: God forbid that I shall give up the inheritance of my fathers, that is, the inheritance of Dionysius, who died in exile in the cause of the faith; the inheritance of the Confessor Eustorgius, the inheritance of Merocles and of all the faithful bishops of bygone days."⁹⁹⁵

The mention of his earlier predecessors, in particular Dionysius, allows Ambrose to kill two birds with one stone. Referring, albeit indirectly, to the Council of Milan in 355 allows him not only to make the desired point about Constantius as a persecutor, but also to situate his own episcopate in the main stream of the history of his see, with his immediate predecessor—who conveniently shared the same name as the primary target of his polemic—being a usurper. Because he had been placed in the see by an Arianizing emperor rather than by the choice of the Christians of Milan, Auxentius' tenure between 355 and 374 can be portrayed as a radical

⁹⁹⁴ On the exiles of Liberius and Hilary, see Claire Sotinel, *Identité civique et christianisme. Aquilée du IIIe au IVe siècle* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2005), 124-126 (for Liberius); and (for Hilary) Manlio Simonetti, "Hilary of Poitiers and the Arian Crisis in the West," in *Patrology*, vol. 4, *The Golden Age of Latin Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Chalcedon*, ed. Angelo di Berardino, trans. Placid Solari (Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics, 1986), 33-143, at 36-38.

⁹⁹⁵ *Ep.* 75A.18, *CSEL* 82/3.93-94: "Absit ut tradam hereditatem patrum hoc est hereditatem Dionysii qui in exilio in causa fidei defunctus est, hereditatem Eustorgii confessoris, hereditatem Mirocletis atque omnium retro fidelium episcoporum" (trans. *NPNF*, ser. 2, 10.433, slightly altered). Ambrose frames the question in terms of *hereditas* because in the immediately preceding section of the sermon, he had likened the present-day situation to that of Naboth in I Kings 21, who was murdered by king Ahab for refusing to sell his vineyard, part of the inheritance assigned to him when the Israelites settled the land of Canaan. Merocles was the bishop of Milan who attended church councils in Rome and Arles in the years 313 and 314, respectively, called to settle the Donatist schism that had emerged in North Africa. See *PCBE* 2.1509-1510. Eustorgius was most likely Dionysius' immediate predecessor, and was named by Athanasius as a defender of the Nicene faith. See *PCBE* 2.719.

departure from Milanese tradition not only on account of his theology but also because he did not have a correct view of the proper relationship between bishops and emperors. Ambrose thus represented a return to pristine Milanese tradition—at least, that is, if he and his supporters could prevent Valentinian II—Constantius *redivivus*—from ousting him. Whatever his own fate might be, Ambrose wished to remind his hearers that the faith they professed was eternally vulnerable, and thus in need of a constant and vigorous defense, in particular against emperors who failed to recognize their duty to respect the church’s sacred integrity.⁹⁹⁶

Having explained to his listeners the significance of two historical episodes the appropriation of which he believed was important for fostering an authentic Christian identity, Ambrose turns in a later section of the sermon to the matter of the imperial law that explicitly legalized Homoian worship. This edict presented a particular challenge to Ambrose’s attempts to justify his intransigence, since it allowed the supporters of the court to argue that he was not simply defying the emperor’s whim, but the law itself.⁹⁹⁷ Ambrose counters this contention by ridiculing the notion that “the law can order a faith for man to hold”—an audacious and gross misrepresentation of the actual purpose of the law, which was not an attempt to compel belief on

⁹⁹⁶ The word “integrity” is chosen advisedly. We saw in chap. 2 that *integritas* was central to Ambrose’s understanding of the symbolic power of asceticism, in particular female asceticism, as the presence of consecrated virgins at the liturgy marked the church out as a sacred space, and thus in a sense transferred their *integritas* to the church as an institution. This fact could serve as a powerful rationale for claiming that at least certain aspects of its life occupied an independent sphere over which emperors had no rights.

⁹⁹⁷ Roman rulers had traditionally been regarded as subjects rather than masters of the law. Although by the fourth century the emperor had come to possess supreme legislative authority, nevertheless, as a practical matter he “actually exercised his governmental functions and powers with guidance from established substantive and procedural norms. Although he might change these norms at his discretion, he was bound to observe them to ensure that his decisions produced the intended practical results.” See George Mousourakis, *A Legal History of Rome* (London: Routledge, 2007), 157. As Jill Harries summarizes the situation, *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 20, “The emperor could, of course, make deliberate changes to Roman general law, as and when he chose, and the constitutions of the Later Empire show the reformer’s hand constantly at work. What was not desirable was that changes should be made through the creation of precedents by casual infringements of the rules. The resultant tension between the emperor’s urge to exhibit power through the conferring of favours, *beneficia*, and his subjection to the law as it stood emerges even in Justinian’s own discussion of the constitutions of emperors.”

the part of anyone.⁹⁹⁸ He elaborates on this point, arguing that in matters of faith, what counts is faith, not law: “He [sc., Auxentius] has not heard what was read today: ‘That a man is not justified by the works of the law,’ or ‘I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I may live unto God.’”⁹⁹⁹ Clearly, the court’s intention in issuing this law was to give itself legal cover for taking over a basilica in Milan against the will of the city’s bishop. There was precedent for such a move, to be sure.¹⁰⁰⁰ But the court, weakened by Ambrose’s opposition as well as by the presence of the pro-Nicene Magnus Maximus in Gaul, was wise to give itself a more secure legal basis for its attempts, especially in the event that it became necessary to employ coercion to achieve its ends. Mindful of the weakness of his own position (critics might say that he was taking a serious risk in order to prevent the court from exercising its traditional and legitimate rights), Ambrose’s rhetorical strategy here is to seize the moral high ground by trying to frame the issue as religious compulsion versus religious tolerance. If he succeeded in persuading his audience that the court’s action represented a legitimate threat to the church’s freedom, he could be seen as upholding a principle—freedom of conscience in religious matters—which had long been favored by learned Christian opinion.¹⁰⁰¹

⁹⁹⁸ Ep. 75A.24, CSEL 82/3.97: “Qui quos non potuerit sermone decipere, eos gladio putat esse feriendos, cruentas leges ore dictans, manu scribens et putans quod lex fidem possit hominibus imperare.”

⁹⁹⁹ Ep. 75A.24, CSEL 82/3.97-98: “Non audivit et id quod hodie dictum est: *Quoniam non iustificabitur homo ex operibus legis*, ait, *per legem legi mortuus sum ut deo vivam.*”

¹⁰⁰⁰ Earlier in Ambrose’s episcopate, Gratian had taken over a basilica in Milan for the use of the court. See *De spiritu sancto* 1.1.19-21; McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 121-123; and Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 139-140. In Ep. 76, discussed below, Ambrose reports one of the rationales given him by certain members of the administration as to why he was obligated to hand over a basilica: “Convenior ipse a comitibus et tribunis, ut basilicae fieret matura traditio, dicentibus imperatorem iure suo uti, eo quod in potestate eius essent omnia” (§8, CSEL 82/3.112).

¹⁰⁰¹ Even though the Constantinian era saw Christian thinkers for the first time articulating theoretical justifications for religious coercion, the work of Harold Drake has shown that the older Christian position of religious toleration still enjoyed broad support. In any case, many Christian thinkers and writers even during the Theodosian period remained opposed to coercion in religious matters. See the chapter in *Constantine and the Bishops* entitled “Power Players,” pp. 393-440, esp. 400-402, 405-408, and 429.

Having thus shifted the grounds of the argument by (falsely) portraying the court as intending to compel belief, he goes on to examine the belief that the court allegedly desires to impose. To do this, he once again refers to an episode of recent history that in his view served as an example of the opposite of proper conduct on the part of a Christian emperor. He takes his hearers back to the Council of Rimini in 359, whose creed has now been given explicit legal backing by the new edict, which in Ambrose's mind was yet another instance in which interference in the church's internal affairs by an imperial court skewed the results of a gathering of bishops. After the council finished its business, it sent a delegation to the emperor Constantius to inform him that the majority had voted in favor of a creed that upheld the *homoousion*, which was favored by most western bishops but for was not acceptable to the emperor. Meanwhile, the minority at Rimini sent its own delegation, which made it to the emperor first, and so when the majority's delegation arrived they found themselves subjected to persuasions and threats aimed at overturning their decision. They were successful. Back at Rimini, the delegates to the council were not permitted to leave until they ratified this outcome. They did, and the creed promulgated by the council was the minority report, according to which the Son was "like the Father according to the scriptures."¹⁰⁰²

But Ambrose did not seize on the conduct of the emperor, which he could easily have held up as a textbook case of imperial manipulation of a council of bishops that should have been left free to deliberate and formulate the church's teachings. Instead, he makes the creed itself the target of his polemic—not the actual creed, however, but a misrepresentation of it, "wherein

¹⁰⁰² On the Council of Rimini (or Ariminum), see Socrates, *HE* 2.37; Sozomen, *HE* 4.17-18; Theodoret, *HE* 2.15; R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318-381* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 376-380; and Lewis B. Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 160-161.

Christ was said to be a creature.”¹⁰⁰³ He goes on: “But they say, ‘God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law.’ And so they say ‘made,’ that is, ‘created.’”¹⁰⁰⁴ In point of fact, the Creed of Rimini says no such thing; the view of Christ that Ambrose ascribes to it is much more like the radical neo-Arianism of Eunomius than the Homoianism actually enshrined in the creed, which sought to avoid *ousia*-language altogether, and thus to sidestep the question of whether the Son was a creature or not. In the view of the Homoians, the less said about the relationship between the Father and the Son, the better, and whatever was said should adhere closely to the language of the Bible.¹⁰⁰⁵ The distortions and falsehoods that Ambrose relied on to make his argument, however, are rather beside the point. The significance of the *Sermo contra Auxentium* is the way in which the bishop of Milan seeks to shape his listeners’ memory of the past to establish a sense of identity that will be useful for meeting the challenges of their time.

The other document Ambrose produced during the basilica controversy of 386 also demonstrates his grasp of the importance of shaping his supporters’ perceptions of key historical events, whether they took place several centuries in the past, or as recently as a quarter century or even a few days previously. Letter 76 also shows that, as Neil McLynn points out in his study of Ambrose’s episcopal career, he had an extraordinarily strong desire to control the way in which he was perceived by his contemporaries.¹⁰⁰⁶ No doubt he was motivated in part by the

¹⁰⁰³ *Ep.* 75A.25, *CSEL* 82/3.98: “in quo creatura dictus est Christus.”

¹⁰⁰⁴ *Ep.* 75A.25, *CSEL* 82/3.98: “Sed aiunt: *Misit deus filium suum factum ex muliere, factum sub lege; ergo factum legunt hoc est creatum*” (trans. *NPNF*, ser. 2, 10.434, slightly altered).

¹⁰⁰⁵ The Second Sirmian Creed (357, labeled the “blasphemy of Sirmium” by its pro-Nicene opponents) explicitly condemned the use of “ousia”-language to describe the relationship between the Father and the Son, a reticence typical of Homoianism. See Michel Meslin, *Les ariens d’occident, 335-430* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1967), 283-284; Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1975), 267; Hanson, *The Search*, 343-347; and Ayres, *Nicaea*, 127, 134-135, 137-138, and 163.

¹⁰⁰⁶ McLynn speaks of the “inaccessibility” of Ambrose, who shields his true self behind the persona cultivated in his published works, especially his letters, but also the biography written by his deacon Paulinus. “Perhaps no body

hopes of protecting his reputation. But like any influential public figure, he also recognized that the preservation of his legacy depended in large part on how he was remembered. And thus, to a certain extent, it was impossible to separate Ambrose the man from the causes he represented. In order to help ensure that the pro-Nicene cause continued to enjoy broad support after his death, he therefore reached out with his pen, a means of leaving his mark that was more permanent than the ephemeral spoken word.¹⁰⁰⁷

Letter 76 was written to his sister in April of 386, after the court abandoned its attempts to secure use of the Portian Basilica and withdrew to Aquileia.¹⁰⁰⁸ We have seen in chapter 4 that one of the goals of this letter was to draw the line that separated what belonged to Caesar and what belonged to God in the light of Jesus' saying in Matthew.¹⁰⁰⁹ But the political struggle that provided the context for the letter is also important in relation to the anti-Arian polemic it contains. In the *Sermo contra Auxentium*, Ambrose consistently emphasizes that in the controversy over the basilica during Lent of 386, the demands made on behalf of the "Arian" faith were underwritten ultimately not by justice, but by raw political power. The same is true of Letter 76. Here again we will focus on the rhetorical strategy he deploys in order to create an association in the memory of his audience between Arianism and the illegitimate use of political power.

His strategy in this letter consists mainly in depicting the court as far too ready to use violence and intimidation to achieve its objective. The intimidation might take the form of the

of patristic literature," he writes, "is as carefully controlled as Ambrose's." See *Ambrose of Milan*, xvi, and the entire discussion in xiii-xvii.

¹⁰⁰⁷ As has been mentioned, the *Sermo contra Auxentium* was included in Ambrose's letter collection, and so what has just been said about *Ep. 76* applies equally well to the sermon.

¹⁰⁰⁸ On this temporary withdrawal, see McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 196-197.

¹⁰⁰⁹ See above, p. 221n.665.

use of high officials to overawe him or, in blunter fashion, the jailing of his supporters or the stationing of troops outside the church where he was officiating—an ominous hint of what could be wrought with the apparatus of coercion at the court’s disposal. In the second paragraph, for example, he relates to Marcellina that on Friday, March 28, “Illustrious men who were counts of the consistory came to me and informed me that I must both hand over the Basilica [Nova] and make sure that the people did not cause a disturbance.”¹⁰¹⁰ The court, however, soon changed its mind as to which edifice it desired for its services. The message was relayed to Ambrose by the praetorian prefect himself, who when he arrived at the church in which the bishop was presiding at the liturgy “urged us to give up the Portian Basilica,” which lay outside the city walls.¹⁰¹¹ When imperial banners were hung in the Portian in preparation for the court’s Easter service, some of Ambrose’s people responded by abducting one Castulus, a Homoian priest. Although Ambrose dispatched members of his clergy to instruct that he be released, the court retaliated by imposing a fine on the merchants of Milan, most of whom were evidently supporters of the bishop. The result was that before long, “The prisons, too, were packed with tradesmen.”¹⁰¹²

As if to underscore the heavy hand with which the court was seeking to impose itself, the bishop followed up this pitiful bit of information by giving Marcellina a glimpse of how the court regarded the resistance to its will: “All the palace officials, that is, the *memoriales*, the *agentes in rebus*, the *apparitores* of various *comites* were ordered to avoid going out on the

¹⁰¹⁰ Ep. 76.2, CSEL 82/3.108: “Convenerunt me primo viri <illustres> comites consistoriani, ut et basilicam traderem et procurarem, ne quid populus turbarum moveret” (translation mine).

¹⁰¹¹ Marcia Colish, “Why the Portiana? Reflections on the Milanese Basilica Crisis of 386.” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 10.3 (2002): 361-372.

¹⁰¹² Ep. 76.6, CSEL 82/3.111: “Condemnationes ilico gravissimae decernerentur; primo in corpus omne mercatorum. Itaque sanctis diebus ebdomadis ultimae, quibus solebant debitorum laxari vincula, stridunt catenae, imponuntur collo innocentium, exiguntur ducenta pondo auri infra totum triduum. Respondent aliud se tantum aut duplum si peterentur daturos, dummodo servarent fidem. Erant pleni carceres negotiatoribus” (trans. Beyenka, FC 26.367).

pretext that they were forbidden to take part in the *sedition*.¹⁰¹³ If that last term, the technical term in Roman law for an illegal and violent attempt to overthrow the state, is a fair indication of the court's view of the matter, what Ambrose says next indicates that he is ready to respond in kind in this battle for hearts and minds, labeling the court's actions a "*persecutio*."¹⁰¹⁴ If *sedition* was pregnant with meaning on account of its power to evoke in the mind of Roman officials the dark days of the Catilinarian conspiracy, *persecutio* was equally charged with meaning in the mind of anyone steeped in Christian literature, evoking all the episodes in biblical and ecclesiastical history in which the powerful wicked sought to crush the powerless righteous for their fidelity to the cause of God.¹⁰¹⁵ His strategy in this letter is therefore similar to the one he employs in the *Sermo contra Auxentium*—to situate the present crisis in a broader narrative of the suffering endured by authentic Christians so as to help his readers understand its meaning properly.

The juxtaposition of these two loaded terms—*sedition* and *persecutio*—is one of the rhetorical highpoints of the letter. Ambrose uses the term *persecutio* to describe the court's

¹⁰¹³ *Ep.* 76.7, *CSEL* 82/3.111-112: "Palatina omnia officia, hoc est memoriales, agentes in rebus, apparitores diversorum comitum, temperare a processu iubentur specie qua seditioni interesse prohibebantur" (trans. Beyenka, *FC* 26.367, slightly modified so as to leave the key terms untranslated). By hinting about the court's worries about the loyalty of these officials, Ambrose perhaps means to imply that the show of force was little more than a show, but fearsome enough nevertheless.

¹⁰¹⁴ *Ep.* 76.7, *CSEL* 82/3.112: "Fervebat persecutio, ac si aperuissent portam prorupturi in omne facinus videbantur."

¹⁰¹⁵ The importance of the term *sedition* in Roman political thought can be gauged by the fact that so many Latin authors regarded it as a useful conceptual category for describing various types of discord, whether in a military or political context. For a military context, where the term refers to what in English is typically denoted by the term "mutiny," see, e. g., Caesar, *BC* 1.87 and *BG* 7.28; Tacitus, *Hist.* 2.29; *Ann.* 1.19; 1.38; 1.42; 1.45; 1.69; 2.15; and 6.3. For the broader sense, referring to the type of civil strife or political discord that might betoken civil war, or to the uprising of a subject people, see, e. g., Sallust, *Jug.* 6.3; 37.1; 66.2; 72.1; *Cat.* 34.2; 37.3; 51.32; Livy, 6.16, 6.18, and 45.19; Vergil, *Aen.* 1.149; Tacitus, *Hist.* 4.68; *Ann.* 1.52; 14.17; and 16.30 (all cited in Egidio Forcellini et al., *Lexicon totius Latinitatis* [Padua, 1940], 4.288). The common use of the term seems to have prompted Cicero to define it in *De republica* 6.1 as "ea dissensio civium, quod seorsum eunt alii ad alios." The notion of the righteous as the object of *persecutio* was deeply rooted in both the Old and New Testaments. See, e. g., Ps. 30 (31):16; 118 (119):84, 86, 150, 157, 161; Matt. 5:10-12, 44; Jn. 15:20; Acts 9:5; Rom. 12:14; Phil. 3:6; II Tim. 3:12. For the use of the term in Latin Christian literature, see the relevant parts of *TLL* 10.1.11.1679-1683.

actions in another place in the letter as well, but it is not necessary to belabor the point.¹⁰¹⁶ One other point, however, that should be made before moving on to Rufinus's *Ecclesiastical History* pertains to what Ambrose says about the presence of Gothic troops among those used by the court to intimidate him and his supporters into complying with the imperial policy. At a number of points, he mentions the presence of soldiers in the city deployed by the government as part of its show of force during this tense period.¹⁰¹⁷ In several places, he refers to the fact that a number of them are Goths, which is significant for more than one reason.

The first reference to Gothic troops comes at a point in the letter in which Ambrose expresses to Marcellina his fear "that in defending the basilica bloodshed would occur and turn to the harm of the whole city."¹⁰¹⁸ At this particularly delicate moment when troops had been dispatched to occupy the basilica, he relates that "Some tribunes of the Goths were there; I assailed them, saying, 'Is this why the Roman state has taken you in, to make you agents of a public riot? Where will you go if these lands are destroyed?'"¹⁰¹⁹ He depicts these soldiers as ingrates who repay with the threat of violence and mayhem the generosity of the Roman people in receiving them.¹⁰²⁰ The use of *adoriebar* to denote the posture he assumed in addressing the

¹⁰¹⁶ See §18, *CSEL* 82/3.118: "Quid dicam quod etiam Heliam Iezabel cruenta persecuta est? Quod Iohannem baptistam Herodias fecit occidi? ... Quae ratio igitur est adversus hunc vermieulum gravioris tamptationis nisi quia non me sed ecclesiam persequuntur?"

¹⁰¹⁷ See, for example, §9, *CSEL* 82/3.113: "Horrebam quippe animo cum armatos ad basilicam ecclesiae occupandam missos cognoscerem..."

¹⁰¹⁸ *Ep.* 76.9, *CSEL* 82/3.113: "...ne dum basilicam vindicant, aliqua strages fieret, quae in perniciem totius vergeret civitatis."

¹⁰¹⁹ *Ep.* 76.9, *CSEL* 82/3.113: "Aderant Gothi tribuni, adoriebar eos dicens: 'Propterea vos possessio Romana suscepit ut perturbationis publicae vos praebeatis ministros? Quo transibitis si haec deleta fuerint?'"

¹⁰²⁰ The verb *suscipere* has a number of meanings which Ambrose may be evoking here. Beyond its basic definition of "to take," it can also mean "to receive, admit, take as a citizen," "take up, acknowledge, recognize, bring up [a child] as one's own [which a father did when he picked up a newborn baby to acknowledge it as his]," or "to get, beget, bear, have." These meanings denote the undertaking of a duty or responsibility. The verb can also mean "to undergo, submit to, incur, bear," thus denoting the undertaking of a burden or some form of suffering. See Charlton

tribunes indicates the strength of his feeling at perceiving the possibility that the situation might just descend into violence.¹⁰²¹ He had reason to expect that both his sister as well as the broader audience intended for his collected letters could readily comprehend the bitterness and anger conveyed in these words in light of the common perception of barbarians in the late Roman world as uncouth and violent, incapable of appreciating and participating in civilized life.¹⁰²² He engages in a similar rhetorical move at a later point in the letter when, in commenting on Ps. 78 (79):1—“O God, the heathen have invaded thine inheritance”—he states, “In reality, the heathen have invaded, and even more than the heathen have invaded. For the Goths have invaded, and men of different nations; they invaded with arms and surrounded and seized the basilica.”¹⁰²³

One important way in which Ambrose sought to shape public perceptions of the basilica controversy was thus to connect the court’s threats of unjustified violence in the mind of his audience with the barbarian soldiers who were used to make them. Another way in which he sought to control how this episode was remembered was by associating Gothic identity with Arian identity, in the hopes that the illegitimate use of political power, Gothic identity, and Arianism would cluster together in the minds of his readers.¹⁰²⁴ He does this in one passage in Letter 76, where he gives a brief description of what we might call the “demography” of the

T. Lewis, *A Latin Dictionary for Schools* (New York, Cincinnati, and Chicago: American Book Company, 1916), 1048.

¹⁰²¹ The verb can denote either a physical or a verbal assault. See Lewis, *A Latin Dictionary*, 34.

¹⁰²² Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (London: MacMillan, 2005), 69-70; and especially Ralph W. Mathisen, “Violent Behavior and the Construction of Barbarian Identity in Late Antiquity,” in *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices*, ed. Harold A. Drake (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006), 27-35.

¹⁰²³ *Ep.* 76.20, *CSEL* 82/3.120: “Et re vera venerunt gentes et plus etiam quam gentes venerunt, venerunt enim Gothi et diversarum nationum viri, venerunt cum armis et circumfusi occupaverunt basilicam.”

¹⁰²⁴ Ambrose’s desire to cultivate such an association in the minds of his audience should be understood as part of a broader attempt to shape the identity of the Christians of Milan as Romans. His full embrace of Latin as Milan’s liturgical language was another aspect of this project that complemented what he tried to accomplish in this part of *Ep.* 76. See above, p. 202.

“Arian” community of Milan: “there were none [i. e., no “Arians”] among the citizens; they consisted of a few who belonged to the imperial household and several Goths.”¹⁰²⁵ Given the polemical purpose of the letter, his tendency is obviously to exaggerate how small this community is—few in number, clinging to a heresy out political self-interest rather than moral conviction. But although Ambrose would scarcely want to admit that there was a “Homoian revival” in Milan in the mid-380s, if we take what he says as an indication of the sort of people who made up the core of the Homoian community of Milan in these years, there is reason to believe that he was basically correct.¹⁰²⁶ First of all, the prospect of preferment could be a powerful inducement for civil servants to convert to the faith of the emperor whose favor they sought. There is evidence that this dynamic had an influence on the conversion of such men from the time of Constantine on, and there is no reason why it should not have had a similar effect in the case of Valentinian II.¹⁰²⁷ In fact, two specific pieces of evidence can be adduced to suggest, albeit indirectly, that this was indeed the case. In his *Sermo contra Auxentium*, Ambrose alleges that Auxentius “rebaptizes” Christians received into the Homoian

¹⁰²⁵ *Ep.* 76.12, *CSEL* 82/3.114: “Prodire de Arrianis nullus audebat, quia nec quisquam de civibus erat, pauci de familia regia, nonnulli etiam Gothi.”

¹⁰²⁶ It is Williams who uses the term “revival” to describe the growth of the Homoian church in Milan in this period. To support this contention, he appeals not only to the effect of the court’s patronage of this cause—including its sponsorship of the activities of bishop Auxentius of Durostorum, Ambrose’s target—but also to the likelihood that Homoian refugees had followed it from Illyricum to Italy in 383. McLynn has called into question the notion of refugees swelling the Homoian ranks in the capital, but even if Williams exaggerates the numbers of Homoians, his main argument nevertheless stands, based as it is on the ability of the court to create an atmosphere conducive to Homoian growth. See *Ambrose of Milan*, 139, 144, 153, and 203; and McLynn, “Review of Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Arian-Nicene Controversy, by D. H. Williams,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, n. s. 48.1 (1997): 270-273, at 272.

¹⁰²⁷ Timothy D. Barnes has consistently argued that Roman aristocrats converted to Christianity in large numbers earlier than is commonly assumed, and these conversions were motivated at least in part by the prospect of obtaining high office under the now Christian emperors, since both Constantine and Constantius (so Barnes argues) preferred to appoint Christians as provincial governors. See, for example, “Christians and Pagans in the Reign of Constantius,” in *L’église et l’empire au IV^e siècle* (Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1989), 301-343, at 319-321; and “Statistics and the Conversion of the Roman Aristocracy,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 85 (1995): 135-147, at 144. Cf. Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 174, 376, and 796-797.

community.¹⁰²⁸ Furthermore, the experience of Benivulus, a Christian of Brescia who had resigned from his post as *magister memoriae* rather than draft legislation explicitly authorizing Homoian worship, shows that the court was willing to put pressure on imperial officials to implement its religious policy. Here, pressure (in the form of a promise of preferment) was applied on Benivulus not to induce him to convert, but instead to cooperate in achieving the court's goal of promoting and safeguarding the legal position of Homoianism.¹⁰²⁹

The second reason why Ambrose's depiction of the Homoian community of Milan is plausible is because recent research has underscored the importance of barbarian soldiers in the late Roman army.¹⁰³⁰ By the end of the fourth century, many of these barbarian soldiers were Homoian Christians.¹⁰³¹ As this letter shows, the presence of these outsiders (so Ambrose and other educated Romans would have regarded them) in the Roman ranks and their deployment in the situation Ambrose is describing in Letter 76 could easily be perceived by patriotic Romans as

¹⁰²⁸ *Ep. 75A.37, CSEL 82/3.107*: "Cur igitur rebaptizandos Auxentius fideles populos putat baptizatos in nomine trinitatis, cum apostolus dicat: *Una fides unum baptisma*, et se hominum dicit adversarium esse non Christi cum consilium dei spernat et condemnet baptismum, quod Christus nobis ad redimenda nostra peccata donavit?"

¹⁰²⁹ Gaudentius, *Praef. ad Beniv. 5, CSEL 68.4*: "tu quoque, ea tempestate magistrum memoriae, oblitum salutaris fidei arbitrata contra catholicas dictare ecclesias compellebat; quod ne faceres, ultro et promotionis pollicitae dignitatem et ambitionem saeculi gloriamque mundanam pro dei gloria contempsisti, magis eligens privatus vivere quam mortuus militare."

¹⁰³⁰ More will be said below, in the context of our discussion of Maximus of Turin, about the changes undergone by the Roman army during the fourth and fifth centuries. Suffice it for now to say that Ambrose's complaints about barbarians in Roman military service echoed the outlook of Otho's soldiers, who were defending the north Italian city of Placentia against Vitellius' army of the Rhine in the spring of A. D. 69: "illi [sc. Vitelliani] ut segnem et desidem et circo ac theatris corruptum militem, hi [sc. Othoniani] peregrinum et externum increpabant." See Tacitus, *Hist. 2.21*, cited in Lawrence Keppie, *The Making of the Roman Army* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1984), 181.

¹⁰³¹ Christian missionary work had been undertaken among the Goths by Ulfila beginning in the middle of the fourth century, but did not result in large-scale conversions. The Tervingi, one of the two Gothic confederations who crossed into Roman territory in 376, probably embraced the creed of the emperor Valens as part of the agreement whereby they were permitted to enter the empire. See Peter Heather, "The Crossing of the Danube and the Gothic Conversion," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 27 (1986): 289-318.

a threat and a tool of heavy-handed internal repression on the part of the emperors.¹⁰³²

Ambrose's evocation of traditional anti-barbarian prejudices is meant to stigmatize the actions of the court as relying on these irrational brutes who, like animals, are incapable of thinking about the morality of what they are asked to do.¹⁰³³ The letter also shows us the way in which he sought to use this perception so as to depict himself and the Nicene community of Milan as the perpetual underdogs in the struggle between true and false religion and legitimate and illegitimate exercises of political power. By doing so, Ambrose sought to make a "victim consciousness" a central feature of Nicene Christian identity. Loyalty to Christ—identical with loyalty to the Nicene view of Christ—meant suffering the aggressive hostility of Christ's enemies, whether they were pagans or heretics. It meant potentially enduring violence at the hands of the barbarians, whose very irrationality rendered them incapable of appreciating the enormity of the crimes they were called on to commit.

As we turn now to the way in which Gaudentius of Brescia and Rufinus of Aquileia addressed issues related to "Arianism," we will see that they seem to have inherited this framework, according to which the upholders of the true faith were constantly beleaguered by an alliance of "Arian" heretics and unscrupulous rulers—the return, in fact, of the situation that had prevailed across the empire as recently as 361, and in the east as recently as 378. These themes are deployed in different combinations and with different emphases, but they are all present.

Gaudentius of Brescia

¹⁰³² One other Roman writer who flourished in the years shortly after Ambrose's death and who took a similar view of the empire's use of barbarian troops was Synesius of Cyrene, whom we met in the previous chapter as the author of an influential treatise on kingship. In addition to outlining the characteristics of the virtuous ruler, one of Synesius' goals in composing the work was to voice his concerns about the empire's reliance on barbarian troops for its security. See *De regno* 14-15.

¹⁰³³ For the Roman perception of barbarians as animals, see Mathisen, "Violence and the Construction of Barbarian Identity," 30-31.

The first writer of the generation immediately following the death of Ambrose whom we will consider is bishop Gaudentius of Brescia, whose episcopate began ca. 396 and lasted for at least fourteen years, ending with his death ca. 410. As we have seen, he was a close ally of Ambrose, whose election had been demanded by the people of Brescia and strongly supported by the bishop of Milan. Two of Gaudentius' sermons—one delivered in the presence of Ambrose at his own episcopal consecration, and another delivered in Milan on the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul—testify as to the close nature of their relationship.

Like Ambrose, Gaudentius was a militant pro-Nicene in his theological orientation. Moreover, he enjoyed enough of a reputation as an exegete and theologian that a certain deacon named Paul approached him with a request to rebut common anti-Nicene interpretations of a text in the Gospel of John in which Jesus appears to endorse a subordinationist view of the Father-Son relationship in the Trinity.¹⁰³⁴ The one place in his surviving writings in which he addresses the intersection between political power and “Arianism” is in the Preface to a collection of fifteen sermons that he put together for Benivolus, the *magister memoriae* at the court of Valentinian II.¹⁰³⁵ In this Preface Gaudentius congratulates the former palatine official for the moral courage he showed in the crisis: “Though you have not yet received the grace of baptism, you nonetheless fight for the truth of the heavenly faith. Imbued with the admirable doctrines of that most apostolic of men, our father, Filaster, you show your approval of them with the testimony of great constancy.”¹⁰³⁶ Gaudentius evokes the memory of Filaster, his predecessor as

¹⁰³⁴ *Tr. 19, Responsio Gaudentii ad Paulum Diaconum de eo, quod Dominus Iesus dixit apostolis: Quia pater maior me est*, CSEL 68.163-178.

¹⁰³⁵ On Benivolus, see above, p. 342 and n.1029. On Gaudentius' collection of these catechetical sermons for Benivolus, see chap. 2 above, p. 159n.481.

¹⁰³⁶ *Praef. ad Beniv. 4*, CSEL 68.3: “qui necdum percepta baptismi gratia ita pro fidei caelestis veritate pugnasti, ut imbutum te admirabilibus doctrinis apostolici per omnia viri patris nostri Filastrii tantae constantiae testimonio

bishop of Brescia, who had been chosen for his office after being a member of the clergy of Milan during the time of Ambrose's predecessor Auxentius. Gaudentius also credits him with having suffered beatings for his attempts to promote the Nicene view of Christ.¹⁰³⁷ By associating Benivulus with Filaster, he is acknowledging the former courtier's long association with the (orthodox) Christian community of Brescia. But from there he quickly moves on to the dramatic events of 386, which he recalls here for the benefit of the wider audience who will inevitably read the Preface and the sermons that circulated with it.

Like Ambrose, Gaudentius uses his (brief) telling of the basilica controversy to situate the church of Brescia, *via* its connection with Benivulus, in the context of a larger narrative, and in so doing to shape the outlook and values of his readers. He does this by deploying a standard trope, rooted in the Old Testament, according to which every female enemy of orthodoxy was a new Jezebel. Ambrose, casting the empress mother Justina as the driving force behind the court's policy, had also used this trope in his Letter 76 to Marcellina, asking: "Why should I tell of how Jezebel severely persecuted Elias, and Herodias caused John the Baptist to be put to death?"¹⁰³⁸ In their depiction of the role of Justina, Gaudentius' words echo those of Ambrose: "For when the Queen Jezebel of our time, patroness and ally of the Arian falsehood, was persecuting blessed Ambrose, bishop of the church of Milan, at the same time she pressed you also, the *magister memoriae*, to be forgetful of the saving faith and to dictate her will against the

approbares" (trans. Stephen L. Boehrer, "Gaudentius of Brescia: Sermons and Letters." Ph.D. Dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1965, p. 36, slightly altered).

¹⁰³⁷ Much of our evidence for Filaster comes from Gaudentius' *Tr.* 21, a sermon delivered on the fourteenth anniversary of that bishop's death. For this particular bit of information, see §7, *CSEL* 68.186: "Nam et in Mediolanensi urbe idoneus olim custos dominici gregis fuit Arriano repugnans Auxentio, priusquam beatus eligeretur Ambrosius." See also *PCBE* 2.817-819.

¹⁰³⁸ *Ep.* 76.18, *CSEL* 82/3.118: "Quid dicam quod etiam Heliam Iezabel cruenta persecuta est? Quod Iohannem baptistam Herodias fecit occidi?" (trans. Beyenka, *FC* 26.371, slightly altered).

Catholic churches.”¹⁰³⁹ The inclusion of his addressee in the narrative serves to make explicit the way in which Gaudentius’ community was linked to the long-suffering Nicene cause by virtue of the suffering endured by Ambrose and Benivolus at the hands of the court’s “persecution.”

This brief allusion to the basilica crisis, along with the information it gives about the role Benivolus played (or declined to play) in it, is hardly enough to give us a full picture of the events of that spring. However, we can draw two conclusions from Gaudentius’ short treatment of it. First, like the two letters of Ambrose discussed above, it attempts to stigmatize “Arianism” by linking it with the illegitimate use of political power, and uses the emotionally charged term *persecutio* to characterize the actions of the court during the basilica controversy.¹⁰⁴⁰ Second, depicting the situation in this way would tend to have the effect of reinforcing in his readers the notion that they were a threatened minority, an idea also fostered by Ambrose’s accounts of these events. Like militants in every age, Ambrose and Gaudentius understood the way in which a perception of oneself and one’s social group as marginalized and menaced, at the mercy of powerful enemies, was a powerful force that tended to produce cohesion and a sense of shared purpose. Gaudentius, writing at least ten years after the events themselves, after the death of those (or rather, she) whom he casts as the enemies (or enemy) of the faith, was attempting to do so in a new context, in which Homoianism no longer had the prestige afforded it by virtue of its being the creed of the imperial court. The age of “Arianism ascendant” had been over for more than a decade. The “Homoian revival” was done with. But the events of 386 were still recent

¹⁰³⁹ *Praef. ad Beniv.* 5, *CSEL* 68.3-4: “Nostrī namque temporis regina Iezabel, Arrianae perfidiae patrona simul ac socia, cum beatissimum persequeretur Ambrosium, ecclesiae Mediolanensis antistitem, te quoque, ea tempestate magistrum memoriae, oblitum salutaris fidei arbitrata contra catholicas dictare ecclesias compellebat...” (trans. Boehrer, 36-37, slightly altered).

¹⁰⁴⁰ On the resonance of the term *persecutio* among Christians, see above, p. 338n.1015.

enough that calling them to mind in the manner in which Gaudentius does still possessed the power to shape the identity of his readers, even in a new context in which the Nicene cause had achieved total victory, at least in regards to the commitment of the imperial family.

Rufinus of Aquileia

The third north Italian writer who attempted to construct and preserve the memory of the basilica controversies was the ascetic scholar Rufinus, who included an account of this episode in his continuation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*. That account reads as follows:

In Italy Valentinian, terrified by his brother's murder and in dread of the enemy, gladly pretended to embrace the peace which Maximus pretended to offer. Meanwhile his mother Justina, a disciple of the Arian sect, boldly uncorked for her gullible son the poisons of her impiety which she had kept hidden while her husband was alive. Thus while residing in Milan she upset the churches and threatened the priests with deposition and exile unless they reinstated the decrees of the Council of Ariminum by which the faith of the fathers had been violated. In this war she assailed Ambrose, the wall of the church and its stoutest tower, harassing him with threats, terrors, and every kind of attack as she sought a first opening into the church she wanted to conquer. But while she fought armed with the spirit of Jezebel, Ambrose stood firm, filled with the power and grace of Elijah. She went about the churches chattering noisily and trying to rouse and kindle discord among the people, but when she failed, she regarded herself as having been wronged, and complained to her son. The youth, indignant at the tale of outrage concocted by his mother, sent a band of armed men to the church with orders to smash the doors, attack the sanctuary, drag out the priest, and send him into exile forthwith. But the steadfastness of the faithful was such that they would rather have lost their lives than their bishop.

Meanwhile imperial decrees contrary to the faith of the fathers were sent for drafting to Benivolus, then *magister memoriae*. But this faith had been held in holy awe by him since infancy, and he said that he could not make impious statements and speak against God. Then, lest the empress's plans be foiled, he was promised advancement if he did as he had been told. But he desired to advance in faith rather than in honors, and so he said, "Why do you promise me higher rank in return for impiety? Take away the one I have; only let my conscience remain clear about the faith." Saying this he threw down his belt at the feet of those who were ordering the impious deed.

Ambrose for his part did not ward off the empress's fury with hand or weapon, but with fasts and unceasing vigils at the foot of the altar set himself to win God by his prayers to his and the church's cause. And when Justina had spent a good

while contriving these schemes and methods of attack, to no avail, Maximus, eager to rid himself of the stigma of usurpation and to show himself a legitimate ruler, declared in a letter he sent that what she was attempting was impious and that the faith of God was being attacked and the laws of the Catholic Church destroyed; at the same time he began to move toward Italy. Justina, upon learning this, under pressure from both her enemy and her bad conscience, took flight with her son and was the first to undergo the exile she had planned for God's priests.¹⁰⁴¹

Three observations should be made at the outset of our discussion of this account. First, Rufinus situates it immediately after his very brief narration of the elevation of Theodosius to the imperial office in 379 and the murder of Gratian in 383. He had praised Gratian for his piety (a key element for Rufinus in determining whether a ruler was effective or ineffective), and by placing this episode immediately after the death of Gratian, Rufinus is using it to highlight the dangers that can arise when a ruler (in this case Valentinian II, or rather, his mother Justina) does

¹⁰⁴¹ Rufinus, *HE*, 11.15-16, *GCS* 9/2.1020-1022: "11.15 – At Valentinianus in Italia degens fratris nece atque hostis metu perterritus oblatam pacem a Maximo simulans ipse quoque libenter amplectitur, cum interim Iustina mater eiusdem Arrianae haereseos alumna impietatis suae venena, quae vivente viro suppresserat, filio facile decepto aperuit. Igitur apud Mediolanum posita conturbare ecclesiarum statum, comminari sacerdotibus depulsionis exilia, ni Ariminensis concilii decreta, quibus fides patrum temerata fuerat, revocarent. Quo bello ecclesiae murum et turrem validissimam pulsabat Ambrosium eumque minis, terroribus atque omni oppugnationis genere fatigans primum sibi aditum debellandae rimabatur ecclesiae. Sed quamvis illa Hiezabel spiritu pugnaret armata, resistebat tamen Ambrosius Heliae virtute repletus et gratia. Ipsa autem in ecclesiis garrere, strepere, animare et inflammare ad discordiam populos, sed quod minus res ex sententia cederet, iniuriam putare et pro hac apud filium conqueri. Unde adulescentulus pro contumeliae invidia, quam falso conflaverat mater, accensus armatorum globum ad ecclesiam mittit, confringi ianuas, oppugnari sancta, sacerdotem pertrahi atque in exilium agi protinus iubet. Sed tanta fuit perseverantia fidelium populorum, ut animas prius amittere quam episcopum mallent.

11.16 – Interim dictanda adversum fidem patrum imperialia decreta mandantur Benivolo tunc memoriae scriniis praesidenti. Sed ille, cui ab incunabulis sacra fides et venerabilis fuit, abnegat se impia posse verba proferre et contra deum loqui. Tum vero, ne inceptum reginae frustrae videretur, celsior ei honor promittitur, si impleteret iniuncta. Ille, qui nobilior in fide esse quam in honoribus cuperet, 'quod mihi', ait, 'pro impietatis mercede auctiorem promittitis gradum? Hunc ipsum, quem habeo, tollite, tantum mihi conscientia fidei duret inlaesa'. Haec dicens ante pedes impia praecipientium cingulum iecit. Ambrosius vero adversum reginae furorem non se manu defensabat, aut telo, sed ieiuniis continuatisque vigiliis sub altari positus per obsecrationes defensorem sibi atque ecclesiae deum parabat. Cumque haec in longum diversis machinis et obpugnationibus nequiquam Iustina molitur, Maximus, qui se exuere tyranni infamia et legitimum principem gestiret ostendere, datis litteris impium protestatur inceptum, fidem dei impugnari et statuta catholicae ecclesiae subrui, et inter haec adpropinquare Italiam coepit. Quo Iustina conperto hoste simul atque impietatis conscientia perurgente in fugam versa cum filio exilia, quae dei sacerdotibus praeparabat, prima sortitur" (trans. Philip R. Amidon, *The Church History of Rufinus of Aquileia, Books 10 and 11* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997], 75-76).

not endorse the Nicene cause.¹⁰⁴² His account ends with Maximus' invasion of Italy, highlighting what for him were the political consequences of the persecution (though he does not use this precise term) of orthodoxy.¹⁰⁴³ Second, the inclusion of the anecdote about Benivolus shows that Gaudentius was obviously a source for Rufinus' reconstruction of these events.¹⁰⁴⁴ Third, the extent to which Rufinus relied on the information about the two basilica crises available in Ambrose's *Sermo contra Auxentium* and Letter 76 is unclear. Rufinus conflates the two controversies of 385 and 386 into one only, does not narrate events in chronological order, and depicts the court (in the person of Justina) as being much less cautious in employing physical force than it actually was.¹⁰⁴⁵ Overall, his account is much more impressionistic as compared to that of Ambrose, which depicts the court as treading carefully and being calculating in its actions. Ambrose's account also contains many *realia* that make it more reliable for reconstructing the events it purports to describe.¹⁰⁴⁶

¹⁰⁴² It was noted in chap. 4 above, pp. 289-296, that Rufinus drew a sharp contrast between Valentinian II's (and Justina's) support for "Arianism" and Theodosius' support for Nicene Christianity.

¹⁰⁴³ Indeed, he makes it seem as though Maximus' invasion of Italy, which took place in the summer of 387 and thus more than a year after the court's retreat in the second basilica controversy, was the direct result of Justina's actions: "Cumque haec in longum diversis machinis et obpugnationibus nequiquam Iustina molitur, Maximus, qui se exuere tyranni infamia et legitimum principem gestiret ostendere, datis litteris impium protestatur inceptum, fidem dei impugnari et statuta catholicae ecclesiae subrui, et inter haec adpropinquare Italiam coepit."

¹⁰⁴⁴ It is not clear whether he obtained his information about Benivolus on account by reading a copy of Gaudentius' *Praefatio* or by some other means, such as personal correspondence or a conversation, which could have happened in 401 at the Council of Milan, convened to condemn the suspect teachings of Origen. On this council, see chap. 6 below, pp. 423-424.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Ambrose, for example, says nothing about troops breaking down doors or dragging clergy away, let alone about immediate exile as a punishment for non-cooperation.

¹⁰⁴⁶ For example, Ambrose names specific offices of those whom the court used to try to persuade Ambrose to comply with its wishes, identifies the specific basilicas that were the objects of the court's attempts to secure a place to hold its services, relates words that he spoke (in frustration, no less!) to a group of Gothic soldiers, and names Castulus (the kidnapped Homoian priest) as well as Calligonus, the eunuch who threatened him after the court backed down from its demands. By comparison, Rufinus' account speaks in much more general terms, and gives the impression that its author lacked the detailed information that is provided by Ambrose's letters.

What is clear on the basis of Rufinus' account, however, is that his purpose in relating these events is very similar to that of Ambrose and Gaudentius. Like them, he casts Justina as Jezebel; he pushes the analogy farther, however, by casting Ambrose as Elijah.¹⁰⁴⁷ Rufinus also seeks to distance the young Valentinian, described as "*facile deceptus*," from the policy pursued by his court in his name, which he accomplishes by emphasizing the agency of his mother, an "*Arrianae haereseos alumna*" who was the true source of the "*venenum*" that infected the boy's mind and the government's goals. In fact, Justina plays a much more prominent role in Rufinus' telling than in Ambrose's. The emphasis on the threats of violence present in Ambrose's texts is matched and even exceeded, for as Rufinus would have it, the empress mother went so far as to "*comminari sacerdotibus depulsionis exilia*."¹⁰⁴⁸ She also "*ecclesiae murum et turrem validissimam pulsabat Ambrosium eumque minis, terroribus atque omni oppugnationis genere fatigans primum sibi aditum debellandae rimabatur ecclesiae*."¹⁰⁴⁹ Moreover, it is alleged that she "*in ecclesiis garrere, strepere, animare et inflammare ad discordiam populos*."¹⁰⁵⁰ Only when her own efforts failed did she manage to convince her son to take action: "*armatorum globum ad ecclesiam mittit, confringi ianuas, oppugnari sancta, sacerdotem pertrahi atque in exilium agi protinus iubet*."¹⁰⁵¹

¹⁰⁴⁷ Ambrose had mentioned Elijah and John the Baptist, but any suggestion that he was to be identified with either of them was implied rather than made explicit. See *Ep.* 76.18, *CSEL* 82/3.118: "Quid dicam quod etiam Heliam Iezabel cruenta persecuta est? Quod Iohannem baptistam Herodias fecit occidi?"

¹⁰⁴⁸ This is vaguely reminiscent of the threat made by the eunuch Calligonus, whom Ambrose claims expressed a desire to have him executed. See *Ep.* 76.28, *CSEL* 82/3.125: "Denique etiam speciali expressione Calligonus praepositus cubiculi mandare mihi ausus est: 'Me vivo tu contemnis Valentinianum? Caput tibi tollo.'" But he never mentions being threatened with exile.

¹⁰⁴⁹ These words can be interpreted as summarizing the standoff that Ambrose describes to his sister in *Ep.* 76.

¹⁰⁵⁰ The general nature of these allegations makes it nearly impossible to imagine what specific actions Rufinus might be referring to. Ambrose says nothing of anything done by Justina that could be described in this manner.

¹⁰⁵¹ Here again, nothing in Ambrose's writings on the basilica controversies seems to be the basis for this allegation. While he does mention *milites* or *armati* in several places in his two writings on these events, he never alleges that

The fabrications and exaggerations present in this account suggest that Rufinus was not very well informed about the basilica controversies. Apart from his telling of Benivolus' sacrifice of his career ambitions, which is probably embellished (if he did "throw down his belt at the feet of those who were ordering the impious deed," it was almost certainly in a metaphorical rather than a literal sense), his account lacks the sort of specificity and concreteness provided by Ambrose. But one way in which it does resemble Ambrose's documents is in its mention of the Council of Rimini and the attempt of the court to "reinstate" its decrees. We have seen that Ambrose situated his own telling of the basilica controversy of 386 as part of a broader narrative in which that council loomed large as an example of the dangers of attempts by the emperors to control the church's efforts at achieving theological consensus.¹⁰⁵² He sought to stigmatize that council in the memory of late fourth-century church politics that he constructed. Here, Rufinus makes it clear that he wishes to do the same, criticizing it explicitly because by it "*fides patrum temerata fuerat*." His narrative thus shows how it was possible even for a writer who was fuzzy on the facts of the matter to conjure up for his readers the image of the tyrannical "Arian" ruler. This theme would have been relevant for his Aquileian audience, since the church in that city had until the late 360s or early 370s been home to a sizeable faction that was sympathetic to Homoianism.¹⁰⁵³ As noted in chapter 4, Rufinus indicates in the *Prologue* to Books 10 and 11—his original additions to the translation of Eusebius he produced—that bishop Chromatius had asked him to undertake the work to distract the Christians of the city from the

they engaged in actual violence, let alone in the form of breaking down doors, forcing their way into the sanctuary, and dragging out the priest.

¹⁰⁵² See above, pp. 334-336.

¹⁰⁵³ As we will see in the following chapter, pp. 393-395, Chromatius, along with a group of deacons of Aquileia, seems to have played a key role in securing the allegiance of many members of that church to the pro-Nicene position.

troubles wrought by Alaric's first invasion of Italy.¹⁰⁵⁴ But this piece of information by no means exhausts the complexities of his overall agenda, and the project gave him a convenient opportunity to use historiography to shape the attitudes of audiences both in Aquileia and elsewhere toward "Arianism" in a way that militant pro-Nicenes would no doubt have found congenial.

Maximus of Turin

We now turn to Maximus of Turin's treatment of "Arianism" in his sermons. As we do so, we will witness a rather different strategy for presenting to his audience the threat he believed was posed by those to whom he attaches this pejorative label. Here there is no attempt to conjure up for his audience the specter of a persecuting emperor. In fact, we do not find in the sermons of Maximus any attempt to call to memory the struggle between the imperial authorities and the pro-Nicene bishops who opposed them. What we see, rather, is the use of invective to demonize his opponents. But as different as his strategy may be when compared to that of Ambrose, Gaudentius, and Rufinus, it shares the same ultimate goal: to nourish the cohesion and sense of shared purpose they all believed was important for sustaining their identity as Nicene Christians. The tool used to advance this purpose is no longer history, but a rhetorical tradition that dated back at least to Athanasius.¹⁰⁵⁵ This survey of Maximus' treatment of "Arianism" will not engage in a deep analysis of his rhetoric, but rather will attempt to account for its vehemence—a

¹⁰⁵⁴ *CCL* 20.267: "Peritorum dicunt esse medicorum, ubi imminere urbibus vel regionibus generales viderint morbos, providere aliquod medicamenti vel poculi genus, quo praemuniti homines ab imminente defendantur exitio. Quod tu quoque, venerande pater Chromati, medicinae exequens genus tempore, quo disruptis Italiae claustris Alarico duce Gothorum se pestifer morbus infudit et agros armenta viros longe lateque vastavit, populis tibi a Deo commissis feralis exitii aliquod remedium quaerens, per quod aegras mentes ab ingruentis mali cogitatione subtractae melioribus occupatae studiis tenerentur, iniungis mihi ut ecclesiasticam historiam, quam vir eruditissimus Eusebius Caesariensis Graeco sermone conscripserat, in Latinum verterem, cuius lectione animus audientium vinctus, dum notitiam rerum gestarum avidius petit, oblivionem quodammodo malorum quae gererentur acciperet."

¹⁰⁵⁵ See chap 1 above, p. 16n.40.

product, it will be argued, of the presence of Homoians Goths serving in the Roman army either as members of the legions or as *foederati*.

By the early fifth century, there was a long tradition of barbarians serving in the Roman army in one capacity or another.¹⁰⁵⁶ Auxiliary forces had always been made up of non-citizens, with citizenship typically coming as a reward for the long term of service.¹⁰⁵⁷ By the late empire, non-citizens might join the legions in one of two ways. Prisoners of war who had been captured in one of the frequent border wars between the empire and its northern neighbors might be pressed into service. Most, however, left their homelands and enlisted voluntarily, attracted by the comparatively high pay, tolerable living conditions, and prospects for advancement.¹⁰⁵⁸ But it was also common for barbarians to serve in distinct units. A relatively simple way in which emperors could increase their manpower reserves was by imposing obligations on their defeated barbarian enemies to supply them with contingents of troops. After several years of armed conflict, for example, Constantine had in 332 established a peace treaty with the Tervingi

¹⁰⁵⁶ A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire: A Social, Administrative, and Economic Survey* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1964), 1.611-613 and 614-623; and (for the various ways in which barbarians could be recruited in the late empire) Pat Southern and Karen R. Dixon, *The Late Roman Army* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996), 46-52 and 69-72. Peter Heather cautions us, however, about placing too great an emphasis on the “barbarization” of the army in the later empire, as if the high profile of non-citizens from beyond the empire’s frontiers was a radical departure from previous practices. In point of fact, as early as the time of Augustus half or more of the army, including its auxiliary forces, was made up of non-citizens (though provincials, not those from territory outside the empire’s practical control). The main change that took place in the fourth century, as he sees it, was the breakdown of the distinction between citizen legionaries and non-citizen auxiliaries. See *Empires and Barbarians: The Fall of Rome and the Birth of Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 74-75; and *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 119.

¹⁰⁵⁷ The grant of citizenship to veterans of auxiliary units was regularized by Claudius (r. 41-54). The promulgation of the *Constitutio Antoniniana* in 212, however, which granted citizenship to nearly all free residents of the empire, obviously made citizenship in return for military service redundant. Nonetheless, it is easy to grasp the value of such a reward in the early years of the Principate, when fewer non-Italians enjoyed the privileges that came with citizenship. See Keppie, *The Making of the Roman Army*, 180-186; and Gabriele Wesch-Klein, “Recruits and Veterans,” in *A Companion to the Roman Army*, ed. Paul Erdkamp (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2007), 435-450, at 442-443.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 1.619.

and Greuthungi, groups of Goths living north of the middle and lower Danube frontier. One of the terms of this treaty was that these barbarian peoples provide a certain number of troops on an as-needed basis for particular campaigns.¹⁰⁵⁹

A crisis that began in 376, however, set the stage for a change in the arrangement established by Constantine. In that year, the Tervingi and Greuthungi—the two groups of Goths who lived nearest to the frontier—were allowed to cross into imperial territory as refugees, a result ultimately of pressure put on the peoples of the Hungarian Plain by the Huns.¹⁰⁶⁰ The officials put in charge of organizing their settlement botched the job, failing to disarm the newcomers and then arousing their resentment by forcing them to sell their children into slavery in exchange for the food supplies that had been designated for them.¹⁰⁶¹ Not surprisingly, the angry refugees rose in armed revolt. There followed six years of on-and-off warfare. In the summer of 378, the insurgents annihilated the emperor Valens' field army at the Battle of Adrianople. They likewise denied his successor, Theodosius, an outright victory.¹⁰⁶² And so a compromise peace was reached in 382, according to which these two groups of Goths would be given imperial land to farm and would be allowed to remain concentrated in those areas that had been devastated by the war, rather than being scattered throughout the empire. As a result, the Goths were able to settle in imperial territory in a way that allowed them to retain their distinct

¹⁰⁵⁹ Peter Heather, *Goths and Romans 332-489* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 107-116.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Their decision to migrate was made in response to the growing military power of the Huns in the areas that are today Ukraine and southwestern Russia. See Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 135-136; and *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 154-158.

¹⁰⁶¹ Ammianus, *Res gestae* 31.4.9-11; and Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 130-142.

¹⁰⁶² On the Gothic uprising and the difficulty the emperors faced in suppressing it, see Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, trans. Thomas J. Dunlap (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 117-133; Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 142-156; and *The Goths*, 131-135.

identity.¹⁰⁶³ In exchange for these concessions, they would be required, as before, to provide troops for the empire on an as-needed basis, only now in greater numbers.¹⁰⁶⁴

Thus the combination of the settlement of 382 and the longstanding tradition of recruiting large numbers of barbarians into the ranks of the regular army had the result of increasing the amount of contact between barbarians and Romans, particularly in those places where units were stationed.¹⁰⁶⁵ Roman hostility toward barbarians that was rooted in cultural prejudices mixed with close proximity between members of the two groups could easily boil over into anti-barbarian violence.¹⁰⁶⁶ The religious differences between Goths and Romans added another element to the mix that at the very least made harmony a more difficult goal to achieve.¹⁰⁶⁷

¹⁰⁶³ For the terms of this treaty, see Herwig Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 133-134; Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 158-165; and *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 182-189. This agreement seems to have been the turning point that resulted in barbarians making up a larger and larger proportion of the Roman army. The reasons were doubtless complex, but two can be noted here. Wesch-Klein points out, first of all, that the treaty of 382 made the emperors more willing to accept cash payments in lieu of levies of men drawn from particular places, with the Goths now providing the actual manpower. See "Recruits and Veterans," 437. Timo Stickler notes that the prospect of recruiting large numbers of barbarian troops, who could be called up for service as the need arose and then paid and sent back home, had certain advantages for the Roman government, which was relieved (at least in part) of the financial burden of supporting a standing army. See "The *Foederati*," in *A Companion to the Roman Army*, 495-514, at 506. This novel agreement gave barbarian *foederati* more freedom from direct Roman control, and one might speculate as to whether this new situation may somehow explain why in the fourth and fifth centuries barbarians rose more frequently to high positions in Roman military service than they had been able to attain during the earlier centuries of the empire's history.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Heather speculates that the provision to the usurper Procopius of 3,000 troops by the Tervingi and Greuthungi in 365 was in line with the stipulations of the 332 treaty. By contrast, he points to Orosius' estimate of 10,000 Goths killed at the Battle of the River Frigidus in 394 to suggest that the peace of 382 required greater numbers of troops in exchange for the relative autonomy granted them. See *Goths and Romans*, 109 and 163-164.

¹⁰⁶⁵ See *Goths and Romans*, 181-182, referring to Synesius of Cyrene, Libanius, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Themistius.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Heather cites three examples of this from the period after 382: Two riots in Constantinople, reported by Libanius (*Orr.* 19.22 and 20.14), and a conflict between barbarian troops and their Roman comrades who were manning a garrison in Scythia Minor. See *Goths and Romans*, 182.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 182-183. For the Christianity of Rome's barbarian neighbors to the north, see E. A. Thompson, "Christianity and the Northern Barbarians," in *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, ed. Arnaldo Momigliano (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 56-78; Mathisen, "Barbarian Bishops and the Churches 'in barbaricis gentibus' during Late Antiquity," *Speculum* 72.3 (1997): 664-697; and *idem*, "Barbarian 'Arian' Clergy, Church Organization, and Church Practices," in *Arianism: Roman Heresy, Barbarian Creed*, ed. Guido M. Berndt and Roland Steinacher (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2014), 146-191.

Reference has already been made to Ambrose's chastising of a group of Gothic soldiers dispatched by the court to surround the Portian Basilica: "Is this why the Roman state has taken you in? To make you agents of a public riot? Where will you go if these lands are destroyed?"¹⁰⁶⁸ The fact that later on in the same letter he highlights the Goths' status as an important component of the "Arian" population of Milan leaves little doubt that his exasperation is best understood as an expression of anti-Goth as well as anti-Homoian sentiment.¹⁰⁶⁹ Like Ambrose, Maximus was a patriotic Roman and an ardent pro-Nicene, and so we would expect him to share Ambrose's harsh attitude toward barbarian soldiers serving in the Roman army, whether as *foederati* or as recruits who were fully integrated into the army, serving in units alongside Romans.¹⁰⁷⁰

The reason that the composition of the Roman army is important for interpreting Maximus' references to "Arianism" in his sermons is that the military situation in northern Italy in the first decade of the fifth century made it necessary for the government to deploy a large portion of the army in or near the Po Valley in these years, during which hostile barbarian armies made their way into Italy on three different occasions. As part of his long effort to force the Roman government to revise the treaty of 382, Alaric invaded Italy in late 401 and was there until summer 402. He invaded again in 408, and was in Italy until his death shortly after the sack

¹⁰⁶⁸ *Ep.* 76.9. Ambrose draws on the traditional Roman perception of barbarians as violent also in §20.

¹⁰⁶⁹ *Ep.* 76.12, *CSEL* 82/3.114: "Prodire de Arrianis nullus audebat, quia nec quisquam de civibus erat, pauci de familia regia, nonnulli etiam Gothi."

¹⁰⁷⁰ On Maximus' patriotism, which was bound up much more with one's particular city than with the empire as a whole, see Christopher Chaffin, "Civic Values in Maximus of Turin and His Contemporaries," in *Forma Futuri. Studi in onore del cardinale Michele Pellegrino* (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1975), 1041-1053; and Rita Lizzi, *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche nella città tardoantica (L'Italia Annonaria nel IV-V secolo d. C.)* (Como: Edizioni New Press, 1989), 179-193.

of Rome in 410.¹⁰⁷¹ Radagaisus also invaded in 405 and was only defeated the following year by an army made up of temporary citizen recruits and even slaves.¹⁰⁷²

The best way to explain Maximus' expressed concerns over Arians is to see them as directed against the influence of barbarians serving in the Roman army.¹⁰⁷³ As we have seen, the army that was defending the empire from the invasions of Alaric and Radagaisus in the first decade of the fifth century was one in which a large number of barbarians would have been found.¹⁰⁷⁴ Most barbarian troops serving in the legions, moreover, would have interacted with their Roman comrades-in-arms on a daily basis, and were even probably served by military chaplains who shared their creed.¹⁰⁷⁵ The military situation in northern Italy from the years 401 to 412 would have placed them in close proximity to residents of the cities of the Po Valley at one time or another.¹⁰⁷⁶ Because the city of Turin, in particular, enjoyed the protection of formidable defenses, refugees from nearby cities and towns would have fled there during these

¹⁰⁷¹ On the invasions of Alaric, see Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 150-161; and Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 206-209 and 213-217.

¹⁰⁷² On the invasion of Radagaisus, see Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 1.184; Heather, *The Goths* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996), 147; and *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 194.

¹⁰⁷³ It is hardly likely, after all, that the presence of these invading armies would have prompted Maximus to utter critiques of their religious beliefs. It is extremely improbable that Roman Christians would have been sympathetic to the theological persuasions of their military enemies. And in any case, it is difficult to imagine what opportunities for such interaction there would have been. If what Maximus feared was an Arian infiltration of his church on the part of hostile barbarian armies, we must ask how this could even have happened unless the invading armies had been victorious on the battlefield and appeared poised to stay for the long term. There is every reason to believe, therefore, that the immediate danger posed by these invading armies was not pastoral, but military in nature.

¹⁰⁷⁴ By the late fourth century, as has been indicated, there were many federate units in the army, which served as cohesive tribal units under their own commanders. Even at this late date, however, the majority of barbarian recruits were fully integrated into units of the regular army. See Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 1.620-621.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Mathisen discusses the evidence for bishops accompanying barbarian armies in Roman service in "Barbarian Bishops," 677-681.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Battles between imperial forces and those of Alaric took place in the year 402 at Verona and Pollentia. See Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 209. Radagaisus was trapped and defeated in 406 near Fiesole, in the northern part of *Tuscia et Umbria*. See Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, 194. When Alaric returned to Italy from 408 to 410, he spent most of his time camped outside of Rome, while Honorius was holed up in Ravenna. See Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 213-217.

crises, giving Maximus a larger-than-usual audience until the emergencies had run their course.¹⁰⁷⁷ Two other factors should also be kept in mind when seeking to explain why Maximus approached the challenge of Homoianism as he did. First, the differences between Nicene and Homoian theology might have seemed very subtle to many or even most of his hearers. Second, the subtlety of these differences might easily have led Maximus' people to conclude that whatever divided them from the troops who were protecting them, it was not religion. It is in light of this background that we should understand the concern with "Arianism" that he demonstrates in his sermons.

These references to "Arianism" are found in three of his sermons, which we will examine briefly before pausing to consider their significance. The first comes in Sermon 26, which is about the duties of tax collectors and soldiers. Basing himself on the words of John the Baptist from Luke 3, he admonishes his flock that although tax collectors have a legitimate public duty to perform, they must not exact more than they are allowed, "for he did not say: 'Exact nothing,' but: *You should exact no more...*"¹⁰⁷⁸ That Maximus offers this admonition for tax collectors likely indicates the presence in his audience of members of the local *curia* whose responsibility it was under the imperial system to collect taxes in the territory of their *civitas*.¹⁰⁷⁹ The presence of soldiers in his audience is likewise strongly implied by the following section of the sermon, which is based on the inquiry that a group soldiers make of John the Baptist in Luke 3, asking him how they must conduct themselves in the light of his preaching of the approaching kingdom

¹⁰⁷⁷ Lizzi, *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche*, 178-179.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Sermon 26.2, CCL 23.102: "Non enim dixit 'nihil exigatis' sed 'nihil amplius'." All translations of Maximus are those of Boniface Ramsey in *The Sermons of Maximus of Turin*, ACW 50 (New York: Paulist Press, 1989).

¹⁰⁷⁹ Chaffin observes that Maximus' reference to the tax collectors is typical of the concern on the part of Ambrose, Gaudentius, Chromatius, and Maximus to denounce the violence of the powerful. See "Civic Values in Maximus of Turin and His Contemporaries," 1042.

of God. He replies, “Do not intimidate anyone or injure anyone, but be content with your pay.”

Maximus’ gloss on these words is as follows:

Everyone in military service ought to see that he is being addressed here. For Scripture does not speak only of soldiers who are on the front lines; whoever is in military service is considered to be a soldier. Consequently these words, for example, are spoken to bodyguards and to everyone of rank. Whoever receives money that has been publicly set aside for him is condemned, in John’s words, as a cheat and an extortionist if he looks for more.¹⁰⁸⁰

These instructions for soldiers certainly underscore what has already been said about the political and military context in which Maximus delivered many of his surviving sermons. The reference to “Arianism” soon follows, for he goes on from here to apply to the clergy the same principal he has just laid out for soldiers. Those in public service (*militia*), who are paid from the public treasury, should be content with their wages, for clergy, “although they do not seem to be in military service in the world, are nonetheless soldiers for God and the Lord.”¹⁰⁸¹ As such, “we receive our pay and our reward from Him, as the blessed Apostle says: *who has given us the Spirit as a pledge*.”¹⁰⁸² God, Maximus goes on to say, “has enriched us with the recompense of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁰⁸³ For those in the *militia* of God no greater reward could obviously be imagined. Some, however, are not satisfied with this payment (*donavitum*), and Maximus likens these avaricious clerics to Arian heretics, who “while they seek I know not what more, in

¹⁰⁸⁰ Serm. 26.2, *CCL* 23.102-103: “Hic iam cognoscere se debet omnis homo qui militat. Non enim tantum de his militantibus scriptura loquitur quo armata militia detinentur, sed quisque militiae suae cingulo utitur, dignitatis suae miles adscribitur. Atque ideo haec sententia potest dici verbi gratia militibus protectoribus cunctisque rectoribus. Quicumque stipendia sibi publice decreta consequitur, si amplius quaerit, tamquam calumniator et concussor Iohannis sententia condemnatur.”

¹⁰⁸¹ Serm. 26.4, *CCL* 23.103: “qui etiamsi non militare videntur saeculo, tamen deo et domino militamus...”

¹⁰⁸² Serm. 26.4, *CCL* 23.103: “Milites igitur Christi sumus et stipendium ab ipso donumque percipimus, sicut dicit beatus apostolus: *Qui dedit nobis pignus spiritum*.”

¹⁰⁸³ Serm. 26.4, *CCL* 23.103: “hoc est qui spiritus sancti nos remuneratione ditavit.”

discovering the spirit of error they have lost the grace of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁰⁸⁴ As we will see, this type of demonization is typical of the way in which Maximus attempts to alert his listeners to the danger he perceives in this form of Christianity.

The second reference to Arianism comes in Sermon 56, delivered on Pentecost. Here, Maximus closes with the following words:

But do not be surprised that we have said that the Son sits at the Father’s right hand. For He sits at His right hand not because He is greater than the Father but that He might not be thought less than the Father, as the heretics are in the habit of saying blasphemously. For as divinity knows no grade of honor, so sacred Scripture knows how to prevent blasphemies.¹⁰⁸⁵

The comment that “divinity knows no grade of honor” constitutes the only instance in which Maximus comes anywhere near to articulating the position of those against whom he is inveighing, or trying to refute it by logical argument. He is referring to a way of conceiving of divinity that was commonly held in the ancient world by both Christians and non-Christians until the late fourth century, when the victory of the Nicene understanding of God excluded from Christianity the notion that there could be different grades in divinity.¹⁰⁸⁶ To this argument, based on a combination of dialectic and biblical interpretation, Maximus adds an element of

¹⁰⁸⁴ Sermon 26.4, *CCL* 23.103: “Si quis ergo christianorum hoc donativo contentus forte non fuerit et quaerit amplius, incipit hoc ipso carere quod meruit. Quod specialiter contingit haereticis Arrianis. Dum nescio quid amplius quaerunt, inveniunt erroris spiritum gratiam sancti spiritus perdiderunt.”

¹⁰⁸⁵ Sermon 56.3, *CCL* 23.226: “Ne miremini autem quod ad dexteram patris residere diximus filium! Ad dexteram enim residet non quia maior a patre, sed ne minor patre esse credatur, sicut haeretici blasphemare consueverunt. Sicut enim divinitas honorificentiae gradum nescit, ita scriptura sancta novit obviare blasphemias.”

¹⁰⁸⁶ Positing different grades of divinity was a strategy that non-Nicene theologians used to account on the one hand for the places in which the Scriptures ascribed divinity to Christ, while on the other hand safeguarding a way of genuinely accounting for Christ’s suffering. As Ayres points out, “At issue until the last decades of the controversy [over the doctrine of God] was the very flexibility with which the term ‘God’ could be deployed. Many fourth-century theologians easily distinguished between ‘God’ and ‘true God’. In discussions of the relations between the Son and the Father, or between creation and generation, arguments about the ‘grammar’ for talking about God were also under way.” See *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 14. Non-Nicene theologians were loath to jettison the concept precisely because it allowed them to preserve the reality of Christ’s suffering for and redemption of the world, which as Hanson points out was always the strong suit of their position. See *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 99-128 and (speaking specifically of Homoians) 565-566.

denunciation by labeling those guilty of this subordination of “the Son” (obviously “Arians,” even though they are not explicitly named here) as blasphemers.

The third and final explicit reference to Arianism is found in Sermon 58, where Arians are compared with Judas, the “persecutor” of Christ. “The heretic, I say, is condemned to the same punishment as Judas. Nor is this undeserved, for the Lord whom the one sold the other blasphemes, whom the one handed over to the persecutors the other persecutes daily, for the heretic persecutes the Lord when he strips divinity from Him and claims that He is a creature.”¹⁰⁸⁷ Here again, although Maximus does not label this “heretic” as an Arian, it is obvious what position he is denouncing. And in addition to the accusation of blasphemy found in Sermon 56, Maximus here adds the charge of persecution, comparing Arians with Judas, the betrayer of Christ and the very embodiment of wicked resistance to Christian truth. Moreover, Maximus’ use of the term “persecute” to describe the “Arians”’ alleged treatment of Christ borrows from the same rhetorical strategy employed by Ambrose and Gaudentius.¹⁰⁸⁸

Maximus’ tendentious references to Arianism do not accurately portray the position they criticize. Unfair as this may be, it does at least tell us something about their purpose, which was no doubt to ensure that the Nicene Christians of Turin did not stray from what he regarded as the genuine Christian faith. And having surveyed the military situation in northern Italy during the early fifth century, we have suggested that this crisis is the proper background against which to read Maximus’ denunciations. Having now reviewed what he says, we are in a position to make one further point. Given the very clichéd arguments he uses (if indeed they even rise to the level

¹⁰⁸⁷ Sermon 58.3, *CCL* 23.234: “Tali, inquam, haereticus quali et Iudas poena damnatur; nec immerito, quia dominum, quem ille vendidit, iste blasphematur; quem ille persecutoribus tradidit, cotidie iste persequitur. Persequitur enim haereticus dominum, cum divinitatem ei derogat et adserit creaturam.”

¹⁰⁸⁸ On their use of this loaded term, see above, pp. 337-338 (for Ambrose) and p. 346 (for Gaudentius).

of arguments), it is unlikely that Maximus was trying to combat an intellectually sophisticated movement. Therefore, he almost certainly did not have Latin Homoians in mind.¹⁰⁸⁹ Maximus' apparent lack of familiarity with the theology of Latin Homoianism is quite different from the knowledge of its arguments displayed by Gaudentius and Ambrose before him, and by Peter Chrysologus in a later generation. The object of Maximus' concern was therefore probably the large numbers of Arians among the barbarians who were coming into ever closer contact with the empire and its people in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Maximus would likely have been concerned about their influence on his flock, an influence that would have arisen from the day-to-day contacts between Romans and the barbarians serving in the Roman army during the wars of the first decade of the fifth century.¹⁰⁹⁰

¹⁰⁸⁹ Even the little that remains of Latin Homoian literature shows that in its heyday this community indeed possessed an impressive intellectual heft. *CCL* 87 contains editions of works of the fourth and fifth centuries reconstructed on the basis of the following manuscripts: The *Collectio Veronensis*, part of the collection of the Biblioteca Capitolare di Verona, which contains (among other things) dozens of sermons as well as polemical works against the Jews as well as against the pagans; the Bibliothèque Nationale de France's Parisinus Latinus 8907, which contains the scholia on the Council of Aquileia, found in the margins of the ms., and consists of comments critical of the handling of the council (a second set of comments is found in the margins of Books I-II of Ambrose's *De fide*); and the Bobbio Palimpsests, some parts of which are now in the Biblioteca Ambrosia, other parts in the Vatican Library, and which consist of parts of a commentary on Luke, an anti-Nicene polemical work, and an "instruction on the true faith." *CCL* 87A contains three anti-Arian works of Augustine that stemmed from his brief encounter with the Homoian bishop and military chaplain Maximinus, who accompanied the expedition of Sigisvult to North Africa in the year 428. On this, see below, pp. 369-370. These writings contain important fragments of the works they critique. Yet another important literary artifact of Latin Homoianism is the *Anonymi in Iob Commentarius*, published in *CSEL* 96. The text is a detailed exposition of the first three chapters of Job, and was likely written in the late fourth century somewhere between Pannonia and Northern Italy. But perhaps the flower of this body of literature is the *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum*, a commentary on that Gospel; it has not yet been published in the Corpus Christianorum series, but the text can still be found in *PG* 56.611-946. It was preserved because during the Middle Ages it was thought to be a work of John Chrysostom. Thomas Aquinas knew it well enough to be able to say that he would gladly trade the city of Paris to possess a complete copy of it! See *CCL* 87B.ix-x and clxxviii-clxxx. R. P. C. Hanson describes its author as "highly intelligent and well educated." See *The Search*, 119.

¹⁰⁹⁰ That this was a legitimate concern is borne out by a passage in Prosper of Aquitaine's *De vocatione omnium gentium*. Writing around the year 450, he refers to the fact that pagans from beyond the empire's frontiers became Christians while serving in the Roman army. Whereas this is not direct evidence that soldiers might move from one Christian confession to another as a result of the contacts they made in the army, it nevertheless illustrates the way in which the comradery of military life created the possibility for a change in one's religious allegiance, a possibility to which Maximus could not have been blind. See 2.33, *PL* 51.718: "At alii barbari dum Romanis auxinantur, quod in suis locis nosse non poterant, in nostris didicere regionibus, et ad sedes suas Christianae religionis institutione remearunt. Ita nihil obsistere divinae gratiae potest quominus id quod voluerit impleatur, dum etiam discordiae ad

Maximus may have feared that these daily contacts between “Arian” barbarian soldiers on the one hand, and Roman soldiers on the other—and indeed all Romans who would have interacted with the barbarian soldiers stationed among them—would undercut the religious authority he exercised over his flock. Elsewhere in his sermons, Maximus displays a great deal of concern regarding the legitimacy of his authority over his church. In four sermons, he uses a variety of classical and biblical metaphors to explain the role of the bishop within the Christian community. Echoing a passage in Vergil’s *Georgics*, he compares bishops to bees, chaste and diligent workers in the beehive of mother church, whose preaching is like nourishing honey.¹⁰⁹¹ In their role as preachers, bishops are also like watchmen, whose seemingly harsh sermons can be justified by pointing to their duty to speak frankly to their flocks.¹⁰⁹² Finally, the voice of the bishop is the fulfillment of the Old Testament figure of the priestly trumpet that brought down the walls of Jericho.¹⁰⁹³

Maximus’ harsh rhetoric regarding “Arianism” indicates that he regarded it as (at least potentially) a serious challenge to the authority he exercised as the first bishop of Turin.¹⁰⁹⁴ The only opportunity that “Arians” would have had to pose such a challenge would have been in the context of the military emergency that confronted the western Empire in the first decade of the fifth century. In the course of this emergency, northern Italy was the stage for much of the military action, with important battles being fought at Pollentia and Verona, as well as the

unitatem trahunt, et plagae in remedia vertuntur, ut Ecclesia unde metuit periculum, inde sumat augmentum.” Cited in Thompson, “Christianity and the Northern Barbarians,” 57.

¹⁰⁹¹ Serm. 89, *CCL* 23.364.

¹⁰⁹² Serm. 92.1, *CCL* 23.371.

¹⁰⁹³ Sermm. 93-94, *CCL* 23.374-378.

¹⁰⁹⁴ For the founding of Turin as an episcopal see, cf. the Appendix below, pp. 572-575.

Etrurian city of Fiesole.¹⁰⁹⁵ The Visigoths' movement along the roads in western Italy and entry into Gaul in 412 would no doubt have prompted a counter-deployment on the part of the imperial government to ensure the safety of the cities of Liguria, including Turin.¹⁰⁹⁶ The presence of barbarian recruits in the ranks of the Roman army meant that Homoianism could still be found within one of the empire's most important institutions. Intellectually sophisticated Latin Homoianism had suffered a severe setback on account of its loss of political power in 387, but the same creed had meanwhile gained inroads among the barbarians who were now coming into the empire in increasing numbers to fight both for the empire and (in the case of the Vandals and the Visigoths) against it. Maximus' warnings illustrate the response of one militantly pro-Nicene bishop in northern Italy, and can be seen as evidence that bishops of this persuasion in the early fifth century regarded "Arianism" as just as much of a threat to their communities as they ever had.

Peter Chrysologus

A period of relative peace and calm for Italy followed the departure of Alaric's Goths. With the minor exception of the short civil war between eastern troops and units of the western army defending the usurpation of John in 424-425, this peace lasted until Attila and his Huns descended on the peninsula in 452.¹⁰⁹⁷ But some the underlying factors that caused Maximus to

¹⁰⁹⁵ For these battles, see Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 1.184; Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 152-153; Heather, *The Goths*, 146-147; and *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 194 and 204.

¹⁰⁹⁶ On this, see Lizzi, *Vescovi e strutture*, 181.

¹⁰⁹⁷ The emperor Honorius died in 423, but shortly before his death he had sent his half-sister Galla Placidia into exile along with her son, the future Valentinian III. At this time, neither Placidia's rank of Augusta nor her son's title of nobilissimus was recognized in the east. The power vacuum in Ravenna prompted John, the *primicerius notarius*, to assume the imperial office, with the support of the generals Castinus and Aetius. In response, after a period of vacillation, Theodosius II at last recognized Placidia's rank, conferred on her son that of Caesar, and sent them to Italy with an army led by Ardaburius and his son Aspar. Ardaburius was captured as he approached Ravenna by land from the north, but the force led by his son managed to take the capital, aided by the fact that his father was able to turn some of the garrison against the usurper. The expedition having succeeded, Valentinian was proclaimed Augustus in October 425, thus beginning a reign that would last thirty years. On these events, see

voice his harsh and unsophisticated criticisms of “Arianism” in several of his sermons continued to exist even in these more stable times. For the reasons discussed above, barbarians continued to be recruited into the Roman army.¹⁰⁹⁸ Even if they did not yet make up a majority of the empire’s fighting men before the end of the fourth century, they certainly did by the middle of the fifth.¹⁰⁹⁹ Furthermore, even though generals of thoroughly Roman stock like Boniface and (especially) Aetius dominated the very highest ranks of the army during the reign of Valentinian III (425-455), many barbarian officers nevertheless occupied important military posts under them.¹¹⁰⁰ After the deaths of Aetius (454) and Valentinian, in fact, barbarian generals like Ricimer came to dominate the administration of the western empire, the culmination of a trend that had begun in the fourth century (with Stilicho being the most prominent example), the ascendancy of the two aforementioned Roman strongmen notwithstanding.

Valentinian’s reign also coincided very closely with the episcopate of Peter Chrysologus, the bishop of Ravenna, which had become the imperial residence in 402 and retained this distinction until the 440s, when Valentinian began to spend more of his time in Rome than in the

Stewart I. Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta: A Biographical Essay* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 180-193; and Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 259-260. For Attila’s campaign in Italy, during which he captured and sacked both Aquileia and Milan, see Oost, *Galla Placidia*, 297-299; and Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 339-342.

¹⁰⁹⁸ See pp. 353-356.

¹⁰⁹⁹ One comparatively new development that distinguished the army of the mid-fifth century from that of the late fourth was the increasing use of *bucellarii*—essentially private militias raised, supplied, and paid for by individual generals rather than by the emperors, made up of both Romans and barbarians. Aetius, for example, made extensive use of such a force, which consisted of many Huns, among whom he had spent much of his youth as a hostage. On these personal armies in general, see Southern and Dixon, *The Late Roman Army*, 72. For Aetius’ *bucellarii*, see Heather, “The Huns and the End of the Western Roman Empire,” *The English Historical Review* 110.435 (1995): 4-41, at 26; and *Empires and Barbarians*, 214.

¹¹⁰⁰ For Boniface and Aetius, see *PLRE* 2.237-240 and 21-29. Examples of prominent barbarian military commanders will be given shortly.

marshes of the upper Adriatic.¹¹⁰¹ Like the other bishops discussed in this chapter, Peter regarded “Arians” as a threat to the Nicene identity of the Christians of his city. But one important difference between the political context in Ambrose’s day and in that of Peter was the commitment of the imperial family to the Nicene view of Christ.¹¹⁰² It was highly unlikely that the crises of 385 and 386 would be repeated during Peter’s episcopate.¹¹⁰³ His context was also different in an important way from that of Maximus, a difference that is evident in the way that Peter argues against his “Arian” opponents. He is pugnacious, to be sure, but he does not rely on crude and unthinking invective to demonize them, as Maximus does. Rather, he endeavors to conquer them in the realm of ideas. We are fortunate to possess no fewer than eight of Peter’s catechetical sermons on the Apostles’ Creed, in which he appeals to three types of authority to overturn positions that are recognizably Homoian (though which he, like the others considered in this chapter, simply labels as “Arian”): individual New Testament texts, principles of logic, and the dogmas articulated by the Creed.¹¹⁰⁴

Peter’s more sophisticated approach may seem difficult to account for in light of the fact that we have no evidence for the continued presence of Latin Homoians by the middle of the fifth century. True, the Homoian bishop Maximinus, who had accompanied a Roman army to

¹¹⁰¹ Andrew Gillett speculates that the relocation to Rome was prompted in large part by the Vandals’ capture of Carthage in 439. See “Rome, Ravenna, and the Last Western Roman Emperors,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 69 (2001): 131-167, at 146.

¹¹⁰² The piety of Galla Placidia, the daughter of Theodosius I who shared his theological views, is illustrated by her patronage of holy men like Saint Germanus of Auxerre and by the number of churches whose construction she sponsored or whose adornment she underwrote (at Rome, Ravenna, and Rimini). On this, see Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta*, 265-278.

¹¹⁰³ Knowing what we know about Peter’s ideal of the emperor’s submission to orthodoxy as defined by the church, however, we can be reasonably certain that his attitude toward Constantius II’s heavy-handed treatment of the delegation that came to him on behalf of the majority of Council of Rimini, as well as toward the attempts of Valentinian II’s court to secure a basilica in Milan for Homoian services, would have been virtually identical to that of Ambrose, Gaudentius, and Rufinus.

¹¹⁰⁴ Sermm. 56-62A, *CCL* 24.314-355.

North Africa in 428, proved a difficult challenge to Augustine when the two debated in Hippo in that year.¹¹⁰⁵ But he was most likely a chaplain to the barbarian elements in that army, and so his intellectual ability cannot be taken as evidence for the continued existence of a Homoian community among the Roman population of the western empire at that late date.¹¹⁰⁶ In any case, Peter can hardly be expected to respond in his sermons to conditions that were unique to North Africa. But the presence in his sermons of the features that have already been alluded to make it clear that he was laboring in a context that required him defend the Nicene position, and to do so in a way that was much more intellectually satisfying than that offered by Maximus. We can best account for Peter's anti-Homoian arguments by thinking about the sort of barbarians he would have encountered as bishop of Ravenna. Because it was the primary imperial residence from the beginning until the middle of the fifth century, there would always have been a significant number of troops nearby, a sizeable proportion of whom would have been barbarians.¹¹⁰⁷ But in an administrative center like Ravenna, those of higher rank—Roman and barbarian alike—would have been disproportionately represented, since it was important for high officials to be present at court to help advance their careers, or indeed to avoid falling victim to

¹¹⁰⁵ On this debate, see Frederick van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, trans. Brian Battershaw and G. R. Lamb (London: Sheed and Ward, 1961), 122-123.

¹¹⁰⁶ And indeed, his barbarian associations may even indicate, in spite of what his name suggests, that he was himself a barbarian. See Mathisen, "Sigisvult the Patrician, Maximinus the Arian, and Political Stratagems in the Western Roman Empire, ca. 425-440," *Early Medieval Europe* 8.2 (1999): 173-196, at 177-178.

¹¹⁰⁷ Zosimus provides evidence for the presence of troops in the early fifth century. He reports a mutiny that took place among the soldiers stationed there in the year 409, in which Allobichus, the barbarian *comes domesticorum equitum*, was believed to have played a major role. See *Historia nova* 5.47, cited in *PLRE* 2.61. Another barbarian commander who was near Ravenna at the same time was Sarus, a rival of Alaric for preeminence among the Visigoths. He commanded forces fighting for the Romans against Radagaisus in 406. In 408, he could be found again in command of a barbarian troop at Ravenna (in April/May) and with Stilicho at Bologna (in August). In 410, he could be found in Picenum, independent of both Alaric's Goths and Roman authority, where he presumably lived off the land. Later that year, having been attacked by Alaric's brother Athaulf, he took his followers to join Honorius, and in that same year defended Ravenna against an attack by Alaric. See *PLRE* 2.978-979.

the machinations of their rivals.¹¹⁰⁸ The example of Ricimer, who saw religion as an avenue for legitimizing his authority and thus advancing his career, illustrates how important it was for barbarian military commanders seeking high office in the late empire to imitate the political strategies that proved effective for aspiring politicians from old senatorial families, and indeed from the imperial family itself.¹¹⁰⁹

Ricimer's high rank and long service in the Roman military, along with the fact that he was able to employ the language of iconography to communicate with a Roman audience, no doubt indicate that he was Romanized to a much greater degree than the rank-and-file soldiers who were Maximus' main concern. And Ricimer was no outlier in this regard.¹¹¹⁰ Another barbarian general who was no doubt also highly Romanized and who no doubt passed through

¹¹⁰⁸ The presence of high-ranking barbarians in the Roman army was, of course, nothing new. But what was new in Peter's time was the fact that most of the Germanic barbarians—Goths, Vandals, and Burgundians—had embraced the Homoian form of Christianity as they entered the empire. Stilicho had been half-Vandal, but a convinced Nicene. Since his death, however, his father's people had embraced the "barbarian creed." On the conversion of these peoples, see Hanns Christof Brenneke, "Deconstruction of the So-Called Germanic Arianism," in *Arianism: Roman Heresy and Barbarian Creed*, 117-130, at 119-123. Mathisen describes the religious mix of barbarian generals in the mid-fifth century as "nearly all Christian, some Arian, some Nicene." See "Ricimer's Church in Rome," 308. The way in which absence from the court could render a military commander vulnerable is well illustrated by the conflict between Boniface and Felix, one of his military rivals in the late 420s. While Boniface was in North Africa, Felix managed to convince Galla Placidia of his disloyalty, which could be proved by his refusal to come to Ravenna when recalled. Meanwhile, he communicated to Boniface that Placidia planned to accuse him of treason and was about to recall him. The recall order was sent out by the Augusta, and the count revolted rather than obey the summons. There followed a two-year period of civil war, which was terminated by a negotiated peace. Boniface thus survived this plot, but it was not long before Aetius, who was the most powerful western general until his death in 454, managed to bring him down. See Procopius, *The Wars*, 3.3.14-36 (who erroneously substitutes Aetius for Felix in his narrative); Oost, *Galla Placidia Augusta*, 220-224 (on the revolt of Boniface) and 229-233 (on the civil war between Boniface and Aetius in which the former was killed); and Heather, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, 261-262.

¹¹⁰⁹ Mathisen, "Ricimer's Church in Rome," 318-319, gives several examples of high-ranking fifth-century Romans who underwrote the cost of building or adorning churches, and notes that the dedicatory inscriptions commemorating these gifts use language very similar to the one commemorating Ricimer's gift to S. Agata dei Goti in Rome—an apse mosaic depicting Christ seated in glory with the twelve apostles beneath him (see the sketches of it on pp. 315, 316, and 321 of Mathisen's article).

¹¹¹⁰ Romanizing first provincials and then barbarians was a traditional function of the Roman army. See Southern and Dixon, *The Late Roman Army*, 47. Unsurprisingly, therefore, Ricimer was not the only fifth-century barbarian general who could be described as "thoroughly Romanized." Another example would be the eastern commander Aspar and his relatives who all obtained high office, some of them even receiving the consulship. See Heather, *Goths and Romans*, 300.

Ravenna during Peter's episcopate was Fl. Sigisvultus. Sigisvult was sent by Galla Placidia to North Africa in 428 to suppress the revolt of Boniface, who at that time was the *comes Africae*.¹¹¹¹ Having been promoted to *comes et magister utriusque militiae* in 437 or 440, and then to *patricius* in 448, Sigisvult likely spent much of his time during these years in Ravenna.¹¹¹² He and Ricimer are two examples of the sort of barbarian "Arians" Peter probably had in mind in when he included anti-"Arian" remarks in his sermons. But an intriguing possibility to consider is that Peter's concern over "Arianism" may not have been related to the presence of male military commanders only, but also to high-ranking (and therefore influential) women of barbarian origin. An example of such woman is Pelagia, who was from a barbarian background and married first count Boniface, then (after his death in battle) the patrician Aetius. When the daughter she bore to Boniface was baptized by an Arian priest (a sure indication of her theological persuasion), Augustine wrote to the count to express his dismay.¹¹¹³

This was the sort of "Arian" influence—that of elite barbarians making their way in Roman military and political circles—against which Peter desired to inoculate his catechumens, many of whom would doubtless have been civilian administrators (or perhaps military officers) who in the course of carrying out their duties had ample occasion to mix with the ambitious barbarian military men who frequented the city. His ultimate goal in articulating this defense of

¹¹¹¹ It was on this expedition that Sigisvult was accompanied by the Homoian bishop Maximinus, mentioned above (p. 342).

¹¹¹² See *PLRE* 2.1010; and Mathisen, "Sigisvult the Patrician and Maximinus the Arian."

¹¹¹³ *PLRE* 2.856-857. This suggestion must remain a conjecture, however, since although Pelagia was with her husband as he died, having been mortally wounded in a battle with Aetius' forces near Rimini, we cannot be sure that she ever resided in Ravenna. But even if she herself did not, what is known is that prominent women—most of all Galla Placidia—might build or endow churches. If an Augusta could do this, then certainly aristocratic women could do so as well, albeit on a smaller scale, as did the ascetic women discussed in chap. 2, who distributed vast fortunes on various religious causes. Ricimer's activities in underwriting the mosaic in S. Agata dei Goti show that the toleration afforded to Homoianism extended quite naturally to the endowment of churches used by Homoian congregations.

the Nicene position was to ensure the distinctive identity—and, therefore, the survival and prosperity—of Nicene Christianity in a world that was dominated (at least in the military realm) increasingly by barbarians and, so Peter feared, by their own distinctive brand of Christianity. Peter’s eight sermons on the Creed are not the only places in his extant body of sermons where he critiques Homoian beliefs, but they are the richest, with regard both to length and depth.¹¹¹⁴ The following discussion will focus mainly on Sermon 60, which is probably the best example of his ability to articulate arguments against Homoianism that many of his listeners would have found credible.

Peter’s typical approach when giving a sermon on the Creed was to expound it line by line, sometimes pausing to focus on one particular word. In section 4 of Sermon 60, for example, he singles out the word “Father” from the first article of the Creed, which deals with “God the Father Almighty.” This word gives him occasion first of all to summarize a common Homoian objection to the Nicene doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son. Peter states, “The heretic says: ‘How is he a Father if he does not precede? How is he a Son if he is not subsequent? How does the begetter not provide a beginning? How does the Begotten not take his beginning from the Begetter? This is what reason teaches, this is what nature manifests.’”¹¹¹⁵

¹¹¹⁴ See also Sermm. 23.3, 24.3, 57.1 and 4, 58.3, 59.4, 61.3-4, 62.6 and 9-10, 63.2, 65.5, 76.1, 84.6 and 10, 109.4, and 144.7.

¹¹¹⁵ Serm. 60.4, CCL 24.337: “Sed dicit haereticus: quomodo pater, si non praecedit? Quomodo filius, si non sequitur? Quomodo qui generatur principium a generante non sumit? Hoc ratio docet, hoc natura probat.” Such arguments as this had been used by anti-Nicene theologians and polemicists of various stripes during the controversies of the fourth century. Ayres, *Nicaea*, 41-43, makes the point that in the early fourth century the two main trends in Christian theology with regard to the generation of the Son—the point under discussion here in Peter’s sermon—emphasized either the diversity of the two Persons or their sameness. One point on which Father and Son might differ was in their origin. Arius himself explicitly taught in his metrical *Thalia*, for example, that “the Son has an origin, but God is unoriginated,” and “the Son derives from non-existence.” See Hanson, *The Search*, 6-7. A later example of this is found in a document entitled “the Profession of Patricius and Aetius who communicated with Eunomius, Heliodorus and Stephen.” It contains the following declaration concerning the Son: “He is subject to command, is under authority, comes from nothing (*ex nihil*), has an end (*finem*)...” (cited in Hanson, *The Search*, 578, who goes on [p. 579] to argue that the text represents a stage in theological development at which “Homoian doctrine had not yet clearly distinguished itself from that of Aetius or of Eunomius”). A more

He critiques this notion, however, by making the argument that it represents a capitulation to merely human ways of thinking: “You are wrong, O heretic! This is what human reason holds, but it is not what divine reason holds. This is what worldly nature proposes, this is not what the divine nature disposes.”¹¹¹⁶ This type of argumentation—the appeal to the incomprehensibility of God’s nature and his ways—can be found elsewhere in Peter’s sermons, and indeed was a common theme in patristic theology.¹¹¹⁷

Peter has thus critiqued the notion that biology can provide an adequate illustration of the relationship between the Father and the Son. He goes on from there to state his own view:

God the Father, however, did not beget in time, because he did not know time; he who knows no beginning did not give a beginning; he did not transmit an end because he has no end; but he generated the Son from himself in such a way that everything that was in him was and remained in the Son. The honor of the Begotten is an honor for the Begetter; the perfection of the Begotten is the image of the Begetter; any diminution of the Begotten brings dishonor on the Begetter.¹¹¹⁸

pertinent example, however, would be one from the west in the fifth century. Maximinus, chaplain to Sigisvult’s army and Augustine’s debate opponent, supplies us with one, for he affirms that the Son was created: “*creator creatorem genuit*.” See *Fragmenta Arriana*, CCL 87.256, cited by Simonetti, “Alla ricerca dei cosiddetti omei,” in *Studi di cristologia postnicena* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2006), 259-267, at 264.

¹¹¹⁶ Serm. 60.4, CCL 24.337: “Erras, haeretice! Hoc habet humana ratio, ratio non habet hoc divina; hoc accipit natura mundi, deitatis non recipit hoc natura. Fragilitas humana concipitur et concipit, parturit et parturit, generatur et generat, accipit initium et dat mortem, suscipit et refundit, et reservat in subule quicquid suae conditionis est et naturae.”

¹¹¹⁷ See, for example, Sermm. 58.1 (faith to be accepted by faith alone, not explained), 69.2 (God not even completely known when he reveals himself), 76.3 (having only human wisdom makes us blind), 90.1 (God’s promises should be trusted, not debated), 96.1 (the mystical meaning of Scripture only discernible to the believer), 131.1 (complete trust in God is necessary in order to perceive him), 141.3 (Peter’s listeners should not “pry too much into” Christ’s virginal conception, but simply believe it; cf. 143.1, 146.2, 148.3), and 163.7 (one attains by believing what one cannot attain by thinking). See also §1 of his *Ep. ad Eutychem*. On the incomprehensibility of God in early Christian theology more generally, see G. L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, 2nd ed. (London: SPCK, 1950), 5-6.

¹¹¹⁸ Serm. 60.4, CCL 24.337: “Deus vero pater non genuit in tempore, quia tempus ignorat; non dedit initium, qui initium nescit; non transfudit finem, qui non habet finem; sed sic genuit ex se filium, ut totum quod in se erat, esset et maneret in filio. Honor geniti generantis honor est; perfectio geniti generantis forma est; minoratio geniti revolat ad generantis iniuriam.”

Two observations should be made about this exposition, which is essentially a restatement of the view of the Creed of the 381 Council of Constantinople. First, Peter begins by explaining the inadequacy of analogies drawn from nature. The Father, as he says, “did not beget in time, because he did not know time.” When applied without qualification to the nature of God, which is beyond nature and beyond the ability of human reason to comprehend, such analogies will inevitably distort rather than illuminate the reality of which they are made to speak. Second, these words represent a concise expression of the theology that the *homoousion* of the Creed of 381 meant to convey—that the Son is not a lesser grade of divinity, but shares completely in the Father’s divinity, differing only in being Son rather than Father, and therefore begotten rather than begetter.¹¹¹⁹ As Peter phrases it, “everything that was in [the Father] was and remained in the Son.” What follows this statement is in the same vein, emphasizing the way in which the Father and the Son shared the same divine qualities. It should be further noted that the Latin term *honor*, which came from the world of Roman politics and administration and included in its semantic range notions of “esteem,” “dignity,” and “office,” would have been especially vivid to many in Peter’s audience.¹¹²⁰

But Peter does not end his discussion of the term “Father” in the Creed with this positive statement of his own position. Instead, he mounts yet another assault on his opponents’ defenses, this time attempting to trap them on the horns of a dilemma.

But when you hear these things, O heretic, do not say: “How do these things happen?” You have said, *God*, you have believed in the Father, you have professed that he is Almighty. If you doubt, you have lied. If you say, *I believe*, how is it that you do not believe but you raise objections? If you think such

¹¹¹⁹ On the notion of grades of divinity in fourth-century Christian theology—one that was finally rejected by pro-Nicene theologians—see above, p. 360n.1086.

¹¹²⁰ On the range of meaning of *honor*, see Lewis, *A Latin Dictionary*, 464.

things are impossible, then you have removed the omnipotence that you professed.¹¹²¹

In other words, the confession of God's omnipotence implies for Peter that there need be no discussion of how the Father can be Father without preceding the Son, and how the Son can be Son without being less than the Father. Attributing omnipotence to God should, in his estimation, remove any grounds for doubt or discussion of the matter. He thus believes that to call into question the doctrine of eternal generation and to seek to differentiate the persons of the Trinity by positing differing grades of divinity is to become trapped in a contradiction, to profess and yet at the same time to deny that the almighty God can accomplish what human reason cannot fathom.

Peter's discussion of this theme, as we have seen, is much lengthier and fuller than anything to be found in the sermons of Maximus.¹¹²² The depth of his treatment of this topic (and the same could be said of his treatment of other themes in his catechetical sermons) is best explained in reference to the make-up of his audience. As the bishop of the city where the imperial court spent most of its time in the 430s and 440s, Peter would have been preaching to an audience that was on the whole socially and intellectually more sophisticated than those of most of the other bishops considered in this study.¹¹²³ The audience that likely differed the most from Peter's was probably that of Maximus, since Turin was merely a provincial city that was unlikely

¹¹²¹ Serm. 60.4, *CCL* 24.337: "Sed haec audiens, haeretice, ne dicas: quomodo ista sunt? Dixisti deum, credidisti patrem, omnipotentem confessus es. Si dubitas, mentitus es. Credo si dicis, quomodo non credis, sed discutis? Si putas impossibile, omnipotentiam, quam confessus es, substulisti."

¹¹²² The same could also be said regarding Chromatius' *Tractatus in Mathaeum*. It will be argued in the following chapter that they were written for an audience that was, on the whole, more theologically sophisticated than the one to which his sermons were directed, and probably included the clergy of the city, as well as perhaps a group of non-clerical ascetics. The bishop of Aquileia does not use the same rhetoric of demonization as Maximus, but also does not engage with Homoian arguments as seriously as Peter does. See *Sermm.* 4.1, 11.4, 18A, 21.3; and *Trr.* 11.3, 35.3-4, 50.3 and 8, and 54A.6-8. For the argument on the audience of the *Tractatus*, see below, pp. 396-416.

¹¹²³ Ambrose is, of course, the obvious exception to this generalization.

to have boasted more than a few citizens of senatorial rank, if any.¹¹²⁴ Instead, Maximus' people probably consisted mainly of artisans and other modest city dwellers, and we have seen evidence in this chapter that, in addition to smaller-scale landowners (Maximus' "tax collectors"), their ranks included a number of soldiers.¹¹²⁵ By contrast, Ravenna in the time of Peter would have been home to all of these groups, as well as to high-ranking and well-educated civil servants, military men, and, naturally, members of the imperial family. This more "top-heavy" demographic mix made it necessary for Peter to adorn his preaching with the type of rhetorical features that late-Roman elites would have appreciated.

The nature of Peter's critique of "Arianism" is also noteworthy. As we have seen, his argument against the Homoian position in Sermon 60.4 summarizes the position, offers a first critique of it on the grounds that it fails to understand the limitations of analogies drawn from the natural world and applied to the divine nature, offers a positive statement of the Nicene position in terms that would have been particularly vivid to his listeners, and concludes with yet another critique of the Homoian position on the grounds that it is inconsistent with belief in divine omnipotence. He therefore gives his listeners much more theological substance than Maximus. This greater intellectual sophistication is best understood, again, in light of the needs of Peter's audience. If his highly educated listeners appreciated the rhetorical features of their bishop's preaching, it is evident that Peter for his part wished them to understand not only what the

¹¹²⁴ Lizzi points out that Maximus was less learned than his contemporaries Chromatius of Aquileia and Gaudentius of Brescia. This fact alone is enough to lead us to believe that although there were some wealthy landowners around Turin (as evidenced by Maximus' insistence that they see to the conversion of their tenants: see chap. 3 above, pp. 235-236), there were much fewer cultivated senatorial aristocrats or well educated parvenus than there would have been in Rome or Ravenna, or even in a port city like Aquileia. See Lizzi, *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche*, 182-183. These landowners might even have been below curial rank or, like Augustine's family, of curial rank but less than well-to-do. On the economic and social position of Augustine's family, see Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 9-10.

¹¹²⁵ See above, pp. 358-359, on Maximus' Sermon 26.

Nicene position regarding the nature of God the Son was, but also why they should prefer it to the Homoian alternative. The fact that the Roman army of Peter's day consisted mainly of barbarian soldiers, and that the officer corps also contained a larger number of barbarians than even in Maximus' time, means that it was not only the humbler members of his audience who, as in Turin in the early 400s, would have been in close contact with those who held to a different confession. Rather, the imperial officials, civil servants, and military officers who were among his listeners would have had more occasion than ever to come into contact with both allies and rivals who adhered to a different theology.

The discussions of Maximus and Peter in particular underscore the way in which the increasing visibility—and influence—of barbarians in Roman society and in Roman administration (this term being conceived broadly to include high-ranking military officials who had not only military but also political influence) came more and more to dominate the pastoral concerns of the north Italian church over the course of the fifth century. We have suggested that Maximus' use of invective and the relative lack of theological substance in his anti-Arian preaching—which when taken together convey a keen sense of urgency—is best understood against the military situation in northern Italy during his episcopate. Peter's more substantial arguments—including his accurate summary of Homoian beliefs about the implication of calling the first two persons of the Trinity "Father" and "Son"—bear witness to the different nature of the audience he was trying to persuade. But in spite of these differences, the two of them shared the same goal: to present Nicene and Homoian positions as incompatible and to force their listeners to make a choice.

Conclusion

We have seen in this chapter that the bishops of northern Italy from the late fourth until the middle of the fifth century all viewed “Arianism” with a mixture of suspicion, hostility, and alarm. The reasons were many and complex, but the one element that unites them all is that of identity. Ambrose, Gaudentius, and Rufinus were interested in how the history of conflict between “orthodox” and “Arian” Christians could be leveraged to shape the identity of their Nicene supporters as a permanent minority, even at a time when they were on their way towards becoming a powerful majority of the population of the cities of Milan, Brescia, and Aquileia, respectively, and indeed throughout the Roman Empire as a whole. They did this by construing historical episodes in which “Arian” emperors had sought to impose themselves on pro-Nicene bishops (naturally portrayed as the heroes), and situating the Milanese basilica crises of 385 and 386 within this broader narrative of the abuse of imperial authority. Their aim was to instill in their audiences a “victim consciousness,” which can serve as a powerful adhesive in the formation of group identity in any age.

But the question of identity we have explored in this chapter is made richer by the fact that there was a cultural and ethnic element to it, as well. We saw that Ambrose highlighted the presence of barbarian soldiers among the troops used by the court to enforce its sequestration of a basilica. In writing his *Sermo contra Auxentium* and his Letter 76 to his sister Marcellina, he emphasized the Gothic ethnicity of these soldiers as a marker of difference—in addition to their Homoian affiliation—that set them apart from the Nicene Romans who made up the vast majority, if not the entirety, of Ambrose’s Milanese supporters.¹¹²⁶ As one who held to the

¹¹²⁶ Some of the soldiers employed by Valentinian II during the 386 basilica crisis were evidently Nicenes. At one point during the standoff over the Portian Basilica that spring, a group of them entered the basilica in which Ambrose was conducting the liturgy. Their presence immediately aroused fear in the hearts of some of the worshipers, until they informed Ambrose and his supporters that they “ad orationem venisse non ad proelium.” See *Ep.* 76.13, *CSEL* 82/3.112-113. But Ambrose says nothing about their ethnicity, and it is much more likely that Nicenes would have been Romans rather than Goths.

traditional Roman view of the barbarian “other,” he was confident of the superiority of Roman culture and institutions vis-à-vis their barbarian counterparts—as well as the superiority of the Roman creed. But an episode from late in his episcopate illustrates that there were limits to his Roman-centered worldview. Paulinus of Milan recounts that near the end of the bishop’s life,

Fritigil, a certain queen of the Marcomanni, when she heard of the fame of the man [sc., Ambrose] from a report of a certain Christian who had by chance come to her from the regions of Italy, believed in Christ, whose servant she recognized him to be, and sending gifts to the Church she asked through her envoys that she be informed by his own hand what she should believe. And he wrote to her a remarkable letter in the manner of a catechism, in which he urged her also to persuade her husband to keep peace with the Romans; when the woman received the letter she persuaded her husband to entrust himself and his people to the Romans. When she came to Milan, she grieved very much because she did not find the holy bishop to whom she had hastened; for he had already departed from this life.¹¹²⁷

His outlook as reconstructed here by his deacon Paulinus, whereby part of the queen’s duty as a Christian was to help ensure political harmony between the Marcomanni and the Romans, demonstrates that for Ambrose there was much overlap between Roman identity and Christian identity. But by sending the queen a catechetical letter Ambrose demonstrated his belief that there were limits to his embrace of traditional Roman prejudices against barbarians, since Fritigil’s acceptance of authentic Christianity showed that even barbarians, in spite of their alleged irrationality, at least had the potential to perceive the truth of Nicene Christianity and by embracing it receive eternal salvation. Membership in the Roman *respublica* and the ability to participate in its social and political institutions provided a universalistic sense of identity, while

¹¹²⁷ *Vita sancti Ambrosii*, 36: “Per idem tempus, Frigtil [sic], quaedam regina Marcomannorum, cum a quodam Christiano viro qui ad illam forte de Italiae partibus advenerat referente sibi audiret famam viri, Christo credidit, cuius illum servulum recognoverat, missisque muneribus ad ecclesiam per legatos postulavit ut scriptis ipsius qualiter credere deberet informaretur. ad quam ille epistolam fecit praeclaram in modum catechismi, in qua etiam admonuit ut suaderet viro Romanis pacem servare; qua accepta epistola mulier suasit viro ut cum populo suo se Romanis traderet. quae cum advenisset Mediolanum, plurimum doluit, quod sanctum sacerdotem ad quem festinaverat minime reperisset; iam enim de hac luce migraverat” (ed. Mary Simplicia Kaniecka).

at the same time requiring a degree of Romanization. But adherence to authentic Christianity—understood by Ambrose as adherence to Nicene theology—was more immediately accessible. His chauvinism was therefore not the only aspect of his view of the non-Roman “other” that should be highlighted.

Maximus and Peter were concerned about Homoianism among barbarians who occupied positions low or high in the Roman army, one of the most critical institutions in the late empire. The argument in this regard has relied on placing their sermons in the broader social, cultural, and political context of fifth-century northern Italy. They never explicitly refer to any anxieties they have about barbarians *per se*, only about beliefs we know were held by the barbarians with whom they and their people came into contact. Whereas Ambrose had been alarmed about Homoians who were not only Homoians but barbarians(!), we could perhaps say that Maximus and Peter were concerned about barbarians who were not only barbarians but Homoians(!). The confessional differentiation has come to occupy the foreground in their minds. But by the middle of the fifth century, barbarians were even more of a fact of life in the Roman world than they had been in Ambrose’s day—a time at which many of them already held high military posts. The careers of barbarian officers like Sigisvult, and later Ricimer and Odovacer, illustrate the ability of barbarians to rise to the very pinnacle of Roman society by the time the last western emperor was deposed.

The careers of such figures as these, as well as figures from the late fourth and early fifth century such as Arbogast and Stilicho show that barbarians could be integrated socially and politically into Roman society with very little friction.¹¹²⁸ But the vehement disapproval that

¹¹²⁸ On Arbogast, see *PLRE* 1.95-97. On Stilicho, see *PLRE* 1.853-858.

Table 2: Fifth-Century Barbarian Generals in Roman Service¹¹²⁹

West (years for which we have evidence)	East (years for which we have evidence)
Alaric (391-410)	Gainas (399)
Stilicho (394-408 – half-barbarian, Nicene)	Fl. Fravitta (400-401 – a pagan)
Sarus (406-412)	Fl. Ardaburius (424-427)
Edobichus (407-411 – a Frank, and thus probably a pagan)	Fl. Ardaburius Aspar (424/431-471)
Chariobaudes (408)	Fl. Ariobindus (434-449)
Allobichus (409)	Ioannes the Vandal (441)
Gaiso (409-410)	Arnegisclus (447)
Fl. Sigisvultus (427/8-after 448)	Ardaburius iunior (447-466)
Fredericus (453/4 – unclear whether he was in Roman service)	Fl. Areobindus Martialis (449)
Gundiocus (455-473/4)	
Remistus (456)	
Fl. Ricimer (456-472)	
Suniericus (459-461)	Fl. Dagalaifus (461-475/6)
Odovacer (463-493)	Herminericus (465)
Bilimer (472)	Fl. Iordanes (466-469 – converted to Catholicism in 465)
Gundobadus (472)	
Chilpericus (474)	

Maximus and Peter express regarding the “Arian” creed of barbarian military men and politicians—sentiments which were universal among fifth-century pro-Nicene bishops whose opinions survive in our evidence—indicates that one powerful opinion-forming group in late Roman society was committed to marking off any adherent of Homoianism as an outsider. By the middle of the fifth century, the only Homoians left in Roman society were barbarians, and no matter how well integrated elite barbarians were into the culture and politics of the empire, the fact remained that Homoianism—“Arianism,” to use these bishops’ favorite term of abuse—was the creed of these outsiders. That barbarians were indeed considered outsiders on account of their creed even at this late date is indicated by the name of Ricimer’s church in Rome: S. Agata

¹¹²⁹ This chronologically-arranged table is based on vol. 2 of the *PLRE* and lists all high-ranking barbarian military officers (whether under a legitimate emperor or a usurper) and whose careers are known or appear likely to have overlapped with the period 397-451. Unless otherwise indicated, their religion is assumed here to be Homoian.

dei Goti. That it was popularly known by this designation perhaps indicates that the efforts of Maximus and Peter to stigmatize “Arianism” as a barbarian trait were part of a larger effort on the part of Nicene bishops throughout the empire, and that these efforts were successful in confining Homoianism to the ranks of barbarians who, though they might be politically powerful by virtue of their control of the army and socially prominent by virtue of their offices and titles, had nevertheless been relegated on the religious plane to the level of an identifiable minority. We can be sure that all the bishops considered in this discussion would have wanted them to remain so.

CHAPTER 6: CHROMATIUS OF AQUILEIA'S THEOLOGY OF THE CONSECRATED LIFE

The previous chapter showed that, because the long controversy in the wider Christian world over the proper view of the Trinity was not only a matter of theology, but also impinged on questions of political, religious, and cultural identity, it had a much longer life than traditional accounts allow for, especially in the north Italian context of the first half of the fifth century. But this was not the only theological dispute whose impact was felt in these churches during the period of our study. Throughout Late Antiquity, the churches of the eastern Mediterranean struggled to come to grips with the legacy of Origen, the third-century Christian philosopher, catechist, and biblical scholar who was the most important Christian intellectual between Paul and Augustine. As a philosophical theologian, Origen had offered answers to fundamental questions about human nature and origins, the justice of God, and the nature of the resurrection body. His ideas have had a complicated reception, beginning already within his own lifetime, and he was eventually declared a heretic at the Council of Constantinople in 553. The great value that many ancient churchmen attributed to his scholarship, combined with the provocative nature of many of the things he taught (or was alleged to have taught), meant that tensions over the proper attitude to take to this brilliant but (in the eyes of many) troublesome figure simmered continually, and occasionally flared up into open controversy.¹¹³⁰

One such flare-up occurred during the 390s, and this one is significant in the history of the reception of Origen because it drew Jerome and Rufinus, who had been friends from their student days in the 350s up until the 390s, into the dispute on opposite sides. These two figures

¹¹³⁰ For an overview of the fourth-century reception of Origen, see Richard A. Layton, "Reception of Origen in the Fourth Century," in *Oxford Handbook on Origen*, ed. Ronald Heine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming). I am grateful to Professor Layton for allowing me to look at a draft of this chapter.

were especially liable to take an interest in the controversy because they were ascetics. The controversial ideas to which the label “Origenism” was often attached were, after all, of particular interest to ascetics, especially “Origenist” ideas related to the resurrection body. Because their distinctive practices were aimed at disciplining the body, they of all Christians had the most at stake in determining to what extent their self-denial in the present age might shape the form their bodies would take in the age to come. And because the social networks of both Jerome and Rufinus included intellectually curious and ascetically-minded north Italian bishops, like Gaudentius of Brescia (a friend of Rufinus), Heliodorus of Altinum (a friend of Jerome), and Chromatius of Aquileia (a friend and patron of both), they were one of the important conduits through which this especially fierce chapter in the long history of the reception of Origen made waves also in the west.¹¹³¹

The present chapter examines Chromatius of Aquileia’s approach to these issues in the context of both the history of the ascetic circle of Aquileia, in which he appears to have taken a leading role since its establishment in the 360s, and of the open controversy in which his friends Jerome and Rufinus became involved. It seeks to show that he made a significant and hitherto neglected contribution to ascetic theology. We saw in chapter 2 that the ideal of the ascetic bishop was a distinctive feature of the ecclesial culture of northern Italy. Thus it is no surprise that someone like Chromatius would take an interest in the issues raised by this phase of the “Origenist” controversy, even if he addresses them rather obliquely in his surviving writings. Our discussion will also suggest ways in which the debate over Origenism in the late fourth and early fifth century was related to a later controversy that arose in the western churches during the

¹¹³¹ On the importance of Jerome’s and Rufinus’ social networks in the way in which this episode unfolded, see Elizabeth Clark, “Elite Networks and Heresy Accusations: Towards a Social Description of the Origenist Controversy,” *Semeia* 56 (1991): 79-117.

410s over the teachings of Pelagius. The issues raised in the course of this latter dispute continued to be discussed sporadically until the early sixth century, when the Council of Orange (529) handed down a series of canons that represented a compromise between Augustine's position and that of such Gallic theologians as John Cassian and Vincent of Lérins, sometimes (but without justification) labeled "semi-Pelagianism."¹¹³² Thus it is important to understand this episode in the history of ascetic theology as it relates both to the reception of Origen itself as well as to the background of the one theological dispute that perhaps more than any other arose out of the peculiar concerns of western theology.

Why Chromatius?

The thought of Chromatius, who was bishop of Aquileia between 388/389 and ca. 407, is a helpful entryway into this topic as it relates to northern Italy for two reasons. First, he enjoyed relationships with Ambrose, Jerome, and Rufinus, who were among the most prominent ascetic theologians writing in Latin during his lifetime; his efforts to encourage the work of the latter two mark him as an important figure in the development of the ascetic movement and of ascetic theology in northern Italy.¹¹³³ Second, it is only comparatively recently that the vast scope of

¹¹³² For a brief survey of the debate on free will and grace between the early fifth and the early sixth century, see R. A. Markus, "The Legacy of Pelagius: Orthodoxy, Heresy and Conciliation," in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 214-234. See also Rebecca Harden Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency: A Study of the Semi-Pelagian Controversy* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1996), which focuses on the period after the death of Augustine.

¹¹³³ For surveys of the ascetic theology of Ambrose and Jerome, see Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 341-365 (Ambrose) and 366-386 (Jerome). No comprehensive survey of Rufinus' ascetic theology has yet been made. The nature of Chromatius' relationship with Ambrose is unclear. The two men certainly met at the Council of Aquileia in 381, when Chromatius came as an aide for his bishop Valerian. There, Ambrose would no doubt have taken note of the young presbyter's zeal for the pro-Nicene cause. Ambrose's *Ep.* 28 is addressed to Chromatius, but this is the only letter sent by either one to the other that is extant. At any rate, Ambrose most likely journeyed to Aquileia to consecrate Chromatius as bishop of that city on the death of Valerian. Pio Paschini, *Storia del Friuli* vol. 1, *Dalle origini alla metà del duecento*, 2nd ed. (Udine: Libreria Editrice Aquileia, 1953), 59, argues for his consecration by Ambrose, as does Rita Lizzi, "Ambrose's Contemporaries and the Christianization of Northern Italy," *Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990): 156-173. But Carlo Truzzi, "L'ordinazione episcopale di Cromazio di Aquileia nel suo contesto storico-culturale," in *Chromatius Episcopus, 388-1988, AAAd* 34 (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1989), 27-44, at 31-33, is more cautious, as is *PCBE* 2.433. Finally, Chromatius was undoubtedly influenced by some of

Chromatius' written work has come to light. When volume 9 of the *CCL* was published in 1957, only 17 *Tractatus in Mathaeum* and 2 sermons belonging to Chromatius were known.¹¹³⁴ During the 1960s, however, Raymond Étaix and Joseph Lemarié discovered dozens more sermons and *Tractatus*, which were included in *CCL* 9A. This volume, published in 1974, contains 58 *Tractatus* and 42 sermons.¹¹³⁵ Two more *Tractatus* and another sermon were discovered too late to be published with it, but appeared in a supplement three years later.¹¹³⁶ Still another *Tractatus* was subsequently found, and published by Étaix in 1981.¹¹³⁷ Currently, critical editions of 61 *Tractatus* and of 43 sermons and sermon fragments have been published. No discovery of previously unknown works of Chromatius has been made since 1981, but students of late antique Christianity remain hopeful that more may be found.

The reappearance of so much Chromatian material at this late date gives scholars the opportunity to reevaluate Chromatius' stature as a preacher, an exegete, and a theologian. This process has already begun, as evidenced by the many articles that have appeared since the 1970s that focus on one aspect or another of his work.¹¹³⁸ He is beginning to receive the attention he

Ambrose's writings, particularly his exegetical writings. On this last point, see Gérard Nauroy, "Chromace, disciple critique de l'exégèse d'Ambroise. Réalité et limites de l'influence de l'*In Lucam* sur les *Tractatus in Matthaum*," in *Chromatius Episcopus 388-1988, AAAd* 34 (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1989), 117-149. Thus it seems best to characterize their relationship as one marked by mutual esteem, in which Ambrose functioned in some way as a mentor, but which did not prevent Chromatius from going his own way on certain matters.

¹¹³⁴ *Chromatii Aquileiensis Episcopi Quae Supersunt*, in *CCL* 9, ed. A. Hoste (Turnhout: Brepols, 1957), 371-447.

¹¹³⁵ *Chromatii Aquileiensis Opera*, *CCL* 9A, ed. Raymond Étaix and Joseph Lemarié (Turnhout: Brepols, 1974).

¹¹³⁶ *Spicilegium ad Chromatii Aquileiensis Opera*, *CCL* 9A Supplementum, ed. Joseph Lemarié and Raymond Étaix (Turnhout: Brepols, 1977).

¹¹³⁷ Raymond Étaix, "Un '*Tractatus in Matheum*' inédit de saint Chromace d'Aquilée," *Revue Bénédictine* 91 (1981): 225-230.

¹¹³⁸ Yves-Marie Duval, "Les relations doctrinales entre Milan et Aquilée durant la seconde moitié du IV siècle. Chromace d'Aquilée et Ambroise de Milan," in *Aquileia e Milano, AAAd* 4 (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1973), 171-234; Giulio Trettel, "Terminologia esegetica nei sermoni di san Cromazio di Aquileia," *Revue d'études augustiniennes et patristiques* 20 (1974): 55-81; Joseph Lemarié, "Le commentaire de saint Chromace d'Aquilée sur la Transfiguration," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 16 (1980): 213-222; Giulio Trettel, "Cristologia cromaziana (appunti)," *Ricerche religiose del Friuli e dell'Istria* 1 (1981): 3-86; Giuseppe Cuscito, "Cromazio di

deserves, although it is only within the last year that a monograph has appeared that attempts to analyze in full the context, thought, and influence of Chromatius.¹¹³⁹ Furthermore, although many different aspects of his thought have been explored after the publication of the much larger corpus of his works in the 1970s, his ascetic theology has not been among them. The importance of this area of his thought has been noted by earlier scholars, but nevertheless it remains largely uncharted territory. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Carlos García-Allen began to map it by examining Chromatius' understanding of the relationship between baptism and Christians'

Aquileia e la chiesa di Concordia," *AAAd* 25 (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1984), 69-89; Carlo Truzzi, "L'ordinazione episcopale di Cromazio di Aquileia nel suo contesto storico-culturale," in *Chromatius Episcopus, 388-1988*, *AAAd* 34 (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1989), 27-44; Angelo de Nicola, "Il prologo ai *Tractatus in Matthaeum* di Cromazio," in *Chromatius Episcopus, 388-1988*, 81-116; Gérard Nauroy, "Chromace, disciple critique de l'exégèse d'Ambroise"; Yves-Marie Duval, "Chromace et Jérôme," in *Chromatius Episcopus, 388-1988*, 151-183; Antonio Quacquarelli, "L'ecclesiologia nella esegesi di Cromazio," *Vetera Christianorum* 26 (1989): 5-22; Celestino Corsato, "Il profeta Elia in Cromazio di Aquileia. Un giusto dal cuore puro nella tempesta delle prove," *Studia patavina* 57.1 (2010): 183-197; Carla Lo Cicero, "Cromazio committente di traduzioni" in *Chromatius of Aquileia and His Age: Proceedings of the International Conference held in Aquileia, 22-24 May 2008*, ed. Pier Franco Beatrice and Alessio Peršič (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 227-252; Agnès Bastit-Kalinowska, "Les *Tractatus in Matthaeum* de Chromace et leur lecture de l'évangile de « Matthieu », in *Chromatius of Aquileia and His Age*, 425-467; and Francesco Pieri, "Chromatius and the Apocalypse of John," in *Chromatius of Aquileia and His Age*, 485-501. In addition to these articles, substantial portions of several books since the 1980s have been devoted to various aspects of Chromatius' intellectual and/or pastoral activity: Carlo Truzzi, *Zeno, Gaudenzio e Cromazio. Testi e contenuti della predicazione cristiana per le chiese di Verona, Brescia e Aquileia (360-410 ca.)* (Brescia: Paideia Editrice, 1985), *passim*; Rita Lizzi, *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche nella città tardoantica (L'Italia Annonaria nel IV-V secolo d.C.)* (Como: Edizioni New Press, 1989), 139-169; and Claire Sotinel, *Identité civique et christianisme. Aquilée du IIIe au VIIe siècle* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2005), 171-231. Reference will be made also to other recent works in the exposition of Chromatius' views on grace and human agency.

¹¹³⁹ Vittorio Cian's *L'anno liturgico nelle opere di S. Cromazio di Aquileia*, ed. Pietro Zovatto (Trieste: Centro Studi Storico-Religiosi Friuli-Venezia Giulia, 1996), is rather short with just over 100 pages of text, but nevertheless helpful. The same can be said of Giulio Trettel's *La vergine Maria in s. Cromazio* (Trieste: Centro Studi Storico-Religiosi Friuli-Venezia Giulia, 1991) and Grazia Rapisarda's *Cromazio di Aquileia, operatore di pace* (Catania: Cooperativa Universitaria Editrice Catanese di Magistero, 2006), with only 75 and 120 pages of text, respectively. Flavio Placida's *Aspetti catechistico-liturgici dell'opera di Cromazio di Aquileia* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2005) is more substantial, but focuses quite narrowly on certain aspects of Chromatius' works. The sixteenth centenary of both his consecration and of his death did, however, prompt scholarly conferences whose contributions were published. See *Chromatius Episcopus, 388-1988*, *AAAd* 34 (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1989), and *Chromatius of Aquileia and His Age: Proceedings of the International Conference held in Aquileia, 22-24 May 2008*, ed. Pier Franco Beatrice and Alessio Peršič (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011). The latter anniversary was also the occasion for an exhibition of artifacts in Udine between November 2008 and March 2009 entitled, "Cromazio di Aquileia, 388-408. Al crocevia di genti e religioni." A volume with the same title, including scholarly articles on a variety of topics related to Chromatius and Christian origins in the upper Adriatic region, was published at the same time. See *Cromazio di Aquileia, 388-2008. Al crocevia di genti e religioni*, ed. Sandro Piusi (Milan: Silvana Editoriale Spa, 2008). The recent monograph that begins to do justice to Chromatius' significance is Robert McEachnie, *Chromatius of Aquileia and the Making of a Christian City* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

ethical obligations.¹¹⁴⁰ Giovanni Spinelli, discussing the evidence for organized monasticism at Aquileia during the fourth century, observes concerning Chromatius that

For the great bishop the Christian life, of which the highest ideal is martyrdom (the last of the eight evangelical beatitudes), flows naturally into asceticism, without demanding per se to be institutionalized in a monastic form. Nevertheless, there is material in Chromatius' sermons (especially 1, 5, 23, 31, 33, and 41) with which to put together a theology of the consecrated life, if not exactly of the monastic life, and we hope that someone will take care of this job soon!¹¹⁴¹

In the more than three decades that have passed since Spinelli published this article, it appears that no one has undertaken the work he so ardently desired. It is hoped that this chapter will help to fill in this unfortunate gap in our understanding of Chromatius' contributions to early Christian asceticism in northern Italy.

This exploration of the bishop of Aquileia's ascetic theology will be based not only the sermons mentioned by Spinelli, but also on his *Tractatus in Mathaeum*, a commentary whose surviving sections cover roughly half of that Gospel. But before coming to Chromatius' distinctive ideas about the ascetic life, we will first set the context by tracing the history of ascetic practice in Aquileia during his lifetime. If Chromatius' relationship with Jerome and Rufinus is one of the main reasons why his contributions to ascetic theology are so potentially important, we would do well to begin with the *chorus beatorum* evoked by Jerome in his *Chronicle*.¹¹⁴² This episode in the history of Christian asceticism is already well known, so we

¹¹⁴⁰ His interest in Chromatius has been sparked the possibility that certain aspects of his thought influenced Pelagius. See Carlos García-Sánchez, "Pelagius and Christian Initiation: A Study in Historical Theology," Ph.D. Dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1978, 292-310; and C. A. García-Allen, "Was Pelagius Influenced by Chromatius of Aquileia?" *Studia Patristica* 17.3, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (1982): 1251-1257.

¹¹⁴¹ Spinelli, "Ascetismo, monachesimo e cenobitismo ad Aquileia nel sec. IV," *Aquileia nel IV secolo*, AAAd 22.1 (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1982), 273-300, at 285n.27.

¹¹⁴² This group of ascetics was discussed briefly in chap. 2 above, pp. 130-132.

will simply endeavor to synthesize what other scholars have said about it. From there, we will move forward in time from the foundational period of our study to the years of Chromatius' episcopate and ask what evidence there is for the existence of an ascetic group during the last years of the fourth century and the early years of the fifth. We will then consider the possible influence of the Aquileian community of ascetics on other ecclesiastical figures in northern Italy and elsewhere, and from there move on to our discussion of Chromatius' ascetic theology as it relates to the broader debates of his age about the legacy of Origen.

The Chorus Beatorum ca. 370: the Evidence from Jerome and Rufinus

Several of Jerome's early letters were written to the group of ascetics centered on the household of Chromatius, at that time a presbyter of Aquileia. Jerome's Letter 7, addressed to Jovinus, Eusebius, and Chromatius, gives us the best picture of the ethos of these ascetics, even as it provides valuable evidence for its structure and membership:

I salute your mother and mine with the respect which, as you know, I feel towards her. Associated with you as she is in a holy life, she has the start of you, her holy children, in that she is your mother. Her womb may thus be truly called golden. With her I salute your sisters, who ought all to be welcomed wherever they go, for they have triumphed over their sex and the world, and await the Bridegroom's coming, their lamps replenished with oil. O happy the house which is a home of a widowed Anna, of virgins that are prophetesses, and of twin Samuels bred in the Temple! Fortunate the roof which shelters the martyr-mother of the Maccabees, with her sons around her, each and all wearing the martyr's crown! For although you confess Christ every day by keeping His commandments, yet to this private glory you have added the public one of an open confession; for it was through you that the poison of the Arian heresy was formerly banished from your city.¹¹⁴³

¹¹⁴³ *Ep. 7.6, CSEL 54.30-31*: "Matrem communem, quae, cum vobis sanctitate societur, in eo nos praevenit, quia tales genuit, cuius vere venter aureus potest dici, eo salutamus honore, quo nostis; una quoque suspiciendas cunctis sorores, quae sexum vicere cum saeculo, quae oleo ad lampadas largiter praeeparato sponsi opperiantur adventum. o beata domus, in qua morantur Anna vidua, virgines prophetissae, geminus Samuhel nutritus in templo! o tecta felicia, in quibus cernimus Macchabeorum martyrum coronis cinctam martyrem matrem! nam licet cotidie Christum confiteamini, dum eius praecepta servatis, tamen ad privatam gloriam publica haec accessit vobis et aperta confessio, quod per vos ab urbe vestra Arriani quondam dogmatis virus exclusum est" (trans. *NPNF*, ser. 2, 6.10). For this circle as a whole, see also Francis X. Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia (345-411): His Life and Works* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1945), 21-27.

This passage indicates that this community—if such it can be called—was centered on the house of Chromatius and his family; that his mother, brother, and sisters were part of it; and that it was responsible for “banishing” the “poison of the Arian heresy” from Aquileia. This last point is quite significant, and we will return to it momentarily. For now, however, we wish merely to focus on the question of who was a part of this group.

Jerome wrote several letters to his friends in and around Aquileia during the mid-370s, and on the basis of them we are able to identify a number of ascetics or likely ascetics who probably had some kind of relationship with Chromatius’ household and thus with what can best be termed the circle of Aquileian ascetics. As already indicated, the Aquileian deacons Jovinus and Eusebius (brother of Chromatius), as well as Chromatius’ mother and sisters, were key members of this circle.¹¹⁴⁴ Its ranks also included Julian, a deacon of Aquileia;¹¹⁴⁵ Bonosus, Jerome’s childhood friend and schoolmate who became a hermit on an island in the upper Adriatic;¹¹⁴⁶ the subdeacon Niceas;¹¹⁴⁷ the “monk” Chrysocomas, who was not a member of the Aquileian clergy;¹¹⁴⁸ Heliodorus, for a short time Jerome’s companion in his travels to the east, who returned to Italy and later became bishop of nearby Altinum;¹¹⁴⁹ the centenarian bibliophile

¹¹⁴⁴ For Jovinus, see *PCBE* 2.1152-1153; for Eusebius, *PCBE* 2.697-698.

¹¹⁴⁵ He was the addressee of Jerome’s *Ep.* 6. See also *PCBE* 2.1174.

¹¹⁴⁶ Bonosus was mentioned in chap. 2 above, p. 151, in the discussion of island eremitism in Italy. See *Epp.* 3 and 7.3; and *Chronicon* sub anno 377. See also *PCBE* 2.344.

¹¹⁴⁷ *Ep.* 8. See also *PCBE* 2.1538.

¹¹⁴⁸ *Ep.* 9. He is called a “monachus” in the heading of the letter, but the use of the term should not lead anachronistically to imagine that there existed at Aquileia already in the 370s an organized and hierarchical monastic community. See also *PCBE* 2.438.

¹¹⁴⁹ *Epp.* 4 and 9; for Heliodorus, see also *Ep.* 14 and *PCBE* 2.965-967. *Ep.* 9 is addressed to Chrysocomas, but the mention of Heliodorus in this context, Jerome’s reference to him in his letter to Rufinus (*Ep.* 3) as the one who first informed him that Rufinus had reached the desert of Nitria in Egypt, as well as Heliodorus’ presence with Jerome in the Syrian desert, mentioned in *Ep.* 6, make it clear that Heliodorus was an ascetic and had resided in Aquileia during the 370s. In *Ep.* 52.1, addressed to Heliodorus’ nephew, Nepotianus, during the mid-390s, Jerome recalls his disappointment at Heliodorus’ “abandonment” of him when the two had set out together to the east to learn a more

Paul of Concordia;¹¹⁵⁰ and Rufinus, a native of Concordia who was baptized in Aquileia and was later ordained a presbyter by Chromatius.¹¹⁵¹ Jerome's sister also seems to have had some connection with this circle.¹¹⁵²

It was only natural that Aquileia, as the second most important episcopal see in northern Italy and a city that had hosted Athanasius for a brief time during his second exile, would be the site of a pioneering ascetic community.¹¹⁵³ But it is especially noteworthy for some of its

advanced form of asceticism from the desert monks, a disappointment he had expressed bitterly to Heliodorus himself in *Ep.* 14. The friendship shared by the two, however, survived this disappointment. Jerome dedicated to Chromatius and Heliodorus his translation of the "three books of Solomon" [i. e., Proverbs, the Song of Songs, and Ecclesiasties], as well as of the Apocryphal books of Tobit and Judith. And when Nepotianus died only two years after receiving this letter from Jerome, he wrote Heliodorus a letter of consolation, *Ep.* 60. On Jerome's relationship with Heliodorus, see also J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: Life, Writings, and Controversies* (London: Duckworth, 1975), 44-45; Stefan Rebenich, *Hieronymus und sein Kreis. Prosopographische und sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1992), 83-85; and J. H. D. Scourfield, *Consoling Heliodorus: A Commentary on Jerome, Letter 60* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), *passim*.

¹¹⁵⁰ *Ep.* 10. The nature of Paul's connection with the Aquileian circle is not definitely known, but circumstantial evidence for it includes the proximity of Concordia to Aquileia and the fact that Jerome attributes the old man's longevity to his "iustitia," which coming from the pen of Jerome should be taken as a synonym for "ascetism." In addition, Jerome included with this letter a copy of his *Life of Paul*. Finally, toward the end of the letter he asks his elderly correspondent for the Gospel commentary of Fortunatianus of Aquileia, Aurelius Victor's *History*, and the letters of Novatian, indicating an interest in theology that was shared by many of those who at one time or another belonged to the Aquileian circle of ascetics. See also *PCBE* 2.1670 (Paulus 1).

¹¹⁵¹ For a brief sketch of Rufinus' background, see Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 1-19; Joseph Lemarié, *SC* 154.43-44; Jean Gribomont, "Rufino di Aquileia," in *DPAC* 2.3034-3035; Giorgio Fedalto, *Rufino di Concordia tra oriente e occidente* (Rome: Città Nuova, 1990), 33-41; *PCBE* 2.1925-1940; and Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 135-137. As for his baptism, writing 401, he states, "ante annos fere triginta in monasterio iam positus, per gratiam baptismi regeneratus, signaculum fidei consecutus sum per sanctos viros Chromatium Iovinum et Eusebium." See *Apologia contra Hieronymum* 1.4, *CCL* 20.39; Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 22-23; and Fedalto, *Rufino di Concordia*, 41-42.

¹¹⁵² In *Ep.* 6, Jerome refers to his sister as the deacon Julian's "daughter in Christ," and in *Ep.* 7.4, he alludes to the role played by Julian in his sister's "conversion," presumably to the ascetic life, and admonishes his addressees (Chromatius, Jovian, and Eusebius) that "it is for you to water" the seed sown by Julian, indicating that she was in or near Aquileia at the time Jerome was writing. See also *PCBE* 2.1174.

¹¹⁵³ For Athanasius' visit to Aquileia in 345-346, see Timothy D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), ix and 64-70. The impact of his visit, however, should not be exaggerated. For whereas both Giuseppe Cuscito and Francis Murphy identify Athanasius as the original inspiration for the asceticism of Chromatius and his companions in Aquileia, Philip Rousseau nevertheless suggests that the indigenous Italian model of Eusebius of Vercelli, which seems to have predated the community in Aquileia, may have influenced it as well. See Cuscito, "L'ambiente di cultura e di fede nell'età di Cromazio alla luce della recente storiografia," in *Chromatius Episcopus, 388-1988*, 12; Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 20-21; and Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 2010), 87 and n.29. J. N. D. Kelly also believes the latter possibility is more likely. See *Jerome*, 32. There is, however, evidence for ascetic practice in the environs of Aquileia as early as the late third century, in the time of Victorinus of Pettau, who was martyred during the Great

defining characteristics. In the first place, it stood at the center of a network of upwardly mobile young men who abandoned what might have been promising careers for the sake of their interest in the ascetic life. Jerome, Bonosus, Rufinus, and Heliodorus certainly seem to fit into this category.¹¹⁵⁴ All four of them eventually left Aquileia, presumably to practice more stringent (and more ancient) forms of asceticism in the east or (in the case of Bonosus) on a remote island off the Adriatic coast (though Heliodorus returned after a relatively brief stay in the east, having decided that the life of a desert ascetic was not for him). The heading of Jerome's Letter 9 places Chrysocomas in Aquileia, but nothing in it connects him directly with the household of Chromatius. He was likely an independent lay ascetic whose connection with other members of the community such as Jerome and Heliodorus was born of a common interest, but did not lead them to live under the same roof. Paul of Concordia's very toponym suggests that his relationship with the ascetics of Aquileia was based on geographical proximity and a common interest, though the distance between Aquileia and Concordia obviously made impossible the sort of daily or weekly interaction that Chrysocomas could have had with the nucleus of the circle. Evagrius of Antioch, the translator who produced the definitive Latin version of the *Life of St. Antony* and had accompanied Eusebius of Vercelli—probably the first ascetic bishop in Italy—when he returned from exile in 363, maintained close contacts with this household community.¹¹⁵⁵

Persecution or, perhaps, during the reign of Numerian in 284. See Alessio Peršič, "Aquileia monastica. I primordi eremitico-martiriali e martiniani, il 'coro' cromaziano 'di beati', le idealità 'terapeutiche' di Girolamo," in *Cromazio di Aquileia, 388-2008. Al crocevia di genti e religioni*, 254-267, at 254.

¹¹⁵⁴ Rufinus, Jerome, Heliodorus, and Bonosus had all studied at Rome as young men, an indication of their parents' aspirations for them. See Kelly, *Jerome*, 18-19; and Rebenich, *Hieronymus und sein Kreis*, 23 and 34. Jerome mentions Heliodorus' study of rhetoric in several of his works, and in his *Ep.* 9 he refers to Heliodorus' post in the imperial *militia* which he resigned to pursue asceticism. See *PCBE* 2.966n.3.

¹¹⁵⁵ Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 25-26. In his judgment, "it is hardly presumptuous to assume that he [Evagrius] was responsible for renewing in some of the brethren, and in Jerome in particular, a longing for the more perfect

The second important feature we should note about this circle is its “spiritually and theologically cultivated character.”¹¹⁵⁶ Rufinus bears witness to this feature of the community in his *Apology*, writing that Chromatius, Jovinus, and Eusebius, “all of them now bishops, well-tried and highly esteemed in the church of God, one of whom was then a presbyter of the church under Valerian of blessed memory, the second was archdeacon, the third deacon, and to me a spiritual father, my teacher in the creed and the articles of belief.”¹¹⁵⁷ This last phrase—“my teacher in the creed and the articles of belief”—refers to the catechesis any fourth-century Christian would undergo before being baptized, but Rufinus goes on to describe the greater depth of the instruction he had received from them: “These men so taught me, and so I believe, namely, that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are of one Godhead, of one Substance: a Trinity coeternal, inseparable, incorporeal, invisible, incomprehensible, known to itself alone as it truly is in its perfection.”¹¹⁵⁸ Rufinus’ translation of the works of Greek theologians such as Origen, Basil of Caesarea, and Gregory of Nyssa, as well as his original compositions, including the two books he appended to Eusebius of Caesarea’s *Ecclesiastical History* and his *Commentary on the Apostles’ Creed*, make him a significant figure in the intellectual history of late antique Christianity, even if he did not attain to the status of a doctor of the church. Jerome was, of

forms of asceticism—for the life of the solitary of the desert. And it is to Evagrius’ home in Antioch that Jerome betakes himself upon breaking away from the Aquileian group” (26).

¹¹⁵⁶ Peršič, “Aquileia monastica,” 260. Cf. Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 24.

¹¹⁵⁷ *Contra Hieron.*, 1.4, CCL 20.39: “opinatissimos et probatissimos in ecclesiis Dei episcopos, quorum alter tunc presbyter beatae memoriae Valeriani, alter archidiaconus, alter diaconus simulque pater mihi et doctor symboli ac fidei fuit.”

¹¹⁵⁸ *Contra Hieron.*, 1.4, CCL 20.39: “Illi ergo sic mihi tradiderunt et sic teneo: quod Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus unius deitatis sit uniusque substantiae: coaeterna inseparabilis incorporea invisibilis incomprehensibilis Trinitas et sibi soli, ut est, ad perfectum nota.” In what follows, Rufinus goes into yet more detail about the nature of his Trinitarian theology, and then his understanding of Christ’s incarnation, and finally professes his belief in the resurrection of Christ “illa ipsa carne quae posita fuerat in sepulchro,” and in like manner of the resurrection: “haec ipsa, in quibus nunc vel vivimus vel morimur, nostra corpora recepturi.” The occasion for this protestation was the charge of heresy levelled at him by Jerome and others regarding precisely these points of doctrine.

course, one of the most significant Christian intellectuals of antiquity, and second only to Origen of Alexandria as a biblical scholar.¹¹⁵⁹ And Chromatius' erudition, embodied in his sermons and *Tractatus*, prompted Yves-Marie Duval to qualify him as "the best representative of the Latin Christian literature of Aquileia."¹¹⁶⁰ There can be no doubt, therefore, of the importance of the *chorus beatorum* and of the literature produced by those who were for a time part of it.¹¹⁶¹

Yet a third feature that marks this ascetic circle is the way in which it functioned as a center for training future bishops. It has been suggested that there existed in this period a seminary at Aquileia that groomed such bishops as Filaster and Gaudentius of Brescia, Vigilius of Trent, and Peter Chrysologus.¹¹⁶² Later scholars, however, have strongly denied any such

¹¹⁵⁹ Jerome's talent in this area of learning was recognized by bishop Damasus of Rome already when he was young. After years of honing his craft by translating the commentaries of others, such as Origen, and producing commentaries of his own that drew largely on the insights of earlier authorities, he began to produce commentaries that were more original (though he never ceased his practice of borrowing from earlier interpreters), drew on his knowledge of Hebrew and of rabbinic interpretations, and were highly prized by his contemporaries. By the time he died, he had composed commentaries on vast swaths of both Testaments, thus securing his place as the greatest Latin exegete of the early church. See Kelly, *Jerome*, 83-84, 141-152, 164, 211-213, 221-223, 291-295, 299-302, 316-317, and 334.

¹¹⁶⁰ Duval, "Les relations doctrinales entre Milan et Aquilée, 370-420," 171. These words were written before the publication of all of Chromatius' extant works, and must therefore be regarded as rather an understatement.

¹¹⁶¹ Although the surviving letters of Jerome testify unequivocally as to the fact of his relationship with this community, its exact nature is nevertheless a mystery. Yves-Marie Duval is cautious about what the evidence suggests, being of the opinion that with respect to Jerome's relationship with Chromatius, the fact that they were in direct contact is "la seule chose dont nous soyons sûrs. Mais nous ne connaissons pas leur durée, leur occasion, leur intimité, ni même leur date." See "Chromace et Jérôme," in *Chromatius Episcopus, 388-1988*, 153. Kelly is somewhat more confident. Speaking of the years shortly after 370, he acknowledges that "No direct evidence for this survives, but several letters which he was to write a few years later strongly suggest that he now resided at both Aquileia and Stridon, possibly also at Emona. It is impossible to reconstruct, even in the roughest outline, his moves at this stage or the order in which he visited these centres, much less the time he spent at each. We may suspect, however, that while he would naturally wish to see his relatives after his prolonged absence, the real magnet was Aquileia. With his new and exciting sense of vocation he would want to think out his position and test his ascetic aspirations in a congenial environment. His old school-friend Rufinus, for whom he had transcribed Hilary's treatises at Trier, was at Aquileia, and may well have painted a glowing picture of the favourable conditions he might expect to find there. ... What particularly thrilled Jerome about this Aquileian coterie was that all its members were devoted Christians who were also enthusiasts for the higher religious life. ... Little wonder that, surrounded by such heroic models, Jerome joined with Julian [a subdeacon of Aquileia] in planting a similar resolve in his own sister too, thereby restoring the wayward girl to the right path." See *Jerome*, 30-32.

¹¹⁶² Aurelia Scholz, "Il 'Seminarium Aquileiense,'" trans. G. Brusin, *Memorie storiche forogiuliesi* 50 (1979): 5-106.

formal institution as is suggested by the word “seminary,” and have emphasized that there is no solid evidence for the supposed connections between the church of Aquileia and the aforementioned bishops.¹¹⁶³ Nevertheless, the fact remains that Jovinus, Eusebius, and Heliodorus all became bishops after having spent time in the ranks of the Aquileian clergy, which shows that this church and the circle of ascetics associated with it was a proving ground of sorts for clerics who would go on to become bishops in the churches in Aquileia’s immediate sphere of influence.¹¹⁶⁴

These three features of the circle—its composition of young men who had opted for a life of asceticism rather than professional success, its literary and theological interests, and the fact that many of its members went on to become bishops—are best explained in the light of what was perhaps its central goal, at least in its early years. The passage from Jerome’s Letter 7 that was cited above offers a clue as to what this goal was. As we saw, he praises the household of Chromatius for its “*aperta confessio*” of the Nicene faith. This confession was the “*publica gloria*” that crowned its practice of asceticism. By the time Jerome wrote this letter in the mid-370s, the “*Ariani dogmatis virus*” had disappeared from the city, or so he seemed to believe.¹¹⁶⁵ But one prominent member of the Aquileian Christian community is noticeably absent from this

¹¹⁶³ Spinelli, “Ascetismo, monachesimo e cenobitismo,” 277-281.

¹¹⁶⁴ As discussed in chap. 1, pp. 69-70, in the late fourth century it is almost certainly too early to call Aquileia a metropolitan see in any official sense. The size and importance of the city, the antiquity of its church, and the prestige of its leaders, however, combined to give it a certain influence over the churches of neighboring cities and towns, which may not have boasted the institutional strength to prepare effective bishops, particularly if those churches opted for ascetic bishops. In the discussion of ascetic bishops in chap. 2, it was noted that in addition to Chromatius, Eusebius, Jovinus, and Heliodorus left the clergy of Aquileia to become bishops elsewhere. It was typical for the churches of larger cities to “colonize” the episcopacy of the surrounding area. At roughly the same time, four individuals who had been members of the clergy of Milan also went on to become bishops of other cities: Filaster of Brescia, Sabinus of Piacenza, Felix of Bologna, and Theodulus of Modena. See above, pp. 174-180. To this list of Milanese clerics turned bishops we may also add Felix of Como. See p. 220n.660.

¹¹⁶⁵ *Ep.* 7.6, *CSEL* 54.30, cited above in n.1143. In his survey of fourth-century asceticism in Aquileia, Spinelli points to the praise Jerome heaps upon his friends in this passage to argue that the circle’s primary purpose was not asceticism *per se*, but opposition to Arianism. See “Ascetismo,” 292.

narrative (albeit ever so brief) of the elimination of “Arianism” from this center—bishop Valerian.

Jerome had mentioned the bishop in §4 of the same letter, but in an entirely different connection. There, he asked his addressees to request “*papa Valerianus*” to send letters to his sister, who had recently committed herself to asceticism, “*ad eam confortandam*.”¹¹⁶⁶ The most likely scenario is that his sister had chosen the life of a consecrated virgin. We saw in chapter 2 that the veiling and supervision of such women was an episcopal affair.¹¹⁶⁷ His sister’s conversion had been the fruit of the labor of Julian, a deacon of Aquileia, and so she must have been at a close enough proximity to the city to fall under the jurisdiction of its church.¹¹⁶⁸ Thus Jerome’s request that Valerian take steps to strengthen the young woman’s resolve was quite natural, and need not imply any particularly strong connection between the two men. How, then, can we explain the fact that Jerome wrote in such glowing terms about the family of Chromatius and their role in the “orthodox reconquest” of northern Italy, but seemed to give the bishop of Aquileia short shrift? In her study of Aquileia in Late Antiquity, Claire Sotinel suggests that there was both a generational gap between Valerian and the militant pro-Nicene ascetics in his clergy, as well as a difference in strategy, according to which these young men, “without breaking with the episcopal church, nevertheless act with a certain independence vis-à-vis the bishop.”¹¹⁶⁹ Valerian was both a pro-Nicene and active in anti-Arian church councils during this period. He attended one in Rome in 368/372 that condemned Auxentius of Milan; he also

¹¹⁶⁶ *CSEL* 82/3.29.

¹¹⁶⁷ See above, pp. 123-124.

¹¹⁶⁸ *Ep.* 6.

¹¹⁶⁹ *Identité civique*, 135.

presided at the Council of Aquileia in 381, which led to the deposition of the two leading Homoian clerics of Illyricum.¹¹⁷⁰ However, it seems that he left the “spade work”—catechizing new Christians in the Nicene faith (as had been the case with Rufinus) and publicly refuting Homoianism, for example—to his younger clergy. It appears, then, that one of the main reasons why this ascetic circle in Aquileia coalesced in the first place was to undertake a purification of the Christianity of the city, inspired perhaps by the activities of Eusebius of Vercelli and Hilary of Poitiers in northern Italy during the 360s.¹¹⁷¹ If correct, this reconstruction of the primary aim of the Aquileian circle and of its relative independence from bishop Valerian indicates that it was probably formed during the 360s (though an earlier date, during the episcopacy of Fortunatianus, cannot be ruled out). The fact that it attracted Rufinus, Jerome, and Bonosus—not natives of Aquileia—suggests that it both earned a certain notoriety and enjoyed some success in its anti-Arian endeavors.¹¹⁷²

¹¹⁷⁰ Rome: Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1.733-736. Aquileia: Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*, 169-184; Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 145-169; and McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 128-149.

¹¹⁷¹ *Identité civique*, 136.

¹¹⁷² Sotinel suggests that, although he was a pro-Nicene, Valerian was not active in the fight against Arianism. She and Spinelli both speculate on the basis of Jerome’s faint praise for Valerian that the break-up of the community can be attributed in some way to dissatisfaction with his episcopal leadership, related either to his lukewarm participation in the struggle against Arianism (which Sotinel regards as having been in continuity with that of Fortunatianus, who in the end agreed to the condemnation of Athanasius, encouraged bishop Liberius of Rome to escape from exile by doing the same, and attended the Homoian Council of Rimini in 359) or the fact that he did not, like them, lead an ascetic life. See Spinelli, “Monachesimo,” 289 and 300n.64; and Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 125-128 (for Fortunatianus), and 136-137 (for Valerian). It seems more likely, however, in light of his attendance at anti-Arian church councils both in Rome in 368/372 and in Aquileia in 381, that his participation in the effort to bring the teachings of the church into line with Nicene convictions was simply of a different sort from that of the band of young radicals living in his midst. By the 360s, bishops had long made use of church councils as tools against doctrinal opponents. And although bishops were also responsible for teaching their churches, it was not unheard of for this duty to be delegated by bishops to presbyters who were especially gifted. Augustine in Hippo and John Chrysostom in Antioch are two examples of this. Valerian seems therefore to have occupied himself with the “foreign policy” of the church of Aquileia, which no doubt required careful management in light of the continued presence of Homoian bishops in Illyricum throughout the 370s, while leaving “domestic policy” to Chromatius and his fellow ascetics, whose abilities are attested by the future career trajectories of several of them.

The departure of these three talented individuals certainly removed some of the luster from the “*chorus beatorum*,” as Jerome calls it in his *Chronicon*. But there is no reason to believe that their departure was prompted by or led to the break-up or disappearance of the circle. Most likely, Chromatius himself, his brother Eusebius the deacon, along with their mother and sisters, continued to live according to the same ascetic discipline that had brought those budding stars of the ascetic life to Aquileia in the first place. The following section will therefore examine to what degree Chromatius’ *Tractatus in Mathaeum* contain evidence for the continued existence of an ascetic community in Aquileia itself in the early fifth century.

An Ascetic Community during Chromatius’ Episcopate? The Evidence from His *Tractatus in Mathaeum*

The existence during the 370s of the community described by Jerome and Rufinus is in itself *prima facie* evidence for the presence of a group of ascetics in Aquileia twenty years later, during the episcopate of Chromatius, who had been at the center of that community while still a presbyter. The fact that several of its members went on to become bishops in and around Aquileia in the 380s and 390s suggests that the churches in this area perceived some advantage in being shepherded by ascetic bishops. The letters written by Jerome to Heliodorus and Nepotianus also bear witness to the continued interest in asceticism among clergy serving the churches near Aquileia.¹¹⁷³ There is at any rate no evidence of any resistance to this form of episcopal leadership, such as that which provoked Ambrose to write to the church of Vercelli in 396, urging them not to turn away from the established practice of choosing an ascetic bishop.¹¹⁷⁴ Doubtless Rufinus, who returned to Aquileia in the late 390s and stayed there for

¹¹⁷³ *Epp.* 14, 52, and 60.

¹¹⁷⁴ Ambrose, *Ep. 14 extr. coll.* (Maur. 63), *CSEL* 82/3.235-295. See chap. 2 above, pp.90-91.

several (as many as eight) years, would have found it congenial to live among fellow ascetics.¹¹⁷⁵

This evidence is confirmed by a great many places in Chromatius' *Tractatus in Matthaeum*, whose form and content suggest that they were most likely written for an audience interested in pursuing an ascetic lifestyle.

The matter of how to describe the form of these *Tractatus* is important for understanding their purpose, so we will begin there. Based on some of their literary features, Agnès Bastit-Kalinowska has argued that they are “a specific literary genre, intermediate between the written commentary in the strict sense and the homily.”¹¹⁷⁶ Her treatment of the matter is particularly helpful, so we will summarize it briefly here. She observes that commentaries on scripture written by late antique Christian exegetes typically 1) commented on the text in order, 2) attempted to bring out its meaning in a systematic and rigorous way, and 3) raised difficult interpretative questions (in the form of a *quaestio*) to which an answer was given only after the opinions of other interpreters were discussed.¹¹⁷⁷ Chromatius' *Tractatus* possess some of these features, but are nevertheless different from the standard written commentary in some important ways.

They certainly comment on the Gospel of Matthew in order, but whereas most ancient commentaries divided the text into pericopes that were roughly equal in length, Chromatius' *Tractatus* dealt with portions of the Gospel text that were of varied length, sometimes 10 verses

¹¹⁷⁵ For Rufinus' return to Aquileia and the length of his stay there, see below, n.1247.

¹¹⁷⁶ “Les *Tractatus in Matthaeum* de Chromace et leur lecture de l'évangile de ‘Matthieu,’” in *Chromatius of Aquileia and His Age*, 425-467, at 427.

¹¹⁷⁷ Bastit-Kalinowska, “Les *Tractatus in Matthaeum*,” 428-442.

or more, sometimes only one or two.¹¹⁷⁸ Already with regard to this basic feature of most written commentaries, Chromatius deviates from the norm.

His departure from the typical style of a commentary is further illustrated by the fact that he only infrequently draws a *distinctio* between the senses of two different words. One place where he does do this is *Tr.* 15.2, where he insists on a sharp distinction between the *tenebrae* and the *regio umbrae mortis* mentioned in the prophecy from Isaiah 9 quoted in Matthew 4:16: “*ostendens alios esse qui in tenebris sedebant, alios qui in regione umbrae mortis sedent constituti.*”¹¹⁷⁹ His preferred method for bringing out the meaning of the passage being commented on is instead the old tool of the collection of biblical *testimonia*, which “are implemented by Chromatius in a systematic and rigorous way that is all his own.”¹¹⁸⁰ Bastit-Kalinowska describes his method as follows:

These dossiers are not complex webs put together by the poetic associations of texts that echo each other (as is sometimes the case with Origen or Ambrose); they are methodically worked out. I will go further: they are built atop a dynamic internal structure that can be schematized in the following way: the point of departure is naturally the Gospel that is being considered, but the commentator turns first to Old Testament testimonies, and these lead in their turn, by a progressive rising movement, toward a New Testament “beacon,” an authoritative place in a Gospel, a text from the apostle or borrowed from the Apocalypse, through which the passage from Matthew is definitively clarified in such a way that, in the same movement, the entire chain of scriptural testimonies that have been mobilized is also clarified. The rest of the Gospel text can then be approached.¹¹⁸¹

¹¹⁷⁸ Bastit-Kalinowska cites as examples *Trr.* 2 and 3, which comment on six and two verses, respectively, and *Tract.* 4 and 5, which comment on ten and three verses, respectively. See “*Les Tractatus in Matthaeum*,” 429n.11.

¹¹⁷⁹ *CCL* 9A.260, cited in Bastit-Kalinowska, “*Les Tractatus in Matthaeum*,” 432.

¹¹⁸⁰ Bastit-Kalinowska, “*Les Tractatus in Matthaeum*,” 432. One example of such a collection of *testimonia* is Cyprian’s *Ad Quirinum*, a collection of Old Testament texts intended to prove that Jesus was the Messiah foretold in its pages.

¹¹⁸¹ “*Les Tractatus in Matthaeum*,” 434.

The function of these collections of scriptural testimonies is to link Matthew with its broader biblical context.¹¹⁸² It might also be observed in this connection that the use of these chains of scriptural passages constitutes a way of bringing out the meaning of the Gospel text that contrasts with that of Jerome, who drew heavily on his philological expertise and his close proximity to many of the places mentioned in the scriptures in order to illuminate the biblical text.¹¹⁸³ And Chromatius' ability to put these chains together leads Bastit-Kalinowska to conclude that his biblical knowledge is "wider and more ordered, it seems, than that of his Latin contemporaries, with the exception of Ambrose and Jerome."¹¹⁸⁴

¹¹⁸² Bastit-Kalinowska, "Les *Tractatus in Matthaeum*," 435. In discussing the Prologue to Chromatius' *Tractatus*, Angelo de Nicola observes that one of the most characteristic traits of Chromatius' exegesis is the way in which he attempts to highlight "the correlation and mutual reinforcement that exists between the Old and New Testament." See "Il prologo ai *Tractatus in Matthaeum* di Cromazio," in *Chromatius Episcopus, 388-1988*, 81-116, at 87. See also Grazia Rapisarda, "Continuità tra Antico e Nuovo Testamento in Cromazio di Aquileia," *Augustinianum* 40 (2000): 291-302.

¹¹⁸³ This feature of Jerome's commentaries is related to his interest in the literal sense of the biblical text. As is noted by J. N. D. Kelly, this interest became more central to his exegetical method as time passed, although he never gave up entirely on the allegorical method that was so beloved of ancient exegetes. See *Jerome*, 147, 156, 165, 221 (where mention is made of Jerome's use of his knowledge of local flora in his commentary on Jonah), 222-225, 291-295, 299-302, 307, 316-317, 327, and 334. Jerome's interest in the literal sense was, moreover, connected with his interest in the Hebrew version of the Old Testament, as illustrated by his common (though by no means exclusive) practice of commenting on the literal sense of the Old Testament text on the basis of the Hebrew, and commenting on the figurative sense on the basis of the Septuagint. On this feature of his exegesis, see Pierre Jay, *L'exégèse de saint Jérôme d'après son "Commentaire sur Isaïe"* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985), 142-147.

¹¹⁸⁴ "Les *Tractatus in Matthaeum*," 435. Bastit-Kalinowska's observations on this point accord well with those of other scholars of Chromatius. Duilio Corgnali, for example, writes that although he is not given to flights of speculative fancy in philosophical or theological matters, Chromatius "nonetheless displays a profound knowledge of the Bible, from which citations come to him easily and in great numbers." See *Il mistero pasquale in Cromazio d'Aquileia* (Udine: La Nuova Base, 1979), 35-36. And in de Nicola's estimation, Chromatius' "profound knowledge of Sacred Scripture" was "not inferior to that of [Jerome and Ambrose]." See "Il prologo ai *Tractatus in Matthaeum* di Cromazio," 83. Giulio Trettel observes that "Chromatius can only be explained and understood if one keeps in mind that Chromatius' references are nearly all from the Bible. Chromatius is (I've said it a thousand times) the man of Scripture." See "Sangue e antropologia biblica in Cromazio di Aquileia," in *Sangue e antropologia nella letteratura cristiana. Atti della terza settimana di Studio, Roma, 29 novembre-4 dicembre 1982*, 3 vols. (Rome: Pia Unione Preziosissima Sangue, 1983), 3.1301-1319.

The third main feature of ancient biblical commentaries was the *quaestio*, which “although not frequent, are nevertheless well enough represented in the *Tractatus*.”¹¹⁸⁵ The way in which this device is employed places the *Tractatus* generically somewhere between the typical sermon and the typical commentary. One normal feature of the *quaestio* is the expression of multiple opinions, a somewhat imprecise phrase that can mean two things in the context of a biblical commentary. It might mean, first of all, “a more or less explicit reference to an adventitious opinion” which the commentator adduces for the purpose of expressing his agreement with it or of suggesting an alternative. It might also mean, however, the commentator’s practice of offering both literal and non-literal interpretations of the text being commented on.¹¹⁸⁶ Here again, Chromatius’ *Tractatus* display these features neither often nor seldom; Bastit-Kalinowska finds fifteen examples of each in his 61 *Tractatus*.¹¹⁸⁷ Regarding the alternation between literal and non-literal meanings, she concludes that the importance of this feature of the *Tractatus* should not be exaggerated.¹¹⁸⁸

¹¹⁸⁵ Bastit-Kalinowska, “*Les Tractatus in Matheum*,” 435. On this and the following page she cites several places in which *quaestiones* appear, such as *Trr.* 18.1, 41.10, 43.1, and 45.3.

¹¹⁸⁶ Bastit-Kalinowska, “*Les Tractatus in Matheum*,” 436.

¹¹⁸⁷ Bastit-Kalinowska, “*Les Tractatus in Matheum*,” 436.

¹¹⁸⁸ Bastit-Kalinowska, “*Les Tractatus in Matheum*,” 438. It should be noted on this point, however, that her opinion differs somewhat from that of other scholars. Corgnali, for example, highlights the presence of literal as well as non-literal interpretations in both the sermons and the *Tractatus*: “At first Chromatius proceeds with a verse-by-verse explanation ‘*secundum litteram*’—and this literal exegesis may be enough—then Chromatius generally offers a series of biblical proofs drawn generally from the Old Testament to show how the New Testament was clearly prefigured in it. Finally, when necessary, he proposes an ‘*intelligentia spiritalis*,’ that is, the typological or allegorical meaning. It can be said that in certain cases the literal commentary and the spiritual form a diptych whose proportions are usually equal, such that, especially in the *Tractatus*, the result is a bipartite structure with a happy balance.” See *Il mistero pasquale*, 35; and Flavio Placida, *Aspetti catechistico-liturgici dell’opera di Cromazio di Aquileia*, 39-40. But see also Giulio Trettel, “Terminologia esegetica nei sermoni di san Cromazio di Aquileia,” 59, which emphasizes the priority Chromatius gives (in his sermons, at least) to the literal sense. Even though Trettel was writing before the publication of most of the *Tractatus*, what he says of the sermons applies for the most part also to them.

We can conclude on the basis of these observations that Chromatius possessed an alternative type of biblical knowledge in comparison to someone like Jerome. Whereas Jerome's knowledge of biblical languages, geography, and history made him in some ways an ancient precursor to the modern, "scientific" biblical scholar who must master each of these fields of knowledge (and more besides), Chromatius' type of biblical knowledge sought by contrast to illumine any given scriptural passage by reference to other passages.¹¹⁸⁹ Whereas modern biblical scholarship emphasizes the historical and literary particularities of each individual biblical author, the reader of Chromatius' *Tractatus* is impressed by the way in which he viewed scripture as an organic whole. This approach was certainly not unique among patristic writers, but it was perhaps rather more pronounced in the case of Chromatius. As someone who lacked the linguistic knowledge of Jerome, or even Ambrose, he made a virtue of necessity by concentrating his efforts on what was for him within the realm of possibility: acquiring a deep knowledge of the Latin text of the Bible. At any rate, the method employed in the *Tractatus* required a wide familiarity with scripture on the part of its author as well as its audience. Anyone who has read his corpus will testify that his *Tractatus* demand more of their audience than do his sermons, which are on average shorter, simpler in language, and contain fewer of the carefully constructed collections of Old (and New) Testament citations that have been described.¹¹⁹⁰ It is therefore unlikely that these two sets of texts were aimed at the same audience.

¹¹⁸⁹ J. N. D. Kelly notes the affinities between modern approaches to the Bible and the exegetical method Jerome employed in his incomplete *Commentary on Jeremiah*. See *Jerome*, 327.

¹¹⁹⁰ These chains are not, however, entirely absent from the sermons. See, for example, Sermm. 1.3; 9.2; 10.2; 14.2; 16.1; 19.4; 31.2; and 33, *passim*. Chromatius simply seems to have adjusted his application of the same technique to make his sermons more accessible to a less sophisticated audience.

These global features of the text therefore offer a strong clue that the *Tractatus* were intended for an audience whose knowledge of the Bible was superior to that for which his sermons were intended. At the same time, however, the simplicity and clarity that is his aim throughout suggests that his audience was not made up of the highest cultural elites.¹¹⁹¹ This impression is confirmed by more specific clues found throughout the text. For example, in *Tr.* 2, commenting on Joseph's intention of divorcing Mary on account of her pregnancy, Chromatius writes, "*Nonnulli de nostris, cum redundant immunditia criminum, uxores suas, aut innocentes appetunt, aut de levi suspicione damnandas existimant, cum ipsi forte apud Deum obnoxii damnationi sint et rei divino iudicio teneantur.*"¹¹⁹² The use of the possessive pronoun *nostris* is curious here, for if Chromatius was making a point about how members of his audience should treat their wives, he would have used a partitive genitive of the personal pronoun—*nostrum*—to denote the part of his audience to whom his words applied. The use of the possessive makes sense, however, if we take Chromatius to be discussing with his clergy the troubling behavior of some of the men of their flock, who are too eager to accuse their innocent wives of infidelity. He holds up the conduct of Joseph as an example for such men, for he was righteous both in not wishing to expose Mary to public humiliation, and in his willingness to take the angel's exculpatory evidence properly into account.¹¹⁹³

¹¹⁹¹ Nauroy and Bastit-Kalinowska both note this feature of Chromatius' writing, with the former drawing an explicit contrast between Chromatius' exegesis and that of Ambrose in his *In Lucam*. See Nauroy, "Chromace, disciple critique de l'exégèse d'Ambroise de Milan," 147; and Bastit-Kalinowska, "Les *Tractatus in Matthaeum* de Chromace," 442-443, who notes Chromatius' use of a middle-brow *sermo mediocris*.

¹¹⁹² *Tr.* 2.2, CCL 9A.202.

¹¹⁹³ CCL 9A.202: "Cum ergo sancta Maria iuxta annuntiationem angeli de sancto Spiritu concepisset et gravida utero appareret, sanctus Ioseph cui desponsata eadem virgo Maria fuerat, ignorans tanti secretum mysterii, voluit eam occulte dimittere. Hoc enim evangelista addidit: *Ioseph, inquit, cum esset vir iustus et nollet eam traducere voluit eam tacite dimittere*. Adulteram putabat quae etiam praegnans virgo manebat, corruptam existimabat quae mater virginitatis erat, et ream mortis credebatur quae auctorem vitae conceperat. Vide tamen viri iusti propositum. Licet sanctam Mariam adulteram existimaret, non tamen eam disponebat offerre damnationi, ne sanctam conscientiam suam sanguine alterius macularet. Nonnulli de nostris, cum redundant immunditia criminum, uxores suas, aut

It has already been pointed out that Chromatius did not possess the philological skills of some of the better-known exegetes of his day. Nevertheless, in three places in the *Tractatus*, Chromatius explains the meaning of a Hebrew personal name, whereas he never does so in his sermons.¹¹⁹⁴ Such *esoterica* would seem intended for a more educated audience with a particular interest in the academic study of the Bible. It should be noted, however, that Chromatius explains the meaning of the Hebrew term Alleluia to his congregation in one of his sermons. It is easy to explain the inclusion of this element in an address aimed at a broader audience, since this term would have been known to every Christian on account of its liturgical use.¹¹⁹⁵

We have seen in chapter 2 that the proper relationship between sexual activity and clerical status was a contested issue during Chromatius' episcopate. Like other north Italian bishops at this time, he seems to have had definite views on the matter.¹¹⁹⁶ In the context of a defense of Mary's *virginitas post partum*, he makes the case that Joseph abstained from marital relations not only before, but also after, the birth of Jesus. "After hearing the voice of God from a bush, Moses abstained from marital relations, and is it right believe that Joseph, a just man, be thought to have known holy Mary after the delivery in which the Lord was born?"¹¹⁹⁷ By

innocentes appetunt, aut de levi suspicione damnandas existimant, cum ipsi forte apud Deum obnoxii damnationi sint et rei divino iudicio teneantur. Et ideo bene apostolus ait: *Existimas autem o homo quoniam qui alium iudicas et facis illa quoniam tu effugies iudicium Dei?* Haec in transitu diximus propter quosdam insolentes qui incitati sunt ad accusationem, faciles ad damnationem. Verum superfluum prope est aliquid de adulterio dicere ubi virginitas Mariae praedicatur."

¹¹⁹⁴ *Tr.* 2.3, 2.4, and 4.3. It should be noted, however, that not all of Chromatius' information regarding the meaning of these names is reliable. For example, he claims (2.2) that Joseph means "without reproach," whereas the actual meaning of the name is "he will add" or "may he add." His other attempts at explaining the meanings of Hebrew names are more successful. He says that Jesus means "savior," which is close to the actual meaning of "the Lord saves" (2.3), and Bethlehem does indeed mean "house of bread" (4.3).

¹¹⁹⁵ *Serm.* 33.1; Chromatius refers to the use of the term as part of a liturgical response in 33.2.

¹¹⁹⁶ See above, pp. 155-158.

¹¹⁹⁷ *Tr.* 3.1, *CCL* 9A.208: "Moyses post auditam Dei vocem de rubo a consortio coniugali abstinuit et credi fas est ut Ioseph vir iustus sanctam Mariam post partum dominicae nativitatis cognovisse credatur?" Chromatius' predecessor as bishop of Aquileia, Fortunatianus, makes a similar point about Joseph the "vir iustus" in his Commentary on the

hearing the voice of God in this way, Moses and Joseph are marked out as holy men, and in Chromatius' estimation the proper response to being so designated is sexual renunciation. The theological point being discussed here has to do with Mary, but the fourth- and fifth-century debate over Mary's virginity was fraught precisely because of the implications that could be drawn from it for the sexual behavior of all Christians. Thus for Chromatius, as for many of his contemporaries, celibacy is a part of holiness not just for Mary (and thus for women), but for men. He also raises the issue of celibacy with his audience in *Tr.* 7, where he asserts that the Nazirite vow involved a commitment to *castitas*, which is in fact not mentioned in Numbers 6, the text that is the basis for the vow.¹¹⁹⁸ That Chromatius read this element into the text is no doubt significant, and only strengthens the impression that the *Tractatus* were intended—in part, if not exclusively—for those pursuing an ascetic lifestyle.¹¹⁹⁹

This strong endorsement of male celibacy must, however, be taken in the full context of Chromatius' teachings on marriage, which were well within the mainstream of the Christianity of his day. A brief look at his other comments on this subject in the *Tractatus* will show not only that this is so, but also that his intended audience in this work was clerics rather than laypeople. In *Tr.* 24, he deals with, among other things, the dominical saying in Matthew 5:31-32 that prohibits divorce altogether, except in cases of fornication. He never directly addresses those

Gospels. The symbol of his sanctity, however, is not his having heard the voice of God, but his having seen visions of angels: "Sed quicumque sanae mentis sunt et spiritalis, sic sentire non debent, ut potuisset Ioseph vir iustus, qui et visiones angelorum videbat et, quid ageret, angelo monente discebat, Mariam contingere, de qua didicerat filium dei natum, cui etiam ut nomen Iesum inponeret, id est 'salvator,' ab angelo didicit" (*CSEL* 103.125).

¹¹⁹⁸ *CCL* 9A.224-225.

¹¹⁹⁹ This point is particularly important in light of the fact that the ascetic context of the *Tractatus* has recently been denied by Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 223, where she asserts that "Chromatius' works do not have any feature that is clearly intended for an ascetic audience." Joseph Lemarié seems to be closer to my position, arguing that Chromatius' *Serm.* 41, assuming that it dates from the time during which he was bishop, was aimed at ascetic clerics. See *SC* 164.232n.2.

who are married by admonishing them, for example, to avoid adulterous relationships. Instead, he seeks to explain what Christ's words mean for the institution of marriage in the light of two possible challenges to it. The first of these comes from those who would dissolve marriages too easily for the sake of convenience, while the other comes from those who, like the Manichaeans, denied that God approved of marriage:

By saying this and by pronouncing this opinion, he condemned both the indiscriminate license of the Jews and also the stupid and wretched presumption of the Manichaeans, who deny that wedlock is from God, saying that the wife is not allowed to be sent away *other than on account of fornication*, which plainly shows that he who presumes to violate a marriage joined by God by the unlawful separation of divorce acts against the will of God.¹²⁰⁰

Chromatius' criticism of the Jews on this account is consistent with both the standard Christian interpretation of this Gospel text, as well as with his sustained polemic against the Jews that is found in both his sermons and his *Tractatus*.¹²⁰¹ What is more, the extended teaching about divorce and remarriage in *Tr.* 24, while obviously not directly applicable for ascetics foregoing marriage, was relevant for clerics whose duties would include holding lay Christians to the high moral standards articulated in this portion of the Sermon on the Mount.¹²⁰²

In the second half of this passage, Chromatius directs his criticism at a view he characterizes as "Manichaean." The true target of his words is likely the Encratite strand in

¹²⁰⁰ *Tr.* 24.1.3, *CCL* 9A.309-310: "Quo dicto et passivam Iudaeorum licentiam et stultam ac miserabilem Manichaeorum praesumptionem, qui negant a Deo esse coniugia, huius sententiae pronuntiatione damnavit dicens excepta causa fornicationis uxorem non licere dimitti, aperte demonstrans eum contra Dei agere voluntatem, qui matrimonium a Deo iunctum illicita divortii separatione temerare praesumpserit."

¹²⁰¹ For the anti-Jewish theme in Chromatius' works, see Lellia Cracco Ruggini, "Il vescovo Cromazio e gli ebrei di Aquileia," in *Aquileia e l'oriente mediterraneo*, *AAAd* 12 (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1977), 353-381.

¹²⁰² *Tr.* 24.1.1-5 (39 lines in *CCL* 9A.309-310) is entirely devoted to these two verses, and Chromatius spends most of his time in these sections justifying the Christian teaching that a man was not permitted to divorce his wife except for unchastity.

Christian asceticism, which held that marriage and procreation were in themselves sinful.¹²⁰³

The renunciation of marriage on the part of Christians who wished to take up the ascetic life obviously raised the question about the good of marriage in general, and so it fell to the bishops to outline a moderate position that would affirm both the ascetic's self-denial as well as the validity of marriage and family.¹²⁰⁴ But it is unlikely that Chromatius would feel constrained to affirm the good of marriage *per se* before a lay audience whose temptation was, if anything, to fail to recognize the superiority of the ascetic life. Returning now to *Tr.* 3.1, we see that Chromatius interprets Moses and Joseph (and Noah, who is also mentioned there) as having both been prompted to renounce marital relations after receiving a message from God in rather extraordinary circumstances. The clear implication is that such renunciation was not based on a general moral principle that applied to all Christians equally, but was only for those who have been called to this holy way of life. Thus it is fair to conclude that his aim here is simply to instruct male ascetics in the biblical basis for their sexual abstention, for which Noah, Moses and Joseph established the pattern.

These three are not the only biblical figures to whom Chromatius appeals in the *Tractatus* as models for his audience to emulate. *Tr.* 9 is a discussion of Matthew's description of John the Baptist's unusual clothing in 3:4 of the Gospel. Chromatius takes this description of John's garb as a clear sign that he was an ascetic, and this *Tractatus* is thus devoted to unfolding the ways in

¹²⁰³ Indeed, Chromatius may also have had in mind the extreme aversion to marriage and procreation that Jerome expressed in his treatise *Adversus Jovinianum*, which was received poorly by many of his own friends, and prompted a variety of attempts to formulate a mediating position. These took the form of Augustine's *De bono coniugali* and *De sancta virginitate*, as well as Pelagius' teachings. See Yves-Marie Duval, *L'affaire Jovinien. D'une crise de la société romaine à une crise de la pensée chrétienne à la fin du IV^e et au début du V^e siècle* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2003), 248-266; and David G. Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy and Ancient Christianity: The Jovinianist Controversy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 244-245 and 259-268 (for Pelagius and his followers); and 269-284 (for Augustine).

¹²⁰⁴ On the influence of the Encratites and their "boycott of the womb" on early Christian asceticism, see Peter Brown, *The Body and Society*, 92-102; and Hunter *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 101-105.

which this desert hermit establishes a pattern that his hearers should follow. One of the activities of John that is highlighted here is the way in which he functioned as the most recent in a long line of holy figures who interceded on behalf of the sins of God's people:

[H]e wept bitterly at the unbelief of the people whom he urged to repentance, saying, *Brood of vipers, who shows you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore make fruit worthy of repentance.* But we recognize that this love toward the people was also in holy men in the past, of whom holy John shows himself by this pattern to be a sharer.¹²⁰⁵

As examples of those who "*praeterito tempore*" had possessed the same "*affectum circa populum*" that prompted them to call the people to account and to seek mercy from God on their behalf, he cites Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Elijah, and Jeremiah, and concludes by observing that "all the prophets in a like manner lamented the wrongs of the people."¹²⁰⁶ The purpose of bringing up these examples was to demonstrate how the prophets throughout sacred history had exercised pastoral care of God's people, a point especially relevant for an audience of current and/or future clerics.

But Chromatius does not only seem to expect his audience to rebuke the church and intercede on its behalf, but also to teach it, for in *Tr.* 20.2.3-5, he admonishes them at length that they must teach "*non solum verbis ... sed et factis.*" From there he goes on to appeal to several texts in both the Old and New Testaments that stress the importance of good works in general and/or in particular for those who teach.¹²⁰⁷ This supposition about his audience is further

¹²⁰⁵ *Tr.* 9.1, *CCL* 9A.231: "Unde populi incredulitatem quem ad paenitentiam hortabatur deflebat dicendo: *Progenies viperarum, quis ostendit vobis fugere a futura ira? Facite ergo fructum dignum paenitentiae.* Sed hunc affectum circa populum etiam praeterito tempore in sanctis fuisse cognoscimus, quorum se consortem hoc exemplo sanctus Iohannes ostendit."

¹²⁰⁶ *Tr.* 9.1, *CCL* 9A.231-232: "Et omnes prophetae similiter delicta populi luxerunt." Elijah was one of Chromatius' favorite Old Testament figures, and made frequent appearances in his sermons, as well. See Celestino Corsato, "Il profeta Elia in Cromazio di Aquileia. Un giusto dal cuore puro nella tempesta delle prove."

¹²⁰⁷ *CCL* 9A.292-293: "Quapropter non solum verbis operandum est, sed et factis; nec ut doceas tantum, sed ut quod docueris, facias. Et audiamus ipsum Dominum huiusmodi doctores, qui dicunt et non faciunt, in evangelio increpantem: *Vae, inquit, vobis, scribae et pharisaei hypocritae, quia oneratis homines oneribus, quae portari non*

strengthened by the fact that in several places in the *Tractatus Chromatius* comments at length on the duties of those who hold various ecclesiastical offices. One such place is *Tr.* 23.3, where he is commenting on Jesus' command to pluck out the offending eye and to cut off the offending hand. After asserting that these words mean first of all that sin should be addressed at its root, he nevertheless goes on to apply them in a most pointed manner to those who occupy the offices of bishop and presbyter, respectively, for "since mention has been made of the body, this can quite rightly be understood rather concerning the body of the church." And so, with regard to the eye, he says that it,

just like a valuable member, is recognized as having signified the bishop, who illumines the whole body with the light of the divine commandment. The saying: *If your eye offends you, rip it out and throw it away from yourself; for it is better for you that one of your members perish than that the entire body go into hell*, is therefore rightly understood to mean that if perchance such an eye, that is, a bishop, through wicked faith and an indecent way of life is an offense to the church, he must be ripped out, that is, it commands that he must be thrown away from the body of the church, lest the people be considered guilty because of his sin.¹²⁰⁸

And in the same way, "But by the hand it is understood that the presbyter has been signified, whom the Lord instructs must be cut off if he has a wicked faith and does not live rightly, being an offense to the people of God, that is, that he be thrown away, lest the church be stained by his

possunt, ipsi autem non tangitis digito vestro sarcinas ipsas. Si hoc etiam de audientibus dicit, quid de doctoribus intellegendum est? Inde et Salomon ait: *Noli esse citatus in lingua tua, et segnis ac remissus in operibus tuis.* Et ideo oportet eum qui docet, exemplum ex se praebere purae fidei et honestae conversationis, ut apostolus Timotheo scribit: *Forma, inquit, esto fidelium.* Et iterum: *Exemplum te ipsum praebens operum bonorum, in iustitia, in castitate, in sobrietate, per doctrinam sanam.* Unde et ipse Filius Dei, qui magister et dominus legis est, ad exemplum nostrum, cuncta quae docuit, voluit rebus ipsis implere."

¹²⁰⁸ *Tr.* 23.3.1, *CCL* 9A.306: "Sed quia corporis mentio facta est, rectius id magis de corpore ecclesiae potest intellegi; in quo oculus, velut pretiosum membrum episcopus significatus agnoscitur, qui lumine mandati divini totum corpus illuminat. De hoc ergo dictum recte intellegitur: *Si oculus tuus scandalizat te, erue eum, et proice abs te; expedit enim tibi ut pereat unum membrorum tuorum, quam totum corpus tuum eat in gehennam*, ut si forte huiusmodi oculus, id est episcopus, per pravam fidem et turpem conversationem ecclesiae scandalum fuerit, eruendum eum esse, id est abiciendum a corpore ecclesiae praecipit, ne peccato ipsius reus populus teneatur."

sin...¹²⁰⁹ Chromatius returns to the same theme in *Tr.* 31, where he states that the “eye of the body” in Matthew 6:22-23 refers to the bishop “who by the clear preaching of his faith and doctrine illumines the body of the church, just like a kind of eye.”¹²¹⁰ And in *Tr.* 56, he makes similar comments, this time not only about bishops and presbyters but also about deacons. Commenting on a command from Matthew 18:8-9 that requires the disciples to cut off their hand or foot for the sake of entering life lame rather than being cast whole into hell, he states that “by the foot we recognize that deacons are signified, who by dashing to and fro in the sacred mysteries of the church, serve as feet to the body, of which we read that it was written by the same Solomon, *His feet are like columns of silver upon foundations of gold.*”¹²¹¹ As in *Tr.* 23, Chromatius states here also that an unfit deacon should be “cut off from the body of the church.”

Thus in his exposition of the figurative sense of these texts, Chromatius makes them apply to the church’s rulers with respect to both their orthodoxy and their conduct. He insists that those who fail to measure up in either respect should be “plucked out” or “cut off” for the sake of the body as a whole. The words from these three *tractatus* (23, 31, and 56) should be taken at face value as outlining the two grounds on which bishops (or presbyters or deacons)

¹²⁰⁹ *Tr.* 23.3.2, *CCL* 9A.306-307: “In manu vero presbyter significatus intellegitur, qui si et ipse pravam fidem tenens aut non recte vivens, scandalum Dei populo fecerit, abscidi eum Dominus iubet, id est abici, ne peccato ipsius ecclesia maculetur, cum ecclesia iuxta apostolum *sancta et immaculata* esse debeat.”

¹²¹⁰ *Tr.* 31.2.1-2, *CCL* 9A.346: “Alio autem sensu oculum corporis, quod est membris omnibus pulchrius ac pretiosius, episcopum advertimus significatum, qui clara fidei suae ac doctrinae praedicatione, velut oculus quidam, ecclesiae corpus illuminat. Qui, si per simplicem fidem ac sanctam conversationem, catholicus et fidelis doctor exstiterit, potest populus cui praeest, doctrinae ac formae ipsius exemplo, in lumine semper veritatis manere. Verum si is, qui lumen ceteris praebeere videtur, per pravam fidem aut per turpem conversationem, nequam et perfidus doctor exstiterit, sine dubio, vitae ac perfidiae suae exemplo, totum corpus potest tenebrosus efficere. Unde non immerito de tali oculo Dominus dicit: *Si lumen quod in te est, tenebrae sunt, tenebrae ipsae quantae sunt?* Hoc est, si huiusmodi doctor qui lumen fidei ex se praebeere ceteris debet, per haeresim obcaecatus, tenebrosus exstiterit, quantae in populo illo possint esse tenebrae peccatorum, debemus advertere!”

¹²¹¹ *Tr.* 56.3, *CCL* 9A.479: “In pede autem diaconos significatos agnoscimus qui in sacris mysteriis ecclesiae discurrendo, tamquam pedes corpori famulantur, de quibus scriptum apud eundem Salomonem legimus: *Pedes eius tamquam columnae argenteae, super bases aureas.*”

could legitimately be deposed: heresy or scandalous immorality. Indeed, deposition of bishops for heresy was not uncommon in late antique Christianity, especially in the context of the many theological controversies that troubled the church during the fourth and fifth centuries. While attending the Council of Aquileia in 381, Chromatius himself had assisted in prosecuting an ecclesiastical trial that resulted in two such depositions.¹²¹² But because the deposition of a bishop was, strictly speaking, the business of other clerics, the most appropriate context in which a discussion like this one would have taken place was among clerics. This point is underscored by the fact that such frank discussions of what should happen to offending clerics are absent from those places in Chromatius' sermons where he broaches the topic of the nature of his authority. In Sermon 6, for example, he glosses Matthew 6:23 ("If your eye is bad, your entire body is in darkness") using some of the same language as he does in *Tr.* 31:

And we can take note that the eye of the body, which is among the more valuable of all its parts, also signifies the helmsman of the church. If clear faith and a shining manner of life are in him, he doubtless illumines the entire body of the church. But if he is a perverse teacher and a heretic, it is obvious that such a teacher can make the entire body dark by the example of his life and of his treachery. For the light of truth and of faith cannot shine in such a people, where the shadows of error have established the night of treachery.¹²¹³

He criticizes the behavior of such erring clerics with vivid language, but says nothing about what fate might await them in this life or in the next. In *Tr.* 56, by contrast, he warns not only of the temporal penalties that await the unfaithful cleric, but also of the eternal punishment he will face

¹²¹² According to the *Acta* of the Council of Aquileia, Chromatius actually intervened in the discussion during Ambrose's interrogation of Palladius of Ratiaria. See *Acta Concilii Aquileiensis* 45 and 51; and Giulio Trettel, "Cromazio al concilio di Aquileia (3 settembre 381)," *Memorie storiche forogiuliesi* 80 (2000): 11-20.

¹²¹³ Serm. 6.2, *CCL* 9A.: "Possumus autem et oculum corporis, qui est in membris omnibus pretiosior, etiam rectorem ecclesiae significatum advertere. In quo si clara fides, et lucida conversatio fuerit, sine dubio omne ecclesiae corpus illuminat. Si autem pravus doctor et haereticus fuerit, manifeste huiusmodi doctor, vitae ac perfidiae suae exemplo, potest totum corpus tenebrosum efficere. Non potest enim in huiusmodi populo lumen veritatis ac fidei resplendere, ubi tenebrae errantiae noctem perfidiae collocarunt." Note that there is no warning about what might happen to such a "pravus doctor," let alone any invitation to take action against him.

in the life to come.¹²¹⁴ Maximus likewise touches on this sensitive topic in several of his sermons, in which he outlines what some of his duties were toward his hearers. But he never suggests what course of action they might take if he ever strayed from the strait and narrow path.¹²¹⁵ In both his and Chromatius' sermons, moreover, discussion of temporal and eternal penalties for wicked clerics is not to be found. This absence suggests that they recognized that in broaching the topic of clerical authority before a lay audience, they needed to take care not to undercut their authority. Outlining the procedure for deposing clerics and offering up lurid descriptions of the punishments awaiting them might have done so. But it was essential to instruct young or aspiring clerics as to their duties in this regard.

We have so far seen that certain global features of the *Tractatus*, as well as a number of the topics they discuss—the rationale for male celibacy, the meaning of Hebrew names, the duties of clerics as those who rebuke and intercede for Christians, and the detailed treatment of the importance of theological orthodoxy and an upright manner of life for clerics—suggest very strongly that they were directed toward a circle of ascetic clergymen. Certain remarks of Chromatius that are scattered throughout the text confirm this judgment. For example, in *Tr.* 32, commenting on Christ's command not to worry about food and clothing, he admonishes his audience not to give in to the appetites of the body, as Adam had done: "Let us remember that it was through the desire for a little food that our father Adam failed to preserve the teachings of the Lord and lost the grace of immortality."¹²¹⁶ This call to be faithful in fasting, which, unlike

¹²¹⁴ *Tr.* 56.4, *CCL* 9A.481: "Sicuti enim magna merces et gloria praepositis et ministris ecclesiae a Domino promittitur, his tamen qui Deo fideliter serviunt ... ita quoque contra infidelibus ministris ecclesiae maiora supplicia praeparata sunt."

¹²¹⁵ He does so in *Sermm.* 89 and 92-94.

¹²¹⁶ *Tr.* 32.1, *CCL* 9A.349: "Recordemur patrem nostrum Adam per parvi cibi desiderium nec Domini praecepta servasse et immortalitatis gratiam perdidisse."

most mentions of fasting in the preaching of Chromatius and his north Italian contemporaries, is not connected to the Lenten fast in which the church as a whole participated, suggests that it is directed at ascetics, for whom fasting was a regular exercise throughout the liturgical year.¹²¹⁷ In *Tr.* 33, he observes to his audience that “to those who ask for such a fish, that is, to those who desire the grace and faith of baptism, we cannot extend snakes...”¹²¹⁸ Who would be in a position to bestow (or deny) this sacrament if not clerics? In *Tr.* 35, Chromatius discusses Photinus, the disciple of Marcellus of Ancyra who became bishop of Sirmium in the 340s, and whose teachings about Christ were deemed heretical by the Council of Milan in 347.¹²¹⁹ Because he had been bishop of a city that was an imperial residence and a rival of Aquileia for influence in western Illyricum, he had become in the minds of Italian churchmen—and indeed in the minds of many other fourth- and fifth-century ecclesiastical figures—an archetype of all those who believed Christ to be a mere man.¹²²⁰ Several north Italian pro-Nicene writers in the

¹²¹⁷ Sermons that make reference to the Lenten fast include Maximus, *Sermm.* 35, 36, 50, 50A, 51, 52, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, and 111 *extr.*; Peter Chrysologus, *Sermm.* 10, 11, 12, 13, 40(?), 41 (?), 42(?), 43(?), 60, and 166; and Chromatius, *Serm.* 25. For a contrast between the spirit in which Chromatius here discusses fasting, and that in which he discusses it before a lay audience, see *Serm.* 3.1-2, where he chides his hearers for their reluctance to fast: “Indictum est legitimum ieiunium nuper, pauci ieiunaverunt”; and offers an alternative to those who excuse themselves from fasting on account of their weak stomach: “Sed forte aliqui decant stomaci causa ieiunare non possint. Numquid stomaci causa est eleemosynam non facere? Fac eleemosynam, et redimes ieiunium. Insiste orationibus, purifica mentem tuam, et cedet tibi pro ieiunio” (*CCL* 9A.13).

¹²¹⁸ *Tr.* 33.7, *CCL* 9A.363: “Huiusmodi ergo piscem petentibus, id est gratiam fidemque baptismi desiderantibus, non possumus serpentes porrigere.”

¹²¹⁹ On Photinus’ career, condemnation, and the long and drawn-out process by which he was finally deposed, see Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 118-122.

¹²²⁰ Daniel H. Williams describes Photinus as “a metropolitan bishop of Pannonia,” but as discussed in chap. 1, such titles are somewhat anachronistic for the west in the mid fourth century. Nevertheless, if taken in the looser, non-technical sense, this label gives us a good idea of the sort of informal influence that the church of Sirmium and its bishop could exercise. See “Monarchianism and Photinus of Sirmium as the Persistent Heretical Face of the Fourth Century,” *Harvard Theological Review* 99.2 (2006): 187-206, at 192. According to Sotinel’s interpretation of the ecclesiastical politics of Italy and Illyricum during the 340s and 350s, the condemnation of Photinus was “a topical subject (un sujet d’actualité) in Aquileia at least until 381, the date when, in the course of the Council of Aquileia, the bishop of the city [sc. Valerian] invokes it in an apparently untimely manner.” See *Identité civique*, 119. Photinus’ doctrine was influenced (though to exactly what degree is unknown) by the rigid Monarchianism of Marcellus, whose deacon he had been before becoming bishop of Sirmium. For his teachings, see Manlio Simonetti,

late fourth or early fifth century made a point of attempting to refute his teachings. The author of a work entitled *De trinitate*, attributed by some to Eusebius of Vercelli, was one; Filaster of Brescia mentions him in several places in his *Diversarum hereseon liber*; Ambrose of Milan makes frequent reference to him in many different works; and Chromatius warns his congregation about his teachings not only here, but also in two of his sermons.¹²²¹ Many other prominent Latin writers of this period, both in Italy and elsewhere, were likewise aware of Photinus' teachings.¹²²² Chromatius' *Tr.* 35 is mainly devoted to refuting the teachings of Photinus, Arius, and Sabellius, which he classified together even though he was aware they were not identical. What stands out about his discussion of Photinus is the way in which he refers not just to his teachings, but also to the fact that he had been a bishop:

Long ago, Photinus came in sheep's clothing, that is, under the preaching of the name of Christ, and he lay concealed in only a sheep's clothing so that he was even ordained as a bishop by Catholic men; but inside he was a wolf, who held falsehood in his heart instead of faith, which he afterward revealed. At length he entered the sheepfold of God at Sirmium as if he were a shepherd, but with his sacrilegious mouth he ravaged the flock of Christ as if he were a ravenous wolf.¹²²³

La crisi ariana nel IV secolo (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1975), 204-206; and especially Williams, "Monarchianism and Photinus."

¹²²¹ On the debate over Eusebius' authorship, see chap. 2 above, p. 131n.392. The references to Photinus can be found in the following texts: Eusebius of Vercelli, *De trinitate libelli vii* 3.39, 3.46, and 3.55; Filaster of Brescia, *Diversarum hereseon liber* 65, 91.2, and 93.5; Ambrose, *De fide* 1.6, 1.8, 2.13, 3.8, 4.3, and 5.8; *De spiritu sancto* 1.16.164, 2.11.117, 3.16.117, and 3.17.129; *Ep.* 32.5; *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam* 1.13, 5.4, and 8.13; Chromatius, *Sermm.* 11.4 and 21.3; and *Trr.* 4.3, 35 *passim*, and 50.3. See also the *Gesta concilii Aquileiensis* 49 and 69.

¹²²² Hilary of Poitiers, *De trinitate* 7.3, 7.7, and 8.40; and *Liber contra Constantium imperatorem* 23; Ambrosiaster, *Commentarius in Pauli Epistolam ad Romanos* 1.1 and 2.24; *Commentarius in Pauli epistulas ad Galatas argumentum* 1.1 and 3.1; *Commentarius in Pauli epistulas ad Philippenses* 1.1 and 3.9; and *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi testamenti* 76.1 and 91 *passim*; Augustine, *De baptismo* 4.6.23; and *Sermm.* 37.17 and 162A.12; Leo, *Sermm.* 16.3, 24.5, and 96.2.

¹²²³ *Tr.* 35.3, *CCL* 9A.369: "In vestitu ovis iamdudum venit Fotinus, id est sub praedicatione nominis Christi, et in tantum vestitu ovis fefellit ut a catholicis viris etiam episcopus ordinaretur; sed intus lupo erat, qui pro fide perfidiam in corde tenebat, quam postea prodidit. Denique apud Sirmium ovile Dei tamquam pastor ingressus est, sed tamquam lupo rapax gregem Christi sacrilego ore vastavit."

Photinus' ordination as bishop "*a catholicis viris*" seems in particular to be a warning that candidates for the episcopacy must be carefully examined before being chosen, a duty that would naturally fall to the clergy as those with the greatest ability to determine a candidate's theological orthodoxy.

Finally, some of Chromatius' attempts in the *Tractatus* to refute heretical theological views are more detailed than those found in his sermons, and thus seem to be directed at an audience that is theologically more sophisticated than that of the sermons. For example, in *Tr.* 54A, while condemning the type of subordinationism that was characteristic of the various forms of "Arianism," he attempts to specify the precise nature of Christ's sonship, in both positive and negative terms. He states, "By saying, *This is my Son*, he testified that he is his true and proper Son," the words "true and proper" being intended to explain the *homoousion* of the Nicene Creed. From there he goes on to list several unsatisfactory ways of understanding this sonship—"not by adoption, not by grace, and not by creation"—and closes by specifying three more appropriate ways of understanding the relationship: "but in quality, in truth, and in nature."¹²²⁴ After making this distinction between appropriate and inappropriate ways of understanding Christ's relationship with the Father, Chromatius appeals to several Old Testament texts to make the case that the distinction between sonship by adoption, election, and grace (i. e., the type enjoyed by Christian believers), and sonship by nature (enjoyed by Christ) is not arbitrary, but grounded in scripture—a somewhat subtle point that might be lost on many in his congregation, but important for clerics who would have to defend the Nicene position in debates with its detractors. From there, he spends an equal amount of space making the case that the Father's

¹²²⁴ *Tr.* 54A.6, *CCL* 9A Supplementum, 631: "Dicendo: *Hic est Filius meus*, et verum et proprium Filium suum esse testatus est, non adoptione, non gratia, non creatione, sed proprietate, sed veritate, sed natura."

generation of the Son was “*impassibilis*,” a term borrowed from the realm of philosophy whose significance he could not expect the average layperson to grasp, but that could help pro-Nicene polemicists in making the case for their position.¹²²⁵

In the light of the evidence just discussed it seems more than reasonable to conclude that Chromatius’ *Tractatus in Mathaeum* were written for an audience of current or future clerics, at least some of whom were living an ascetic lifestyle.¹²²⁶ As our discussion of the *chorus beatorum* of the 370s indicated, an ascetic community existed in Aquileia about a quarter century before Chromatius began his *Tractatus*. It seems that it was centered in his household, and that his brother, mother, and sisters were also part of it. We unfortunately have no hard evidence for the community’s structures and distinctive practices. The *Tractatus* may, however, provide a clue about at least one of this community’s practices. As has been noted, they exist in a generic limbo somewhere between the standard written commentary and the typical late antique sermon. The obvious question raised by this fact is whether the sermonic features, such as the doxologies with which most of them close, are merely a literary conceit or an indication that they were

¹²²⁵ *Tr.* 54A.6-7, *CCL* 9A Supplementum, 631-632: “Aliter enim hos quos sibi per gratiam filios adoptat nuncupare consuevit. Et dicit quidem per Esaïam: *Filios genui et exaltavi*; non tamen “filios meos” dicit. Et de Israhel: *Filius primogenitus Israhel*; non tamen “filius primogenitus meus”. In hoc enim quod filium tantum nuncupat, electionis vel adoptionis suae gratiam ostendit. In hoc autem quod Filium suum esse testatur, proprietatem et veritatem naturae profitetur. Testatur et per Hieremiam, dicens de Israhel: *Et factus sum huic Israhel in patrem et Effrem primitivus meus est*. Sed non se naturalem patrem Israhelis esse profitetur, sed per electionis suae gratiam fieri potius patrem huius populi voluisse. Nihil de Filio suo tale testatur, nisi hoc solum quod ad professionem naturalis veritatis pertineat, dicendo: *Hic est Filius meus dilectus*. Et merito addidit: *Hunc audite*. Ipsum solum audiendum esse Pater praecepit, quia ipse solus de Patre natus est. Et videamus quid etiam ipse Filius de se, quem Pater audiendum esse praecepit, profiteatur. Ait namque ipse unigenitus Dei Filius, ut divinae nativitatis suae nobis sacramentum ostenderet: *Ego, inquit, a Deo Patre exivi et veni in mundum*. Cum dicit se a Deo Patre exisse, nonne manifeste non aliunde quam de Patre natum profitetur? Sed cur exisse se potius quam natum esse testatus est, nisi ut corporalem et passibilem nativitatem suam de Patre fuisse monstraret? Non enim aliquo detrimento naturae suae Pater Filium genuit, licet de se genuerit, sed impassibili generatione incorporeus Pater incorporeum Filium protulit. Ideo et *Verbum Dei* Filius dicitur, quia non aliunde quam de Deo processisse monstratur, et impassibiliter ex Patre natus ostenditur.”

¹²²⁶ I thus concur with Sotinel insofar as she believes that the *Tractatus* were intended for clerics in formation, differing from her only in believing that some of Chromatius’ content is directed at ascetics. See *Identité civique*, 223-227.

actually delivered orally, or at least written in such a way as to lend themselves to be read aloud before a group of listeners. In a number of places, Chromatius draws his audience's attention to a biblical text he wishes use to support his exegesis of a text from Matthew with the word "*Audi!*" or "*Audiamus!*"¹²²⁷ On the other hand, he makes reference in one place to his wish not to bore his "readers."¹²²⁸ Taken at face value, referring to his audience in this way does seem to indicate that the *Tractatus* were, in fact, a merely written document. But the somewhat frequent use of verbs of hearing, as well as the doxological endings toward which the vast majority of them drive, point to an oral delivery. As has been noted, the length of the *Tractatus* varies; many are just as short as his sermons, and none of them is so long that it could not have been digested by an audience of clerics.¹²²⁹ It is probably features like these that prompted Yves-Marie Duval to point out that, compared with Jerome's "disjointed" commentary on the same Gospel, Chromatius' *Tractatus* lend themselves better to "liturgical reading."¹²³⁰ If this is correct, it would explain both features of the text while at the same time strengthening the argument in favor of its having been composed to be read aloud before an audience of clerics, at least some of whom were ascetics. It would also suggest that perhaps one of the practices of this ascetic circle

¹²²⁷ *Trr.* 7.2; 12.2.1; 16.3; 17.3.3; 23.1.5; and 50.1.

¹²²⁸ *Tr.* 19.2.3, *CCL* 9A.286: "Et multa similia quae praetermisimus, ne taedium legentibus faceremus, maxime cum haec quae dicta sunt, ad probationem civitatis huius satis abundeque sufficient."'

¹²²⁹ Many of the catechetical sermons that Gaudentius collected and sent to Benivulus, for example, are roughly equal in length to the longest of Chromatius' *Tractatus*. In fact, his *Tr.* 8, one of his sermons on the Passover narrative in Exodus, has 51 §§ and runs to 401 lines in the *CSEL* edition, making it somewhat longer than Chromatius' longest *Tractatus*, number 54A, which runs to 337 lines in the *CCL* edition.

¹²³⁰ "Chromace et Jérôme," 183, commenting on the fact that some mss. containing the *Tractatus* attribute them to Jerome. Bastit-Kalinowska "Les *Tractatus*, 465, believes that the *Tractatus* possess "an undeniable para-liturgical tone."

was a periodic gathering at which Chromatius preached to this narrower audience, using the Gospel of Matthew rather than a lectionary as the basis for his sermons.¹²³¹

Chromatius' Ascetic Theology in its Theological Context

The time has now come to turn to the content of Chromatius' ascetic theology, or what the title of this chapter, borrowing from Spinelli, refers to as his "theology of the consecrated life." The latter term is preferable because the following sketch, which explores his teaching on matters disputed in the Origenist controversy as well as in the Pelagian controversy, refers to nothing in Chromatius' work that is meant exclusively for ascetics, even though ascetics certainly played the leading part in the debates surrounding them. There are two reasons why we should understand Chromatius' teachings on these matters not to be aimed at ascetics alone. First, the metaphysical speculations so beloved of Origenist ascetics on such matters as the origin of the soul or the *apokatastasis* are entirely absent from his preaching and exegesis. Even when treating the figurative sense of a text, Chromatius' aim is simply the moral edification of his listeners. Second, the issues of sin, grace, and merit, which he does discuss in many places, were central to the attempts of late antique theologians to articulate the Christian gospel in a way that was compelling for their contemporaries. Because of their centrality in this endeavor, they were relevant for ascetics as well as non-ascetics who wished to take the teachings of their religion seriously. What follows will be based not only on the *Tractatus in Mathaeum*, but also on the

¹²³¹ The word "periodic" is deliberately vague. If this supposition about occasional gatherings is correct, it is impossible to know with what frequency they were held. The *Rule of Benedict* structures the daily routine of monks around the eight offices, and public worship was a central feature of earlier forms of communal asceticism. We can perhaps imagine that, given the somewhat informal nature of the Aquileian circle, any such gatherings would have been less frequent (perhaps weekly or monthly?). Because Chromatius was both at the center of this circle and a bishop, it would not be surprising if these gatherings resembled the regular liturgy of the church of Aquileia, with the preaching being aimed at a specific subset of his normal audience.

sermons, the latter of which were obviously meant for the Christian community of Aquileia as a whole.

Before beginning our exposition of Chromatius' views on these matters, we must place his work in the context of his time. As has been pointed out, he articulated his theology of the consecrated life in the context of one episode in the church's long attempt to grapple with the legacy of Origen. Within a few years of his death, the western church was to find itself in the throes of another theological debate over Pelagianism. Both of these controversies were of critical importance in solidifying late antique Christianity's teachings about such issues as the origin of the soul, human free will, and divine justice, and both were quite pressing in ascetic contexts.¹²³² This section will explore two questions concerning Chromatius' approach to these controversies. The first is related to what his own position was on the real issues that divided the "Origenists" from the "anti-Origenists." The second has to do with to whether his teachings on the issues debated as part of the Pelagian controversy, which broke out only after his death, can be reconstructed in a way that would allow us to locate his position in relation to the loose consensus reached by the western church roughly a decade after his death. Stated differently, we will attempt to determine whether Chromatius' teachings would have been condemned by the Council of Carthage of 418, by an imperial rescript, and by bishop Zosimus of Rome's *Epistula*

¹²³² Following Jerome (in his *Commentary on Jeremiah* and *Ep.* 133), several modern scholars have commented on the fact that the Origenist and Pelagian controversies were fought over many of the same issues. See, for example, R. F. Evans, "Pelagius and the Revival of the Origenist Controversy," in *Pelagius: Inquiries and Reappraisals* (New York: Seabury Press, 1988), 6-25; Otto Wermelinger, *Rom und Pelagius: Die theologische Position der römischen Bischöfe im pelagianischen Streit in den Jahren 411-432* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1975), 49-53; Vittorino Grossi, "Adversaries and Friends of Augustine," in *Patrology*, vol. 4, *The Golden Age of Latin Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicea to the Council of Chalcedon*, ed. Angelo di Berardino, trans. Placid Solari (Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics, 1986), 463-503, at 464 and 465-466; B. R. Rees, *Pelagius: A Reluctant Heretic* (Wolfeboro, N. H.: Boydell Press, 1988), 6-8; and most especially Elizabeth Clark's thorough treatment of the links between these two episodes in *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 194-244.

tractoria, which was issued later that same year and sent to all the major sees of the empire that their bishops might affix their signature to the condemnation.¹²³³

These two controversies seem at first glance to be about two rather different sets of issues. During the late fourth century, accusations of Origenism were usually leveled at those who were suspected of undervaluing the physical and the material. In this way, Origen was regarded as in some way the heir of the Gnostics of old, who denied the goodness of the material creation and taught that redemption meant escape from the body rather than its resurrection.¹²³⁴ None of those accused of Origenism at this time taught any such denigration of the material world. There did, however, exist a strand of theology that was sympathetic to the way in which Origen and many of the intellectually sophisticated monks of Egypt sought to resolve certain theological problems related to human embodiment—problems that arose in the course of their practice of asceticism.¹²³⁵ Among the contested ideas of the Origenism of the late fourth century were the preexistence of souls, whether God's image in man was lost as a result of the Fall, the nature of the "garments of skins" given by God to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:21, and the allegorical interpretation of Paradise, and of the waters in Paradise, above the heavens, and under the earth in the early chapters of Genesis.¹²³⁶ Perhaps the most hotly contested Origenist

¹²³³ On these events, see Wermelinger, *Rom und Pelagius*, 165-196 and 209-218; Grossi, "Adversaries and Friends of Augustine," 466-467; and Rees, *Pelagius*, 2-3 and 64-65.

¹²³⁴ In his thorough study of the long struggle in ancient Christianity between Origen's supporters and detractors, Jon F. Dechow attributes the conflict in the late fourth century in part to Epiphanius of Cyprus' "incapacity to distinguish carefully between the views of Origen, Origen's various followers, gnostics, and Hieracites." See Epiphanius of Salamis, *Ancoratus*, 82, *CGS* 25.102-103; and Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism in Early Christianity: Epiphanius of Cyprus and the Legacy of Origen* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1988), 15 and 107. See also Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, 246.

¹²³⁵ On this monastic Origenism, which flourished among the monks living in Nitria, in Scetis, as well as among the Pachomian communities of Upper Egypt, see Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism*, 96-107 and 139-218. We will see below that Didymus the Blind of Alexandria was one theologian in the late fourth century who dealt with the problem of embodiment from a decidedly Origenist perspective.

¹²³⁶ Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism*, 297-347.

teaching was on the nature of the resurrection body.¹²³⁷ The particular episode that interests us began in 393 when Atarbius, a monk and client of Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis and author of the most widely used anti-heretical handbook of his day, traveled to Bethlehem and Jerusalem to demand of Jerome and Rufinus, respectively, that they formally repudiate Origen.¹²³⁸ Jerome obliged, but Rufinus refused, and even threatened to drive off with cudgels Atarbius and those who had made the journey with him.¹²³⁹ One thing led to another, and in the end an open breach occurred between Epiphanius and bishop John of Jerusalem, with some of the monastic communities in his jurisdiction taking the side of Epiphanius.¹²⁴⁰ The different receptions offered to Epiphanius' acolytes by the two communities laid bare the latent differences in attitude that had for a long time characterized Jerome and Rufinus.¹²⁴¹ The two old friends found themselves on opposite sides of the divide.¹²⁴² By 397, tensions had calmed down and the two were reconciled.¹²⁴³ But Rufinus soon returned to Italy and, in the preface to his translation of Origen's *Peri Archon*, appealed to the example of Jerome to justify his controversial method of

¹²³⁷ Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism*, 349-390.

¹²³⁸ Epiphanius' *Panarion* was a catalogue of 80 heretical teachings, including "Origenism." It is published in *GCS* 25.151-464 and 31.

¹²³⁹ As Jerome relates in his *Apologia contra Rufinum*, 3.33, cited in Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 68-69. See also Kelly, *Jerome*, 198; and Fedalto, *Rufino di Concordia*, 102.

¹²⁴⁰ For a full account of the events leading up to the split, see Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 69-75; and Fedalto, *Rufino di Concordia*, 102-104.

¹²⁴¹ Murphy notes that the two communities had different attitudes toward material possessions, secular learning, and the propriety of using the Hebrew Old Testament rather than the Septuagint. He hastens to add, however, that only a difference over the issues raised by Origenism can explain the subsequent bitterness of the debate between their leaders. See *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 59-65.

¹²⁴² One reason why this was so was Jerome's ill-considered decision to translate for an Italian friend the letter that Epiphanius had written against John of Jerusalem, of which a copy eventually made its way to Rufinus' community on the Mount of Olives. Rufinus, who had stood by John when some of the monastic communities around Jerusalem had begun to question his orthodoxy, could not help but feel that his ally had been treated unfairly. For an account of this first phase of the controversy, see Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 68-81.

¹²⁴³ Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 81.

rendering Origen's Greek into Latin. Jerome, ever sensitive to anything that might damage his reputation for orthodoxy, took offense. Open pamphlet warfare between the two ensued, which began when Jerome wrote a letter to two friends in Rome criticizing Rufinus for dragging him into the matter. The letter was meant to be private, but a copy of it found its way to Rufinus.¹²⁴⁴ He responded by penning an *Apology* in which he defended his claim that his approach to translating Origen was not all that different from Jerome's.¹²⁴⁵ Jerome followed this with an *Apology* of his own, a rejoinder to the rejoinder.¹²⁴⁶ This back-and-forth happened in 401-402, and was only put to a stop by Chromatius when he convinced Rufinus, who was now one of his presbyters, not to respond.¹²⁴⁷ A second reconciliation between the two was, however, never brought about. Jerome reviled the memory of his erstwhile friend even after the latter's death.¹²⁴⁸

The falling out between these two ascetic scholars and translators was a microcosm of the tensions that existed throughout the Christian church around the year 400. Ascetic practices had been gaining rapidly in popularity, including in Italy. But there was as yet no consensus on what

¹²⁴⁴ *Ep.* 84, to Pammachius and Oceanus, *CSEL* 55.121-134. Cf. Clark, "Elite Networks and Heresy Accusations," 87.

¹²⁴⁵ *Apologia contra Hieronymum*, *CCL* 20.35-123.

¹²⁴⁶ *Apologia contra Rufinum*, *CCL* 79.1-116.

¹²⁴⁷ Rufinus had meanwhile returned to Aquileia, probably in early 399. See Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 138; C. P. Hammond, "The Last Ten Years of Rufinus' Life and the Date of His Move South from Aquileia," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n. s. 28.2 (1977): 372-429, at 385; and Fedalto, *Rufino di Concordia*, 11. Estimates differ as to the length of his stay, with Murphy suggesting that he left only after the death of Chromatius, which was probably at the end of 407, and Hammond by contrast pointing out that 402 is the latest date at which it is possible to be certain that Rufinus was in Aquileia, and suggesting that he perhaps returned south with Chromatius when the latter went to Rome for a synod that probably took place there early in 405. See Murphy, *Rufinus*, 202n.68 and 205; and Hammond, 373, 378, 407-408, and 420-421. Hammond suggests that the request to translate Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* may have been motivated in part by Chromatius' eagerness to put an end to the public dispute between Jerome and Rufinus. See "The Last Ten Years," 392.

¹²⁴⁸ Jerome, *Prologue to Commentary on Ezekiel* cited in Kelly, *Jerome*, 305. See also Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 219-220.

they meant and what understanding of human nature was the proper basis for them. In the Jovinian controversy, which took place in Italy during the early 390s, the claim that all Christians received the same reward in the afterlife seemed to subvert the rationale for ascetics' denial of the body's appetites and demands, the marks of which they hoped to take with them into the kingdom of God, and for which they hoped to be richly rewarded.¹²⁴⁹ In a similar way, the status of humans' material bodies were at the center of the Origenist controversy—their origin in creation itself or as a result of the Fall, and their destiny in the resurrection. But the issue here was not related to the rewards that awaited those who denied the body, but to the way in which a person's ultimate identity was defined by his or her body. For the Origenism of the late fourth century, the body was in a sense contingent.¹²⁵⁰ It had been created only in response to the rebellion of souls, to clothe them and serve as the instrument through which they could work their way back to a sinless state of being.¹²⁵¹ Once this had been achieved, redeemed souls

¹²⁴⁹ A point made by Epiphanius, who was concerned about two things: First, if the resurrection body was different in some fundamental way from the earthly body, then it might be asked what the purpose of ascetic exercises was. Why subdue the body if it was just going to be replaced by another one? Second, if all souls—and even the devil—were going to be redeemed in the end, what was the purpose of moral effort? See Epiphanius *Panarion* 64.71 and *Ep. Ad Iohannem Episcopum* (= Jerome, *Ep.* 51) 5, cited in Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 92-93 and 99-100. Clark also shows that a belief in a diversity of heavenly rewards became more important for Jerome as a result of the Jovinian controversy. See *Origenist Controversy*, 129-130. Jovinian had argued that baptism made all Christians equal in merit, provided they were equal in works, and that celibacy conferred no advantage in this regard on those who practiced it. See Yves-Marie Duval, *L'affaire Jovinien*, 48-58 and 71-80; and David Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, 35-38 and 41-43.

¹²⁵⁰ In his study of Didymus, Richard A. Layton states that “The body remains for Didymus solely adventitious to the essence of human existence and is at best morally neutral to the human quest. ... Embodiment adds a ‘burden’ to the quest for virtue, but it neither changes the ultimate goal of the virtuous life nor does it diminish the prospect for its achievement.” See *Didymus the Blind and His Circle in Late-Antique Alexandria: Virtue and Narrative in Biblical Scholarship* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 112. As Layton points out elsewhere, it was Epiphanius who in his *Panarion* had successfully made the connection in the minds of many churchmen in the late fourth century between Origen and the view of the origin of the soul outlined here. See “Reception of Origen in the Fourth Century,” in *Oxford Handbook on Origen*, ed. Ronald Heine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

¹²⁵¹ As Layton explains, “In the scheme widely attributed to Origen, a primordial fall had alienated rational beings from their original contemplation of God's being, and propelled them into a situation in which they labored in the material world to return to direct participation in God's fullness. The material creation represented a school for salvation, in which all rational beings were educated through a divine pedagogy to progress—albeit slowly in some cases—towards recovery of their created condition in the contemplation of God.” See “Didymus the Blind and the

would keep their body, to be sure (its resurrection was a fundamental Christian doctrine and could not simply be denied), but as far as Origen's sympathizers were concerned, there was room for a legitimate difference of opinion as to how continuous the resurrection body would be with the earthly body.¹²⁵² Even if the church confessed, as it did in Aquileia, that the resurrection would be "of this flesh," there was more than one way to understand the demonstrative.¹²⁵³

A consensus position regarding Origenist speculations on these matters was in the process of being achieved during the episcopate of Chromatius. Late in 399 or early in 400, Theophilus, patriarch of Alexandria and veritable Pharaoh of Egypt, reversed his earlier position by condemning Origen, and he took police actions aimed at harassing and intimidating the Origenist monks of Nitria.¹²⁵⁴ He pressured bishop Anastasius of Rome (s. 399-402) to suppress Origenist opinion by securing the condemnation of the man and prohibiting the reading of his writings.¹²⁵⁵ In the midst of the hysteria, Rufinus became a target and was constrained to write a carefully-worded defense of his theology.¹²⁵⁶ Anastasius sent a letter to bishop Simplicianus of

Philistines: A Contest over Historia in Early Christian Exegetical Argument," in *New Approaches to the Study of Biblical Interpretation in Judaism in the Second Temple Period and in Early Christianity. Proceedings of the Eleventh International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, Jointly Sponsored by the Hebrew University Center for the Study of Christianity, 9-11 January, 2007*, ed. Gary A. Anderson, Ruth A. Clements, and David Satran (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 243-267, at 250-251.

¹²⁵² Henri Crouzel, "La doctrine origénienne du corps ressuscité," *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* 81 (1980): 241-266; Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism*, 373-386; and Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 93. It should be pointed out, however, that the "Origenist" concept of the resurrection body to which Epiphanius and others objected was based on Methodius' reconstruction of Origen's teachings on the basis of a treatise that has been lost, making it impossible to determine how well Methodius understood Origen's actual position. See Layton, "Reception of Origen in the fourth Century."

¹²⁵³ Rufinus, *Expositio Symboli* 43, CCL 20.179, and *Contra Hieron.*, 1.6, CCL 20.40-41; and Chromatius, *Tr.* 51.8, CCL 9A.396.

¹²⁵⁴ On these developments, see Jerome, *Ep.* 96; and Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism*, 403-408.

¹²⁵⁵ Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 133-137; and Hammond, "The Last Ten Years of Rufinus' Life," 385-390.

¹²⁵⁶ *Apologia ad Anastasium*, CCL 20.25-28; cf. Anastasius, *Ep.* 1, addressed to John of Jerusalem, PL 20.68-73.

Milan asking him to take action against Origen's ideas.¹²⁵⁷ None could be taken before the death of the venerable old man in 400/401, and so another letter was sent to his successor, Venerius.¹²⁵⁸ If Jerome's testimony from Bethlehem is to be believed, it had the desired effect, and a council of north Italian bishops—including Chromatius—met in Milan to condemn Origen, probably in the summer of 401.¹²⁵⁹ The victory was not total, however, for we have no evidence that Rufinus was the object of any condemnation, censure, or any other form of ecclesiastical discipline. Nevertheless, the trend of opinion was clearly away from embracing "the prospect of a limitless fluidity of the human person that [Origen's late-fourth-century opponents] thought they perceived (not always correctly) to have lain at the very heart of Origen's thought."¹²⁶⁰

But interest in Origen's writings did not go away, even on the part of those who had condemned him at Milan, for Rufinus continued to translate his works into Latin, and even dedicated the *Homilies on Joshua* to Chromatius.¹²⁶¹ In spite of the condemnation, however, the conflict continued to simmer under the surface as Rufinus went on with his project—to "make [Origen] a Roman"—and Jerome carped at him from his Bethlehem cell.¹²⁶² And so, not long

¹²⁵⁷ *Ep. 2, PL 20.73-76.*

¹²⁵⁸ Anastasius, *Ep. ad Venerium Mediolanensem Episcopum, PLS 1.791-792.*

¹²⁵⁹ Jerome, *Apology* 2.22; Duval, "Chromace et Jérôme," 172; and *PCBE* 2.2263. To be sure, Jerome does not specifically mention a council, but he does indicate that not only had Theophilus and Anastasius condemned Origen, but also Venerius and Chromatius. Given Anastasius' requests to both Simplicianus and Venerius, it seems natural to suppose that the condemnation was pronounced at a council in Milan at this time.

¹²⁶⁰ Brown, *The Body and Society*, 380.

¹²⁶¹ This was in response to a request from the bishop that he translate him something from Greek. See Rufinus, *Prologus in Omelias Origenis super Iesum Nave, CCL 20.271*: "Quia ergo et tu, o mihi semper venerabilis pater Chromati, iniungis et praecipis nobis, ut aliquid ad aedificationem et constructionem divini tabernaculi ex Graecorum opibus et copiis conferamus, oratiunculas viginti et sex in Iesum Nave, quas ex tempore in ecclesia peroravit Adamantius senex, ex Graeco Latine tibi pro virium mearum parvitate disserui."

¹²⁶² Rufinus, *Praefatio in librum 1 Origenis Periarchon* 1, *CCL 20.245*: "Scio quamplurimos fratrum, scientiae scripturarum desiderio provocatos popocisse ab aliquantis eruditissimis viris et Graecarum litterarum peritis, ut Origenem Romanum facerent et Latinis auribus eum donarent."

after the death of both Chromatius and Rufinus, the issues underlying the conflict arose once again in explosive fashion, but this time in the west, and in a somewhat different form. The Pelagian controversy is usually explained as a dispute over original sin and “the powers of human nature” to achieve moral transformation.¹²⁶³ But in fact, it once again raised the question of the degree to which humans and their identity were malleable, and to what degree they were inevitably subject to external (or even internal) powers beyond their control. If the outcome of the Origenist controversy had been a Christian theology that affirmed the eternal significance of the earthly body, the outcome of the Pelagian controversy was a theology that held humans to be subject not only to the guilt of sin, but also to its power, with divine grace as the only path to liberation.¹²⁶⁴ Moral effort was required in order to be free from it, but only a power that was

¹²⁶³ Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 343.

¹²⁶⁴ A case in point is the doctrine of the origin of the soul, one of the specific theological issues that was debated in both controversies. There were three options in late antique theology: preexistence, creationism, and traducianism. Preexistence was the teaching, to which the Origenists held, that all souls had been created in an initial act of creation. Some subsequently fell, and were placed into human bodies. By the time of the Pelagian controversy, this option, which had the definite advantage of explaining the universality of sin among human beings without implicating God in it, was nonetheless shut off from western theologians because of its lack of exegetical grounding, a weakness revealed during the controversy of the late fourth century. Creationism was the notion that at the moment of a new human being’s procreation, birth, or at some moment in between, God made a new soul for it. Traducianism was the view that children’s souls are derived from those of their parents. The attraction of creationism was its compatibility with a belief in free will, because the fact that each newborn child possessed an entirely new soul seemed to imply that it was free of the moral turpitude of its parents. Its weakness was that it seemed to go against the observable fact of universal sin. If the theory were true, and yet all these newly created souls followed Adam in sinning, it seemed to suggest that the soul was somehow under the power of sin from the moment it came into existence, thus implicating its creator in its sin. The strength of traducianism lay in its ability to account, in a commonsense manner, for the way in which the character of children often resembled that of their parents, and in the way it shielded God from implication in the sin that characterized the human race as a whole. Its weakness lay in its apparent incompatibility with a belief in free will and the ability of each individual human being to chart his own moral destiny. Augustine, who was acutely aware of the difficulties of both positions for someone who wished to avoid implicating God in human sin and at the same time to hold to a doctrine of hereditary original sin, continually vacillated between the latter two throughout his career. Rufinus likewise wished to avoid being pinned down on this issue. See *Apologia ad Anastasium*, 6, CCL 20.27: “Alii adserunt quod formati in utero corporibus Deus cotidie faciat animas et infundat. Alii factas iam olim, id est, tunc cum omnia Deus creavit ex nihilo, nunc eas iudicio suo dispenset nasci in corpore. Hoc sentit Origenes et nonnulli alii Graecorum. Ego vero cum haec singula legerim, Deo teste dico quia usque ad praesens certi et definiti aliquid de hac quaestione non teneo, sed Deo relinquo scire quod sit in vero et si cui ipse revelare dignabitur. Ego tamen haec singula et legisse me non nego, et adhuc ignorare confiteor, praeter hoc quod manifeste tradit ecclesia, Deum esse et animarum et corporum conditorem.” For the variety of views on the subject that were held by Chromatius’ contemporaries, see J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1978), 344-346. As has already been pointed out, the connection between the set of issues debated in the controversies over Origen and Pelagius is a

divine could ensure that this effort achieved the desired outcome. In sum, then, both controversies turned on questions about what the true nature of the human self was, and how it could be made fit for life in the kingdom of God.¹²⁶⁵

Chromatius and the Origenist Theses

Using the work of Jon F. Dechow on the specific charges laid against Origen by his opponents in the late fourth century, we will look at Chromatius' position on five Origenist theses: the origin of the soul, whether God had a body, the *apokatastasis*, the threefold meaning of scripture, and the resurrection body. With regard to the origin of the soul, Origen had entertained the possibility (without explicitly endorsing it) that human souls had been created without physical bodies, which were only made for them as a result of their rebellion while still in a disembodied state. Some of his disciples, less cautious than he had been, took this account of human origins for granted, interpreting the "garments of skins" mentioned in Genesis 3:21 as referring to the embodiment of the rebellious souls.¹²⁶⁶ Chromatius refers to this verse in Sermon 38, where he interprets the garments figuratively, but in a non-Origenist sense: "They were naked, despoiled of the garment of the grace of God and the robe of piety toward him. For he who is not clothed in the grace of God is naked with respect to every good thing, even if he

commonplace of modern scholarship on both episodes. Jerome also detected in the teachings of Pelagius a revival of the heresies of Origen, Jovinian, and Rufinus. See *Commentary on Jeremiah* 29.14-20, cited in Kelly, *Jerome*, 317.

¹²⁶⁵ Elizabeth Clark brings this theme out in relation to the debate over Origenism. See *Origenist Controversy*, 4 and 89.

¹²⁶⁶ On this theme in Origen's writings, see Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 91-92; and Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism*, 315-319. There, Dechow indicates that although this teaching is found in Origen's extant writings, in none of them does he fully and explicitly commit himself to it. Based on the arguments made by Manlio Simonetti and Georg Bürke, however, he concludes that Origen is likely to have taught that humans were given their physical bodies only after the Fall. See Bürke, "Des Origenes Lehre vom Urstand des Menschen," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 72.1 (1950): 1-39; and Simonetti, "Alcune osservazioni sull'interpretazione origeniana de *Genesi* 2,7 e 3,21," *Aevum* 36.5/6 (1962): 370-382.

has many garments.”¹²⁶⁷ But when he discusses the events in Genesis 3 in *Tr.* 32, it is clear that he treats both the eating of the fruit and the clothing in garments of skin as events happening within an already-existing historical framework. “Let us remember,” he says, “that it was through the desire for a little food that our father Adam failed to preserve the teachings of the Lord and lost the grace of immortality.”¹²⁶⁸ The fact that Adam disobeyed God for the sake of fulfilling a bodily appetite rules out the possibility that Chromatius followed the Origenists in taking the fall as something that happened in a non-material realm, and the garments of skins as a fall into a more decidedly material form of existence. He goes on immediately to use language similar to that of Sermon 38, stating that “by violating the command, because the covering of heavenly grace had been lost, he [sc. Adam] saw that he was naked.”¹²⁶⁹ The loss of “the covering of heavenly grace” here echoes the phrase “despoiled of the garment of the grace of God” from Sermon 38, but in this context, the difference between Chromatius and the Origenists on this point is quite clear. He did not subscribe to any cosmological theory based on Origenist speculation about humans being originally pure souls.¹²⁷⁰ Unfortunately, however, nothing in any of Chromatius’ writings allows us to determine his positive view of the soul’s origin, that is, whether he was a creationist or a traducianist.

¹²⁶⁷ Serm. 38.1, *CCL* 9A.167: “Quanta gratia Dei circa hominem fuerit etiam post praevaricationem mandati, audivimus in lectione divina cum legeretur. *Et fecit*, inquit, *Deus Adae et mulieri eius tunicas pelliceas, et induit eos*; erant enim ambo nudi post peccatum, quia indumenta pudoris amiserant, ut diabolo per serpentem loquenti magis obedirent quam iussioni Domini. Ideo nudi erant, spoliati tunica gratiae Dei et veste pietatis eius.”

¹²⁶⁸ *Tr.* 32.1, *CCL* 9A.349: “Recordemur patrem nostrum Adam per parvi cibi desiderium nec Domini praecepta servasse et immortalitatis gratiam perdidisse.”

¹²⁶⁹ *Tr.* 32.1, *CCL* 9A.349: “praevaricando mandatum, amisso indumento gratiae caelestis, nudum se esse conspexerat.”

¹²⁷⁰ I thus concur with Alessio Peršič, “Da soggetto di colpa a oggetto di misericordia. Uomo e ‘peccato d’origine’ nella comprensione degli aquileiesi Vittorino, Cromazio e Rufino” *Annali di scienze religiose* 9 (2004): 299-324, at 316n.70.

The next Origenist thesis was that regarding whether God had a body, a point very much in dispute among the monks of Egypt in the late fourth century.¹²⁷¹ Origen and his latter-day followers insisted that he did not, and the charge of “anthropomorphite” was often hurled against those like Epiphanius and the more simple-minded among the monks of Egypt who insisted that because man, God’s image, had a body, God must have a body as well.¹²⁷² On this point, the Origenists represented the majority position of elite theological opinion in the late fourth century, for the enormous problems for theology and devotion implicit in the claim that God had a body were evident to most. But taking such a view created other difficulties, particularly regarding how to interpret texts such as Matthew 5:8, where Jesus pronounces a blessing on the pure in heart, promising that they “will see God.” Several references to the way in which saints will one day be able to see God can be found in Chromatius’ *Tractatus* and Sermons. Let us look at one in particular that comes as part of his exegesis of the Sixth Beatitude:

For although we contemplate God presently with the eyes of faith, nevertheless we cannot see his brightness because of the weakness of the flesh; but at that time we will see when, having been transformed into heavenly glory and having received immortality, we will begin to see God with immortal eyes; and then what is written will truly be fulfilled in us: *Just as we have heard, so also have we seen in the city of the Lord of miracles.*¹²⁷³

¹²⁷¹ Socrates indicates in his *Ecclesiastical History*, 6.7, that many Egyptian monks were anthropomorphites. For modern discussions of the debate over this issue, see Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism*, 404-405; and Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 43-84.

¹²⁷² Dechow, *Dogma and Mysticism*, 302-303. Manlio Simonetti cautions us, however, that in Origen’s day the idea that God had a body was not limited to Christians who had not benefited from a formal education, reminding us that “beliefs that conceived God as bodily, and even bluntly as having a human form (anthropomorphism), were common in Egypt and outside of Egypt, in Asia, especially among unlettered persons but also among certain learned ones, where materialism of Jewish origin was combined with materialism of a Stoic provenance.” See “Quelques considerations sur l’influence et la destinée de l’alexandrinisme en occident,” in *Origene esegeta e la sua tradizione* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2004), 423-442, at 424.

¹²⁷³ *Tr.* 17.6.4-5, *CCL* 9A.276: “Huiusmodi ergo mundo corde Dominus beatos esse ostendit, qui pura mente et integra conscientia sub fide Domini viventes, Deum gloriae in futuro caelesti regno conspiciere merebuntur *non iam per speculum et in aenigmate, sed facie ad faciem*, ut apostolus retulit. Modo enim licet oculis fidei Deum contemplemur, claritatem tamen eius prae infirmitate carnis videre non possumus; tunc autem videbimus cum, accepta immortalitate in caelestem gloriam transformati, immortalem Deum immortalibus oculis conspiciere coeperimus; et tunc vere implebitur in nobis illud quod scriptum est: *Sicut audivimus ita et vidimus in civitate Domini virtutum.*” Cf. *Tr.* 4.2, 5.1, 15.2, 39.1, and 51A.2, where he distinguishes between seeing with the literal eye

Nowhere does Chromatius specify by what mechanism humans will be able to see God, even in the resurrection. But his words explaining the Transfiguration elsewhere in the *Tractatus* make a distinction between mortal and immortal eyes similar to the one made here. There, having referred back to Moses' request that God show him his glory, he writes, "And truly, if when we direct our eyes toward the light of this sun, we cannot bear its splendor and its bright rays, how much more can mortal eyes not bear the sight of his divine majesty."¹²⁷⁴ The fact that Chromatius takes care to specify that God can only be seen in the present life by the "vision of the mind," and by the "immortal eyes" of the redeemed hereafter implies that in his view, God is imperceptible to human senses—at least until the resurrection—and that therefore God does not have a body. He is firmly on the side of the majority of western Christian theologians and exegetes of his day in believing this.¹²⁷⁵

and seeing with "the vision of the mind (*visu mentis*).¹²⁷⁴ In another place in *Tr.* 17, commenting on the Seventh Beatitude—"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God"—Chromatius once again brings up the matter of seeing God, explaining the meaning of the Gospel text by appealing to the Epistle to the Hebrews. See *Tr.* 17.7.3, *CCL* 9A.275-276: "Nihil enim tam necessarium servis Dei, tam salutare ecclesiae, quam caritatem servare, quam pacem diligere, sine qua Deum videri non posse, ad Hebraeos apostolus docet dicendo: *Ante omnia diligite pacem, sine qua nullus nostrum Deum videre poterit.*"

¹²⁷⁴ *Tr.* 54A.3, *CCL* 9A Supplementum, 629: "Et revera si ad solis istius aspectum conferentes oculos nostros fulgorem ipsius et radios splendentes ferre non possumus, quanto magis divinae illius maiestatis aspectum mortales oculi ferre non possunt. Ita et Filius Dei, qui sol iustitiae est, splendorem quidem maiestatis suae apostolis ostendit, non tamen ipsam naturam quae videri in totum mortalibus oculis non potest. Nam cum claritas solis comparari omnino creatori non possit, manifestum est tantum Dominum apostolis ostendisse, quantum mortales, ut diximus, oculi apostolorum poterant sustinere." Cf. *Serm.* 41.6, *CCL* 9A.178: "Plane iam mundo sunt corde, plane iam Deum videre poterunt, qui pauperes spiritu, qui mites, qui lamentati peccata, qui iustitia refecti, qui misericordes, in adversariis quoque tam sincerum oculum cordis et lucidum gerunt, ut sine aliqua malitiae lippitudine inaccessibilem Dei claritatem sine impedimento conspiciant. Munditia enim cordis et conscientiae puritas nullam nubem ad intuendum Dominum patietur."

¹²⁷⁵ Simonetti describes western opinion on this matter in the latter fourth century as follows: "Before his exile Hilary [of Poitiers], too, was dependent to a certain degree on Stoic materialism, but exile in Phrygia put him in contact with the works of Origen, and reading them converted him to Platonic spiritualism. In his works written during and after his exile, we find the affirmation that God is incorporeal, and after him this concept took hold rapidly and above all in an obvious and natural way, without raising any doubts or discussions, its spread being of course facilitated just as much by the success of Platonism in the West beginning with Marius Victorinus and Ambrose." See "Quelques considérations," 425-426.

We come now to Origenist beliefs about eschatology. The Alexandrian master had speculated on the possibility that all beings without exception would be reconciled to God and return to their original unity with him, including even the devil. Didymus the Blind taught a variant of this view, and it was known to Sulpicius Severus, who depicts St. Martin as proclaiming to the devil that he could receive the mercy of Christ if he repented of his evil.¹²⁷⁶ On this issue Chromatius leaves no doubt as to his position, for he condemns the Origenist view forthrightly, referring to the “eternal fire” to which the damned and the devils are destined, to the fact that unbelievers are “cut down” by the judgment predicted by John the Baptist, and to his conviction that “sinners” will be “purged by a penal conflagration.”¹²⁷⁷ According to the “allegorical meaning” (*allegoricam rationem*), he interprets the “bad tree” of Mt. 7:18-19, which Jesus warns will be thrown into the fire, as the devil.¹²⁷⁸ Given the Aquileian church’s relationship to some of the major events and participants in the Origenist controversy in the early fifth century, this exegetical move should have dispelled any suspicion that Chromatius sympathized with the unpopular notion of a universal salvation that extended even to the fallen angels and their captain. Numerous other texts from his *Tractatus* could be listed in which he

¹²⁷⁶ On Didymus, see Layton, *Didymus the Blind*, 151-152. On Sulpicius, see *Vita sancti Martini*, 22. Western theologians in the early fifth century who were in contact with theological trends in Italy and/or in the east were aware of the basic outlines of the set of teachings that went by the name of Origenism. Augustine, for example, argues at length against Origen’s teaching on the creation in the *City of God*, 11.23, and against his belief in universal salvation in Book 21.17-18 of the same work.

¹²⁷⁷ All these references come from various places in *Tr.* 11.1 and 5, *CCL* 9A.239 and 242: “igni perpetuo destinantur”; “Huiusmodi itaque evangelica secure increduli quidem esciduntur”; “Est etiam ille verus futuri iudicii ultor ignis aeternus, in quo peccatores post perditam gratiam Spiritus sancti quasi quodam baptismo poenali incendio purgabantur.” Cf. *Tr.* 11.6, *CCL* 9A.242: “Peccatores autem quasi paleas inexstinguibili igne tradit urendos.”

¹²⁷⁸ *Tr.* 35.7, *CCL* 9A.372: “Huiusmodi arbor mala numquam potest bonum fructum afferre, quia ad hoc cotidie laborat, ad hoc totum saeculum circuit, ut non solum nullum bonitatis fructum faciat, verum etiam iniquitatis suae fructus et opera malignitatis accrescentibus peccatis accumulet, damnandus brevi in poenam aeternam a Domino et Salvatore nostro.”

makes clear his belief in the punishment of the wicked in eternal fire, but those that have been adduced here should demonstrate beyond doubt that on this point, he was no Origenist.¹²⁷⁹

Most of the issues discussed in connection with the Origenist debate of the late fourth century centered on cosmology and eschatology on both the macro and micro level, but they had implications also for biblical hermeneutics. For much like human beings, who consisted of body and soul, the biblical text could be considered to have a body and soul, corresponding to a literal sense and one or more non-literal meanings. Origen himself had drawn the analogy, asserting that like humans, the biblical text was composed of body, soul, and spirit, corresponding, respectively, to its historical, moral, and allegorical or anagogical meaning.¹²⁸⁰ In one of his *Tractatus*, Chromatius reveals that he is likely aware of the analogy between the human person and the biblical text when he notes to his listeners that a divine command “must be understood ... not in a bodily sense, but by its spiritual meaning.”¹²⁸¹ That he knew of a tripartite scheme like that of Origen is probable, but in his own exegesis Chromatius operates on two levels only, beginning always with an exposition of a text according to its literal sense and then moving on to

¹²⁷⁹ *Tr.* 43.2, *CCL* 9A.406, referring to the unclean spirits possessing the two Gerasenes: “Cum ante tempus torqueri se dicunt, manifeste et futurum iudicium et ipsum esse iudicem confitentur, a quo sciunt se in perpetuam poenam gehennae esse damnandos.”; *Tr.* 51.4, *CCL* 9A.452, commenting on the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares in Matthew 13:36-43: “omnes peccatores perpetuis ardoribus concremari ... In qua etiam poena ignem inextinguibilem esse et vermem immortalem Dominus et ante per prophetam et postea in evangelio declaravit ... audiamus et quae poena ignis aeterni sit, in qua omnes iniqui tamquam zizania ad comburendum igni tradentur...”; *Tr.* 53.7, *CCL* 9A.467, referring to the plant “that my Father has not planted” in Matthew 15:13: “protinus eradicanda est ac perpetuo igni tradenda”; *Tr.* 55.3, *CCL* 9A.474, on the one who “scandalizes one of these little ones who believe in me” in Matthew 18:6: “poenam aeternae illius mortis incurrere”; *Tr.* 56.3, *CCL* 9A.480, referring to the fate of wicked clerics: “in poenam perpetuam illius ignis in iudicio futuro damnari”; and *Tr.* 59.6, *CCL* 9A.497, referring to the fate of the Christian who fails to show mercy: “mittendum ... in infernum, ut illic aeternis suppliciis excrucietur...”

¹²⁸⁰ Origen discusses his theory of scripture in *De Principiis* 4.3, but he refers to the analogy in other places, as well. See Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, vol. 1, *The Four Senses of Scripture*, trans. Mark Sebanc (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 142-143; and Manlio Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church: An Historical Introduction to Patristic Exegesis*, trans. John A. Hughes (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 41-44.

¹²⁸¹ *Tr.* 19.4.6, *CCL* 9A.288: “Quod utique Dominum praecepisse, non corporali sensu, sed ratione spiritali intellegendum est.”

an exposition of its non-literal sense. For this he uses one or more of a variety of terms: *ratio spiritalis*, *ratio mystica*, *ratio veritatis*, *intellegentia spiritalis*, *intellectus*, *sensus spiritalis*, *sensus mentis*; *allegoria/allegoricus*, *mysterium*, *mysticus*; *typus/typicus/typice*; but most especially *secundum allegoricam vel mysticam rationem* or *secundum mysticam vel allegoricam rationem*.¹²⁸² And unlike Origen, who allowed that some biblical texts might lack a coherent meaning according to the literal/historical/bodily sense, Chromatius agreed with the mainstream of western exegetical theory and method of his day in affirming the Bible's historical value: "In the episode that has been read or heard," one of his interpreters puts, it, "it must be understood and seen that it took place in precisely the manner in which it is spoken of there."¹²⁸³

The connection between the use of language about the components of human nature when speaking of biblical interpretation and the proper understanding of the resurrection body (to be discussed shortly) was not lost on participants in the Origenist controversy. In his *Apology against Jerome*, Rufinus consciously connects the two issues, criticizing his old friend for learning exegetical techniques from a Jewish teacher, appropriately enough (in his view) named Barabbas: "From that other friend of yours ... you learned to hope for a resurrection not in power but in frailty, to love the letter which kills and hate the spirit which gives life..."¹²⁸⁴ We will return momentarily to the expression "a resurrection not in power but in frailty." For now, let it suffice to point out that Rufinus alludes here to II Corinthians 3:6—"The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life"—where Paul contrasts the old and the new covenants, and attempts to explain

¹²⁸² Trettel, "Terminologia esegetica nei sermoni di san Cromazio di Aquileia," 60 and 62-65.

¹²⁸³ Trettel, "Terminologia esegetica," 59.

¹²⁸⁴ *Contra Hieron.* 2.15, *CCL* 20.95: "Ille vero de synagoga Barabbas tuus, pro Christo electus, docuit te resurrectionem carnis non in virtute sed in fragilitate sperare, litterae occidentis amicum fieri et inimicum spiritus vivificantis, et alia quaedam secretiora, quae, si res poposcerit, postmodum proferentur in tempore." Cf. 1.7 and 2.45. All these passages are cited in Clark, *Origenist Controversy*, 176.

why most of his fellow Jews continued to adhere to the former even after the latter had been inaugurated. This verse became a seminal New Testament text for early Christian exegesis, for it seemed to provide a rationale for interpreting the Old Testament in a typological or allegorical way, making the Hebrew Scriptures a Christocentric book.¹²⁸⁵ Thus for Rufinus, consulting rabbinic exegesis in order to understand the historical sense of the Old Testament, as was Jerome's practice, was quite beside the point and could only lead one astray. Embracing Jewish exegesis—attending too closely to the “body” of the biblical text—might serve as the camel's nose in the tent, eventually leading to the importation of errant Jewish theological ideas. He feared that this is what had happened to Jerome, and that because he had embraced a Jewish view of the biblical text, he had come to accept a Jewish view of the resurrection: “they [sc. the Jews] believe they will rise, but in such sort as that they will enjoy all carnal delights and luxuries, and other pleasures of the body.”¹²⁸⁶ To deny that the text had a body was, to be sure, implicitly to deny the reality of the resurrection body. But by the same token, to misconstrue the true nature of the body of the text by going in for rabbinic exegesis could easily lead one to embrace an overly carnal view of the resurrection body. We now turn to explore this matter further.

¹²⁸⁵ Ambrose captures the typical late antique Christian understanding of this Pauline text, applying it to the relationship between the Old and New Testaments, when he writes in his *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam* 3.28, CCL 14.90-91: “Duo igitur gemini duae geminae vitae, duae geminae sunt militia, ita ut prior melior sit sequente. Et ideo quod est melius reformatum est. Quis autem neget evangelium praestare legi? Bona tamen lex, si supra litteram mentem erigas; *littera enim occidit*. Quod autem haberet haec historia gratiae, nisi lucem tanti mysterii videremus? Docuit enim nos apostolus sanctus in simplicitate historiae secretum quaerere veritatis et in quasdam non intellegibiles secundum litteram disputationes sensum referre scribens: *dicite mihi, qui legem legistis, legem non audistis? Scriptum est enim quia Abraham duos filios habuit, unum ex ancilla et unum de libera; sed qui ex ancilla secundum carnem natus est, qui autem de libera secundum promissionem. Quae sunt inquit per allegoriam dicta. Haec enim sunt duo testamenta; et infra: quae autem sursum est Hierusalem libera est.*” Cf. Origen, *Hom. in Ies. Nav.* 3.9, GCS 30.353. In his treatise *De spiritu et littera*, written during the Pelagian controversy, Augustine used this text as the basis for constructing an entire hermeneutic, but one that contrasted two levels on which the Old Testament could be read while at the same time associating the letter with commands and spirit with grace.

¹²⁸⁶ *Contra Hieron.* 1.7, CCL 20.42: “Est enim vere Iudaeorum de resurrectione talis opinio, quod resurgent quidem, sed carnalibus deliciis et luxuria ceterisque voluptatibus corporis perfruantur. Quae autem alia est fragilitas corporis, nisi corruptela morborum, irritatio gulae et incitamenta libidinis?”

Jerome and Rufinus represented two different approaches to Christian speculation about the nature of the resurrection body, approaches that correspond to two possible receptions of Origen in the early fifth-century context. The one, represented by Jerome, emphasized what were, from the standpoint of contemporary orthodoxy, the heretical nature of Origen's speculations about the ways in which the resurrection body would be different from the earthly body. Thus after the controversy over the Origenist theses reached the monastic communities of Palestine in 393, Jerome came to insist quite strongly on "the resurrection of [the body's] separate members," which implied the continuation of sex differences in the resurrection state and emphasized the "fleshliness" of the resurrection body, which was "such flesh as Thomas touched."¹²⁸⁷ For him, the resurrection body is fundamentally a body of "fragile clay," as is the earthly body, but one that has been "baked by the heat of the Holy Spirit into a jar of solid consistency, thus changing its grade of glory, though not its nature."¹²⁸⁸ The other approach, represented by Rufinus, conceded that Origen had taught things outside the bounds of contemporary orthodoxy, but sought to mitigate the heretical stigma that might otherwise attach to him by placing his teachings in their historical context and considering the dangers he was confronting.¹²⁸⁹ And whereas Jerome had insisted on the ways in which the resurrection body

¹²⁸⁷ *Ep.* 84.5, *CSEL* 55.127, where Jerome chides those who "singula membra negunt et corpus, quod constat ex membris, dicunt resurgere." Continuation of sex differences: *Contra Ruf.* 2.5, *CCL* 79.37: "quaero, quod Origenes negat, utrum in eodem sexu quo mortua sunt corpora suscitentur, et Maria Maria, Iohannes resurgat Iohannes, an, commixto sexu atque turbato, nec vir sit nec femina, sed utrumque vel neutrum; et an ipsa corpora incorrupta et immortalia et, ut argute praemones, iuxta Apostolum spiritalia permaneant in aeternum, et non solum corpora, sed carnes et sanguis infusus venis et ossibus irrigatus, quae Thomas tetigit; an certe paulatim resolvantur in nihilum et ad quattuor unde compacta sunt elementa retrahuntur." In this respect, Jerome's view was quite similar to that of Epiphanius, whom Dechow characterizes as being "opposed to an asceticism that sought freedom from the human corporeal condition," and contrasts Epiphanius' (and Jerome's) position with that taken by Evagrius Ponticus, who said, "Happy is the spirit that becomes free of all matter and is stripped of all at the time of prayer," and "that attains to complete unconsciousness of all sensible experience." See *Dogma and Mysticism*, 350 and 425-426.

¹²⁸⁸ *Contra Ruf.* 1.25, *CCL* 20.25: "donec cum Christo resurgat in gloria et, fragile prius lutum, excoquatur fervore Spiritus Sancti in testam solidissimam, demutans gloriam, non naturam."

¹²⁸⁹ Such a claim about Rufinus' awareness of the danger of anachronism may seem dubious. For example, Henri Crouzel asserts that "Neither Rufinus nor Jerome have the slightest idea of what we call the historical sense or the

was like the earthly body, Rufinus looked at the other side of the coin and highlighted the differences. He did not deny the continuation of sex differences, but seemed to allow that the transformation of bodies would take away much of the significance attached to them in the present life.¹²⁹⁰ And whereas Jerome's emphasis was that the resurrection body would still be fleshly, Rufinus frequently applied to the earthly body words like *corruptio*, *ignominia*, and *fragilitas*, whereas he spoke glowingly and with eager expectation of the *gloria* of the resurrection body.¹²⁹¹ To this effect, he often cited the words of Paul from the end of I Corinthians, where he states that "corruption shall not possess incorruption," and "this corrupt will put on incorruption, and this mortal will put on immortality."¹²⁹² The language Rufinus uses to describe these future realities bespeaks a painful awareness that what was earthly was liable to fall apart, to decay, to lose its integrity and to be subject to fleshly appetites.¹²⁹³ Thus he

development of dogma, which are relatively modern notions. Between the little persecuted church of Origen and the triumphant church of their time, many events have taken place. First the peace with the Roman Empire and the association between them; then the Arian heresy and the reaction of the orthodox between the Councils of Nicea and Constantinople that made Trinitarian dogma much more precise." See "Rufino traduttore del 'Peri Archon' di Origene," in *Rufino di Concordia e il suo tempo*, AAAd 31/1 (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1987), 29-39, at 30-31. The warning about the different approaches to the history of theology typical of Late Antiquity as opposed to the modern day is well taken, but nevertheless it seems that Rufinus was not insensitive to the historical context when discussing Origen's Trinitarian theology. Origen denied that the Son could "see" the Father, thus seeming to imply that the Son was subordinate to Him. Rufinus, however, explains his unwillingness to use the term by appealing to its meaning in the context of third-century theology. If the fact that Origen was seeking to avoid the appearance of attributing corporeality to God is taken into account, his use of language makes more sense. See *Contra Hieron.* 1.18, CCL 20.51-52.

¹²⁹⁰ See, for example, his defense of the women whom Jerome mocked for embracing the hope that it would not be their "poor weak body" that would rise again. See *Contra Hieron.* 1.7, CCL 20.41.

¹²⁹¹ *Corruptio*: *Apol. ad Anast.* 4, *Contra Hieron.* 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, and 1.9; *Exp. symb.* 27 and 43. *Ignominia*: *Apol. ad Anast.* 4 and *Contra Hieron.* 1.8. *Fragilitas*: *Contra Hieron.* 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 1.24, 1.41, and 2.15; *Exp. symb.* 11, 27, 28, and 29. *Gloria*: *Apol. ad Anast.* 5; *Contra Hieron.* 1.6, 1.7, and 1.13; *Exp. symb.* 27, 39, 41, 44, and 46. *Incorruptio*: *Apol. ad Anast.* 5; *Contra Hieron.* 1.6, 1.8, 1.9, and 1.13; *Exp. symb.* 27.

¹²⁹² References to I Cor. 15: 42ff.: *Apol. ad Anast.* 4; *Contra Hieron.* 1.6, 1.7, 1.9, and 1.13; *Exp. symb.* 9, 41, 43, and 44.

¹²⁹³ *Contra Hieron.* 1.7, CCL 20.42: "Quae autem alia est fragilitas corporis, nisi corruptela morborum, irritatio gulae et incitamenta libidinis?" By contrast, he states in *Exp. symb.* 8, CCL 20.145, that "in sanctificatione Spiritus Sancti nulla sentienda est fragilitas..."

regarded power and permanence—the putting off of what was weak and fragile—as the most noticeable traits of the resurrection body.¹²⁹⁴ The metaphor of clay baked so as to become hard did not seem to him to explain adequately how the human body would be transformed so as to be made fit to live in that kingdom that was “*sine corruptionis fine*.”¹²⁹⁵

The natural question to ask in light of the preceding is what view Chromatius took of the matter. On the one hand, he bowed to the pressure to condemn Origen at Milan in 401, and his friendship with Jerome does not appear to have suffered even while the latter was trading barbs with Rufinus.¹²⁹⁶ On the other hand, Chromatius had welcomed Rufinus as part of the clergy of Aquileia when he came there from Rome in 399, and continued to patronize his diffusion of Origen’s writings even after the condemnation at Milan.¹²⁹⁷ For this reason, it is unlikely in the extreme that he found the Alexandrian teacher totally unacceptable. Let us therefore briefly review the references he makes to the resurrection of the body. In *Tr.* 32, Chromatius borrows, as Rufinus does in so many places, the terminology Paul uses in I Corinthians 15 to stress the transformation undergone by the body at the resurrection, when he explains Christ’s words, “the body is more than clothing”: “this corrupted clothing,” he states, “is destroyed and perishes, but the body is covered with the clothing of immortality through the resurrection.”¹²⁹⁸ Further down

¹²⁹⁴ Cf. *Exp. symb.* 27, *CCL* 20.161: “Resurrectionis gloria in Christo omne quod infirmum et fragilis videbatur, absoluit”; and 44, *CCL* 20.180: “Nec mireris, si caro sanctorum in tantam gloriam ex resurrectione mutabitur, ut in occursum Domini suspensa nubibus et aere vecta rapiatur, cum ipse apostolus, exponens quantum conferat Deus his, qui diligent eum, dicat: *Qui transformabit corpus humilitatis nostrae conforme corpori Filii claritatis suae*.”

¹²⁹⁵ *Exp. symb.* 32.

¹²⁹⁶ When Jerome has occasion to mention Chromatius in his exchange of polemical tracts, he does so without rancor. See *Contra Ruf.* 3.2, *CCL* 79.75: “Testem invoco Iesum conscientiae meae, qui et has litteras et tuam epistolam iudicaturus est, me ad commitionem sancti papae Chromatii voluisse reticere, et finem facere simultatum, et vincere in bono malum.”

¹²⁹⁷ See above, pp. 423-424.

¹²⁹⁸ *Tr.* 32.2, *CCL* 9A.351: “Et corpus, inquit, plus est quam vestimentum, quia vestimentum hoc corruptum aboletur et deperit, corpus autem per resurrectionem immortalitatis vestimento contegitur.”

in the same *Tractatus*, he once again emphasizes the transformation of the resurrection body by interpreting a verse from Ephesians 4 as a comment about the nature of that body:

But according to the spiritual understanding, to add a cubit signifies the future hope, in which the Lord will make us who have been transformed through the glory of the resurrection to arrive at the perfect man, according to what the apostle said: *Until we all attain to the perfect man, to the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ.*¹²⁹⁹

Transformation is not, however, the only aspect of the resurrection body that Chromatius emphasizes. Commenting on the warning that in hell “there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth,” he states that “when the Lord testifies that in that place there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, he doubtless makes known the future resurrection not only of the soul, as some heretics wish, but of the body also.”¹³⁰⁰ The “heretics” in question might be Origenists, but they might also be Valentinians, who denied any sort of resurrection of the body. In either case, the fact that Chromatius takes the mention of “weeping and gnashing of teeth” as proof of a resurrection is significant when considered in light of the debate between Jerome and Rufinus. In keeping with his emphasis on the continuity between the earthly and resurrection body, Jerome pushed Rufinus to acknowledge that the body would rise “with all its members.”¹³⁰¹ In spite of this prodding, Rufinus was still somewhat evasive on this point, stating that the resurrection body “will be furnished and adorned with *its own proper members*, not with members taken from elsewhere, according to that glorious image of which Christ is set forth as the perpetual type, as

¹²⁹⁹ *Tr.* 32.4, *CCL* 9A.352-353: “Secundum spiritalem vero intellegentiam, cubitum addere spei futurae significatio est, in qua nos Dominus per resurrectionis gloriam commutatos in virum perfectum faciet pervenire, secundum quod apostolus retulit: *Donec occurramus omnes in virum perfectum, in mensuram aetatis plenitudinis Christi.*”

¹³⁰⁰ *Tr.* 51.2, *CCL* 9A.: “Cum autem illic fletum et stridorem dentium Dominus esse testatur, sine dubio non solum animae, ut quidam haeretici volunt, sed et corporis futuram resurrectionem ostendit.”

¹³⁰¹ As Rufinus complains in *Contra Hieron.* 1.5, *CCL* 20.40: “Membra – inquit – singula nominatim nisi dixeris, et caput cum capillis suis, manus pedes ventrem atque ea quae sub ventre sunt, nisi expressius designaveris, resurrectionem carnis negasti.” Cf. Jerome, *Ep.* 84.5. Jerome once again takes a position very much like that of Epiphanius. See Layton, *Didymus the Blind*, 153.

it is said by the Apostle: ‘Who shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory’” (emphasis mine).¹³⁰² To the last, Rufinus was eager to avoid specifics (and indecency) as much as possible, preferring instead to return as quickly as he could to the glorious body of the risen Christ as the pattern for that of the believer, believing that to say more was to go beyond what the Apostles had taught.¹³⁰³ Chromatius, for his part, seems to have believed that in Christ’s warning about the torments of hell, the mention of “teeth” was a sure sign that the wicked, too, would be raised, and at the very least with teeth.

So what does all this mean for categorizing Chromatius’ position on the resurrection body? The fact that he never names Origen even while condemning a position associated with him, whereas he did not hesitate to name other heretics whose positions he condemned (for example, Photinus, Arius, and Sabellius) suggests that Chromatius put Origen in a different category from them. And there was good reason to do so. The other three were condemned during their own lifetimes. Origen was not. Despite Origen’s condemnation at Alexandria, Rome, and Milan around the year 400, and the attempts of bishop Anastasius of Rome to prohibit the reading of his works, his influence as an exegete persisted.¹³⁰⁴ Although only a small part of his body of work survives in Greek, Rufinus’ (and Jerome’s) Latin translations of a select few of his writings nevertheless allow us to reconstruct the outlook of Christianity’s most influential

¹³⁰² *Contra Hieron.* 1.6, CCL 20.41: “Tamquam ergo spiritale et gloriosum et incorruptibile corpus, suis propriis et non aliunde adsumptis exornabitur et inlustrabitur membris, secundum eam gloriam quam propositum nobis Christi servat exemplum, sicut et apostolus dicit: *Qui transformabit corpus humilitatis nostris conforme corpori claritatis Filii sui.*”

¹³⁰³ *Contra Hieron.* 1.6, CCL 20.40: “Haec sunt novelli sapientis inventa, quae beatos apostolos tradentes fidem ecclesiae latuerunt; nec ulli sanctorum, nisi huic soli per carnis spiritum revelata sunt. Et nunc indecenter quidem proponit: sed audiat et honestius et verius quam proponit.”

¹³⁰⁴ Henri de Lubac, *The Four Senses of Scripture*, 152-155.

theologian in its first three centuries, provided that due caution is exercised.¹³⁰⁵ Much research still remains to be done on the reception of Origen in Italy in the late fourth and early fifth century, but there is no doubt that he was known to some of the more cosmopolitan figures of the Italian church during this period. Because Ambrose knew Greek, he was able to absorb the teachings of some of the leading Greek theologians and exegetes of his day, including Philo of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea and Didymus the Blind.¹³⁰⁶ He also read many of Origen's works.¹³⁰⁷ Yves-Marie Duval went so far as to suggest the existence of what he calls a "western Origenism," which had access to the works of Origen before they were translated by Rufinus and Jerome.¹³⁰⁸

Thus Origen, or at any rate ideas that were inspired by him, were "in the water" of western Christian theology at the turn of the fifth century, even in spite of active resistance on

¹³⁰⁵ Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 2, *The Ante-Nicene Literature after Irenaeus* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1964), 43. Dechow points out some places where those in search of Origen's authentic voice must be careful in *Dogma and Mysticism*, 4, 279, 287, 305, and 307.

¹³⁰⁶ R. H. Malden, "St. Ambrose as an Interpreter of Scripture," *Journal of Theological Studies* n. s. 16.7 (1915): 509-522, at 518-521; and John Moorhead, *Ambrose: Church and Society in the Late Roman World* (New York and London: Longman, 1999), 8, 45n.11, 57, 72-73 (Philo); 73-74, 109n.12, and 114 (Basil); and 114, 195 (Didymus). In Moorhead's estimation (p. 217), "while his reading of poetry was predominantly Latin, for theology and ideas he turned to Greek authors."

¹³⁰⁷ Moorhead notes Origen's influence on two of Ambrose's exegetical works, the *Explanatio XII psalmorum* and the *Explanatio evangelii secundum Lucam*, which was widely read by his contemporaries, in particular Chromatius and Maximus of Turin. See *Ambrose*, 73-74. David Hunter detects the influence of Origen, among others, on Ambrose's *Hexaemeron*. See "Fourth-century Latin writers: Hilary, Victorinus, Ambrosiaster, Ambrose," in *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frances Young, Lewis Ayres, and Andrew Louth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 302-317, at 310. But Origen influenced not only Ambrose's approach to scripture, but also some parts of his theology. Peter Brown notes, for example, Origen's influence on Ambrose's conception of the body as "a mere 'veil'" whose weakness could be conquered in the waters of baptism. See *The Body and Society*, 348-350.

¹³⁰⁸ "Les sources grecques de l'exégèse de Jonas chez Zénon de Vérone," *Vigiliae Christianae* 20.2 (1966): 98-115. Two other possible conduits for the diffusion of Origenist ideas in the west from the 360s onward were Hilary of Poitiers and Jerome. Hilary's extant *Tractatus super psalmos* and *Tractatus mysteriorum* bear the marks of Origen's influence. See Hunter, "Fourth-century Latin writers," 303-304. Jerome's contributions to the project of translating Origen for a western audience included his rendering of Origen's *Homilies on the Song of Songs*, dedicated to Pope Damasus, as well as a selection of Origen's *Homilies on Luke*. Between 386 and 393, he also produced a number of his own biblical commentaries, in particular one on Ephesians, for which he was deeply indebted to Origen. See Kelly, *Jerome*, 141-152.

the part of powerful churchmen to the influence of such ideas. Although it would be going too far to assign Chromatius without qualification to one side or other of the dispute between Jerome and Rufinus over the resurrection body, two factors suggest that he was at the very least sympathetic with Rufinus' outlook and emphases on this matter. First, some of his language seems to echo that of Rufinus, for example, when he characterizes the [earthly] body as "clothing," and assures his listeners that it will be "destroyed" and then "covered with immortality through the resurrection," or when he appeals to Paul's admonition in Ephesians 4 that the church become "the perfect man" to support the notion that the body will be "transformed" by the resurrection.¹³⁰⁹ The fact that he believed that the wicked would be raised with tear ducts and teeth hardly offsets this, for we have no reason to believe that Rufinus would have denied these members to those who had been raised. Second, Chromatius cannot have been unaware of the position taken by his protégé Rufinus, whom he had received as a member of the clergy of Aquileia when he arrived there at the end of the 390s, whose literary efforts he patronized, and whose *Apologia contra Hieronymum* and *Expositio symboli* comment at length on the nature of the resurrection body in defense of a position that clearly emphasizes the discontinuities between the present body of clay and the future body of glory.¹³¹⁰ There is no reason to suspect that his relationship with Jerome, who was hundreds of miles away in Bethlehem while Chromatius and Rufinus were renewing their old friendship and collaborating in the project of making Origen available to readers of Latin, exercised a countervailing influence on his views. It is therefore ironic that a church that included in its symbol a profession of faith in *huius carnis resurrectionem*—words designed specifically to stick in the

¹³⁰⁹ *Tr.* 32.2 and 32.4, nn.1298 and 1299.

¹³¹⁰ *Contra Hieron.* 1.5-8, 1.13, and 2.15; *Exp. symb.* 27 and 39-45.

throat of those who emphasized the discontinuity between the present and future state of the body—should have been under the supervision of a bishop who was willing to go so far but no farther in the interest of making peace with the theological trends of his day.¹³¹¹ Chromatius seems to have harbored a hope similar to that of Rufinus—that once raised from the dead and clothed with immortality, believers would no longer be bound by the constraints that their animal nature imposed on them in the present life.

But just as Chromatius was a “critical disciple” of Ambrose, the same and more can be said about him in relation to Origen and Origenism.¹³¹² His views on the other matters discussed in this section show this to be the case. As regards the origin of the soul and Origen’s speculation about human embodiment as being a result of the fall of disembodied souls from their contemplation of God, Chromatius’ contention that Adam’s sin came about because he gave in to a bodily appetite shows that he did not embrace the Origenist position on this matter. However, he nowhere elaborates on what his own position is. As regards Origen’s speculations about the *apokatastasis*, at which not only humans, but also the demons and the devil himself, would be redeemed, Chromatius’ strong language about the eternal punishment of the damned and the inability of the devil to be saved make his position clear. There is considerable distance between Origen and Chromatius also on the matter of exegetical method. Origen did not believe that every biblical text had a coherent literal sense, and that some texts only made sense when

¹³¹¹ Cf. Rufinus, *Exp. symb.* 41 and 43; and Chromatius, *Tr.* 41.8, *CCL* 20. “Sed quia resurrectio carnis a quibusdam infidelibus negabatur, beatus apostolus, ut argueret huiusmodi mentes qui non credebant futuram corporum resurrectionem, hoc testatus est: *Quid faciunt*, inquit, *qui baptizantur pro mortuis si omnino mortui non resurgunt?* ut manifeste ostenderet ad hoc unumquemque nostrum in hoc corpore mortali baptizari, ut credat se cum eodem in vitam aeternam resurgere, secundum quod in fide symboli in qua baptismum accipimus profiteamur dicendo: *Huius carnis resurrectionem in vitam aeternam*. ... Unde a Domino qui in eodem corpore quod propter salutem acceperat resurgere dignatus est, fecit initium.”

¹³¹² Borrowing from the title of the article by Gérard Nauroy, cited above in nn.1133, 1138, and 1191.

interpreted allegorically. By contrast, Chromatius always begins his exposition of a biblical text by examining its literal meaning, while leaving ample room for discussing the mystical or spiritual meaning. And finally, with regard to the resurrection of the body, Chromatius refers to the form of the symbol employed by his church, and yet seems to have shared Rufinus' emphasis—Origenist in spirit—on the ways in which the resurrection would transcend the lowly body with which humans were clothed in the present age. Thus if he was a “critical disciple” of Ambrose, we should call him a “very critical disciple” of Origen—a disciple insofar as he was willing to read and learn from the one whom so many others regarded with suspicion, but “very critical” insofar as he wished to conform to the orthodoxy of his day. This stance toward Origen should be seen as part of Chromatius' ascetic theology. He desired to absorb the best theological scholarship in order to construct the firmest theoretical foundation for the ascetic life, but when push came to shove, he believed that the humility that was the proper posture of the *vir evangelicus* consisted in submitting to the authority of the church, made concrete by its bishops.

Chromatius on Sin, Grace, and Merit

We now turn to the next major theological controversy to break out in the western church during the early fifth century, over the teachings of Pelagius, the ascetic teacher and exegete who had moved in Roman aristocratic circles since the 380s and shared common friends with Rufinus.¹³¹³ This particular controversy—a “Punic War of the mind”—broke out in the year 411 as a result of the contact between African and Italian theological traditions that took place in the wake of the dislocations caused by the Visigoths' invasion of Italy between 408 and 412.¹³¹⁴ It

¹³¹³ That Rufinus and Pelagius had mutual friends, including Paulinus of Nola, is pointed out by both Peter Brown and Theodor de Bruyn. See Brown, “Pelagius and His Supporters: Aims and Environment,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, n. s. 19.1 (1968): 93-114; *idem*, “The Patrons of Pelagius: The Roman Aristocracy Between East and West,” *Journal of Theological Studies*, n. s. 21.1 (1970): 56-72; and de Bruyn (ed. and trans.), *Pelagius' Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 18.

¹³¹⁴ This characterization of the Pelagian controversy is that of Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 343.

burned hot from the years 411 to 418, during which time bishop Augustine of Hippo produced one treatise after another addressing the views of Pelagius and his disciples.¹³¹⁵

Chromatius died probably around the end of 407, and so he did not live long enough to participate in this debate himself. But scholars have asked whether there is any affinity between his view of the issues debated in this later controversy and those of Pelagius.¹³¹⁶ One possible pathway for this influence was indirect, *via* Rufinus. We have seen that, by virtue of his friendship with Chromatius, Rufinus spent many of the last years of his life in Aquileia.¹³¹⁷ He and Pelagius also shared an interest in questions related to the freedom of the will and God's providence.¹³¹⁸ Their approach to the Christian life was similar, and they may even have shared a similar temperament.¹³¹⁹ But in addition to these indirect connections, it is possible, and indeed likely, that Pelagius was directly influenced by Chromatius' Sermons and *Tractatus in Mathaeum*.

We have also seen that the issues in both the Origenist and Pelagian controversies revolved ultimately around the origin of the soul, human free will, and the justice of God. The fact that Chromatius lived through the one makes it possible to reconstruct—if in provisional fashion—his opinions on many of the specific issues that were debated as part of the other. In

¹³¹⁵ For the events of these years, see Wermelinger, *Rom und Pelagius*, 4-218; and Grossi, "Adversaries and Friends of Augustine," 477-483.

¹³¹⁶ Garcia-Allen, "Was Pelagius Influenced by Chromatius of Aquileia?" in *Studia Patristica* 17, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (New York: Pergamon Press, 1982), 1251-1257; see also Alessio Peršič, "Da soggetto di colpa a oggetto di misericordia. Uomo e 'peccato d'origine' nella comprensione degli aquileiesi Vittorino, Cromazio e Rufino."

¹³¹⁷ See above, n.1247.

¹³¹⁸ Hammond, "The Last Ten Years," 423-425.

¹³¹⁹ Hammond, "The Last Ten Years," 426-427. Henry Chadwick notes that Pelagius found Rufinus' translation of the Sentences of Sextus to be "congenial reading." See Rufinus, *The Sentences of Sextus: A Contribution to the History of Early Christian Ethics*, ed. and trans. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 121.

this final section, therefore, we will look at Chromatius' understanding of the human condition, of the relationship between Adam's sin and the present spiritual state of the human race, and of the nature and power of divine grace. As we do so, we will frequently refer to the canons of the Council of Carthage of 418, which defined the boundaries of orthodoxy with regard to these issues from 418 until the Council of Orange of 529 further clarified some of the issues debated in the century-long interim as part of what is conventionally (if mistakenly) called the "semi-Pelagian" controversy. The eight canons are as follows:

1. That Adam was not created mortal by God.
2. That children are baptized for the remission of sins.
3. That the grace of God not only gives the remission of sins, but it also helps us not to sin.
4. That the grace of Christ not only gives knowledge of what we must do, but also inspires delight in us, so that we are able to perform what we know we ought to do.
5. That without the grace of God, we can perform nothing good.
6. That it is not only the humble man, but the true voice of the saints that says, If we say that we do not have sin, we deceive ourselves.
7. That in the Lord's Prayer the saints say on their own behalf, Forgive us our debts.
8. That it is truly said by the saints, Forgive us our debts.¹³²⁰

We will proceed by attempting to reconstruct Chromatius' view of the following points:

humanity's present, post-Fall spiritual state; the relationship between grace and merit; the priority of grace in human redemption; and the diversity of reward awaiting the redeemed in the life to come. We will pause along the way to relate his views to the canons of the Council of Carthage.

¹³²⁰ PL 67.217-219, where they appear as part of the *Codex canonum ecclesiasticorum*. Each canon is followed by an explanation, which has been omitted here for the sake of brevity:

1. Quod Adam non sit factus a Deo mortalis.
2. Quod parvuli in peccatorum remissionem baptizentur.
3. Quod gratia Dei non solum remissionem tribuit peccatorum, sed etiam praestat adiutorium, ne peccetur.
4. Quod gratia Christi non solum scientiam tribuit quid agamus, sed etiam dilectionem nobis inspirat, ut quod scimus implere valeamus.
5. Quod sine Dei gratia nihil boni possimus implere.
6. Quod non solum humilis, sed verax sanctorum vox ista est, Si dixerimus quia peccatum non habemus, nos ipsos seducimus.
7. Quod in oratione Dominica sancti pro se dicant, Dimitte nobis debita nostra.
8. Quod veraciter a sanctis dicatur, Dimitte nobis debita nostra (translation mine).

Chromatius habitually compared the present spiritual state of human beings to either disease or death, in both cases drawing on the language of the New Testament. So, for example, in *Tr.* 39.2, commenting on the healing of the centurion's servant in Matthew 8, he compares the poor fellow's condition to that of "the people of the Gentiles, who, because they were weighed down by serious offenses, lay in the house of this world, destroyed in soul and body," and states that Christ had come to liberate men "from such an infirmity of sins."¹³²¹ He thus combines medical imagery with language that evokes the powerful and destructive effect sin has had on the human race, rendering them unable to undertake God-pleasing action. Chromatius compares humanity's spiritual state to a disease in many other places, as well. In *Tr.* 40.2, for example, he speaks of "the fever of sin," and in 40.3 he likens sin to "a kind of sickness."¹³²²

In still other places, Chromatius picks up on the Bible's use of death as a metaphor for the human spiritual condition, for example in *Tr.* 41.7, where he explains Christ's admonition, "Let the dead bury their own dead," as follows:

That is why we plainly see that the dead who bury their own dead signify all the impious and sinners, who because of their unbelief of mind are dead to God according to the inner man; they bury their own dead, that is, their mortal bodies, in everlasting death through vices and sins. For just as although the saints and all believers are alive to God through the works of life and justice, they are also dead and buried to this present age, according to what the apostle shows, saying,

¹³²¹ *CCL* 9A.382-383: "In puero vero centurionis qui paralyticus in domo iacebat, populi gentilium typus ostensus est, qui gravibus delictis oppressus in domo istius mundi animo et corpore dissolutus iacebat. Pro hoc igitur veniens Dominus sanctorum precibus exoratur ut ad salutem gentium curam verbi divini concederet, quo liberati homines de tali valitudine peccatorum perfectam sanitatem fidei ac salutis acciperent." Cf. Sermon 1.4, *CCL* 9A.4, where Chromatius compares the human condition to that of one who is unable to walk on account of lameness: "Et nos dudum, antequam veniremus ad cognitionem Christi, vere claudi eramus, quia claudicabamus a via iustitiae. Claudicabamus autem non corporis gressu, sed internae mentis incessu. Qui enim alienus est a via iustitiae, a via veritatis, hic etiam si rectos pedes habeat, totus claudus est, quia mente et anima claudicat."

¹³²² *CCL* 9A.386-387: "Unde in eo quod socrus Petri per tactum manus Domini a febribus liberata ministrare coepit, id ostensum est quia quicumque ex synagoga Dei Filio crediderunt, per gratiam potestatis divinae liberati a febre peccati essent, per opus iustitiae Domini ministri futuri. ... Haec igitur lex, quae in persona socrus Petri figuratur, usquequo Dominus ad salutem generis humani in carne veniret, per delicta populi Iudaeorum veluti quadam valitudine infirmabatur, secundum quod apostolus retulit: *Nam quia lex infirmabatur, per carnem misit Deus Filium suum in similitudine carnis peccati ut de peccato damnaret peccatum in carne.*"

*Therefore, we have been buried with him through baptism into death, so also, although all the impious and sinners are alive to this present age through the desires of the flesh, they are dead and buried to God through the works of wickedness.*¹³²³

In this passage the influence of the Pauline epistles on Chromatius' language is evident, for earlier in the same section he had quoted Ephesians 2:3—"And you, when you were dead in your offenses and sins." Commenting in Sermon 33.5 on the very same dominical admonition about the dead burying their own dead, he declares that "The church does not, however, deign to be the mother of the dead, that is, of the unbelieving and of sinners, because all who do not believe and do not have faith are reckoned as dead in the sight of God, even if they live in the body."¹³²⁴

Another important set of texts to consider in trying to reconstruct Chromatius' view of human nature is those in which he mentions the effects of Adam's sinful act in Paradise. These often come in a context in which Chromatius notes the parallel between Adam and Christ, derived from Romans 5:12-21 and I Corinthians 15. Thus, for example, he states in Sermon 19.7:

Long ago Adam tasted the sweet fruit, and he obtained the bitterness of death for the human race. By contrast, the Lord took the bitterness of the poison in order to

¹³²³ CCL 9A.395: "Unde manifeste mortuos qui mortuos suos sepeliunt, omnes impios et peccatores significatos agnoscimus, qui per infidelitatem mentis secundum interiorem hominem Deo mortui, mortuos suos, id est corpora mortalia, in perpetuam mortem per vitia et peccata sepeliunt. Sicuti enim sancti atque omnes credentes per opera vitae ac iustitiae Deo viventes, huic saeculo et mortui sunt et sepulti, secundum quod apostolus manifestat dicendo: *Consepulti ergo illi sumus per baptismum in mortem*, ita quoque omnes impii et peccatores per desideria carnis, per opera iniquitatis huic saeculo viventes, Deo mortui sunt et sepulti." For Chromatius, the Christian's death to God "through the works of wickedness" is an objective state into which a person enters through baptism. Pelagius' exegesis of the same verse also notes the objective nature of the Christian's death "to our offences" through baptism, but also emphasizes the duty of the Christian to be morally transformed: "Ostendit nos propter ea ita baptizari, ut per mysterium consepeliamur Christo, criminibus morientes et renuntiantes pristinae vitae, ut, quo modo [pater] glorificatur in filii resurrectione, ita et per nostrae conversationis novitatem ab omnibus honoretur, ut ne signa quidem veteris hominis agnoscantur in nobis, nec enim aliquit velle aut cupere debemus, quod volunt aut cupiunt qui nondum sunt baptizati, et quicumque athuc veteris vitae erroribus implicantur."

¹³²⁴ CCL 9A.154: "Verum mortuorum, id est infidelium et peccatorum, ecclesia mater non dignatur, quia omnes increduli et infideles apud Deum mortui computantur, etiam si vivant in corpore." On at least one occasion, Chromatius employed both metaphors in the same breath. See Sermon 31.2, CCL 9A.139-140: "Denique iamdudum Adam quando in paradiso praevaricator exstitit divini mandati non languorem corporis sed animae infirmitatem incurrit, per quam in aeternam mortem perierat, nisi eum Christi gratia redemisset a morte."

call us back from bitter death to sweet life. He therefore took the bitterness of the poison in order to destroy the bitterness of sin in us; he took the sour taste of the vinegar, but poured out for us the wine of his blood. He bore evil, but he gave back good in return; he underwent death, but he granted life. It is not without cause that he was crucified where it is said that the body of Adam was buried, in order that where death had first been wrought, there life might be wrought, in order that life might rise from death. Death through Adam, life through Christ, who deigned to be crucified for us in order to abolish the sin of the tree through the tree of the cross, and to cancel the punishment of death through the mystery of his death.¹³²⁵

Thus also he declares in Sermon 20, “We fell in Adam, but we rose again in Christ; we had been broken through Adam’s sin, but repaired through the grace of Christ.”¹³²⁶

On the basis of texts such as these we can conclude with Alessio Peršič that “Chromatius did not feel the need to inquire deeply into the mechanism of the propagation to all men of the ‘stain of Adam,’ because experience itself seemed to demonstrate the simple truth affirmed by Paul and reworked by Irenaeus.”¹³²⁷ Like many theologians of his day, he was content to affirm that a link existed between Adam’s guilt and punishment and that of his descendants.¹³²⁸ But Peršič goes too far when he asserts that “the concept of hereditary ‘original sin’ remains foreign

¹³²⁵ *CCL* 9A.93: “Iamdudum Adam dulce pomum gustavit, et amaritudinem fellis accepit, ut ad dulcem nos vitam de amara morte revocaret. Accepit igitur amaritudinem fellis, ut amaritudinem peccati in nobis exstingeret; accepit acorem acetii, sed pretiosum pro nobis vinum sanguinis fudit. Mala itaque sustinuit, sed bona retribuit; mortem suscepit, sed vitam donavit. Non sine causa in loco hoc crucifixus est, ubi corpus Adae sepultum adseritur. Ibi ergo Christus crucifigitur, ubi Adam sepultus fuerat, ut illic vita operaretur, ubi primum mors fuerat operata, ut de morte vita resurgeret. Mors per Adam, vita per Christum, qui idcirco et crucifigi pro nobis dignatus est et mori, ut peccatum ligni ligno crucis deleteret, et poenam mortis mysterio mortis absolveret.”

¹³²⁶ *CCL* 9A.95: “Cecidimus enim in Adae, sed in Christo resurreximus; confracti fuimus per peccatum Adae, sed reintegrati sumus per gratiam Christi.” On this same theme, see also *Tr.* 14.2 and 54.3.

¹³²⁷ “Da soggetto di colpa a oggetto di misericordia,” 317.

¹³²⁸ Gaudentius of Brescia, writing at roughly the same time as Chromatius, in one place mentions Adam’s guilt and punishment and the guilt and punishment of Adam’s descendants in the same breath, but says nothing about any possible connection between these two realities. See *Tr.* 10.17, *CSEL* 68.89: “Nam neque Adam fuisset mortuus, quod de fructu illius arboris manducavit, nisi contra vetitum manducasset, legem mandati contemnens; neque hodie aliquis reatum peccati incurrit, si eum non adstringat aut naturalis lex aut mandati lex aut litterae lex.” Elsewhere, he speaks in much the same vein, stating that the sin of the first humans resulted in death for the entire race. See *Tr.* 15.14, *CSEL* 68.133: “Igitur si unius arbusculae fructus contra dei mandatum temere a protoplastis degustatus mortem generi adquisivit humano...”

to Chromatius,” and that, like most Greek theologians, “he extends to the human race only the penal consequence of the transgression of the first parents.”¹³²⁹ It is one thing to assert that Chromatius cannot be clearly said to have believed that Adam’s corrupt nature was inherited by his descendants, and another thing to say that it is “clear” that this belief was “foreign” to him, as Peršič does. A careful reading of the texts he uses to support his view shows, however, that his certainty about Chromatius’ non-belief in hereditary original sin is unfounded. One of these comes from Sermon 15.6, where Chromatius declares that “The Lord therefore washed the feet of his disciples in order that no trace of sin deriving from Adam’s vileness might remain in us.”¹³³⁰

Peršič’s case rests upon his assertion, cited above, that Chromatius “extends to the human race only the penal consequence of the transgression of the first parents,” a view that leaves open the question of whether human nature was universally corrupted by their rebellion. But the word *sordibus*, translated here as “vileness,” suggests that Chromatius believed that Adam’s descendants inherited more than simply his guilt. The word *sordes* can be translated as “dirt, filth, uncleanness, squalor; lowness, meanness of rank, low condition, humiliation, vileness, baseness.”¹³³¹ Most of these definitions refer to the moral, social, or (by transference) spiritual status of the person or object to which the term is applied. Thus it is not a legal term, a fact that calls into question Peršič’s contention that Chromatius did not posit a link between Adam’s moral and spiritual condition after the fall and that of his descendants, but only his legal

¹³²⁹ “Da soggetto di colpa a oggetto di misericordia,” 320.

¹³³⁰ CCL 9A.69: “Lavit ergo Dominus pedes discipulorum suorum, ne in nobis aliqua peccati vestigia de Adae sordibus remanerent.” This passage refers to a liturgical foot-washing, which will be discussed in chap. 7 below, pp. 487-488.

¹³³¹ Charleton T. Lewis, *A Latin Dictionary for Schools* (New York, Cincinnati, and Chicago: American Book Company, 1916), 997.

condition. For the “trace of sin” that is wiped away by baptism is said to be “*de Adae sordibus*.” And so in Chromatius’ view, Adam’s descendants are not only impacted by his legal condition, but also by his moral and spiritual condition. Therefore we must dissent from Peršič’s overly hasty conclusion that Chromatius lined up in an unproblematic way with most Greek theologians of the fourth century.

Table 3: Pelagius on the Transmission of Adam’s Sin¹³³²

Text	Pelagius’ Gloss
5:12 – <i>Propter ea sicut per unum hominem in hunc mundum peccatum introit et per peccatum mors.</i>	<i>Exemplo vel forma.</i>
5:16 – <i>Nam iudicium [quidem] ex uno in condemnationem.</i>	<i>...Adam solam formam fecit delicti, Christus vero [et] gratia peccata remisit et iustitiae dedit exemplum.</i>
5:19 – <i>Sicut enim per inoboedientiam unius hominis peccatoris [sic for peccatores] constituti sunt plurimi, ita et per unius oboedientiam iusti constituentur multi.</i>	<i>Sicut exemplo inoboedientiae Adae peccaverunt multi, ita et Christi oboedientia iustificantur multi.</i>
6:6 – <i>Hoc scientes quia vetus homo noster.</i>	<i>Qui veterem hominem terrenum Adam imitando peccabat.</i>

This issue does not intersect directly with any of the canons promulgated by the Council of Carthage, but if the interpretation of the passage from Chromatius’ Sermon 15.6 is correct, it does suggest very strongly that he took a different view from that of Pelagius on the relationship between Adam’s sinfulness and that of his descendants. Whereas Pelagius believed that this relationship was characterized by imitation (see Table 6.1), Chromatius, as we have seen, seemed to believe that the spiritual/moral condition of Adam’s descendants was in some way derived from his. The possibility that this could be by imitation cannot be entirely ruled out, but nevertheless the preposition *de* is suggestive, since it seems most natural here to take it as

¹³³² This table is based on parts of Pelagius’ *Commentary on Romans* that discuss certain verses from chapters 5 and 6. The references can be found in *PLS* 1.1136-1139.

referring to the source of the “vileness” in question.¹³³³ It is much closer to the truth to say that Chromatius’ view of the matter is characterized by the sort of ambiguity that is common in the thought of theologians of every age who venture to speak on matters that have not yet become controversial, and who have therefore not benefitted from the clarity and concision that debate and disagreement alone can produce. However, on the related issue of whether Adam was created mortal (with Pelagius affirming this view and his opponents denying it), we can say with confidence that Chromatius did not share the Pelagian view. Thus he would not have fallen afoul of Canon 1 of the Council of Carthage. Quite to the contrary, he says in *Tr.* 32 that when Adam sinned, he “lost the grace of immortality.”¹³³⁴ In his view of Adam and of the relationship between Adam’s sin and that of his descendants, Chromatius shows no sure sign of possessing a view similar to that of Pelagius, and was indeed more likely to have had a rather different one.

We turn now to the matter of grace and merit in the writings of Chromatius. To approach this issue, it is necessary not only to locate those places where he uses the words “grace” and “merit,” but also to understand what he means by them. This is especially true with respect to the latter term, for the way in which the early Latin theologians used words like *merere/mereri* and *meritum* is not always straightforward, a confusion that can be attributed to the peculiar qualities of the Latin language.¹³³⁵ According to the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, the verb can be used both *sensu strictiore* and *sensu laxiore*. In the former, it has the basic meaning of “*lucrari, consequi, obtinere*,” and carries the connotation that the thing is gained “*labore, servitio, virtute*,

¹³³³ Definition II in Lewis, *A Latin Dictionary*, 264.

¹³³⁴ *Tr.* 32.1, *CCL* 9A.350: “Recordemur patrem nostrum Adam per parvi cibi desiderium nec Domini praecepta servasse et immortalitatis gratiam perdidisse.”

¹³³⁵ Jean Rivière refers to “the juridical rigor of the language they used.” See “Mérite,” in *DCT*, vol. 10 (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1928), 574-784, at 619.

factis,” and gives as possible objects such words as “*mercedem*” and “*lucrum*.”¹³³⁶ According to the latter, however, it means simply “*id quod quolibet modo aliquid consequi, efficere*,” or “*favore vel casu donari, accipere, nancisci*.”¹³³⁷ As one scholar has pointed out, keeping this distinction in mind when reading such writers as Tertullian and Cyprian (among others) can save us from distorting their soteriology by imputing to them a crude theology of merit based mainly on legal categories.¹³³⁸ When we do this, we discover that “there was rather less unevangelical thinking [among these Latin theologians] than many textbooks of ecclesiastical history would suggest.”¹³³⁹

We will therefore proceed by looking at some of the “hard cases” among the many examples we could cite where Chromatius uses a form of the verb *mereor*.¹³⁴⁰ Where appropriate, we will also refer to the views of other fourth-century Latin writers, in particular Hilary of Poitiers and Ambrose of Milan, both of whose writings Chromatius knew and relied on, and whose ideas on grace and merit were formed in the same general theological milieu of fourth-century Latin Christianity. We will also refer to the ideas of Jerome and Pelagius, who forged their opinions about grace and merit in the context of the very same debates among ascetics in which Chromatius’ own views were likely fashioned. We will see that Chromatius’ concept of grace and merit is similar on most points to that of Hilary, Ambrose, and Jerome. By

¹³³⁶ *TLL* 8.5-11.802.

¹³³⁷ *TLL* 8.5-11.805.

¹³³⁸ J. N. Bakhuizen van den Brink, “*Mereo(r)* and *meritum* in some Latin Fathers,” in *Studia Patristica* 3 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961), 333-340.

¹³³⁹ Van den Brink, “*Mereo(r)* and *meritum*,” 333.

¹³⁴⁰ In almost every case, the verb is in the first person plural form.

contrast, although points of contact with Pelagius' thought can be found, Chromatius had a rather different notion of the nature and operation of grace.

Chromatius most frequently uses the verb *mereor* in the first person plural with a complementary infinitive, usually of a verb of being or possessing, where the object is some heavenly reward. For example, in one sermon he urges his listeners to celebrate Christ's Ascension by living in such a manner in the present life that in the future life "we might merit to become partakers of the glory of the body of the Lord."¹³⁴¹ In one of his *Tractatus*, he admonishes his audience that if they wish to receive blessings from the Lord, they must leave behind their earthly way of life and "ascend the height of faith as a mountain, in order that you might rightly merit to be blessed by God."¹³⁴² It is best to take such cases as these as uses of this verb in the *sensus laxior* of the *TLL*, where the meaning of *mereor* is assimilated to that of its complement. Thus, to "merit to become partakers of the glory of the Lord's body" means nothing more than to "become partakers of the glory of Lord's body," and to "merit to be blessed by God" means simply "to be blessed by God." On a few occasions, however, Chromatius uses the verb *mereor* without a complementary infinitive, but rather with an object in the accusative. Here again, most of these instances are best understood as uses of the verb *sensu laxiore*, for to take them otherwise would involve an absurdity. Thus, for example, he says that the woman who anointed Jesus' feet with oil "conferred a greater service in order to merit a greater grace."¹³⁴³ If the verb is taken *sensu strictiore*, as this wooden translation of mine takes it, it has

¹³⁴¹ Serm. 8.4, *CCL* 9A.37: "Quia ergo caro naturae nostrae in corpore Christi hac die ascendit ad caelum, iure ac merito praesentis diei sollemnitatem celebrare debemus, et ita agere in vita praesenti, ut in futura vita, in regno caelesti, consortes effici gloriae corporis Domini mereamur."

¹³⁴² *Tr.* 17.1.5, *CCL* 9A.269: "Si vis ergo et tu benedictiones a Domino accipere, relinque terrenam conversationem, pete vitam supernam; ascende in altitudinem fidei tamquam montem, ut benedici iure a Domino merearis."

¹³⁴³ Serm. 11.2, *CCL* 9A.46: "Maius ergo obsequium detulit, ut maiorem gratiam mereretur."

Chromatius saying that one can merit what is by definition a gift. If taken *sensu laxiore*, however, he is understood as saying that the woman was offering a greater service “in order to obtain a greater grace.” The notion of exchange is still present, but the transaction moves from the realm of the law to the realm of religion, which is a much more natural way to read Chromatius, and indeed, late antique Latin theologians in general.¹³⁴⁴ The same could be said about his admonition that Christians should love God and despise the devil “in order to be able to merit (*promereri possimus*) God’s mercy.”¹³⁴⁵ Once again, it is much more natural to take *promereri* more loosely, to mean “receive” or “obtain.”¹³⁴⁶

None of the foregoing, however, should be taken as a denial that Chromatius subscribed to a genuine doctrine of merit. Merit was part of the soteriology of Hilary, Ambrose, and Jerome. Hilary had written that “we must merit that blessed eternity, and we must offer something of ourselves,” a clear statement that human effort was necessary in order to receive a

¹³⁴⁴ For this distinction, I am indebted to Bakhuizen van den Brink, “*Mereo(r)* and *meritum* in some Latin Fathers,” 336.

¹³⁴⁵ *Tr.* 31.4.3, *CCL* 9A.348: “Quapropter diligere debemus Deum qui est verus Dominus et qui est auctor vitae, contemnere vero diabolum qui auctor est mortis et qui iniustum sibi dominatum vindicat, ut et misericordiam Dei promereri possimus.” Cf. *Serm.* 41.10, *CCL* 9A.173: “...defleamus peccata, et nostra et aliena, ut consolationem de Domini bonitate mereamur...”; and *Tr.* 51.4, *CCL* 9A.452: “...ut semper prae oculis haec habentes, die ac nocte meditantes, possimus et poenam aeterni illius ignis inextinguibilis evadere et promissam regni caelestis gloriam promereri a Domino Iesu Salvatore nostro...”

¹³⁴⁶ The question of how to translate a statement like those that have been cited here is still left open. Commenting on the dilemma faced by the translator with regard to such statements, Bakhuizen van den Brink writes, “There is no question that *mereri* in Christian literature should very often be translated as ‘to merit’ (or ‘to deserve’) *in bonam* and *in malam partem*... But especially pointed clauses dealing with characteristically Christian conceptions are rarely found without some embarrassing problem of interpretation: *qui sic deo satisfecerit*, Cyprian says in the last sentence of *De lapsis, nec iam solam dei veniam merebitur sed coronam*. The use of *merebitur* here is deliberate; the author intends to give as formal an assurance as any representative of the Gospel is allowed to give to his flock. It would be an encroachment on his style to avoid the translation of: to merit. And yet there is no ‘arithmetic’ merit in it.” See “*Mereo(r)* and *meritum*,” 335. Chromatius uses very similar language in *Tr.* 10.1, *CCL* 9A.236: “ut digna paenitentia satis Deo facientes veniam mererentur ab eo.”

divine reward.¹³⁴⁷ Ambrose, for his part, taught that predestination was on the basis of foreseen merit.¹³⁴⁸ He believed, moreover, that heavenly rewards were not equal, and were determined likewise on the basis of merit.¹³⁴⁹ As the harshest critic of Jovinian, who denied the inequality of heavenly reward, Jerome naturally concurred with this position.¹³⁵⁰ Two passages from Chromatius' sermons show that he agreed with this outlook, which held that good works had "an exchange value that made up for the demerit of [believers'] faults."¹³⁵¹ He asserts that "God deigns to be the God of those who, like mountains, are lifted to high and lofty places by the faith of their merits, that is, of all the saints."¹³⁵² Elsewhere, he urges his listeners that when they suffer, they should "arouse [God] to have mercy on them by the earnestness of their prayers and the faith of their merits."¹³⁵³

But whereas the concept of merit occupied an important place in these theologians' understanding of salvation, they all nevertheless agreed that human merit depended ultimately on divine grace.¹³⁵⁴ Moreover, grace was, at least for Ambrose, a force that worked internally to

¹³⁴⁷ *In Matth.* 6.5, *SC* 254.176: "De nostro igitur est beata illa aeternitas promerenda praestandumque est aliquid ex proprio." Cited in Rivière, "Mérite," 629. The translation is that of Daniel H. Williams in *St. Hilary of Poitiers, Commentary on Matthew*, *FC* 125 (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 88.

¹³⁴⁸ *De fide* 5.6.83, *CSEL* 78.246-247: "Patrem ... non petitionibus deferre solere, sed meritis, quia *deus personarum acceptor non est*. ... Non enim ante praedestinavit quam praesciret, sed quorum merita praescivit eorum praemia praedestinavit." Cited in Rivière, "Mérite," 630.

¹³⁴⁹ *Lib. de Joseph patr.* 13.76, *CSEL* 32/3.118: "Ubi diversa praemia, merita diversa." Cited in Rivière, "Mérite," 630-631.

¹³⁵⁰ *Adv. Jovin.* 2.32, *PL* 23.329: "Iam nostri laboris est pro diversitate virtutum diversa nobis praemia praeparare."

¹³⁵¹ Rivière, "Mérite," 631.

¹³⁵² *Serm.* 5.2, *CCL* 9A.23: "Horum enim Deus Deus esse dignatur, qui more montium ad alta et superna levantur fide meritorum suorum, id est omnium sanctorum."

¹³⁵³ *Serm.* 37.2, *CCL* 9A.165: "Nos vero, quotienscumque tribulationibus et angustiis, velut maris tempestatibus premimur, Dominum ac Salvatorem nostrum, instantia precum et fide meritorum, ad miserandum excitare debemus, ut sperantibus in misericordia sua, opem auxiliumque ferre dignetur..."

¹³⁵⁴ Rivière, "Mérite," 629 (for Hilary) and 632 (for Ambrose and Jerome).

shape the will.¹³⁵⁵ This is over against the teaching of Pelagius, who conceived of grace mainly in terms of the forgiveness of sins through the death of Christ (the effects of which were received through baptism) and external guides (the Law and the example of Christ, the revelation of the future judgment, etc.), both of which were intended, in his estimation, as means of informing the conscience.¹³⁵⁶ Chromatius' understanding of the mechanics of salvation coincided with those of Hilary, Ambrose, and Jerome on the priority of grace and on the notion of grace as an internal force. Thus the Magi were unable apart from grace to recognize that Christ was worthy of their worship.¹³⁵⁷ In his first sermon, when speaking about how a Christian comes to the knowledge of Christ, we find him correcting himself to place the accent more firmly on the priority of the divine side of the transaction: "For we come—or rather we are led by Christ—to the beautiful gate of the Temple, where the lame were accustomed to be healed."¹³⁵⁸ Finally, Chromatius affirms the priority of grace when he asserts that "he [sc. God] is the author and founder of every good work."¹³⁵⁹ This grace that in Chromatius' view seeks man before man seeks God is also something that operates inside of him. In comparing the baptism of John with that of Jesus, he characterizes the latter as that "in which the Holy Spirit works in each believer to melt down sins

¹³⁵⁵ Rivière summarizes his position by stating that grace "is necessary to prepare in us our good will," "Mérite," 632.

¹³⁵⁶ For this interpretation of Pelagius' doctrine of grace, see de Bruyn (ed.), *Pelagius' Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, 44-46; Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. 1, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 314-315; J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 359-360; and Grossi, "Adversaries and Friends of Augustine," 479-480.

¹³⁵⁷ *Tr.* 4.1, *CCL* 9A.211: "Neque enim Christum Dominum nostrum magi falsae religionis auctores cognoscere poterant, nisi dignationis divinae gratia lustrati." Cf. *Tr.* 4.1, *CCL* 9A.212: "Sed forte miretur aliquis quemadmodum magi nativitatem Salvatoris ex signo stellae cognoscere potuerunt. Primo quidem dicimus divinae dignationis fuisse hoc munus."

¹³⁵⁸ *Serm.* 1.4, *CCL* 9A.4: "Venimus enim, vel potius adducti sumus a Christo ad speciosam portam templi, ubi claudi curari consueverunt."

¹³⁵⁹ *Serm.* 11.5, *CCL* 9A.51: "Reficitur enim et recreatur Christus in omni virtute animae nostrae, in omni studio fidei, in omni opere iustitiae, misericordiae et pietatis, quia ipse auctor et institutor est omnis boni operis."

in the manner of fire, burning misdeeds, cleansing the filth of flesh and soul...”¹³⁶⁰ Commenting on what it means to be the salt of the earth, he explains that “just as salts are, to be sure, put on from the outside, nevertheless they work inside through the power of their nature, so also heavenly grace penetrates through the outside as well as the inside of a man, and preserves the entire man whole and uncorrupted by sin.”¹³⁶¹ Thus on these important points, Chromatius’ teachings fell within the boundary lines of the consensus reached by the African bishops and confirmed by Zosimus in 418, articulated in Canons 3-5:

3. That the grace of God not only gives the remission of sins, but it also helps us not to sin.
4. That the grace of Christ not only gives knowledge of what we must do, but also inspires delight in us, so that we are able to perform what we know we ought to do.
5. That without the grace of God, we can perform nothing good.

Both the passages cited from Chromatius’ writings as well as these canons emphasize the internal operation of grace, something Pelagius denied.

One issue related to the broader question of grace and merit on which bishops and theologians in the early fifth century had to be particularly clear was that of the nature of heavenly rewards awaiting Christians. As we saw in chapter 2, the ascetic teacher Jovinian had challenged the conventional understanding that there would be a diversity of rewards given to Christians in the afterlife on the basis of their individual merits, claiming that baptism had a radical leveling effect. He was condemned by church councils in both Rome and Milan, showing that he went too far for elite Christian opinion.¹³⁶² Chromatius’ writings make clear that

¹³⁶⁰ *Tr.* 11.5, *CCL* 9A.241: “Aliud fuit baptismum Iohannis, aliud Domini, illud paenitentiae, hoc sanctificationis et gratiae, in quo Spiritus sanctus in unoquoque credente ad decoquenda peccata modo ignis operatur, urens delicta, purgans sordes carnis et animae.”

¹³⁶¹ *Tr.* 18.2.3, *CCL* 9A.280: “Et sicuti sales a foris quidem apponuntur, intrinsecus vero operantur per virtutem naturae suae, ita et caelestis gratia exteriora hominis atque interiora perpenetrat, et totum hominem integrum a peccato incorruptumque conservat.”

¹³⁶² See above, pp. 91-92

he was firmly on the side of those who condemned Jovinian. Thus he urges his audience that they should do good works “not so much because we are constrained to but because we want to, in order that, when on our own initiative we do more than what is required of us by others, we may obtain the glory of a greater reward.”¹³⁶³ Likewise in his commentary on the Transfiguration, he interprets the tabernacles that Peter wishes to set up as the three “dwellings” of “heaven, paradise, and the earth” that were given to believers “according to the quality of their merits,” reiterating in the following sentence, commenting on Christ’s words in John 14 that in his Father’s house are many dwellings, that “When he says many, he shows the diversity of merits.”¹³⁶⁴ On this point, therefore, Chromatius’ views lined up with the mainstream opinion of his day.

Canons 6-8 of the Council of Carthage condemned the notion that Christians could be perfected in the present life by referring to I John 1:8 and to the Fifth Petition of the Lord’s Prayer: “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”¹³⁶⁵ Here again, Chromatius’ view falls within the boundaries set by these canons, for in his commentary on the Lord’s Prayer he states quite forcefully that these words imply the sinfulness of all Christians: “This expression is completely just and necessary for all. First, in order to confess that we are sinners; then, in order

¹³⁶³ Tr. 25.3.1, CCL 9A.316: “Bonum enim nostrum vult [sc. Dominus] non tam necessitatis esse quam propriae voluntatis, ut dum amplius ex nobis facimus quam ab aliis postulamus, maioris mercedis gloriam consequamur.”

¹³⁶⁴ Tr. 54A.10, CCL 9A Supplementum 635: “In tribus autem tabernaculis de quibus ait Petrus ad Dominum: *Domine, si vis, faciam tria tabernacula*, tres mansiones, id est caeli, paradisi et terrae significatas maiores intellexerunt, quae universis credentibus tam per Moysen, id est per legem, tam etiam per Heliam, id est per prophetas, quam etiam per ipsum Dominum, id est per evangelicam praedicationem, pro qualitate meritorum a Domino repromissae sunt. De quibus mansionibus et Dominus in evangelio ait: *Multae mansiones apud Patrem meum*. Cum dicit multas, ostendit diversitatem meritorum.”

¹³⁶⁵ By contrast, Pelagius believed that because humans were implicated in Adam’s fall by imitation rather than by the corruption of their nature, achieving sinlessness was within the realm of possibility for those who had received Christ’s forgiveness through the waters of baptism. See Grossi, “Adversaries and Friends of Augustine,” 466 and 480.

to pray for our sins to be thus forgiven by God, as we ourselves forgive those who sin against us.”¹³⁶⁶ If these words, which come from his *Tractatus*, were indeed meant primarily for a clerical audience—and one that probably included a number of ascetics—this would indicate that, as far as Chromatius was concerned, neither elite status in the church nor ascetic practices were sufficient to overcome sin. Thus on this issue, as on all the others that were debated as part of the Pelagian controversy, Chromatius expressed himself in ways with which his Latin contemporaries Hilary, Ambrose, and Jerome would have been quite familiar, and which would almost certainly have been within the bounds of orthodoxy as established by the decisions of 418.

In the light of this discussion of Chromatius’ teaching on grace and merit, what can we say about the possibility that he influenced Pelagius, as has been suggested? The case that Pelagius borrowed certain phrases from him is indeed strong.¹³⁶⁷ However, this should not be taken to mean that Chromatius had any sympathy for Pelagius’ distinctive teachings. We have seen that he expressly criticizes many of them in his Sermons and/or *Tractatus*.¹³⁶⁸ The influence may have gone one way, but there is no evidence that it went the other. There is, rather, good reason to believe that what Jean Rivière says about Hilary of Poitiers applies equally

¹³⁶⁶ *Tr.* 28.6.1, *CCL* 9A.333: “Iusta plane ac necessaria haec omnibus vox est. Primum, ut peccatores nos esse confiteamur; dehinc, ut sic a Deo nobis oremus dimitti peccata, quemadmodum peccantibus in nobis ipsi dimittimus.”

¹³⁶⁷ Garcia-Allen concludes on the basis of verbal echoes of Chromatius’ *Serm.* 12 that appear in Pelagius’ *Commentarium in Romanos*, and of Chromatius’ *Tractatus in Mathaeum* that appear in Pelagius’ *Epistula de virginitate*, that the latter had read and borrowed from the former. See “Was Pelagius Influenced by Chromatius of Aquileia?” 1252-1254. He also points out (p. 1253) that they both explain the distinction between “redeeming” and “purchasing” in similar ways, and concludes on this basis that they both saw a strong continuity between creation and redemption. However, the suggestion that this similarity is rooted in a shared a “minimalist” view of Adam’s fall pushes the evidence too far.

¹³⁶⁸ And thus if Aquileia was a haven for Pelagianism, it could only be because Chromatius’ successor, Augustine (ironically named!), held different views and was willing to shield Pelagian sympathizers in the Upper Adriatic from facing ecclesiastical sanctions for dissenting from the decisions of both church and empire. The evidence for Pelagians in Aquileia after 418 will be discussed in chap. 7 below, pp. 470-482.

well to Chromatius. In analyzing Hilary’s teaching on election, Rivière opines that because he believed it to rest on “foreseen merit,” it “belongs to that category of propositions which we would qualify now as semi-Pelagian.”¹³⁶⁹ There are, of course, problems with this category, for “semi-Pelagianism” is a name given by a seventeenth-century historian to fifth-century Gallic churchmen whose views were well within the orthodox consensus of their time. This term of opprobrium falls on them because they did not follow Augustine in teaching that election was based on divine grace alone, and that therefore no one could be saved who had not been chosen by God from eternity—predestined—to receive his favor.¹³⁷⁰ But John Cassian, articulating a perspective characteristic of southern Gallic ascetic circles in the 420s, argued in his *Conlatio* 13 that the source of the *initium fidei* was not always necessarily an act of divine grace, and thus that it was grounded in something other than God’s choice alone.¹³⁷¹ Chromatius never discusses this exact issue, but in his treatment of the Centurion Cornelius in Acts 10, he does touch on one that is related—whether a person who has never heard the gospel can, by his prayers and good works, merit to receive grace.

The reference to Cornelius comes in *Tr.* 9, a commentary on Matthew 3:4, which contains a description of John the Baptist’s unusual clothing and diet. In keeping with his usual exegetical method, Chromatius first treats the literal sense of the text—focusing in this case on John’s humility—before moving on to “what can be understood spiritually” in it. He examines

¹³⁶⁹ “Mérite,” 629.

¹³⁷⁰ On the positions of the “semi-Pelagians,” and the uses and abuses of this term, see Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 318-326; Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 370-371; Adalbert Hamman, “Writers of Gaul,” in *The Golden Age of Latin Patristic Literature*, 504-563, at 522; and Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Washington, D. C.: 1989), 129-130.

¹³⁷¹, CSEL 13.361-396. See esp. §§9 and 12 cf. Hamman, “Writers of Gaul,” 520-522; and Rebecca Harden Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency: A Study of the Semipelagian Controversy* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1996), 111-112.

in particular the meaning of John's tunic of camel's hair, whose many strands symbolize "the calling of the church," which is "composed of diverse nations."¹³⁷² The locusts that make up one part of the Baptist's spartan diet signify the Gentiles; the wild honey that makes up the other signifies "just and merciful men, who dwelt in the wood of this world, that is, in the error of the present age."¹³⁷³ He makes this connection because, as he explains,

although wild honey is gathered without any effort or labor of men, and without any care of human diligence ... it is nevertheless in itself naturally sweet. Thus a great many Gentiles, not having been instructed by any eloquence of heavenly doctrine, are likened to the sweetness of wild honey because they preserve sweetness in themselves by the natural good of an upright life, before they receive knowledge of the divine law, before they are gathered to the faith.¹³⁷⁴

Cornelius is for Chromatius the paradigmatic example of such a person, who is righteous apart from any knowledge of the written law (or grace, for that matter), who "nevertheless fulfilled the precepts of the law as he lived by natural justice."¹³⁷⁵ And so, he goes on to affirm, "on account of natural justice he merited that holy Philip the deacon be sent by God to baptize him."¹³⁷⁶ We have already seen that the verb *mereo* can be used in a strict or loose sense, and that the latter is by far the more common use for Chromatius. However, its use here seems to imply that Cornelius heard the gospel because he was deemed worthy to hear it. This is so especially

¹³⁷² *Tr.* 9.2, *CCL* 9A.232: "Et non dubium est in tunica Iohannis vocationem ecclesiae figuratam, quae ex diversis nationibus velut de pilis camelorum contexta est per Spiritum sanctum, per prophetica et apostolica praedicationem."

¹³⁷³ *Tr.* 32.2, *CCL* 9A.233: "In melle autem silvestri homines iustos ac misericordes significatos advertimus, qui in silva huius mundi, id est in errore saeculi, versabantur."

¹³⁷⁴ *Tr.* 32.2, *CCL* 9A.233: "Mel enim silvestre licet nullo hominum studio vel labore, nulla etiam cura diligentiae humanae apposito vasculo colligatur, per sese tamen naturaliter dulce est. Ita plerique gentiles nullo doctrinae caelestis eloquio eruditi, antequam cognitionem divinae legis accipiant, antequam ad fidem intra ecclesiam colligantur, dum naturali bono honestae in se vitae retinent suavitatem, silvestris mellis dulcedini comparantur."

¹³⁷⁵ *Tr.* 32.2, *CCL* 9A.233: "Et huius rei sanctus ille Cornelius centurio apertum nobis ex sese praebet exemplum, qui cum nullo divinae legis vinculo teneretur, naturali tamen iustitia vivens, praecepta legis implebat."

¹³⁷⁶ *CCL* 9A.233: "De gentilibus cum esset, propter iustitiam naturalem meruit ut ad baptizandum eum sanctus Philippus diaconus a Domino mitteretur."

because Chromatius' comment is an explanation of the words of Acts 10 indicating that Cornelius' prayers and deeds of mercy had "ascended in memory before God." Stated differently, he was "asking, seeking, and knocking" without having first received the grace of baptism, let alone having heard about the mercy of God in Christ.¹³⁷⁷

Conclusion

Chromatius was no Pelagian, nor is there any reason to speculate that he may have been a Pelagian sympathizer. But it seems likely that he would have some of the same concerns about Augustine's teaching that election and the *initium fidei* always had their source and origin in God alone. After adducing the example of Cornelius, one can easily imagine him concurring with the words of Cassian: "we should not hold that God made man such that he can never will or be capable of what is good: or else He has not granted him a free will, if He has suffered him only to will or be capable of evil, but neither to will or be capable of what is good of himself."¹³⁷⁸ Not until years and decades (indeed, over a century) after Chromatius' death would these questions be answered by the broader church in such a way as to make any of his teachings the slightest bit problematic. But the long process of closing these theological doors had already

¹³⁷⁷ That an interpretation of Cornelius such as the one Chromatius offers presented a challenge to Augustine's teaching on the *initium fidei* can be seen from the fact that he felt it necessary to offer an alternative reading of the passage from Acts 10 one of his last works, written for the benefit of Prosper of Aquitaine and a certain Hilary in their ongoing debate with the south Gallic ascetics. He insists that because a person is justified by faith and not works, Cornelius must have possessed faith at the time he was found worthy to be called. See *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 7.12, *PL* 44.969-970: "Quod de Cornelio dici potest, cujus acceptae sunt eleemosynae et exaudita orationes antequam credidisset in Christum: nec tamen sine aliqua fide donabat et orabat. Nam quomodo invocabat, in quem non crediderat? Sed si posset sine fide Christi esse salvus, non ad eum aedificandum mitteretur architectus apostolus Petrus: quamvis nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum, in vanum laboraverunt aedificantes eam. Et dicitur nobis, 'Fides est a nobis, caetera a Domino ad opera justitiae pertinentia:' quasi ad aedificium non pertineat fides; quasi ad aedificium, inquam, non pertineat fundamentum. Quod si in primis et maxime pertinent, in vanum laborat praedicando aedificans fidem, nisi eam Dominus miserando intus aedificet. Quidquid igitur et antequam in Christum crederet, et cum crederet, et cum credidisset, bene operatus est Cornelius, totum Deo dandum est, ne forte quis extollatur."

¹³⁷⁸ *Conlatio* 13.12, *CSEL* 13: "Nec enim talem deus hominem fecisse credendum est, qui nec velit umquam nec posit bonum. Alioquin nec liberum ei permisit arbitrium, si ei tantummodo malum ut velit et possit, bonum vero a semet ipso nec velle nec posse concessum" (trans. *NPNF*, ser. 2, 11.428).

begun, and Simplicianus, his Milanese colleague in the episcopate, helped to hasten it along by consulting Augustine on matters such as human free will and divine election.¹³⁷⁹ About twenty years after Chromatius' death, the theological complexion of north Italian Christianity would shift decisively in favor of closing some of the doors that Chromatius would perhaps have preferred to leave open, when Peter Chrysologus—an articulate defender of many of Augustine's views—became bishop of Ravenna.

¹³⁷⁹ *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum*, CCL 44, ed. Almut Mutzenbecher (Turnhout: Brepols, 1970).

CHAPTER 7: *PETRUS AUGUSTINIANUS*? THE CONTROVERSY OVER FREE WILL AND GRACE IN NORTHERN ITALY

The previous chapter focused primarily on the ways in which Chromatius of Aquileia contributed to the fourth- and fifth-century controversy over Origenism, but ended with a discussion of the Pelagian controversy. This final chapter continues in that same vein, examining Peter Chrysologus' (s. 426/430-ca. 450) appropriation of aspects of Augustine's theology of original sin, grace, and free will. Whereas the discussion of Chromatius' theology of the consecrated life highlighted the connections of northern Italy with the Greek east, where most debate over Origenism took place, our discussion of the Pelagian controversy in this chapter looks at one of the ways in which the theological outlook of north Italian Christianity was shaped by its western context. In spite of the connections scholars have noted between the issues at stake in these two debates, we will begin this chapter by looking at an important development in the intellectual culture of the western churches as opposed to those of the east: the full flowering of a tradition of Biblical scholarship distinguished by a keen interest in the writings of the Apostle Paul. Our analysis of Peter's theology of free will, sin, and grace in the twin contexts of this growing interest in Paul and of the Pelagian controversy will show that Peter's approach to these issues was closely related to an Augustinian ecclesiology, a view of Christian community that was at odds with the one prevalent in Aquileia well into the fifth century. This chapter will also propose that Peter collaborated with bishop Leo of Rome (s. 440-461) in an anti-Pelagian campaign whose aim was to promote in northern Italy the new theological and ecclesiological paradigm that had been formulated during the Pelagian controversy and in discussions between Augustine and the Gallic critics of his soteriology. It

thus contributes to our understanding of the church politics and ecclesial culture of northern Italy in the mid-fifth century, as well as to our knowledge of the early reception of Augustine.

A Pauline Renaissance in the Latin West

Many prominent Christian thinkers and writers of the fourth and fifth centuries contributed to the growth of Pauline studies. Marius Victorinus, the Neoplatonic philosopher who had converted to Christianity in Rome in the 350s, wrote a commentary on the Pauline Epistles, of which the sections on Ephesians, Galatians, and Philippians alone survive.¹³⁸⁰ During the episcopate of bishop Damasus of Rome (366-384), an exegete whose true identity is unknown, but whom Erasmus dubbed Ambrosiaster, composed commentaries on all the Pauline epistles.¹³⁸¹ Jerome not only produced a new translation of Paul's writings as part of his revision of the Latin Bible, but during the late 380s he also composed commentaries on the letters to the Galatians, the Ephesians, Titus, and Philemon.¹³⁸² After his return to Italy, Rufinus translated Origen's *Commentary on Romans*, part of his larger project of making that theologian's works available to the western church.¹³⁸³

¹³⁸⁰ Unfortunately, with "minor *lacunae*." See David G. Hunter, "Fourth-Century Latin Authors: Hilary, Victorinus, Ambrosiaster, Ambrose," in *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 302-317, at 306. Victorinus' collected works are found in *CSEL* 83/1-2.

¹³⁸¹ Hunter, "Fourth-Century Latin Authors," 307-309. Ambrosiaster's *Quaestiones veteris et novi testamenti cxxvi* can be found in *CSEL* 50, and his Pauline commentaries in *CSEL* 81/1-3.

¹³⁸² *CCL* 77A (Galatians) and 77C (Titus and Philomen); and *PL* 26.307-618 (all four). On the circumstances surrounding their composition, see J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (London: Duckworth, 1975), 145-149.

¹³⁸³ According to the estimate of Francis X. Murphy, this translation was produced in 405 or 406. See *Rufinus of Aquileia (345-411): His Life and Works* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1945), 192-195 and 235. The translation can be found in *PG* 14.833-1293.

Much of this new interest in Paul arose in the Roman church, but there is ample evidence that it was shared by the leading lights of the north Italian churches as well.¹³⁸⁴ Simplicianus of Milan (s. 397-400/401), under whose influence Victorinus had asked to be baptized, wrote to Augustine in the late 390s to inquire as to the interpretation of some of the more thorny questions dealt with in Paul's writings.¹³⁸⁵ He was especially troubled by two passages from the Epistle to the Romans: chapter 7:7-24, and chapter 9:11-29. Because we do not know exactly what questions Simplicianus asked of Augustine, it is difficult to know what the former's position was on the issues about which he inquired, or what set of circumstances prompted him to seek the opinion of the newly minted bishop.¹³⁸⁶ But it is likely that, as in Africa and Gaul, the issues of human nature after the Fall (i. e., whether and to what extent human nature was contaminated by original sin and what power of humans' free will still possessed) and the nature and power of divine grace (i. e., whether it consisted of external aids such as the conscience, the Law of Moses, and the example of Christ, or an internal work of God that changed the desires that motivate human action) arose in the context of ascetic theories about the human potential for sinlessness in the present age.¹³⁸⁷

¹³⁸⁴ Theodor de Bruyn suggests that the conflict with Manichaeism, whose exponents appealed to the authority of Paul to uphold their teachings, provided much of the impetus for the increased interest in the writings of this apostle in the late fourth century. See *Pelagius' Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, 15-16.

¹³⁸⁵ For the date of *Ad Simplicianum*, see CCL 44.xxx-xxxiii.

¹³⁸⁶ On Augustine's relationship with Simplicianus, see the Preface above, pp. 1-3.

¹³⁸⁷ Vittorino Grossi notes that the intellectual circles in Rome of the late fourth century in which the tenets of Origenism and the ideas of Jovinian were carefully studied were the cradle of Pelagianism. See "Adversaries and Friends of Augustine," in *Patrology*, vol. 4, *The Golden Age of Latin Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Chalcedon*, ed. Angelo di Berardino, trans. Placid Solari (Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics, 1986), 463-503, at 464. Elizabeth Clark also points out that the Pelagian controversy grew out of issues very closely related to the debate over Origenism. See *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), 196-244. To their observations I will add two of my own. First, after the condemnation of Pelagius and Caelestius by the Council of Carthage and by Zosimus, bishop of Rome, in 418, another debate regarding issues closely related to the original controversy arose among the opponents of Pelagianism. The occasion for this new debate was a letter written to Augustine by the monks of Hadrumetum seeking clarification of the implications of some of his ideas. See Rebecca Harden Weaver, *Divine*

One of the most famous instances of a Latin churchman turning his attention to the study of Paul is also one of the most misunderstood. After being ordained a presbyter by the bishop of Hippo, Augustine asked for a period of “study leave” as preparation for the new role he was to play in the church of Hippo. During the next year or two, he expended much of his energy absorbing the writings of the Apostle to the Gentiles. Many scholars have taken this episode as a watershed in his development of the controversial ideas on human nature and divine grace for which he is most well-known.¹³⁸⁸ More recently, however, it has been shown that Augustine’s study of the Pauline letters during the early 390s did not fundamentally change his theological outlook, which had taken shape already in the 380s while he was as yet in Milan, and was expressed even in the earliest writings he produced as a Christian, which date to before his baptism at Easter 387.¹³⁸⁹ Augustine wrote only one proper commentary on a Pauline epistle, that to the Galatians.¹³⁹⁰ In addition to this he wrote one brief work on Romans, the *Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistula ad Romanos*, and began a work that was to be a full-length commentary on this cornerstone of the Pauline corpus, the *Epistulae ad Romanos inchoata expositio*, but he completed only the section on the epistle’s salutation.¹³⁹¹ However, he

Grace and Human Agency: A Study of the Semi-Pelagian Controversy (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1996), 1-9. Second, nearly all the protagonists in both debates were ascetics: Augustine, Jerome, John Cassian, Vincent of Lérins, Pelagius, and Caelestius.

¹³⁸⁸ Peter Brown outlines this position in a memorable way in the chapter entitled “The Lost Future” in *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, 138-150, where he argues that Augustine’s reading of Paul and his polemics against the Manichaeans during the years 392-394 caused him to break definitively with the classical view of the human person, which he had held for some years after his baptism. Paula Fredriksen largely agrees with Brown’s interpretation. See “Augustine’s Early Interpretation of Paul,” Ph.D. diss. Princeton University, 1979.

¹³⁸⁹ Carol Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine’s Early Theology: An Argument for Continuity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹³⁹⁰ A modern English translation of this commentary has recently been published, along with extensive notes, by Eric Plumer, *Augustine’s Commentary on Galatians: Text, Translation, and Notes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

¹³⁹¹ These two texts, along with his commentary on Galatians, can be found in *CSEL* 84.

constantly appealed to the Apostle during the Pelagian controversy from ca. 411 until the end of his life in 430, so much so that later writers pieced together discussions of passages from Romans that were scattered throughout his works to create what were essentially Augustinian commentaries on the epistle.¹³⁹² Another ascetic writer and teacher who likewise took a keen interest in the study of Paul was Pelagius, Augustine's opponent at the beginning of this controversy. Like Ambrosiaster, he wrote commentaries on all the epistles of Paul. Dating from the years 406-409, they have unfortunately not survived *in toto*.¹³⁹³

The debate over the proper understanding of human nature and divine grace embroiled many Christian thinkers and ascetics in the last two decades of Augustine's life. Pelagius, a native of Britain, had migrated to Rome by the 380s, where he was an ascetic counselor and teacher of upper-class Christian patrons, a role similar to the one played by Jerome before his expulsion from the city in 385, and played by Rufinus upon his return to the City in 397.¹³⁹⁴ The controversy between him and his supporters on the one hand, and Augustine and his partisans on the other, began in earnest only when Pelagius took refuge in North Africa after the Visigoths' sack of Rome in 410. The bishops and ascetics of southern Gaul were also interested in the issues being debated. They came down firmly against Pelagius, but also disagreed with Augustine's position, which they regarded as too extreme and likely to lead to complacency in

¹³⁹² Alexander Souter, *The Earliest Latin Commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 143.

¹³⁹³ Souter, *Earliest Latin Commentaries*, 205. See also *Pelagius's Expositions of Thirteen Epistles of Paul*, ed. Souter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922).

¹³⁹⁴ See chap. 2 above, pp. 106-113 (for Jerome's circle) and 113-117 (for that of Rufinus); and Peter Brown, "The Patrons of Pelagius," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n. s. 21.1 (1970): 56-72.

the ascetic life.¹³⁹⁵ During and shortly after Augustine's lifetime, individual Gallic churchmen opposed him on these matters, but the Gallic church eventually made its collective opinion known as well. Around the year 470, two church councils met in southern Gaul to condemn Augustine's doctrine of predestination (Arles) and to spell out a consensus position on the matters of predestination, grace, free will, and human effort (Lyons).¹³⁹⁶ Among his younger contemporaries, Augustine had but one ardent supporter who sought to defend even his more controversial positions on predestination. Prosper of Aquitaine was a lay theologian who, though forceful in his arguments against the views of his fellow Gauls, which he regarded as fundamentally no different from those of Pelagius or as likely to aid and abet the continued spread of Pelagian ideas, was not able to make any headway in convincing them of the virtue of his and Augustine's position.¹³⁹⁷

The controversy also spilled over into Italy. In 417, the Council of Carthage condemned several Pelagian theses, and this verdict was upheld on appeal by two successive bishops of Rome: Innocent and Zosimus.¹³⁹⁸ But this victory of the anti-Pelagian forces at Rome required

¹³⁹⁵ John Cassian is perhaps the classic exponent of this position, articulated in his *Conlatio* 13, *CSEL* 13.361-396. See also Ralph W. Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious Conflict in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Washington D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 37-43 and 124-126.

¹³⁹⁶ Discussed in Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 256-267.

¹³⁹⁷ See especially his *Liber de gratia et libero arbitrio contra collatorem*, *PL* 51.211-276, translated as *On Grace and Free Will, Against Cassian the Lecturer*, in *Prosper of Aquitaine: Defense of Saint Augustine*, trans. P. de Letter, *ACW* 32 (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1963), 70-138. See also Alexander Y. Hwang, *Intrepid Lover of Perfect Grace: The Life and Thought of Prosper of Aquitaine* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2012).

¹³⁹⁸ For a narrative of the early stages of the controversy, see Otto Wermelinger, *Rom und Pelagius. Die theologische Position der Römischen Bischöfe im pelagianischen Streit in den Jahren 411-432* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1975), 4-218; and Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, 2nd edition (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 344-377.

the intervention of the imperial court.¹³⁹⁹ As we will see, the opinion of the Italian episcopacy on the issues championed by Augustine and Pelagius was divided. Many bishops were ambivalent about the matter, not regarding an error on the matter of human nature and divine grace to be the raw material of which heresies were made.¹⁴⁰⁰ There is even evidence from both northern and southern Italy (i. e., *Italia suburbicaria*, which was under the direct metropolitan jurisdiction of Rome) to suggest that Pelagius' teachings remained popular there for many years after this decision. First, eighteen Italian bishops appealed Zosimus' condemnation in the *Epistula tractoria* by writing to the bishops of Thessalonica and Aquileia.¹⁴⁰¹ We will presently return to the question of just who these bishops were. Second, from this time until Augustine's death, the standard-bearer of the Pelagian cause was none other than Julian, the young bishop of Eclanum, in Samnium, who led the appeal effort.¹⁴⁰² He was victorious by default in his pamphlet war with the aged bishop of Hippo by virtue of the latter's death, but in some ways

¹³⁹⁹ Zosimus had initially reopened the case, but his hand was forced when the emperor Honorius issued an edict condemning the teachings of Pelagius and Caelestius and ordering their expulsion from Rome. See Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 361-363.

¹⁴⁰⁰ Brown points out that, in light of the church's experience in the fourth century, most bishops assumed that a heresy, strictly speaking, was an error regarding the nature of God. See *Augustine of Hippo*, 357.

¹⁴⁰¹ Yves-Marie Duval, "Les relations doctrinales entre Milan et Aquilée durant la seconde moitié du IV siècle," in *Aquileia e Milano*, *AAAd* 4 (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friuliani, 1973), 171-234, at 173; and Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 363-364. More will be said in the following section on the provenance of the letter to Aquileia, which not all scholars believe to have come from Julian's pen.

¹⁴⁰² Julian wrote a number of works either defending the ideas of Pelagius and Caelestius, criticizing Augustine, or both. These included two letters written in response to the *Tractoria*, the document of Zosimus that announced the condemnation of Pelagius and Caelestius; the *Libri IV ad Turbantium*, a response to Augustine's *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*; letters to Rufus of Thessalonica and to the Romans; and the *Libri VIII ad Florum*, another work directed against Augustine. He also produced commentaries on the Minor Prophets and on Job. His surviving works are in *CCL* 88. Julian's challenge to Augustine's doctrine of original sin was rather different from that of Pelagius. Pelagius' critique had focused on the issue of the freedom of the will. Julian, however, was a married bishop, and his challenge to Augustine centered on the issues of marriage and procreation. As some of Augustine's earlier critics had done, Julian sensed a Manichee hidden beneath the outward appearance of the Catholic bishop, and alleged that Augustine's belief in infant sinfulness was the result of unexamined or unstated Manichaean presuppositions regarding the essentially evil nature of creation. See Grossi, "Adversaries and Friends," 488-490; Elizabeth Clark, *The Origenist Controversy*, 216-221; and Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 383-399.

Julian, in spite of his youth, presented the most formidable challenge to Augustine's position on the issues of human nature and divine grace.¹⁴⁰³ The condemnation of Pelagianism by the Fourth Ecumenical Council, meeting at Ephesus in 431, brought a definitive end to this first phase in the long, intermittent debate over these matters.¹⁴⁰⁴ However, Julian found refuge with bishop Theodore of Mopsuestia, and the half-hearted condemnation of the eastern churches meant that no serious attempt was ever made on the part of the Greeks to suppress Pelagian ideas.¹⁴⁰⁵ Even in northern Italy, as we will see, Pelagianism seems to have survived or even to have made new inroads, surviving there into the 440s. In any case, the debate over the intersection of divine grace and justice on the one hand and human freedom on the other continued until the Council of Orange in 529, and has resurfaced at various other times in the history of Christian theology.¹⁴⁰⁶

Aquileia: A Haven for Pelagianism?

The decision of Julian and his episcopal colleagues to seek assistance from the bishop of Aquileia may at first sight seem somewhat strange. It was one of the leading sees of Italy, and yet it enjoyed no special relationship with the church of Rome that would have given its bishop the leverage needed to make his intercession effective. Bishops Valerian and Chromatius had demonstrated the church's anti-Arian *bona fides*, but its bishops had not participated with any

¹⁴⁰³ In J. N. D. Kelly's judgment, he was "probably the ablest thinker in the Pelagian group." See *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th ed. (New York: HarperOne, 1978), 361. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 352, refers to him as "Augustine's brilliant adversary." His theological acumen is not, however, universally recognized. According to Grossi, "compared to Caelestius and Pelagius, he made no particular contribution to Pelagian teaching." See "Adversaries and Friends," 490.

¹⁴⁰⁴ For the condemnation of Pelagianism at the Council of Ephesus, see Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 361.

¹⁴⁰⁵ For Julian's exile in the east, see Josef Lössl, *Julian von Aeclanum. Studien zu seinem Leben, seinem Werk, seiner Lehre und ihrer Überlieferung* (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne: Brill, 2001), 282-319. Brown speaks of the Eastern churches' "very different, more liberal traditions" with regard to the issues of human nature and grace that so concerned many in the west. See *Augustine of Hippo*, 357.

¹⁴⁰⁶ For the Council of Orange, see Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 225-232. The issues that arose in the fifth and sixth century were debated with particular vigor in the ninth, fourteenth, and the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

particular vigor in the controversy over the teachings of Pelagius.¹⁴⁰⁷ Nor, it seems had those of Milan.¹⁴⁰⁸ One might ask, If Aquileia, why not also Milan, as John Chrysostom had done after his first deposition and Theodoret of Cyrrhus was later to do after the decisions made at the Council of Ephesus went against his party?¹⁴⁰⁹ Obviously, Julian and the other bishops believed that the bishop of Aquileia would at the very least be sympathetic to their appeal. If Yves-Marie Duval was correct in describing Aquileia as a “foyer de pélagianisme” during the early fifth century, then we need look no further for our answer.¹⁴¹⁰ There are, however, reasons to call this description into question, or at least to qualify it. The first has to do with both the theology and the pastoral practice of Chromatius. The second has to do with the fact that the hard evidence for actual Pelagians in the province of Venetia only appears in the 440s. Even so, there was good reason for someone in Julian’s position to think it wise to approach the other Augustine—not of Hippo, but of Aquileia.¹⁴¹¹

¹⁴⁰⁷ On the anti-Arian efforts of Valerian and Chromatius, see chap. 6 above, pp. 393-395.

¹⁴⁰⁸ As we saw above, however, Simplicianus was willing to entertain Augustine’s strict predestinarianism. We should certainly not read too much into the fact that the bishop of Milan had established this link with Augustine, but it may be an indication that with regard to the matter of free will and grace, Milan embarked on a rather different trajectory from Aquileia as of the early fifth century. Unfortunately, no subsequent bishop of Milan made his opinions known on these questions, whether by seeking the insight of another or by expressing his own opinions in writing. However, the way in which Paulinus, a deacon of Milan, conducted himself in this controversy is perhaps an indication of where the Milanese church as a whole stood. First, he presented to bishop Aurelius of Carthage a *libellus* against Pelagius’ disciple Caelestius (*ACO* 1.5.66). Second, he dedicated the *Vita Ambrosii* to Augustine while the controversy was going on (*PCBE* 2.1656). Third, in 417 he submitted another *libellus* to bishop Zosimus of Rome, shortly after his election, aimed at convincing him to uphold the condemnation of Caelestius (*CSEL* 35/1.108-111, cited in *PCBE* 2.1656).

¹⁴⁰⁹ On these letters, see chap. 1 above, pp. 69 (for John’s) and 71 (for Theodoret’s).

¹⁴¹⁰ Duval, “Les relations doctrinales,” 174.

¹⁴¹¹ His name appears not at the beginning of the *Libellus fidei*, but near the end, at 4.10, *PL* 48.525: “Illud etiam, sancte ac venerabilis Pater Augustine, necessario respondendum putavimus quod beatae memoriae episcopum Joannem in epistola sanctitatis tuae rectissime collaudisti, non solum non destruxisse Ecclesias, sed etiam confirmasse.”

The discussion at the end of the previous chapter showed that Chromatius' own theology of sin and grace is easily distinguishable from the teachings of Pelagius that became a controversial issue shortly after his death and were finally condemned in 418.¹⁴¹² This fact in itself should render us immediately cautious in making the church of Aquileia out to be a hotbed of Pelagianism. If some of the clergy of Aquileia in the 440s were unrepentant Pelagians, it is not because this view had been bequeathed to them in the writings of their church's most prominent bishop. However, the fact that Chromatius himself did not embrace these teachings does not imply that he was a fierce opponent of them, either. As we saw in regards to his engagement with the Origenist theses that were debated in the late fourth and early fifth century, he did not treat all whom he considered to be heretics in the same way. He denounced Arius and Photinus by name, but was content merely to denounce the teachings of Origen (or, at any rate, those ascribed to him) without naming the man himself. At the same time that he did so, he went right along sponsoring his friend Rufinus' translation of Origen's sermons and commentaries.¹⁴¹³ There thus seems to have been an inconsistency between his theology and his pastoral practice. How shall we explain this? The answer in the case of Origen probably has to do with the man's undeniable genius. Even his detractors had to admit that he had something valuable to teach them.¹⁴¹⁴ The theological consensus of the early fifth century may have found most of his distinctive ideas to be unacceptable, but ascetics like Rufinus, many of his friends for whom he translated Origen, and even Jerome (at least at one time) found the allure of the Alexandrian master irresistible. More than any other early Christian figure, he helped the church of the fourth

¹⁴¹² See above, pp. 442-461.

¹⁴¹³ See above, pp. 417-442, esp. 439-442.

¹⁴¹⁴ On the debt owed to Origen even by those who opposed his ideas, see Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, vol. 1, *The Fourfold Sense of Scripture*, trans. Mark Sebanc (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 1.154-159.

century imagine what freedom they would enjoy who attained to the resurrection of the dead. Though some, like bishop Anastasius of Rome, found his writings to be so subversive that they should not be read at all, the example of Chromatius seems to suggest that even those who rejected his more daring speculations nevertheless found his ideas—in particular his biblical scholarship and his homilies—intoxicating.¹⁴¹⁵ In light of this quality they possessed, it is easy to see why those ascetics whose attitude toward Origen was one of qualified appreciation—and we have every reason to believe that Chromatius was one of them—might desire for their protégés to drink from this well, if only in moderation and under close supervision.¹⁴¹⁶

The writings of Pelagius obviously did not inspire the same zealous, widespread, and sustained admiration as did those of Origen, though they certainly engendered their fair share of controversy. And the links between the disputes over Origenism and over Pelagianism were easily discernible to perceptive contemporary observers.¹⁴¹⁷ Because he died before the outbreak of the Pelagian controversy, it is impossible to know how Chromatius would have sought to navigate it.¹⁴¹⁸ But if his approach to the Origenist controversy offers any guide, one possible

¹⁴¹⁵ On bishop Anastasius' opposition even to the reading of Origen, see *Ep. ad Venerium Mediolanensem Episcopum*, *PLS* 1.791: "Origenis, in quibus [libris] sunt tantae blasphemiae in legem divinam vel in evangelium Christi Domini nostri, ut melius sit aures circumdare spinis quam nequissima illius audire composita, aut aciem oculorum claudere, ne ipsas litteras ex eius expositione currentes legere possimus scelerum vel blasphemiarum"; and *Ep.* 1.4 (to John of Jerusalem), *PL* 20.70-71: "Discere hoc loco libet, quid agat in Romanam linguam ista translatio. Approbo, si accusat auctorem, et execrandum factum populis prodit, ut justis tandem odiis teneatur, quem jam dudum fama constrinxerat. Si vero interpres tantorum malorum consensus praestat, et legenda prodit in populos; nihil aliud sui opera laboris exstruxit, nisi ut propriae veluti mentis arbitrio haec, quae sola, quae prima, quae apud catholicos christianos vera fide jam exinde ap Apostolis in hoc usque tempus tenentur, inopinatae titulo assertionis everteret."

¹⁴¹⁶ As Henri de Lubac has shown, many Latin scholars in Late Antiquity and the early middle ages were drawn to the study of Origen. See *Medieval Exegesis*, 1.161-172, esp. 172: "Like the servant at Cana spoken of by Saint Bruno of Segni, Origen himself more often than not remains unnamed, but the wine that he pours is drunk by all and judged to be delicious."

¹⁴¹⁷ As mentioned on p. 418n.1232, Jerome was aware that many of the same issues were at stake in both controversies.

¹⁴¹⁸ But cf. the arguments of Pier Franco Beatrice, who has recently contended that Chromatius and Jovinus, his old companion in the ascetic circle of Aquileia and later bishop of Padua and then (so Beatrice argues) of Ascalon, were

stance would be to join in the general condemnation of Pelagius and his ideas while at the same time not rigorously enforcing the condemnation within his own sphere of influence.¹⁴¹⁹ In this case, he would perhaps not have inquired carefully about the precise beliefs of candidates for clerical orders. Nor would he have sought to discourage the reading of Pelagius' works, let alone attempted to locate and dispose of copies of them.

Such an approach, if taken by Chromatius' successor(s), would have resulted in a situation where the bishop of Aquileia's own theology was well within the mainstream of early fifth-century western theology, but where his willingness to tolerate dissenting opinions resulted in a diversity of belief among his clergy. Again, it must be stressed that there is no direct evidence that Chromatius or any of his successors conducted themselves in this way, a way that critics might have perceived as double-minded or inconsistent. However, the possibility that the two successors of Chromatius followed an ecclesiastical policy not unlike the one just outlined cannot be dismissed out of hand. There are two reasons why such a possibility must be considered. First, scholars have believed for a long time that the churches of northern Italy—the province of Venetia and Histria in particular—were something of a refuge for Pelagian-minded clerics. Some have gone so far as to believe that the *Libellus fidei* normally attributed to Julian

present at the Synod of Diospolis, Palestine, in 415, where Pelagius was acquitted of the charge of heresy. See "Chromatius and Jovinus at the Synod of Diospolis: A Prosopographical Inquiry," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 22.3 (2014): 437-464. In my judgment, his argument is seriously weakened by its reliance on two very unlikely premises: 1) a "double case of homonymy" of two rare names—Chromatius and Jovinus (on this, see p. 451); and 2) the supposition that both Jovinus, archdeacon of Aquileia and later bishop of Padua, as well as Chromatius would have transferred from their Italian sees to churches in Palestine (see pp. 448-449 and 458). With regard to the first, Beatrice acknowledges (pp. 448-449) that the name Jovinus was "quite common at that time." With regard to the second, appealing to the invasion of Alaric in 408 to account for their transfer (p. 458) is unconvincing. Packing up and leaving for greener pastures in a moment of crisis is, after all, hardly the mark of a diligent shepherd. There is, moreover, no reason to believe that Chromatius knew Greek, which would have been a serious impediment to his functioning as a bishop in the east. See Carlo Truzzi, and Zeno, *Gaudenzio e Cromazio. Testi e contenuti della predicazione cristiana per le chiese di Verona, Brescia e Aquileia (360-410 ca.)* (Brescia: Paideia Editrice, 1985), 309-320.

¹⁴¹⁹ Beatrice believes that Chromatius was, in fact, one of the bishops who voted to acquit Pelagius at Diospolis in 415. See "Chromatius and Jovinus at the Synod of Diospolis," 449-452 and 457.

and 17 other bishops from southern Italy came in fact from the north, having been composed by suffragans of the bishop of Aquileia.¹⁴²⁰ However, its concern to defend the institution of marriage against Manichaean subversion of it is a hallmark of the teaching of Julian of Eclanum, not of anything in the north Italian context, and so it cannot be adduced to strengthen the case for Aquileia as a Pelagian stronghold.¹⁴²¹ Nevertheless, there is evidence from the 440s of the continued survival of Pelagianism among some of the clerics of Aquileia.¹⁴²² Furthermore, we

¹⁴²⁰ Pro: George de Plinval, *Pélage. Ses écrits, sa vie, sa réforme* (Lausanne: Payot, 1943), 336-341; Otto Warmelinger, *Rom und Pelagius*, 220-226; Alessio Peršič, “Da Vittorino di Poetovio a Cromazio di Aquileia e al *Libellus fidei* di 418: predisposizione ‘semipelagiana’ nell’antropologia e nella soteriologia della tradizione cristiana aquileiese?” in *Chromatius of Aquileia and His Age. Proceedings of the International Conference Held in Aquileia, 22-24 May 2008*, ed. Pier Franco Beatrice and Alessio Peršič (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 517-645, at 532-576; and Beatrice, “Chromatius and Jovinus at the Synod of Diospolis,” 459. Con: Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 2.940-944; Yves-Marie Duval, “Julien d’Éclane et Rufin d’Aquilée: du concile de Rimini à la répression pélagienne. L’intervention du pouvoir impériale en matière religieuse,” *Revue des études augustiniennes* 24 (1978): 243-271; and N. W. James, “Who Were the Pelagians Found in Venetia during the 440s?” *Studia Patristica* 22, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Lewiston: Peeters Press, 1989), 271-276, at 274; cf. Claire Sotinel, *Identité civique et christianisme. Aquilée du IIIe au VIe siècle* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2005), 281 and n.222.

¹⁴²¹ *Libellus fidei* 2.8, *PL* 48.516: “Nuptias Deo auctore dicimus esse conditae atque conjunctas, dicente Deo ad Noe: Vos autem crescite, et multiplicamini, et implete terram. Et ne quis allegoriae nebulis simplicem obumbrare velit historiam, adjecit: Et multi estote super eam.” Cf. the condemnations found in 3.10-11 and 17, *PL* 48.520-521: “Eorum quoque similes, qui sub assertione naturalis peccati asserunt, nuptias ab auctore diabolo exstitisse, et illarum filios diabolicae esse arboris fructus; voluptate suscepti sunt, a diabolo jure aequissimo esse possessos ... Quique primas nuptias cum Manichaeis, secundas cum Cataphrygis damnant.” Julian seems to have regarded sexual desire as a “natural good.” See Augustine, *Contra Iulianum* 3.14.28, *PL* 44.716: “prorsus cum libitum fuerit, sternunt se coniuges, et invadunt, quandocumque titillaverit; nec ad horam cubandi appetitus iste differtur, sed tunc videtur legitima corporum esse commixtio, quando istud naturale tuum bonum fuerit sponte commotum,” cited in Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 393. For Julian’s hearty approval of the married state, see also Manlio Simonetti, “Giuliano d’Eclano nelle controversie dottrinali del suo tempo,” in *Giuliano d’Eclano e l’Hirpinia Christiana. Atti del convegno 4-6 giugno 2003*, ed. Antonio V. Nazzaro (Naples: Arte Tipografiche Editrice, 2004), 21-33, at 30. But cf. Chromatius’ defense of marriage against “Manichaeorum praesumptio,” discussed in chap. 6 above, pp. 404-406. The prominence of the anti-Manichaean polemic and the defense of marriage in the *Libellus* would seem to fit better with the south Italian context, where the leading opponent of Augustine’s theology of grace was Julian, the married bishop.

¹⁴²² It may be questioned, however, to what degree this was a “survival” and to what degree it was a new development. James argues that they were locals who had returned from exile. See “Who Were the Pelagians Found in Venetia?”, esp. 275: “It remains to explain why the Pelagian heresy should ever have taken root in Venetia at all. The known centres of Pelagianism in the years before 418 were located in southern Italy, especially Campania and Sicily, and in Rome itself.” Sotinel points out in a similar vein that “Northern Italy does not appear in the geography of the first Pelagianism.” See *Identité civique*, 283n.230, citing Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 2.947.

know that bishops deposed and exiled for their Pelagian views were sometimes successful in their attempts to return to the fold of the church without recanting their views.¹⁴²³

The evidence for Pelagian clerics in Aquileia in the 440s comes from two letters in bishop Leo of Rome's collection. The first of these (1) was sent to an unnamed bishop of Aquileia and the second to Septimus of Altinum.¹⁴²⁴ The latter was nominally a suffragan of Aquileia, but he had apparently gone over the head of his metropolitan to report to the bishop of Rome that his superior had readmitted to communion clerics of various ranks who had held Pelagian beliefs, but without requiring a public abjuration of their errors:

We have learned that in your province certain priests, deacons, and clerics of different ranks, previously involved in the Pelagian (or Coelestian) heresy, have been admitted into Catholic society without having been required to make any condemnation of their particular error. While the shepherds set to watch were sound asleep, wolves clothed in the skins of sheep, but still retaining their bestial instincts, invaded the Lord's sheepfold.¹⁴²⁵

Septimus had indicated, furthermore, that these clerics were using the moral authority they possessed by virtue of their position in the church hierarchy to gain access to private homes, where they could "corrupt the hearts of many who are unaware of their false name."¹⁴²⁶

¹⁴²³ Caelestius, for example, returned to Rome between 423 and 425, although he was later exiled from Italy once again. See Prosper of Aquitaine, *Chronicon*, s. a. 425. Paulinus of Nola, an old friend of Pelagius, readmitted two Pelagian bishops to communion as he lay on his deathbed in 431. See Uranius, *De obitu sancti Paulini*, PL 53.860-861. Cf. James, "Who Were the Pelagians Found in Venetia?", 274.

¹⁴²⁴ Peršič dates *Ep.* 1 to 442, and every indication is that he wrote *Ep.* 2 at the same time. See "Da Vittorino di Poetovio a Cromazio e al *Libellus fidei* di 418," 519. Cf. Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 281-282. The addressee of *Ep.* 1 is unknown; see the discussion in n.1427 below.

¹⁴²⁵ *Ep.* 1.1, PL 54.593: "agnovimus quosdam presbyteros, et diaconos, ac diversi ordinis clericos, quos Pelagiana sive Coelestiana haeresis habuit implicatos, ita in vestra provincia ad communionem catholicam pervenisse, ut nulla ab eis damnatio proprii exigeretur erroris; et pastoralibus excubiis nimium dormitantibus, lupos ovium pellibus tectos in ovile Dominicum, non depositis bestialibus animis introisse" (trans. Edmund Hunt, FC 34.19). As Sotinel points out, Septimus' direct appeal to Leo suggests that he regarded his colleague's indulgence as complicity. See *Identité civique*, 282.

¹⁴²⁶ *Ep.* 1.1, PL 54.593-594: "ut sub velamento communionis plures domos adeant, et per falsi nominis scientiam multorum corda corrumpant."

It was probably about five years later that Leo wrote again to the bishop of Aquileia, this second letter being dated to December of 447.¹⁴²⁷ In the case of this epistle (18), we know the recipient was Ianuarius. The heresy against which Leo warns his correspondent is not specifically named, but this is obviously a follow up to Letter 1, meaning that the alleged Pelagianism of some of the clergy of the city is still the subject of Leo's concern. In this second letter, the bishop of Rome refers to a letter that Ianuarius had sent to him, evidently containing a confession of faith, for he expresses his approval of "the vigour of your faith, which we already were aware of," and congratulates him for "the watchful care you bestow as pastor on the keeping of Christ's flock."¹⁴²⁸ We can gather from Leo's words that he regarded Ianuarius' theology as being perfectly orthodox, and yet he was not fully satisfied with the situation in Aquileia as he understood it. He goes on to admonish his fellow bishop not to promote any cleric who had at one time "fallen away from us into a sect of heretics and schismatics, and stained himself to whatever extent with the pollution of heretical communion," and expresses his judgment that no one who fell into this category should "be received into catholic communion on coming to his senses without making legitimate and express satisfaction."¹⁴²⁹ With regard to

¹⁴²⁷ It is unclear whether this Ianuarius was the same bishop to whom Leo had written several years previously. Peršič believes that the earlier letter had been sent to bishop Adelphius, who is supposed to have occupied the see of Aquileia from 434 to 442. See Peršič, "Da Vittorino di *Poetovio* a Cromazio e al *Libellus fidei* di 418," 519. Lanzoni, *Le diocesi*, 890, believes that Ianuarius was already bishop of Aquileia when the first letter was sent in 442. However, if *Ep.* 18 were simply Leo's reply to a letter sent to him in reply to *Ep.* 1 (sent probably in 442), why did the exchange take so many years? In the letter Leo had received from Ianuarius, reference is made to a confession of faith included with it. One would expect such a document would have been sent in the immediate reply of a bishop whose faith the bishop of Rome had reason to suspect. Furthermore, no reference is made to any further exchange of letters after *Ep.* 1. Quite to the contrary, the letter has the feel of being the first piece of correspondence from Leo to a newly elected bishop.

¹⁴²⁸ *Ep.* 18, *PL* 54.707: "vigorem fidei tuae, quem olim noveramus, agnovimus, congratulantes tibi quod ad custodiam gregis Christi pastorem curam vigilanter exsequeris" (trans. *NPNF* ser. 2, 12.30). Cf. Peršič, "Da Vittorino di *Poetovio* a Cromazio e al *Libellus fidei* di 418," 529. On this letter, see also the discussion in Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 285-286.

¹⁴²⁹ *PL* 54.707: "Quod ne viperea possit obtinere fallacia, dilectionem tuam duximus commonendam: insinuantes ad animae periculum pertinere, si quisquam de his qui a nobis in haereticorum atque schismaticorum sectam delapsus

such as these, he advises Ianuarius that they ought to “consider it a great indulgence, if they be allowed to remain undisturbed in their present rank without any hope of further advancement”—provided, that is, that they have not been rebaptized.¹⁴³⁰ “No slight penalty does he incur from the Lord,” Leo warns, “who judges any such person fit to be advanced to Holy Orders. If advancement is granted to those who are without blame, only after full examination, how much more ought it to be refused to those who are under suspicion.”¹⁴³¹

Leo closes the letter with a final and slightly ominous admonition. After asking Ianuarius to implement the instructions contained in the letter, he urges him:

Do not doubt, beloved, that, if what we decree for the observance of the canons, and the integrity of the Faith be neglected (which we do not anticipate), we shall be strongly moved: because the faults of the lower orders are to be referred to none more than to slothful and careless governors, who often foster much disease by refusing to apply the needful remedy.¹⁴³²

These final words—“*inferiorum ordinum culpa ad nullos magis referendae sunt quam ad desides negligentesque rectores: qui multam saepe nutriunt pestilentiam, dum necessariam dissimulant adhibere medicinam*”—perhaps offer a clue as to how we can account for the survival (or rather reemergence) of Pelagianism in and around Aquileia in the 440s. We have just outlined one important feature of the theological context in which the bishops of Aquileia

est, et se utcumque haereticae communionis contagione macularit resipiscens, in communione catholica sine professione legitimae satisfactionis habeatur.”

¹⁴³⁰ PL 54.708: “Circa quos etiam illam canonum constitutionem praecipimus custodiri, ut in magno habeant beneficio si adempta sibi omni spe promotionis, in quo inveniuntur ordine, stabilitate perpetua maneat; si tamen iterata tinctio non fuerint maculati.”

¹⁴³¹ PL 54.708: “Non levem apud Dominum noxam incurrit qui de talibus ad sacros ordines promovendum aliquem judicavit. Quod si cum grandi examinatione promotio conceditur inculpatis, multo magis non debet licere suspectis.”

¹⁴³² PL 54.708: “Non autem dubitet dilectio tua, nos si, quod non arbitramur, neglecta fuerint quae pro custodia canonum et pro fidei integritate decernimus, vehementius commovendos: quia inferiorum ordinum culpa ad nullos magis referendae sunt quam ad desides negligentesque rectores: qui multam saepe nutriunt pestilentiam, dum necessariam dissimulant adhibere medicinam.”

after Chromatius labored, namely, the fact that the great contemporary of Ambrose himself had outlined a theology of sin and grace that was decidedly not Pelagian. Based on Leo's Letter 18, we can say the same regarding his successor Ianuarius. But it should quickly be added that Chromatius' pastoral practice—if it has been accurately reconstructed here—may have provided breathing space for clerics who did not share his ideas. Chromatius, in other words, may have taken the “big tent” approach to the issues debated as part of the Pelagian controversy—not a surprise, considering that he died before it really began. But the apparent willingness of Ianuarius (and probably his predecessor) to tolerate Pelagian clerics—conduct that Leo characterizes as “*deses et negligans*”—is perhaps somewhat more surprising in light of the way in which the field of orthodoxy had been narrowed by the decisions of 418 and the subsequent difficulties faced by Pelagian-minded clerics outside of northern Italy in regaining entrance into the church's good graces. Nevertheless, it can probably be explained as adherence to a local tradition of tolerance—or at least forbearance—in certain theological matters. The bishops of Aquileia going back to Fortunatianus seem to have tried to stand somewhat “above the fray,” hesitating to use the full disciplinary powers at their disposal to impose uniformity of belief on the Christian community. In the context of the Arian controversy, this meant that Fortunatianus took the long view and did not take action against the large Homoian minority in Aquileia.¹⁴³³ It meant that Valerian left the anti-Homoian catechetical work to his clergy, while he himself took charge of his community's “foreign policy,” so to speak.¹⁴³⁴ In the context of the Origenist controversy, it meant that Chromatius tried to take the moderate path of encouraging the translation and study of the writings of the man whose more controversial teachings he openly

¹⁴³³ See chap. 1 above, pp. 22-23.

¹⁴³⁴ This is, at any rate, what was suggested in chap. 6 above, pp. 394-395.

criticized.¹⁴³⁵ And in the context of the Pelagian controversy, it seems to have meant that Adelphius (if indeed he was still bishop in 442) and Ianuarius exercised what from Leo's standpoint could only be described as lax discipline.¹⁴³⁶ They not only failed to excommunicate Pelagian clerics, but they promoted them!

It would appear, therefore, that the disjuncture noted between Chromatius' theology on the one hand and his pastoral practice on the other remained an enduring feature of the Aquileian church down through the 440s. This phenomenon may best be understood in light of yet a third feature of Aquileian Christianity, and that is the posture that the Christian community of the city adopted vis-à-vis the broader urban community. In their studies of this particular question, both Alessio Peršič and Claire Sotinel agree: the Aquileian church continued to operate in the middle of the fifth century according to an ecclesiology that most other churches had long since traded in for one more fitting for *tempora Christiana*.¹⁴³⁷

The distinctive ecclesiastical culture of the church of Aquileia is significant because theological debates, both in Late Antiquity and in other periods, are never strictly about ideas in the abstract. They have to do instead with competing spiritualities and ways of organizing the common life of the church. The controversy over Pelagianism was framed primarily in terms of theological theories—in this case, ideas about the Fall of Adam, human nature, free will, and the

¹⁴³⁵ See chap. 6 above, pp. 436-442.

¹⁴³⁶ The date of Adelphius' death is unknown, and it is possible that he was succeeded by a certain Maximus or Maximianus, who was in turn succeeded by Januarius. See Lanzoni, *Le diocesi d'Italia*, 889-890.

¹⁴³⁷ Peršič, "Da Vittorino di Poetovio a Cromazio di Aquileia e al *Libellus fidei* di 418," 520, refers to the ecclesiological framework of Septimius of Altinum as "non 'aristocratica' e di separatezza," implicitly contrasting it to that of the church of Aquileia. Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 283 observes that "the church of Aquileia is still, in the middle of the fifth century, in a situation where it thinks of itself as a spiritual aristocracy in the heart of the city. ... Their intransigence, the exaltation of a perfect Christianity, founded on separation between the Christians and the others, could have been congenial to the ecclesiological conceptions of the church of Aquileia." On this issue, see also Brown, "Pelagius and His Supporters: Aims and Environment," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n. s. 19 (1968): 93-114, at 108; and Markus, "The Legacy of Pelagius," 215-216 (both cited by Sotinel).

nature and power of divine grace. But the theological categories used by the bishops and other participants in the debates to express their opinions on such matters can easily obscure the fact that they might be interested in Pelagianism (or other Christian theologies deemed heretical) for reasons that had little to do with the strictly theological issues involved. Pelagianism consisted, to be sure, of a set of beliefs about free will and divine grace. But it could not simply be reduced to a set of propositions. It was also a religious movement, whose sociological characteristics are important for understanding how it would have been perceived by its supporters as well as by its critics. In his study of asceticism and ecclesiastical authority in the late fourth and early fifth century, Philip Rousseau identifies four such features of the Pelagian movement that would likely have been of concern to any bishop: “spiritual direction, the setting of ascetic standards, a certain withdrawal from the ‘official’ church, and a great predilection for privately circulated literature.”¹⁴³⁸

Sotinel and Peršič have described the Aquileian church’s posture toward the broader urban community as “aristocratic” and “separatist.” In order to explain why the Christian community of Aquileia adopted this posture, it is necessary to appeal to habits forged early in its history, even before Constantine legalized Christianity in the early fourth century.¹⁴³⁹ Conceiving of the church as a “spiritual aristocracy,” set apart from the community as a whole and called by God to pursue a narrow path of holiness, tended to foster an ethos according to which the Christian life was one of constant striving after righteousness, a righteousness that

¹⁴³⁸ Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 2010), 237.

¹⁴³⁹ According to Sotinel’s interpretation of the origins of the Christian community of Aquileia, it represented something of a paradox from the beginning. A number of members of the local aristocracy belonged to it, and yet it seemed to have kept its distance from the broader life of the city. See *Identité civique*, 65-109, esp. 90, where she contrasts “the brilliant visibility represented by the Theodorian basilica and the apparent discretion of the Christian community.”

could only be obtained by the few. This vision of the church and its relationship with the world stands in stark contrast to an alternative way of imagining this relationship, according to which the church should seek to incorporate as many people as possible, welcoming them through the sacrament of baptism in order that they might be saved from spiritual shipwreck. This alternative to the “aristocratic”/“separatist” model was, of course, developed by bishop Augustine of Hippo, and his doctrines of grace were an integral part of it.¹⁴⁴⁰ If the *initium fidei* was always a gift of divine grace, and if all rewards for merit were simply God’s crowning his own gifts, then the mission of the church must be to gather in as many sinners as possible, not regarding their poor moral performance as an obstacle to membership in Christ’s body.¹⁴⁴¹ The Pelagian controversy was as much a debate over how the Christian church would draw the boundaries between sinner and saint as it was over the definition of dogma.

Leo and the Battle for a Pelagian-Free Church

Augustine may be the most influential theologian in the history of the western church after St. Paul, but his theology was never adopted wholesale in any period, least of all in the decades immediately following his death. Like the theological system of Origen, the one conceived by the bishop of Hippo exercised its influence as other thinkers reacted to it—either in agreement or (sometimes vigorous) disagreement. His corpus of writings permanently altered

¹⁴⁴⁰ Peter Brown notes the connection between Augustine’s soteriology and his ecclesiology, writing that “The Pelagians, with their optimistic views on human nature, seemed to Augustine to blur the distinction between the Catholic church and the good pagans; but they did so only in order to establish an icy puritanism as the sole law of the Christian community. Paradoxically, therefore, it is Augustine, with his harsh emphasis on baptism as the only way to salvation, who appears as the advocate of moral tolerance: for within the exclusive fold of the Catholic church he could find room for a whole spectrum of human failings.” See *Augustine of Hippo*, 351.

¹⁴⁴¹ Reference has already been made in chap. 6 to the importance of the *initium fidei* or the *ortus bonae voluntatis* in the debates over grace in the fifth century. See above, pp. 459-461. It especially came to the fore, however, in the context of the so-called Semi-Pelagian controversy. See Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 1-35. Augustine came to devote more attention to this matter as time passed. See Tianyue Wu, “Augustine on *Initium fidei*: A Case Study in the Coexistence of Operative Grace and Freedom of the Will,” in *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales* 79.1 (2012): 1-38.

the theological landscape of the Latin-speaking churches as his fellow bishops, as well as ascetic theologians and even lay theologians like Prosper of Aquitaine, adopted various aspects of his compelling vision.¹⁴⁴² One such person was Leo, who first became known to Augustine in the year 418, when as an acolyte of the church of Rome, he delivered a letter from bishop Zosimus to bishop Aurelius of Carthage refuting the teachings of Pelagius.¹⁴⁴³ When he became bishop of Rome more than 20 years later, he made the struggle against Pelagianism “his first doctrinal battle,” one that “defined him as someone committed to championing ... the same Augustinian view of grace to which such predecessors as Caelestine had subscribed, and for which he too had taken a definitive stand.”¹⁴⁴⁴

One reason why Augustine’s doctrine of grace might provoke a fierce reaction, quite apart from what it seemed to imply about human freedom, was that it had important implications for the way in which asceticism was embodied. As discussed in chapter 2, the Roman church had never fully embraced all of the lofty claims sometimes made for asceticism.¹⁴⁴⁵ The stance taken by various bishops of Rome in the late fourth and early fifth century on issues related to asceticism and the ways in which it was embodied in the leadership of the church illustrate the ways in which “the more ostentatious forms” of ascetic piety could lead to church practices that clashed with the more conservative vision of Rome.¹⁴⁴⁶ Leo’s predecessor Celestine (s. 422-

¹⁴⁴² For the influence of Augustine on western theology in the centuries immediately following his death, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. 1, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 349-357; and vol. 2, *The Growth of Medieval Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 9-49.

¹⁴⁴³ See Augustine, *Ep.* 191.1; and Susan Wessel, *Leo the Great and the Spiritual Rebuilding of a Universal Rome* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 35-36.

¹⁴⁴⁴ Wessel, *Leo the Great*, 38.

¹⁴⁴⁵ See above, pp. 94-101.

¹⁴⁴⁶ Wessel, *Leo the Great*, 79.

432), for example, had criticized the monks of Lérins for refusing penitence to the laity. A better pastoral approach, in his estimation, was one informed by a different understanding of grace from that which prevailed in Gaul: “Ascetic performance,” for Leo, “was to be tempered by the implicit constraints of the modified-Augustinian understanding of grace.”¹⁴⁴⁷ Thus to take a stand against Pelagianism—or any other defective understanding of grace—meant not only opposing the theological ideas that lay at its heart; it also meant opposing the ways in which it manifested itself concretely in the life of the church.¹⁴⁴⁸

Leo’s anti-Pelagian views and actions were bound up with his larger project of making the authority of the Roman church over the other churches of the Roman world not only a theory, but a fact. In pursuit of this end, he not only strengthened the bonds that connected his church with the churches of Gaul, North Africa, Spain, and Illyricum, but also with northern Italy.¹⁴⁴⁹ We have already seen that he intervened there by letter with the aim of compelling the bishop of Aquileia to exercise firmer discipline over his clergy in order to prevent the spread of Pelagian ideas and practices. The remainder of this chapter will be taken up with considering the role played by Peter Chrysologus in these anti-Pelagian efforts. As a bishop in northern Italy whose see was elevated to metropolitan status thanks in part to the bishop of Rome, Peter was at once a

¹⁴⁴⁷ Wessel, *Leo the Great*, 79. Celestine’s concern over Pelagianism also moved him to dispatch Germanus of Auxerre to Britain and to criticize the bishops of Vienne and Narbonensis, both of whom were “graduates” of the monastery of Lérins, for wearing distinctive (i. e., monastic) garb. See Wessel, *Leo the Great*, 80-81. The monk-bishop became more common in Gaul in the fifth century, and the monastery of Lérins became something of a training ground for bishops in southern Gaul. These bishops in turn became one of the two main factions in Gallic ecclesiastical politics during this century. See Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 85-92 (for Lerinian monks who became bishops in southern Gaul) and 92-116 (for the consolidation and influence of the Lerinian faction).

¹⁴⁴⁸ Wessel is quick to point out that Hilary of Arles, the particular target of Leo’s ire in Gaul, was no Pelagian. Nevertheless, “Leo may have been wary of the image of asceticism that Hilary championed and the view of grace that his *Vita Honorati* espoused. That intuition is confirmed by Prosper, who told Augustine that Hilary, though he generally followed his teachings, was among those who challenged his doctrine of grace. Because Leo worked closely with Prosper, he surely would have been aware of this sentiment.” See *Leo the Great*, 79.

¹⁴⁴⁹ For Leo’s efforts in Gaul, see Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 141-205; and Wessel, *Leo the Great*, 53-96. For North Africa, Spain, and Illyricum, see Wessel, *Leo the Great*, 96-121.

client of Rome as well as a neighbor and a rival to the other metropolitan bishops of the north: Milan and Aquileia.¹⁴⁵⁰ Peter spoke often and sometimes at length in his sermons about the issues debated in the Pelagian controversy, and so his views can easily be reconstructed. The following survey will show that numerous echoes of Augustine's writings can be found in Peter's sermons, indicating that Peter had probably read at least some of them. The theology of grace he embraced might be called "modified-Augustinian," meaning that his position aligned quite well with that of Leo. Even more important, however, our discussion will show that Peter understood the implications of his view of grace for the way in which the church marked the boundaries between those within and those without. In this regard, therefore, he offered a vision of Christian community that was noticeably different from the "separatist" and "aristocratic" vision still embraced by Aquileia.

Peter's Augustinian Theology of Grace

Peter was certainly not the only bishop of his time to be an ardent opponent of Pelagianism. Such Gallic churchmen as Hilary of Arles, John Cassian, Vincent of Lérins, and (in a later generation) Faustus of Riez could also be described in this way. These Gallic figures agreed with and appreciated Augustine's statement of central doctrines where his views were in step with the mainstream view of the church, including on the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the notion that grace was an internal, restorative power. But they rejected Augustine's distinctive teachings, such as the concept of original sin as an inheritance of both guilt and corruption and the insistence that the *initium fidei* was in every case, without exception, a divine gift. The issue on which they most definitely parted company with Augustine was whether God's salvific will was universal. That is, did God wish to save only those whom he had chosen from eternity, as

¹⁴⁵⁰ For the politics surrounding the elevation of Ravenna, see chap. 1 above, pp. 70-75.

Augustine believed, or did he wish to save all while at the same time leaving humanity with the ability to reject divine grace, as most Gallic theologians believed?¹⁴⁵¹

To be sure, Peter likewise stopped short of embracing a fully-orbed Augustinian position. He never pronounces himself, for example, on the issue of the extent of God's salvific will, nor does he ever defend an Augustinian view of predestination. In many of his sermons, however, he not only outlines a very definite anti-Pelagian position on the issues of human nature, free will, and divine grace. He also articulates a view of original sin very similar to Augustine's and seems to reject the possibility that the *initium fidei* could ever arise apart from grace. His position therefore represented something new in the north Italian context—a mediating position between that of Augustine and the Gallic critics of his predestinarianism. After the condemnations of 418, the field had been narrowed somewhat with regard to what ideas about human nature and grace could be considered orthodox, but there was still much room for diversity. Both Peter and his ally Leo on the one hand, and the churchmen of Gaul on the other, planted their respective flags on different parts of the portion that remained.

Peter was not the first north Italian bishop to address the issues of human nature and divine grace. Ambrose and Chromatius both had views on these topics, although the fact that they were not hotly contested in their day means that their formulation of their position was somewhat vague in comparison to the positions taken by those who participated in the controversy that arose after 410. The broad outlines of a consensus existed by the end of the

¹⁴⁵¹ For the position held by most of the bishops and ascetics of Gaul in the 420s, which was opposed both to Pelagianism as well as to Augustine's doctrine of predestination, see Mathisen, *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 122-140; and Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 71-116 (focusing mainly on John Cassian). For the position of Hilary of Arles in particular, see Susan Wessel, *Leo the Great and the Spiritual Rebuilding of a Universal Rome* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 77-80. Vincent criticizes Augustine's theology of grace in his *Commonitorium*, 26(37). Prosper wrote a rebuttal to Vincent entitled *Pro Augustino responsiones ad capitula objectionum Vincentianarum* (PL 51.177-186), translated by de Letter as *Answers to the Vincentian Articles* in *ACW* 32.163-177. Mathisen shows how Faustus' views align with those of his predecessors in *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 261-264.

fourth century, and they can be summarized as follows: First, humans had enjoyed “supernatural blessedness” in their primitive state. Second, the human race was in solidarity with Adam, although what Adam’s descendants inherited from him was not guilt, but corruption and a tendency to sin. Third, this orthodoxy at the same time affirmed both human free will and the need for the assistance of God’s grace in order for sinners to be restored to the blessedness that had been lost as a result of Adam’s fall.¹⁴⁵² Chromatius’ views, discussed at some length in the previous chapter, were well within this consensus, and so it is quite unlikely that he would have fallen afoul of the dogmatic decisions made by the Council of Carthage and upheld by Zosimus in the year 418.¹⁴⁵³

That Chromatius’ position on these matters was in the mainstream can be illustrated also in another way, which was not discussed in the previous chapter. In chapter 1, we had occasion to refer in our discussion of the duties of bishops in regards to the catechumenate—the rites of initiation whereby a person was received as a full member of a Christian church in Late Antiquity.¹⁴⁵⁴ The purpose of these practices was to impart a new sense of identity to those being initiated, an identity that was in some sense shared with other Christians throughout the Mediterranean world, yet which was also in some ways unique to the region or city in which the new Christian was being received. One example of such a practice that existed only in northern Italy at the end of the fourth century was a ritual footwashing that formed part of the baptismal ceremony.¹⁴⁵⁵ It had originated in the baptismal customs of the Quartodecimans, descended

¹⁴⁵² See Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 353-357.

¹⁴⁵³ See chap. 6 above, pp. 442-462.

¹⁴⁵⁴ See above, pp. 60-62.

¹⁴⁵⁵ On this practice, see E. J. Yarnold, “The Ceremonies of Initiation in the *De Sacramentis* and *De Mysteriis* of S. Ambrose,” in *Studia Patristica* 10, *Papers Presented to the Fifth International Conference on Patristic Studies held*

from the Johannine community in Asia Minor in the late first and early second centuries. It came west with Irenaeus of Lyon, the second-century bishop who was a native of Asia Minor. From there it spread widely, but began to fall out of favor during the fourth century.¹⁴⁵⁶ It is not clear why this rite came to be rejected by some of the western churches. Chromatius explains its meaning clearly enough, though, and the meaning is one that most major western theologians of his day would have endorsed: “The Lord therefore washed the feet of his disciples in order that no trace of sin deriving from Adam’s vileness might remain in us. For the Lord now washes his servants’ feet, whom he invites to the grace of saving baptism.”¹⁴⁵⁷ As these words indicate, the foot-washing took place immediately before the catechumen was immersed in the baptismal font, and it symbolized the washing away of the sin inherited from Adam.¹⁴⁵⁸

Pelagius offended against the consensus that existed by the time of Ambrose and that was embraced likewise by Chromatius in denying that Adam’s sin affected the condition of his descendants in any way besides the force of custom and example.¹⁴⁵⁹ He also defined grace in a way that was unlikely to be satisfactory to the majority of his contemporaries. For Pelagius, the grace of God consisted of two parts: first, the conscience, the Law of Moses, and the example of

in *Oxford* 1967, ed. F. L. Cross (Akademie-Verlag, 1970), 453-463, at 460-461; and Pier Franco Beatrice, “Lavanda dei piedi,” in *DPAC* 2.1910-1911.

¹⁴⁵⁶ The Council of Elvira, probably meeting in the early fourth century, abolished it in Spain. See canon 48, cited in Beatrice, “Lavanda dei piedi,” 1910. It continued to be used in Milan in the time of Ambrose, as attested by his *De sacr.* and *De myst.* . It also became part of the Gallic, Celtic, and even Gothic liturgical traditions. See Yarnold, “The Ceremonies of Initiation,” 461.

¹⁴⁵⁷ *CCL* 9A.69: “Lavit ergo Dominus pedes discipulorum suorum, ne in nobis aliqua peccati vestigia de Adae sordibus remanent. Lavat enim nunc Dominus pedes servorum suorum, quos ad gratiam baptismi salutaris invitat.”

¹⁴⁵⁸ The same passage was cited in the previous chapter in the discussion of Chromatius’ views on sin and grace. See above, p. 448n.1330.

¹⁴⁵⁹ This summary of Pelagius’ position relies on Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 357-361; and Grossi, “Friends and Adversaries of Augustine,” 480.

Christ; and second, the power of baptism to wash away a person's sins. In other words, Pelagius tended (at least in Augustine's view) to reduce grace to nature.

Pelagius was, as we have seen, one of the growing number of western churchmen and ascetics who in the late fourth and early fifth century produced commentaries on one or more of Paul's epistles. Unfortunately for him and his disciples, however, most of his contemporaries came to rather different conclusions on the basis of their reading of the apostle's writings. In fact, the Pauline renaissance that coincided with the flowering of Latin patristic literature in general seems to have shifted the western church's general position in a direction that we cannot describe in any other way than by calling it more "Augustinian."¹⁴⁶⁰ Peter's theological outlook was one of the fruits of this trend. As far as we can tell on the basis of the surviving literature, he was more interested in Paul than any other north Italian preacher we have so far discussed.¹⁴⁶¹ Ambrose liked to preach on the Old Testament; his only published work on the New Testament was his commentary on Luke. Chromatius, as we have seen, wrote a commentary on Matthew and his sermons that were based on biblical texts drew mainly from the Gospels and Acts. Maximus of Turin likewise preached primarily on Gospel texts. But the corpus of Peter's sermons is distinguished by a feature that is not found in that of any earlier bishop from northern Italy: a series of sermons based on texts from Paul's epistles. In this way, therefore, Peter's dozen or so sermons on Paul can be seen as the pastoral fruit of the tradition of western biblical scholarship that was born in the second half of the fourth century, beginning with Victorinus and Ambrosiaster—a tradition characterized by an interest in Paul's epistles, and refined and clarified as a result of the Pelagian controversy. As we proceed, then, we will look first at a

¹⁴⁶⁰ At any rate, the canons of the Council of Orange (529) might be described as "Augustinizing."

¹⁴⁶¹ It should be pointed out, however, that Gaudentius of Brescia comes in a close second. His *Tractatus* are filled with references to Paul's writings, even though none of the sermons is based on any of them.

sample of Peter's many statements on the issues debated as part of that controversy, and in so doing the influence of Augustine on his thinking will become apparent. Next, we will turn to look at aspects of Peter's thought that are in agreement with Augustine. Finally, we will explore areas of disagreement between Peter and Augustine.

We begin with the doctrine of original sin, one of the points of the church's theology that was greatly clarified as a result of the Pelagian controversy. Pelagius, as we have pointed out, scandalized many of his contemporaries by denying this doctrine, which affirmed the solidarity of the human race with sinful Adam, a solidarity that left them in need of redemption by Christ.¹⁴⁶² Before the Pelagian controversy, western theologians did not necessarily understand original sin to imply that the guilt Adam incurred for his rebellion against God was transmitted to his offspring. Augustine, for his part, strongly affirmed the transmission not only of Adam's corruption, but also of his guilt. For him, the essence of original sin was "our participation in, and co-responsibility for, Adam's perverse choice."¹⁴⁶³ The transmission of Adam's guilt to his posterity was one of the distinctive marks of Augustine's own understanding of original sin, and in this Peter follows him.¹⁴⁶⁴ In Sermon 72B, he states that "the first man had on account of his guilt incurred death by the sentence rendered by God, and he passed death onto his race and transmitted it to his posterity, because one who is now mortal in body generates mortals, guilty,

¹⁴⁶² Agostino Trapè, "Augustine," in *Patrology*, vol. 4, 342-462, at 434.

¹⁴⁶³ Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 364.

¹⁴⁶⁴ For the purposes of the present discussion, I have attempted to define the doctrine of original sin in a neutral way that would have been recognized by all parties to the controversy, whether they accepted it, rejected it, or went beyond it. But Kelly's exposition of Augustine's particular doctrine of original sin points out that that it included not only the "solidarity" of which Trapè speaks, but also the transmission of Adam's guilt to his descendants, rendering them guilty from birth, as well as the loss of the free choice of the will, thus making it impossible for them to believe in Christ apart from prior grace. See *Early Christian Doctrines*, 361-366.

not free, not acquitted, but in bondage...”¹⁴⁶⁵ Peter sets forth his ideas about the nature and effects of original sin at somewhat greater length in Sermon 111, an exegesis of Romans 5:12-14 that is entirely devoted to this topic. Here he defines sin as “an unfavorable power which is observed in its operation and felt in the punishment it brings on.”¹⁴⁶⁶ One of the chief consequences of the advent of this power is death, since “through this sin we are seen to have come under the control of death.”¹⁴⁶⁷ He goes on to affirm that Adam’s mortality is passed on to his descendants, lamenting “the miseries [Adam] left us for our inheritance! Not only did he lose the goods conferred on himself, but he left all his descendants at the mercy of such fierce creditors. O bitter and cruel inheritance!”¹⁴⁶⁸ Not only do humans inherit Adam’s mortality, they also inherit his guilt. Peter places into the mouth of those who might object to such a notion the protest that “If I owe to my ancestry the fact that I was born, do I also owe to its transgression this, that nature should make me guilty, before any fault of my own?”¹⁴⁶⁹ He responds to this objection by appealing to the Apostle’s words, “*in quo omnes peccaverunt.*” Following Ambrosiaster and Augustine’s (mis)interpretation of the phrase, Peter takes the words to mean,

¹⁴⁶⁵ Sermon 72B.5, *CCL* 24A.443: “primus homo adiudicante deo de reatu incurrerat mortem, et eam delegavit suo generi, transmisit ad posteros, quia corpore iam mortalis generaret mortales, obnoxios, non liberos, non absolutes, sed addictos” (trans. Palardy, *FC* 110.10).

¹⁴⁶⁶ Sermon 111.2, *CCL* 24A.681: “et adversa est haec potestas, quae videtur in opere, sentitur in poena” (trans. Gans, *FC* 17.176).

¹⁴⁶⁷ Sermon 111.3, *CCL* 24A.681: “per peccatum intrasse videmur in mortem.” Cf. Sermon 112.2, where Peter attributes to some of his opponents the idea “that it was God who established death as something so harsh, so cruel, so merciless.” *CCL* 24A.686: “...tamen quare eam tam trucem, tam crudelem, tam inmitem, nonnulli a deo velint esse conditam, scire non possum.” This is likely a reference to the Pelagian belief that humans are mortal by nature.

¹⁴⁶⁸ Sermon 111.3, *CCL* 24A. 681: “...qui nos tantarum miseriarum reliquit haeredes; qui non solum conlata bona perdidit, sed omnes posteros suos tam feris creditoribus obnoxios sic reliquit! O dura haereditas et crudelis!” (trans. Gans, *FC* 17.177).

¹⁴⁶⁹ Sermon 111.4, *CCL* 24A.682: “si generi debeo quod natus sum, numquid et crimini, ut ante me reum faciat natura quam culpa?”

“in whom all sinned.” He thus concludes, “If because of him [sc., Adam] all men have become sinners, then rightly through him have all men received the penalty.”¹⁴⁷⁰

Peter’s understanding of the capabilities of man’s will after the Fall, as well as his need for and the nature of grace, also adheres closely to Augustine’s position. In many places he downplays the ability of humans’ free will to seek God, emphasizing rather the notion that God’s grace is the only thing that can bring healing to man’s nature, subject as it is to the power of sin. The tragic result of original sin, in Peter’s view, is that mankind before the coming of Christ “was the slave of sin, the captive of death, the possession of the devils. He was a servant of idols, a whipped scoundrel full of vices, a prisoner shackled for his crimes.”¹⁴⁷¹ Sin, for Peter, is a tyrannical power holding man in bondage. Not surprisingly, therefore, he judges that human free will is unable to liberate man from this condition. On the contrary, the human will is part of the problem. Peter attempts to explain the human predicament by contrasting the attitude of the will toward sin with its attitude toward physical illness: “the human being is held willingly in his sins, but he is kept unwillingly when physically infirm.”¹⁴⁷² In a similar way, “our innate frailty compels us to sin, and the confusion related to sin prevents us from admitting it.”¹⁴⁷³ In another sermon, Peter exhorts his hearers to “honor and esteem the merits of the martyrs as being the

¹⁴⁷⁰ Sermon 111.4, *CCL* 24A.682: “Si in illo omnes peccaverunt, merito per illum omnes suscepere supplicium.”

¹⁴⁷¹ Sermon 6.2, *CCL* 24.44: “Erat homo peccati servus, erat captivus mortis, erat mancipium daemonium, erat idolorum vernula, erat vitiorum verbero, erat criminum conpeditus” (trans. Gans, *FC* 17.53-54).

¹⁴⁷² Sermon 35.2, *CCL* 24.202: “...homo habetur voluntarius in delictis, in languoribus tenetur invitatus” (trans. Palardy, *FC* 109.150).

¹⁴⁷³ Sermon 34.1, *CCL* 24.193: “...peccare nos cogit fragilitas innata, et confiteri prohibet confusio cognata peccati” (trans. Palardy, *FC* 109.144). Augustine speaks in his *Contra Iulianum opus imperfectum* 1.106, *CSEL* 85/1.124, of a “necessitas peccandi.” Cited in Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 365.

gifts of God. Let us beg for them, and add the inclination of our own will. For, our will follows; it does not take the lead.”¹⁴⁷⁴

In light of this dim view of human nature, Peter not surprisingly insists that grace is absolutely necessary to free the human race from its bondage. There was, of course, universal agreement among all Christian thinkers about the necessity of grace. What divided them was how grace should be defined. Peter, for his part, understood grace as a divine gift that transforms the human condition in a variety of ways. It removes the guilt that made the human race liable to divine judgment. “Grace,” he states in Sermon 6, “has led back and innocence has brought in those whom guilt had thrown out and conscience had driven away,” removing guilt and leading the sinner back to God.¹⁴⁷⁵ What is more, “to be righteous does not derive from human achievement, but from a divine gift.”¹⁴⁷⁶ Peter makes it clear that this divine gift is grace when he states that Zachariah and Elizabeth were righteous in the sight of God, “not by their effort but by grace.”¹⁴⁷⁷ Grace is also an enabling power, as evidenced when Peter states that “What we do through you we always attribute to you our Author; and by your action come to our aid in those matters which you command us to do. ...we have nothing apart from your grace, thanks to which we stand, ‘we live, we move, and we have our being,’ and without which we fall flat, we fade away, and we perish.”¹⁴⁷⁸ In two places Peter compares God to “a dedicated physician [who]

¹⁴⁷⁴ Sermon 135.3, *CCL* 24B.823: “Ergo martyrum merita dei bona laudemus, amemus, honoremus, subinferamus voluntatem nostram. Voluntas enim sequitur, non praevenit” (trans. Gans, *FC* 17.224).

¹⁴⁷⁵ Sermon 6.2, *CCL* 24.45: “quos eiecerat reatus, quos expulerat conscientia, gratia reducit, intromittit innocentia” (trans. Gans, *FC* 17.54).

¹⁴⁷⁶ Sermon 89.5, *CCL* 24A.551: “...ante deum, qui scrutator corda, cogitationes discutit, videt mentium motus, esse iustum humani laboris non est, muneris est divini” (trans. Palardy, *FC* 110.76).

¹⁴⁷⁷ Sermon 91.3, *CCL* 24A.563: “non labore, sed gratia” (trans. Palardy, *FC* 110.86).

¹⁴⁷⁸ Sermon 97.4, *CCL* 24A.599: “Nos quod per te facimus, tibi semper nostro adsignamus auctori; et tu in his, quae nobis facienda praecipis, ipse operator adsiste. ...nos praeter tuam gratiam nil habemus, per quam stamus, *vivimus*, *movemur*, *et sumus*, et sine qua iacemus, deficimus et perimus” (trans. Palardy, *FC* 110.102).

often cures a sick patient against his will,” thus illustrating the gratuitous nature of grace, the fact that it is a power that works within the sinner to transform his nature and the disposition of his will, and the passive stance with which the sinner receives it.¹⁴⁷⁹ These statements seem to imply that Peter disagreed with the notion that the *initium fidei* could ever arise from something other than divine action. Such a stance would set him apart from someone like John Cassian, who explicitly left open the possibility that unaided human will could give birth to genuine faith.

The fundamental problem with human beings, in Peter’s view, is that, made of dust, they are simply too weak to take the initiative in the matter of salvation. In Sermon 117, on the second half of I Corinthians 15, where the apostle addresses the issues of the Adam-Christ typology and the nature of the resurrection body, Peter explains the apostle’s statement that “the first man was of the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven, heavenly,” by saying that “The one is a case of divine power; the other of human weakness. The one case occurs in a body subject to passion; the other in the tranquility of the divine Spirit and the peace of the human body.”¹⁴⁸⁰ As he states later in the same sermon, explaining the apostle’s statement, “Therefore, even as we have born the likeness of the earthy, let us bear also the likeness of the heavenly,”

Let it be granted that all this was a necessity: that we, formed from earth, could not produce heavenly fruits; that, born from concupiscence, we could not avoid concupiscence; that we, born from the powerful attractions of the flesh, had to carry the base load of its attractions; that we, accepted into this world for our home, were captives to its evils.¹⁴⁸¹

¹⁴⁷⁹ Sermon. 99A.5, *CCL* 24A.615: “Sed quia medicus pius aegrum saepe curat invitum, adprehendens hydropicum Christus dimisit sanum, quia quem comprehenderit Christus, languoris universitas mox dimittit” (trans. Palardy, *FC* 110.113). Cf. Sermon 50.4.

¹⁴⁸⁰ Sermon. 117.3, *CCL* 24A.710: “hoc divinae virtutis sit, illud infirmitatis humanae; illud sit in corporis passione, hoc totum sit in tranquillitate divini spiritus, humani corporis in quiete” (trans. Gans, *FC* 17.200).

¹⁴⁸¹ Sermon. 117.5, *CCL* 24A.711: “Fuerit necessitas quod de terra concreti caelestia aspirare nequivimus, quod de concupiscentia nati concupiscentiam non valuimus evitare, quod inlecebris dominantibus adquisiti coacti sumus inlecebrarum turbidinem sustinere, quod saeculi huius habitaculo recepti captivi fuimus malis saeculi” (trans. Gans, *FC* 17.201).

The human self is therefore frail and carnal, and no human resource is able to cure this weakness. As a result it is engaged in an epic struggle, as Peter explains in another sermon, basing himself on Psalm 6:4, where the psalmist writes, “And my soul is deeply disturbed”:

Between the precepts of God and the passions of the body, between virtues and vices, between adversity and prosperity, between punishments and rewards, between life and death, standing on the battle line, enduring warfare, receiving wounds, rarely holding its ground, faltering in judgment, the soul is disturbed, deeply disturbed, because, being weighed down by the burdens of the flesh, it becomes a slave of the vices before it reaches the virtues.¹⁴⁸²

The work of Christ on the soul thus enslaved to the vices is “to repair the flesh, to renew the spirit, and to transform nature itself into a heavenly reality.”¹⁴⁸³ What is needed is not simply a guide, or illumination, but a power that is able to “repair,” “renew,” and “transform” human nature, inherently weak and captive to the power of sin. In Peter’s view, this is what the grace of Christ does. In this, he is solidly Augustinian.

Other Augustinian Influences on Peter’s Thought

We have seen from the preceding discussion of Peter’s ideas about human nature, free will, and divine grace, that Augustine’s influence had reached northern Italy by the middle of the fifth century. But these are not the only parts of Peter’s theology where Augustinian influence is evident. Echoes of Augustine’s ideas can be heard in his treatment of a number of other issues as well. In some cases, it may be possible to go so far as to identify certain of Augustine’s writings that Peter had likely read. This section will demonstrate both Augustine’s long reach in the decades immediately following his death, as well as the limits of his influence on the shaping

¹⁴⁸² Sermon 45.4, *CCL* 24.252: “Inter dei praecepta et corporis passiones, inter virtutes et vitia, inter adversa et prospera, inter poenas et praemia, inter vitam et mortem, stans in acie, bella sustinens, suscipiens vulnera, raro stans, occumbens sensu, turbatur anima, turbatur valde, quia carnis impedita ponderibus priusquam ad virtutes veniat, vitiorum fit ante captiva” (trans. Palardy, *FC* 109.174-175).

¹⁴⁸³ Sermon 45.5, *CCL* 24.253: “...ut carnem reparet, innovet animam, ipsam naturam in caelestem commutet substantiam” (trans. Palardy, *FC* 109.175).

of Peter's views. We will see that on certain issues on which Augustine had quite distinctive views, the bishop of Ravenna differed from him, preferring instead the moderated form of Augustinianism exemplified by his colleague and contemporary, bishop Leo of Rome.

Not surprisingly, Peter appears to have read Augustine's *Confessions*, or at least to have been familiar with the famous passage from Book 10, where Augustine prays to God, "Grant what you command, and command what you will."¹⁴⁸⁴ In Sermon 178, Peter attempts to encourage his hearers to believe that they are capable of loving their enemies by admonishing them that "he himself who gives the command furnishes the power."¹⁴⁸⁵ But even many of Augustine's opponents had read the *Confessions*, too, as evidenced by the fact that it was this very passage that so offended the sensibilities of Pelagius.¹⁴⁸⁶ On matters completely unrelated to human nature and divine grace, the influence of Augustine is evident in Peter's thought. Peter's notion of the relation between time and eternity bears this stamp, as does his concept of the church as a mixture of the elect and the reprobate, and of death as an evil, in contrast to a tradition of consolation literature that sought to rationalize death—a tradition adapted by some Christian authors, including Ambrose.

One of the most noteworthy aspects of Augustine's thought is his reflection on the nature of time and of the relationship between time and eternity, found in Book 11 of the *Confessions*. There he discusses the relationship between creation and time (time was created along with the universe), God's relationship to time (God neither precedes nor succeeds time, since he created time and stands outside it, seeing all moments in one "instant"), and the nature of time itself (if

¹⁴⁸⁴ 10.29.40, *CCL* 27.176: "da quod iubes, et iube quod vis."

¹⁴⁸⁵ Sermon 178.1, *CCL* 24B.1080: "...posse dat ipse qui iubet" (trans. Palardy, *FC* 110.350). Cf. Sermon 97.4, *CCL* 24A.599, cited above in n.1478.

¹⁴⁸⁶ As Augustine notes in *De dono perseverantiae* 20.53.

no one asks him, he knows; if someone asks him, he does not know).¹⁴⁸⁷ Peter picks up Augustine's train of thought in a sermon in which he discusses the resurrection body. To explain Paul's words in I Corinthians 15, "In an instant, in the batting of an eye the dead rise," he resorts to this Augustinian concept.

Since the blessed Apostle could not relate with words the swiftness of the resurrection, he conveyed it by examples. Or how could he verbally harness such speed in this instance when God's power outstrips speed itself? Or how is time at issue in this instance when an eternal matter is being bestowed apart from time? Just as time has brought what is temporary, so has eternity excluded time.¹⁴⁸⁸

Augustine's reflection on the nature of time and eternity was a natural outgrowth of his endeavor to theologize from within a Platonic philosophical framework. It is unlikely in the extreme that Peter, who was much more an orator than a philosopher, would produce such reflection independently.¹⁴⁸⁹ Almost certainly he is borrowing here from Augustine.

Another aspect of Augustine's thought that Peter took is an important point of ecclesiology. Over against the Donatists, Augustine had argued for a mixed church, made up of the righteous and the unrighteous, the elect and the reprobate—at least until the judgment, at which time God would sort out those who were his and those who were not. In the *City of God*,

¹⁴⁸⁷ Augustine's discussion of these particular issues is found in 11.13.15-11.15.17. Cf. Claudio Moreschini, *Storia della filosofia patristica* (Brescia: Editrice Morcelliana, 2004), 457-458.

¹⁴⁸⁸ Sermon 34.5, *CCL* 24.199: "Beatus apostolus, quia velocitatem resurrectionis non potuit referre verbis, aptavit exemplis. Aut quomodo ibi celeritatem sermone perstringeret, ubi ipsam celeritatem praevenit vis divina? Aut quomodo apparet ibi tempus, ubi aeterna sine tempore res donatur? Sicut temporalitatem tempus attulit, sic exclusit aeternitas tempus" (trans. Palardy, *FC* 110.148).

¹⁴⁸⁹ In a number of places in his sermons Peter either warns of the inability of reason apart from faith to grasp Christian doctrines, or repudiates philosophy, in a number of places. See Sermon 5.5; 11.1; 16.3; 44.6; 58.1; 76.3; 90.1; 131.1; 141.3; 163.7 and *Ep. ad Eutychem* 1. But it should not be inferred from these admonitions that he altogether repudiated the use of reason or of philosophical categories in formulating his theology. In Sermon 34.3, for example, he uses Neoplatonic categories (*simplicitas* and *multiplicitas*) to explain the Incarnation of Christ; in Sermon 101.4, *CCL* 24A.621, echoing a Stoic idea he admonishes his listeners, "Quod non potes nolle, est velle virtutis"; and in Sermon 125.1 he likens reason to salt, which is useful in moderation.

he urges this idea upon his readers by appealing to “this wicked world” and “these evil times,” in which

the Church through her present humiliation is preparing for future exaltation. ... In this situation, many reprobates are mingled in the Church with the good, and both sorts are collected as it were in the dragnet of the gospel; and in his world, as in a sea, both kinds swim without separation, enclosed in nets until the shore is reached.¹⁴⁹⁰

The “dragnet of the gospel” appears to be a reference to the parable Jesus tells in Matthew 13:47-50, where he compares the kingdom of heaven to a net cast into the sea, which collects fish of all kinds. The fishermen sift the good from the bad only once they have reached the shore, their arrival on land a symbol of the world’s arrival at the end of the age and the final judgment. Peter’s sermon on Matthew 13:45-50 interprets the parable in essentially the same way and draws the same conclusion from it about what the make-up of the church should be while it awaits the judgment. “The catch itself brings together fish of every sort, but the separation puts the chosen ones into vessels. Similarly, the vocation to the Christian faith brings together just and unjust, bad and good, but the divine election separates the good and the bad.”¹⁴⁹¹

Augustine’s conception of the church as a mixed body of elect and reprobate had been articulated in the context of his polemics against the Donatists. However, it could be deployed equally well in anti-Pelagian polemics, for their extreme moralism, if taken to its logical

¹⁴⁹⁰ *De civitate Dei* 18.49, CCL 48.647: “In hoc ergo saeculo maligno, in his diebus malis, ubi per humilitatem praesentem futuram comparat ecclesia celsitudinem et timorum stimulis, dolorum tormentis, laborum molestiis, temptationum periculis eruditur, sola spe gaudens, quando sanum gaudet, multi reprobi miscentur bonis et utrique tamquam in sagenam evangelicam colliguntur et in hoc mundo tamquam in mari utrique inclusi retibus indiscrete natant, donec perveniatur ad litus.” All English translations of the *City of God* are taken from *St Augustine Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*, trans. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin, 2003).

¹⁴⁹¹ Serm. 47.3, CCL 24.261: “Pisces congregat captura confusos, sed in vasa discretio dat electos. Sic vocatio christiana iustos, iniustos congregat; malos bonosque electio divina transmittit” (trans. Gans, FC 17.100-101).

conclusion, might exclude from the church those who were less committed.¹⁴⁹² That Peter took over this interpretation and application of the parable is one more piece of evidence that illustrates the wide-ranging influence of Augustine even so soon after his own lifetime. It also suggests that he understood the way in which the ecclesiological implications of Pelagianism were at odds with those of Augustine's view of grace, even in the moderated form in which he and Leo taught it.

A third point on which Augustine left his mark on Peter's thought was one where Augustine differed significantly from the bishop who catechized and baptized him, and who was the towering figure of north Italian Christianity. Ambrose had taught that death was a good, because it allowed the soul to escape from the body. And he was not alone among the Christian thinkers of his age. As John Cavadini has shown, an entire tradition of Christian consolation literature existed by the late fourth century, written by individuals who, basing themselves on such authors as Plato, Plotinus, Porphyry, Cicero, and Lucretius, argued that death was not an evil, and could indeed be seen as a positive good.¹⁴⁹³ Ambrose, who had learned much from the Neoplatonists and from the eastern Christian writers who drew heavily from them, articulated this position in a pair of sermons that he may well have preached in 386, when Augustine was in Milan and regularly attended services in Ambrose's cathedral. These discourses were later published as *De bono mortis*.¹⁴⁹⁴ Ambrose's argument can be boiled down to the following

¹⁴⁹² Augustine himself observed the way in which Donatism and Pelagianism were united by their perfectionism. See Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 348-349.

¹⁴⁹³ Cavadini, "Ambrose and Augustine *De Bono Mortis*," in *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R. A. Markus*, ed. William E. Klingshirn and Mark Vessey (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 232-249.

¹⁴⁹⁴ Cavadini, "Ambrose and Augustine *De bono mortis*," 232-233, where it is pointed out that Ambrose drew on four types of sources for these discourses: the Platonic tradition, as represented by Plato's *Phaedo* and the *Enneads* of Plotinus; Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*; the works of such Greek Christian writers as Origen, Basil of Caesarea, and Gregory of Nazianzus; as well as the tradition of natural philosophy represented by Lucretius' *De rerum natura*.

points: 1) Death is not evil because it does not harm the soul. What is not evil is good; therefore, death is good. 2) Death is good because it separates the soul and the body, which are enemies. In this treatment, the resurrection of the body gets short shrift, being mentioned “almost as an afterthought.”¹⁴⁹⁵

Augustine outlines his own position on the matter in Book 13 of the *City of God*. There he argues that death is evil because, as the separation of the soul and the body, it is “a disintegration of the human being as a whole ... a kind of annihilation that cannot be good.”¹⁴⁹⁶ What is more, Augustine integrates his understanding of death with his understanding of human nature as a whole. “Death is part of the weakening of human nature due to the Fall, an effect and a mirroring of the primal incoherence that the Fall, for Augustine, always represented.” Because the joining of body and soul is what makes a human being, their separation is not the liberation of the soul from a prison, but the disintegration of a human person. Thus death has no utility or benefit.¹⁴⁹⁷

Cavadini points to two reasons why Augustine differed from his mentor Ambrose on this question. The first is his long polemic against Pelagian teaching, one strand of which rationalized death by asserting that it was natural and not a punishment for sin, as Augustine insisted.¹⁴⁹⁸ But the other reason must be sought outside the context of this long debate that did so much to shape Augustine’s thought during the last twenty years of his life. Its origins must be located much earlier in his career as a Christian intellectual, when signs of a fundamental

¹⁴⁹⁵ Cavadini, “Ambrose and Augustine *De bono mortis*,” 233-237.

¹⁴⁹⁶ Cavadini, “Ambrose and Augustine *De bono mortis*,” 238.

¹⁴⁹⁷ Cavadini, “Ambrose and Augustine *De bono mortis*,” 239.

¹⁴⁹⁸ Cavadini speculates that the view of death as natural was particularly that of Caelestius. See “Ambrose and Augustine *De bono mortis*,” 242.

disagreement with Ambrose over anthropology can be detected. Cavadini argues that “*City of God* 13 may be regarded as the mature articulation of a long-developing conviction, the final character of which was indelibly affected by the disputes in which Augustine was involved later in life, but whose basic shape had been dictated by his earlier discomfitures.”¹⁴⁹⁹ What had so “discomfited” Augustine, even as a young theologian, was “perceived deficiencies in Ambrose and the particular tradition of western Christian Platonism in which he was nurtured,” with the notion of death as a positive good being symptomatic of an underlying weakness in the philosophical framework that informed the theological activities of Ambrose and many other theologians in Late Antiquity.¹⁵⁰⁰ Augustine’s theory sought both to reconcile inconsistencies in Ambrose’s thought while at the same time providing a means of opposing both Pelagian and Manichaean interpretations of death as natural and intrinsic to human nature.¹⁵⁰¹

Peter only explicitly addresses the issue of the evil of death in one sermon, but does so in such a way as to make it clear that he is aware of the tradition of Christian interpretation of death as a good to which Augustine objected. Sermon 118 is based on 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 and its main purpose seems to have been to warn about the reality of death and of her three allies—Despair, Unbelief, and Corruption—whose subtle tricks can so easily distract the Christian from acknowledging and preparing for death.¹⁵⁰² After warning his hearers about the wiles of these personifications, he mounts an attack against the tradition of consolation literature that sought to minimize the evil of death.

¹⁴⁹⁹ Cavadini, “Ambrose and Augustine *De bono mortis*,” 243.

¹⁵⁰⁰ Cavadini, “Ambrose and Augustine *De bono mortis*,” 243-244.

¹⁵⁰¹ Cavadini, “Ambrose and Augustine *De bono mortis*,” 249.

¹⁵⁰² Serm. 118.3-5.

Brothers, how wrong those authors have been who have tried to write about the good of death. And what is so surprising about that? In this case the worldly-wise think that they are great and remarkable if they convince simple folks that the thing that is the greatest evil is the greatest good. Quite correctly does Scripture say about this lot: ‘Woe to those who call evil good and good evil; woe to those who put darkness for light and light for darkness.’ And truly, what deception would be beyond them, what blindness have they been unable to induce, when they have succeeded in making the undiscerning believe that it is an evil to live and a good thing to die? But these things, brothers, truth dispels, the Law banishes, faith attacks, the Apostle censures, and Christ blots out, who, while restoring the good that life is, discloses, condemns, and banishes the evil of death.¹⁵⁰³

Augustine never explicitly criticized Ambrose for holding what he believed to be an erroneous view of this matter, and this is probably because he realized that Ambrose’s position had an anti-Manichaean intention that Augustine shared.¹⁵⁰⁴ Peter’s harsh criticism of those who hold the contrary opinion, however, betrays on the one hand a decided lack of sympathy for the context within which earlier writers like Ambrose reached their conclusions, and on the other hand a profound suspicion of the possible implications of treating death as a positive good. This suspicion is probably best explained in light of Peter’s deep mistrust of the ability of human reason to arrive at truth without the aid of revelation found in Scripture.¹⁵⁰⁵ But his forthright

¹⁵⁰³ Serm. 118.6, *CCL* 24A.716: “Erravere, fratres, qui de bono mortis scribere sunt conati. Et quid mirum? Tunc se mundi sapientes magnos aestimant et praeclaros, si id quod est summum malum, hoc esse summum bonum simplicibus persuaserint. Merito scriptura de istis dicit: *Vae qui dicunt malum bonum et bonum malum; vae qui ponunt tenebras lucem et lucem tenebras*. Et revera, quid non isti fallerent, quid non caecare potuerunt, qui vivere malum, mori bonum incautis credere perfecerunt. Sed haec, fratres, veritas submovet, lex fugat, in pugnat fides, apostolus notat, Christus delet, qui dum bonum vitae reddit, malum mortis prodit, damnat, excludit” (trans. Palardy, *FC* 110.152-153).

¹⁵⁰⁴ See R. A. Markus, “Augustine’s Confessions and the Controversy with Julian of Eclanum: Manicheism Revisited,” in *Collectanea Augustiniana: Mélanges T. J. Van Bavel*, ed. B. Bruning, M. Lamberigts, and J. Van Houtem (Leuven: Leuven University Press), 913-925, at 923; and *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 154 and xxiii. Both are cited in Cavadini, “Ambrose and Augustine *De bono mortis*,” 247.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Note that the list of authorities he names at the end of the passage—“Law,” “faith,” “the Apostle,” and “Christ”—are essentially one and the same, and fall into the category of special as opposed to general revelation. This is consistent with the warnings Peter issues in other places about the inability of reason apart from faith to grasp Christian doctrines, and with his repudiation of philosophy. See Sermm. 5.5; 11.1; 16.3; 44.6; 58.1; 76.3; 90.1; 131.1; 141.3; 163.7, and *Ep. ad Eutychem* 1. Nevertheless, in Serm. 34.3 he uses Neoplatonic categories (*simplicitas* and *multiplicitas*) to explain the Incarnation of Christ; in Serm. 101.4, *CCL* 24A.621, echoing a Stoic

criticism of the view held by Ambrose also aligns well with the anti-Pelagian polemic that he sustains throughout the corpus of his sermons. Most likely he had learned from Augustine that opposing Pelagianism made it necessary to call into question not only their teachings on original sin, but also the notion that death was intrinsic to human nature.¹⁵⁰⁶

The stridency of Peter's denunciation of the opposing point of view is therefore best understood in the context of his polemic against Pelagianism. If human nature was created mortal in the beginning, as Pelagius and his supporters claimed, then it would be quite sensible to interpret death as natural and not as a power to be feared. But if anti-Pelagians like Augustine and Peter were correct in interpreting Romans 5:12 to mean that mortality attached itself to human nature only after Adam's rebellion in Paradise, then any attempt to rationalize death as something other than an evil and an enemy of the human race became implausible in the extreme. Ambrose's attempt to do so in the fourth century might have been acceptable, but it is understandable why, from the standpoint of the mid-fifth century such an argument as he had made two generations earlier, in an entirely different set of circumstances, could be seen as awkward at least, and perhaps even worthy of condemnation.¹⁵⁰⁷ To Peter, the attempt to soften

idea, he admonishes his listeners, "Quod non potes nolle, est velle virtutis"; and in Serm. 125.1 he likens reason to salt, which is useful in moderation.

¹⁵⁰⁶ Cavadini points to several places in Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings where he opposes this position, and proposes rather that only on account of God's grace can death, which in itself is a penalty for sin, in any sense be said to serve the interests of the one who undergoes it: *De peccatorum meritis* 2.30.49-34.56; *Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum* 4.4.6; and *De natura et gratia* 24.27. To be sure, he also makes a similar point in some of his anti-Manichaean writings: *Contra Secundinum* 10; *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* 2.7.8; and *De libero arbitrio* 3.25.76.264. Cited in "Ambrose and Augustine *De Bono Mortis*," 247-249. Cf. also *De civ. Dei* 13.4. Given the prominence of the anti-Pelagian theme in Peter's sermons, and the comparative lack of concern over Manichaeism, it seems much more likely that what he says about the nature of death is aimed at the former rather than the latter.

¹⁵⁰⁷ Cavadini, "Ambrose and Augustine *De Bono Mortis*," 249, concludes by stating that "Augustine's disagreement with Ambrose on whether or not death is a 'good' may be seen as part of his struggle to explain how a penalty could be a remedy, as he tried to reconcile inconsistencies in Ambrose's thought while pursuing his mentor's anti-Manichaean aims."

the sting of death in any other way than by a straightforward proclamation of the resurrection must have seemed both sub-Christian and reckless, in light of its possible Pelagian as well as Manichaean implications.¹⁵⁰⁸ Wishing to give no quarter to the very teaching he so strenuously opposed, he attacks the consolatory tradition as a means of covering his flank.¹⁵⁰⁹

The North Italian Traits of Peter's Theology

We have seen that Peter aligned closely with Augustine not only in his ideas about human nature, free will, and grace, but also in the contours of his thinking about time and eternity, the church as a mixed body, and death as a penalty for sin rather than something intrinsic to human nature. But the bishop of Hippo was by no means the only source of Peter's theology. On two issues there is a clear and significant difference between Peter and Augustine, with Peter adhering to a position held also by one of his fellow north Italians. The first is the nature of the first sin, and the second is whether sexual activity pre-dated or post-dated the Fall.

One of the most enduring legacies of Augustine's theology is his interpretation of Adam's rebellion in paradise as motivated above all by pride. Subsequent western Christian theology has tended to follow him on this point, and thus it is often overlooked that this

¹⁵⁰⁸ Peter presents Christ's resurrection as the reversal of the penalty of death in one of his other sermons on a Pauline text, Sermon 110.4, *CCL* 24A.677 (a gloss on Rom. 4:24-25): "*Qui traditus est, inquit, propter delicta nostra, et resurrexit propter iustificationem nostram. Traditus propter delicta, non ut ea, quae non poterat mori, vita puniretur, sed ut delicta, quae nos a vita exulaverant, sola delerentur. Et resurrexit propter iustificationem nostram. Manente condemnatione iustificari non potest condemnatus. Nos ergo, quos primi culpa sic parentis addixerat, ut mors obnoxios sibi iure retineret, Christus, caelestis et verus parens, soluta mortis condemnatione per mortem propriam nos resurrectione iustificat, ut non reus pereat, sed reatus; ipsaque poena, id est, mors, quae reos fuerat iussa percellere, deficiat merito, et suae amittat infulas potestatis. Cur innocentem, cur ipsum iudicem crudelis et inopia esta usa contingere?*"

¹⁵⁰⁹ He does this in Sermon 112.2, *CCL* 24A.685-686: "*Si enim unius delicto, ut dicit, mors regnavit per unum, quare mortem ab uno et primo homine esse posteris adquisitam insinuare et adprobare evangelica laborat auctoritas? Et quamvis sufficiat illa sententia, quae dicit: Deus mortem non fecit, tamen quare eam tam trucem, tam crudelem, tam inmitem, nonnulli a deo velint esse conditam, scire non possum. Nemo sine piaculo existimat tam pium, tam bonum deum mortem creare potuisse, cuius universibus mundus dolore continuo, gemitu, lacrimis accusat et detestatur auctorem. Si mors etiam penes homines est criminum poena, quo ausu concreta homini et poenae ante creditur innocenti a deo insita esse quam vita?*"

interpretation was not universal among Christian writers of the patristic era. The theological perspective of the north Italian church, in particular, was characterized by a somewhat different understanding of Adam's sin. For Augustine, it was the first man's "longing for a perverse kind of exaltation" that prompted him to disobey God by eating the forbidden fruit.¹⁵¹⁰ Chromatius of Aquileia, however, had taught that Adam, "through the desire for a little food, both failed to preserve the teachings of the Lord and lost the grace of immortality."¹⁵¹¹ The first sin was therefore not pride but gluttony. It was Adam's corporeal nature, or at least his weak will's inability to control the appetites of his body, that led to his expulsion from paradise and made him subject to death. In a number of places Peter echoes Chromatius' language and affirms that gluttony was indeed the offense that Adam committed in paradise. In Sermon 12, he states that "gluttony dislodged him from paradise."¹⁵¹² Eve, too, was guilty of this sin, according to Peter. In Sermon 63, commenting on Martha's words to Jesus in John 11—"If you had been here, my brother would not have died"—Peter states, "Lazaraus would not be dead, if the Lord had been there, which in fact he was, but only if you, woman, had not been in paradise. Woman, you sought tears, you found groans, you purchased death for the price of your gluttony..."¹⁵¹³

However, Peter also appeals to an alternative—or perhaps complementary—explanation for the human fall into sin. In a number of places, he names envy as the vice to which the first humans succumbed, and indeed to which the devil himself succumbed. "Envy tampers with

¹⁵¹⁰ *De civ. Dei* 14.13, *CCL* 48.434: "perversae celsitudinis appetitus." Cf. chaps. 12-14.

¹⁵¹¹ *Tr.* 32.1, *CCL* 9A.350: "Recordemur patrem nostrum Adam per parvi cibi desiderium nec Domini praecepta servasse et immortalitatis gratiam perdidisse."

¹⁵¹² Sermon 12.4, *CCL* 24.79: "gula de paradiso quem distraxit" (trans. Palardy, *FC* 109.59).

¹⁵¹³ Sermon 63.3, *CCL* 24A.376: "Non moreretur Lazarus, si dominus fuisset ibi, qui erat ibi, sed si in paradiso tu, mulier, non fuisses. Mulier, tu quaesisti lacrimas, tu invenisti gemitus, tu mortem gulae pretio comparasti" (trans. Palardy, *FC* 109.252).

heaven, for there it made the devil out of an angel; it burns up the earth, since in any event it shut us out of the delights of paradise by the fiery guard; it incites kings, because it drove Herod to rage so furiously against those who were of the same age as Christ, that milk was shed before blood from their tender limbs,” Peter states in Sermon 172.¹⁵¹⁴ In a similar vein, he denounces this vice in Sermon 48:

Envy cast an angel out of heaven, drove man out of paradise, was the first to contaminate the earth with a brother’s blood, compelled brothers to sell their brother, put Moses to flight, aroused Aaron to insult his brother, defiled Miriam with jealousy toward her husband; and in short, what causes the mind to shudder, the sight to become blurred, and the hearing to fail to grasp: it aimed for and attained the very blood of Christ.

Envy is worse than all other evils: those whom it captures cannot be freed; those whom it wounds can never be cured nor return to health. Envy is the venom for offenses, the poison for iniquity, the mother of sins, the origin of the vices.¹⁵¹⁵

Envy thus plays a similar role in Peter’s moral theory as pride does in Augustine’s. Just as for Augustine, pride was the vice that lay behind Satan’s rebellion in heaven, Adam’s rebellion in paradise, and a host of disastrous episodes in sacred history, so for Peter it was envy that enjoyed this dubious honor. But Peter is not of the same analytical cast of mind as Augustine, and so he is not as eager as the latter to explore the nature of the vices he discusses, preferring instead to assume that his hearers are familiar enough with his meaning based on the way his terms are commonly used.

¹⁵¹⁴ Serm. 172.3, *CCL* 24B.1051: “Invidia caelum temptat, ibi enim diabolum fecit ex angelo; urit terras, quae utique paradisi nobis amoena flammeo custode secluserit; reges urguet, quia haec Herodem in coevos Christi sic compulit desaevire, ut ante lac quam sanguis teneris funderetur ex membris” (trans. Palardy, *FC* 110.321).

¹⁵¹⁵ Serm. 48.5, *CCL* 24.267: “Invidia de caelo deiecit angelum, de paradiso exclusit hominem, ipsa primum contaminavit terras germano sanguine, ipsa germanos compulit venundare germanum, ipsa Moysen fugavit, Aaron in fratris excitavit iniuriam, Mariam maculavit livore germani; ac ne multis, quod pavet mens, quod visus tremit, quod auditus non capit: ipsum Christi tetendit et pervenit ad sanguinem. Invidia omnibus malis peior: quos ceperit, liberari nequeunt; quos vulneraverit, ad curam non veniunt, non redeunt ad salutem. Invidia delictorum venenum, criminum virus, peccatorum mater, origo vitiorum” (trans. Palardy, *FC* 109.186-187).

There is one place, however, where he does come close to explaining the sense in which he is using the word envy (*"invidia"*). His Sermon 4 is an extended meditation on the envy of the elder brother in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. In this sermon Peter describes the effects of envy in a manner very similar to the description found in Sermon 48, but he spends more time exploring the parallels between Cain and Abel on the one hand, and the two brothers in the Lucan parable on the other. "O cancer of jealousy!" he exclaims. "A spacious house does not contain two brothers! And what is strange about this, brethren? Envy has wrought this. Envy has made the whole breadth of the world too narrow for two brothers."¹⁵¹⁶ If Augustine held pride to be the bitter fruit of the suspicion that status is a scarce resource and must therefore be grasped at, Peter seems to understand envy as the bitter fruit of the the suspicion that material resources are scarce and must therefore be grasped at. The elder brother in the parable had precisely the same attitude regarding the family property the father divided when the younger brother asked for his share. "When the father recovered his son, he regarded nothing as lost. But the brother did believe it a loss when he saw his co-heir back home. When is an envious man anything but avaricious? *He reckons whatever another possesses as his own loss.*"¹⁵¹⁷ Thus for Peter, the first sin, which indicates something of the essence of sin itself, involves desiring to have what belongs to another, the desire to grasp, to possess, to accumulate for fear of loss.

Both pride and envy involve disordered desires (though we must be clear that to describe vice in this way is quintessentially Augustinian¹⁵¹⁸—Peter never uses that language to describe

¹⁵¹⁶ Sermon 4.2, *CCL* 24.32-33: "O zeli tumor! Duos non capit domus ampla germanos. Et quid mirum, fratres? Fecit invidia; fecit ut mundi tota duobus esset angusta fratribus latitudo" (trans. Gans, *FC* 17.40-41).

¹⁵¹⁷ Sermon 4.3, *CCL* 24.34 (emphasis added): "...nil pater perdidit filium cum recepit. Frater credidit damnum, qui redisse conspicit cohaeredem. Et quando invidus non avarus, quando quidquid habet alter se computat perdidisse?" (trans. Gans, *FC* 17.42).

¹⁵¹⁸ See *De civ. Dei*, 15.22, *CCL* 48.488, where he states that "definitio brevis et vera virtutis ordo est amoris."

the nature of envy), but whereas envy is a disordered desire for possessions, pride is a disordered desire for recognition and praise. Augustine explores the nature of pride in two places in the *City of God*, and concludes that in essence, pride seeks to raise itself above its proper station; it seeks the glory that is due another. “When we ask the cause of the evil angels’ misery, we find that it is the just result of their turning away from him who supremely is, and their turning towards themselves, who do not exist in that supreme degree. What other name is there for this fault than pride?”¹⁵¹⁹ In the context of arguing that humans could not have committed an evil act without first having an evil will, he asks, “What is pride except a longing for a perverse kind of exaltation? For it is a perverse kind of exaltation to abandon the basis on which the mind should be firmly fixed, and to become, as it were, based on oneself, and so remain.”¹⁵²⁰ In Augustine’s mind, that is why the devil fell from his lofty summit; that is why man disobeyed in paradise; that is why Cain was displeased when God accepted his brother’s offering but not his own;¹⁵²¹ that is why Nimrod built the Tower of Babel.¹⁵²²

Thus Peter and Augustine had slightly different ideas about the nature of the rebellion of the devil and of the human race against the creator, and correspondingly different ideas about the nature and essence of sin. But the difference between them should not be exaggerated. In two places in Book 14 of the *City of God*, Augustine discusses pride and envy alongside one another, an indication that although he regarded these two vices as different, he nevertheless saw that they

¹⁵¹⁹ *De civ. Dei*, 12.6, CCL 48.359: “Cum vero causa miseriae malorum angelorum quaeritur, ea merito occurrit, quod ab illo, qui summe est, aversi ad se ipsos conversi sunt, qui non summe sunt; et hoc vitium quid aliud quam superbia nuncupetur?”

¹⁵²⁰ *De civ. Dei* 14.13, CCL 48.434: “Quid est autem superbia nisi perversae celsitudinis appetitus? Perversa enim est celsitudo deserto eo, cui debet animus inhaerere, principio sibi quodam modo fieri atque esse principium.”

¹⁵²¹ *De civ. Dei* 15.7.

¹⁵²² *De civ. Dei* 16.4.

shared common traits. When addressing the question of how the devil, who had no body, could be evil, he reasoned that “Certainly, we cannot accuse the Devil of fornication or drunkenness or any other such wickedness connected with carnal indulgence, although he is the hidden persuader and instigator of such sins. Nevertheless, he is proud and envious in the highest degree...”¹⁵²³ Later in the same book, Augustine depicts the “arrogant angel” coming to Adam, “envious because of that pride of his, who had for the same reason turned away from God to follow his own leading. ... After his fall, his ambition was to worm his way, by seductive craftiness, into the consciousness of man, whose unfallen condition he envied, now that he himself had fallen.”¹⁵²⁴ Pride and envy are linked in Augustine’s understanding of the nature of vice, but pride is clearly for him the chief vice, with all others following in its train.

Augustine’s and Peter’s statements about human sexuality also betray a different understanding of this feature of human life. Augustine, for his part, sought to interpret the early chapters of Genesis in such a way as to affirm that human sexuality was a part of the original, uncorrupted creation.¹⁵²⁵ But we saw in chapter 2 that Peter seems to have entertained doubts as to whether sexuality and procreation were features of human life before the fall, a view that he may have shared with Maximus of Turin.¹⁵²⁶ If this is the case, they were on this point quite far

¹⁵²³ *De civ. Dei* 14.3, CCL 48.417: “Etsi enim diabolus fornicator vel ebriosus vel si quid huius modi mali est, quod ad carnis pertinent voluptates, non potest dici, cum sit etiam talium peccatorum suator et instigator occultus: est tamen maxime superbus et invidus.”

¹⁵²⁴ *De civ. Dei* 14.11, CCL 48.432: “Postea vero quam superbus ille angelus ac per hoc invidus per eandem superbiam a Deo ad semet ipsum conversus et quodam quasi tyrannico fastu gaudere subditis quam esse subditus eligens de spiritali paradiso cecidit ... malesuada versutia in hominis sensum serpere affectans, cui utique stanti, quoniam ipse ceciderat, invidebat...”

¹⁵²⁵ *De civ. Dei* 14.23, CCL 48.444: “Quisquis autem dicit non fuisse coituros nec generaturos, nisi peccassent, quid dicit, nisi propter numerositatem sanctorum necessarium hominis fuisse peccatum?” and 14.26, CCL 48.449: “In tanta facilitate rerum et felicitate hominum absit ut suspicemur non potuisse prolem seri sine libidinis morbo, sed eo voluntatis nutu moverentur membra illa quo cetera, et sine ardoris inlecebrosi stimulo cum tranquillitate animi et corporis nulla corruptione integritatis infunderetur gremio maritus uxoris.”

¹⁵²⁶ See above, pp. 163-173.

from Augustine, whose feet were held to the fire by the polemicizing of Julian of Eclanum.¹⁵²⁷

Peter had to have known that positing that sexuality was a result of the fall could smack of a Manichaean denial of the inherent goodness of creation and the natural processes that were built into it. Such a combination of views—belief in original sin, the transmission of Adam’s guilt and corruption to his descendants, and a denial of sexuality and procreation before the Fall—would have made Peter a rather idiosyncratic theologian. Unfortunately, we possess no writing by one of the Aquileian Pelagians whose survival so alarmed Leo (and, no doubt, Peter), and so we can only speculate as to how they would have responded to Peter’s critiques of their position.

Conclusion: Peter and the “Moderate-Augustinian Turn”

Peter’s theology of human nature, free will, and divine grace shows that he desired to combat what he regarded as Pelagianism’s inadequate account of human nature, sin, and grace by adopting a position on these issues very close to that of Augustine. He affirmed the participation of the entire human race in Adam’s rebellion, with the result that the entire race was not only corrupted by Adam’s sin, but also thereby rendered guilty. He likewise denied that the human will was free to turn to God in faith, a point at which he differed from most Gallic anti-Pelagian theologians, who tended to affirm that the *initium fidei* could arise from the human will, though not in every case. Finally, he understood grace as a divine power that works internally to change the will of the sinner, enabling him to desire God and the good.

Peter’s view of the human race after the Fall and of the need for divine grace in order for there to be a reconciliation between God and man was shaped by a tradition of Pauline exegesis in the Latin-speaking churches that was nearly a century old by the end of his life. Beginning with Marius Victorinus, and continuing with Ambrosiaster, Jerome, and those who participated

¹⁵²⁷ See the chapter entitled “Julian of Eclanum” in Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 383-399.

in the controversy over free will and grace, the writings of the apostle Paul came to be studied in greater detail than they had been in the circles of Latin Christian intellectuals during the third and early fourth century. Peter, however, was the only north Italian bishop considered in this study for whom we possess more than one sermon on a Pauline text—a total of thirteen, based either on Romans or 1 Corinthians, as well as appeals to Pauline texts in sermons based on passages found elsewhere in the Bible. Earlier bishops in northern Italy had devoted their exegetical and homiletical efforts mainly to the Gospels (Zeno, Ambrose, Chromatius, Maximus, and Gaudentius), to extolling the virtues of the martyrs (Zeno, Ambrose, Chromatius, Maximus, and Gaudentius), or to seeking the allegorical meaning of Old Testament narratives (Zeno, Ambrose, and Gaudentius). Peter's Pauline sermons, many of which deal with themes related to the Pelagian controversy, represent the distilling of a mature tradition of Pauline exegesis for an audience that was somewhat intellectually sophisticated.¹⁵²⁸

The letters of bishop Leo of Rome that were discussed near the beginning of this chapter show that he took a rather assertive posture with regard to clergy under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Aquileia who subscribed to Pelagianism. A number of features of Peter's theology, and of the context in which it was formed and deployed, suggest that his strong opposition was part of a coordinated effort between him and Leo. First, there is the substance of his theology, which diverged widely from any view that downplayed the importance of grace as an inwardly-working and gratuitous divine power that was absolutely necessary in order for faith to be born in the sinner. Next, there is the fact that Ravenna owed its elevation to metropolitan status to the action of Galla Placidia and the church of Rome, probably toward the end of Celestine's

¹⁵²⁸ The make-up of Peter's audience in Ravenna has been discussed in chap. 5 above, pp. 367-370.

episcopate. Finally, there is the geographical proximity of Ravenna to the “offending” church of Aquileia, which would have placed Peter on the “front lines” of any effort directed from Rome.

Admittedly, the hypothesis of collaboration between Rome and Ravenna to combat Pelagianism in and around Aquileia is based on a certain amount of speculation. But it seems to fit with Leo’s desire to exert greater authority over his fellow bishops throughout the church, especially in the west.¹⁵²⁹ In any case, Peter’s Augustine-inflected theology of grace introduced an element into the life of the churches of northern Italy that had not been present in the thought of any of the other bishops we have considered in this study. In chapters 6 and 7 of this dissertation, the notion that there were Pelagian elements in the thought of Chromatius and other bishops of Aquileia has been challenged. It has also been argued that there is no good reason for supposing that Leo’s concerns about the presence of unreconstructed Pelagians in the clergy of Aquileia during the 440s was either an illusion or a mere pretext for Roman intervention in northeastern Italy. There is, in fact, reason to believe that the Aquileian church’s tolerance for such clerics had its roots in both its tradition of episcopal forbearance in theological disputes relating to asceticism, as well as in the “separatist” and “aristocratic” nature of its community.

Peter’s anti-Pelagian preaching seems to have been a direct challenge to this traditional forbearance on the part of Chromatius. It is impossible to know how his hearers responded, but if it did take root, it would have had the effect of noticeably altering the theological identity of the north Italian church. As metropolitan sees in a *de facto* if not in a *de iure* sense, Milan and Aquileia had been from the late fourth century the twin centers of a distinct theological culture

¹⁵²⁹ Sotinel discusses Leo’s attempts to do so in precisely in Aquileia and its environs in connection with the crisis faced by bishop Nicetas of Aquileia, to whom he offered advice (in response to Nicetas’ solicitation) with regard to the pastoral challenges that arose as a result of the capture (and in some cases, the subsequent liberation) of members of his flock at the hands of the Huns. See *Identité civique*, 286-287.

within the mainstream of western Christianity. This sub-culture was characterized by firmer links with eastern Christian theology, as represented by Ambrose's interest in Greek Christian writers and Chromatius' ties with both Jerome and Rufinus. But it was not only the metropolitan sees that boasted these eastern links, for both Brescia and Altinum had bishops (Gaudentius and Heliodorus, respectively) whose ascetic interests had led them to travel for a time to the east. These links made northern Italy, much more so than Rome, a bridgehead in the western half of the empire for influences emanating from Greek-speaking Christianity. These influences appear in ideas prevalent in northern Italy about the intersection between asceticism and episcopal authority, in the reception by north Italian churchmen of earlier Christian (mainly Eusebian) ideas about imperial authority, and in the comparative openness of north Italian bishops to studying the writings of Origen even after he was condemned. It was this last feature of the ecclesiastical culture of northern Italy that made it a haven for Rufinus, the translator of Origen. As was mentioned in chapter 1, the bishops of both Aquileia and Milan had for a long time exercised a primacy of influence—Aquileia over an area reaching into Illyricum and Milan over an area that included southeastern Gaul.¹⁵³⁰ These churches thus enjoyed a large degree of independence vis-à-vis Rome. This independence, and the prestige that went with it, allowed Ambrose's successor Simplicianus to preside over a church council whose purpose was to settle ongoing disputes among the churches of southern Gaul.¹⁵³¹

The act of elevating the see of Ravenna to metropolitan status essentially co-opted it for Rome's ecclesiastical sphere of influence. Rome now had a counter-weight to the older metropolitan sees of northern Italy—one that it could use as an outpost for increasing its

¹⁵³⁰ On the broad influence of these two churches, see chap. 1 above, pp. 68-70.

¹⁵³¹ See Mathisen, "The Council of Turin (398/99) and the reorganization of Gaul ca. 395/406," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 6.2 (2013): 264-307, at 292-296.

influence at the expense of these older sees. In Peter, it benefitted from a talented orator whose rhetorical abilities are on full display in his corpus of surviving sermons. For the church of Rome, Peter was indeed a valuable ally, and one who was unlikely to become a problem for Rome. He was hemmed in by Rome to the south, and Milan and Aquileia to the west and north, who were eager not to lose any more influence to Ravenna than they already had.¹⁵³² And outside the sphere of jurisdiction and discipline, at least, Peter seems to have been perfectly willing to defer to the judgment of the bishop of Rome on theological questions that were not yet settled in his day. The only writing of Peter to survive other than his sermons is a letter he wrote to the Constantinopolitan monk Eutyches, whose teaching on the Incarnation of Christ prompted a synod in Ephesus in 449 and an ecumenical council in Chalcedon in 451. Eutyches had appealed to Peter as the bishop of a prominent western see for help in vindicating his theory that Christ's nature after the Incarnation was a divine-human composite. Eutyches' decision to do so is understandable on other grounds, as well, for Peter's language in many of his sermons gives the impression that his own view of the person of Christ leaned in a Monophysite direction. Eutyches was a more strident exponent of this view.¹⁵³³ But rather than use the opportunity of the appeal to take Eutyches' side, and in so doing make a bid to rival the prestige and influence of Rome, Peter meekly wrote back to the monk to encourage him to submit to the wisdom of his

¹⁵³² The danger that a see that owed its elevation to Rome could become too powerful was quite real. Mathisen's study of the Gallic churches in the fifth century draws attention to the willingness of the bishops of Rome to alter the status of episcopal sees in Gaul—for example, by elevating the position of Arles and its bishop Patroclus—on the basis of their cooperation in advancing a Rome-friendly agenda. But when Zosimus gave too much authority to the see of Arles, and his successors had to slay the monster he created. See *Ecclesiastical Factionalism*, 48-60.

¹⁵³³ In his study of Peter's Christology, Ruggero Benericetti argues that Peter's language about the Incarnation sometimes veers "dangerously close to Monophysitism," yet insists that this impression is the result of exaggeration and the rhetorical nature of Peter's sermons. See *Il Cristo nei sermoni di S. Pier Crisologo* (Cesena: Centro Studi e Ricerche sulla Antica Provincia Ecclesiastica Ravennate, 1995), 48n.116 and 103; cf. 107-135, an extended discussion of Peter's view of the person of Christ.

brother Leo in Rome, “because blessed Peter who lives and presides in his own see proffers the truth of faith to those who seek it.”¹⁵³⁴

The exchange of letters between Eutyches and Peter bears witness both to the prestige of the see of Ravenna as well as to the new reality that had emerged in Italian church politics by the middle of the fifth century. Peter’s unwillingness to step into this controversy indicates something about his understanding of Ravenna’s place in the Italian church that is rather different from Ambrose’s expansive view of the see of Milan throughout his active career. Whereas Ambrose’s assertive leadership made it seem for a time that Milan would become the leading church in the Christian west, Peter’s willingness to line up behind Roman leadership indicates an acceptance of a different role for the see of Ravenna as compared with Ambrose’s Milan. The fact that the emperor had moved the court to Rome by the time Eutyches approached him would have made it all the more difficult for the bishop of Ravenna to throw his weight around in a theological dispute. Although Peter’s see had by now been elevated to metropolitan status, it was to play only a subordinate role in Italian church politics, one that recognized the *fait accompli* of Roman dominance, and his successors would have to be content to haggle with Rome over the degree of independence enjoyed by their proud church.¹⁵³⁵ But from the time of Peter Chrysologus, there was no going back to the situation of the late fourth century. The political role that the city of Rome had for centuries played in the Mediterranean world was now largely mirrored by the ecclesiastical role played by the church of Rome. And thus Peter’s

¹⁵³⁴ Peter Chrysologus, *Ep. ad Eutychem* 2, *PL* 54.741-743: “In omnibus autem hortamur te, frater honorabilis, ut his quae a beatissimo papa Romanae civitatis scripta sunt, obedienter attendas: quoniam beatus Petrus, qui in propria sede et vivit et praesidit, praestat quaerentibus fidei veritatem” (trans. Gans, *FC* 17.286).

¹⁵³⁵ The ninth-century chronicler Agnellus recounts these struggles in the *Liber pontificalis ecclesiae ravennatis*, translated by Deborah Deliyannis as *The Book of the Pontiffs of the Church of Ravenna* (Washington, D. C. Catholic University of America Press, 2004).

legacy consists of three things: he was the prophet of a vision of the Christian empire, a preacher of grace, and the golden-tongued assassin of the traditional autonomy of the churches of northern Italy.

CONCLUSION

This study of the bishops of northern Italy in the first half of the fifth century has argued that Chromatius and Rufinus of Aquileia, Gaudentius of Brescia, Vigilius of Trent, Maximus of Turin, and Peter Chrysologus of Ravenna inherited and built upon an Ambrosian theological and ecclesial culture that constituted a distinct regional variation within the broader world of western Christianity in Late Antiquity. This culture was characterized by its conception of episcopal authority as virtually requiring an ascetic commitment, by the innovative use of the cult of the saints and their relics to build networks of ecclesiastical patronage and to define relations of authority among bishops, and by the contributions of Ambrose, Rufinus, and Peter to the political theology of the Christian empire. The north Italian churches of this period were also characterized by a fierce opposition to “Arianism”—their name for the Homoian strand of Trinitarian theology that was articulated in the Creed of Rimini of 359. On all of these issues, the bishops on whose writings we have relied were in agreement. In the last two chapters, however, we focused on a theological issue that revealed fissures in what had appeared in the first five chapters to be a united front. The differing approaches to Pelagianism embodied by Peter on the one hand and his colleagues in Aquileia on the other toward the middle of the fifth century show that divergent visions of the place of ascetic commitment within the church’s life and of the proper stance for the church to take in relation to the broader community and the world had taken root in the churches of the *Annonaria* diocese. Bishop of a see that had been elevated to metropolitan status by one of Leo’s predecessors, Peter was a prophet of the inclusive church, in the mold of Augustine.

Aquileia is silent for most of the second half of the fifth century. Leo wrote a letter to its bishop, Nicetas, in 458 to give him instructions as to how to handle some of the more delicate

pastoral situations that arose when a number of its citizens who had been captured by the Huns a few years earlier managed to obtain their freedom and return home.¹⁵³⁶ We hear nothing more until the late fifth and early sixth century, when its bishop took the side of the losing contender in a schism at Rome.¹⁵³⁷ This was not the last time that the church of Aquileia found itself at odds with her sister in the old capital. Later in the same century, when bishop Vigilius of Rome (s. 537-555) acquiesced under the pressure of the emperor Justinian and condemned the “Three Chapters,” theologians of the Antiochian school who were victims of a posthumous purge at the Fifth Ecumenical Council (553), the bishop of Aquileia withdrew from communion with Rome. The breach was not restored until the early eighth century.¹⁵³⁸ Whether it is called steadfastness or obstinacy, Aquileia was apparently fighting on behalf of an older model of the relationship among churches, one that valued the autonomy the great sees had enjoyed in the Theodosian age.¹⁵³⁹

This Aquileian independence can already be seen in the context of the Pelagian controversy. It was suggested in the last chapter that Milan took a more forthrightly anti-

¹⁵³⁶ *Ep.* 159. See Sotinel, *Identité civique et christianisme. Aquilée du IIIe au VIe siècle* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2005), 286-287.

¹⁵³⁷ The occasion for the so-called Laurentian Schism was the disputed election that took place after the death of bishop Anastasius II (s. 496-498). He was succeeded by Symmachus, but Laurentius mounted a serious challenge to his candidacy that lasted several years into the sixth century. See Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 287-292.

¹⁵³⁸ For a general overview of this controversy, see Karl Baus et al., *The Imperial Church from Constantine to the Early Middle Ages*, trans. Anselm Biggs (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980), 450-456 and 728-735; Pierre Maraval, *Le christianisme. De Constantin à la conquête arabe*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2005), 414-419; and especially the exhaustive treatment in Sotinel, *Identité civique*, 306-370.

¹⁵³⁹ Sotinel makes two observations about the church of Aquileia in this regard. First, she notes that whereas Aquileia's loyalty to Roman conceptions of orthodoxy (as regards Christological dogma) was never in question, nevertheless “its integration into a hierarchical ecclesiastical geography is more doubtful.” Second, she observes that, “assured that it was in the right, disposing of a great capacity to act autonomously, the church of Aquileia was ready to go as far as a breach with Rome to defend a high conception of the authority of the Roman see and of the proper functioning of ecclesiastical discipline. It is tempting to see in this the reflection of a traditional attitude of the civic authorities of Aquileia, certain that they were in the right in the most uncertain causes, going as far as opposing imperial power in the very name of their fidelity to Rome.” See *Identité civique*, 287 and 292.

Pelagian stance than Aquileia did during this dispute.¹⁵⁴⁰ It seems, therefore, that the outlook of the Milanese church in the fifth century made her more eager to cooperate with Rome's ecclesiastical agenda than her sister church on the upper Adriatic. Whatever the case may be, a letter written to Leo in the year 451 by bishop Eusebius of Milan on behalf of a council that had recently met in his city provides yet another instance of that church's readiness to cooperate with Rome.¹⁵⁴¹ The background of the letter is the Christological controversy that occupied the attention of all the churches of the Roman world during the second quarter of the fifth century. It had begun with the firm rejection by Nestorius, the bishop of Constantinople from 428, of the title *Theotokos* for the Virgin Mary.¹⁵⁴² An Ecumenical Council met at Ephesus in 431, at which Nestorius was condemned and deposed, and a formula much along the lines of the teachings of patriarch Cyril of Alexandria (s. 412-444) was promulgated as the church's official position.¹⁵⁴³ Debate over certain questions left open by the council continued, however, and in 449 another gathering of bishops took place, once again at Ephesus.¹⁵⁴⁴ This synod endorsed the Monophysite doctrine, which taught that the incarnate Christ had but a single nature, a fusion of the divine and the human, a view that represented an extreme version of what had traditionally been taught in the churches of Egypt. Dubbed by its critics the "Robber Synod" on account of the underhanded methods alleged to have been employed by the supporters of Dioscorus, patriarch of Alexandria (s. 444-454), its dogmatic settlement proved short-lived. Among those who were greatly displeased with the outcome of the "*latrocinium*" was bishop Leo of Rome,

¹⁵⁴⁰ See chap. 7 above, p. 471n.1408.

¹⁵⁴¹ *Ep.* 97, *PL* 54.945-950. On Eusebius, see *PCBE* 2.704.

¹⁵⁴² Karl Baus et al., *The Imperial Church*, 100-103.

¹⁵⁴³ Baus et al., *The Imperial Church*, 103-107; and Maraval, *Le christianisme*, 358-364.

¹⁵⁴⁴ Baus et al., *The Imperial Church*, 108-114; and Maraval, *Le christianisme*, 365-369.

who was especially disappointed that his contribution to the discussion, the famous *Tomus ad Flavianum*, had been rejected by the council out of hand.

A year after this council, so disastrous from Leo's point of view, the eastern emperor Theodosius II died. The way was now open for a new ecumenical council, which was duly convened by his successor Marcian (r. 450-457). It met in 451 at Chalcedon, just across the Bosphorus from Constantinople, and proved to be the largest church council of antiquity.¹⁵⁴⁵ Its delegates gave a much more favorable reception to Leo's formulation in the *Tome*, and the council produced a Christological formulation that still defines the faith of most Christians in the modern day, even if it proved controversial among many of the eastern churches for several centuries.

Stung by the failure of his intervention at Ephesus in 449, Leo spent the months leading up to this council consolidating his support among the churches of the west by distributing his *Tome* to as many bishops as possible in expectation that they would respond approvingly. Eusebius' letter represents the reply of one group of twenty north Italian bishops to these overtures, meeting in council in Milan.¹⁵⁴⁶ This piece of correspondence is significant on two accounts. First, it contains valuable information about which churches were under Milan's authority at the mid-point of the fifth century.¹⁵⁴⁷ Second, the language in which the council's

¹⁵⁴⁵ Baus et al., *The Imperial Church*, 114-121; and Maraval, *Le christianisme*, 369-376.

¹⁵⁴⁶ §2 refers the fact that the letter was brought to Milan by bishop Abundantius of Como and Senator, a presbyter of Milan. Leo could have relied on his own clergy to distribute copies of the letter, but another way to disseminate it was to give it to ecclesiastical visitors to Rome, who would bring it back to their churches. See also the letter sent to him by the Gallic bishops Ceretius of Grenoble, Salonius of Geneva, and Veranus of Vence, *Ep.* 68 in his collection, *PL* 54.887-890.

¹⁵⁴⁷ The signatories of the letter were as follows: Eusebius of Milan, Faventius of Reggio Emilia, Majorianus of Piacenza, Cyprian of Brescello, Quintus of Tortona, Crispinus of Pavia, Floreius of Ivrea (a presbyter) signing on behalf of bishop Eulogius, Maximus [II] of Turin, Gratus of Aosta (a presbyter) signing on behalf of bishop Euthasius, Cyriacus of Lodi, Abundantius of Como, Asinio of Chur, Paschasius of Genoa, Pastor of Asti,

endorsement of Leo's doctrinal formula is couched suggests something about the way in which the delegates saw the relationship between the church of Milan and the church of Rome.

In this letter, the church of Milan put itself forward as the steward of an ancient tradition of orthodox teaching on Christ's Incarnation. Nor was this the first time it had done so. After the decisions made at the first Council of Ephesus went against patriarch John of Antioch (s. 428-442) and his party, he dispatched letters to the bishops of Milan, Ravenna, and Aquileia to denounce Cyril of Alexandria as an Apollinarian. In response, Martinus, who was then bishop of Milan, sent a letter to John (which has been lost) and a copy of Ambrose's *De incarnationis dominicae sacramento* to the emperor Theodosius II.¹⁵⁴⁸ Martinus seemed to be confident that a perusal of Ambrose's work would resolve the squabbling in the east. Twenty years later, the church of Milan once again made its voice heard on the Christological question by appealing to the memory of its most illustrious bishop. Eusebius' letter heaped fulsome praise on Leo's *Tome*, which "shone with the full simplicity of faith, with the statements of the prophets also, with the authority of the Gospels, and with the testimonies of apostolic teaching."¹⁵⁴⁹ But the highest praise that a bishop of Milan could give to Leo's attempt to speak for all the western churches on the matter of the Incarnation was to indicate that his statement "agreed in every way with the things that blessed Ambrose was moved by the Holy Spirit to write in his books concerning the mystery of the Lord's Incarnation," a not-so-subtle reminder that the see of Milan

Simplicianus of Novara, Joannes of Cremona, Optatianus of Brescia, Justianus of Vercelli, Quintius of Albenga, and Praestantius of Bergamo. See *PL* 54.947-950.

¹⁵⁴⁸ *ACO* 1.1/3.41-42, cited in *PCBE* 2.1418-1419.

¹⁵⁴⁹ *Ep.* 97.2, *PL* 54.946: "Claruit enim plena fidei simplicitate fulgere, prophetarum etiam assertionibus, evangelicis auctoritatibus, et apostolicae doctrinae testimoniis."

had once been occupied by the western church's greatest teacher.¹⁵⁵⁰ Not only had Ambrose secured the victory of Nicene Catholicism over Arianism, he had also instructed the church on a question that would become a live issue only decades after his death.

But what Eusebius was highlighting about the heritage of the Milanese church was its adherence to the dogmatic consensus that Leo was attempting to forge from Rome. Indeed, it was two steps ahead of Leo, who might well be asked why Rome was so slow to catch up with Milan. In any case, they were in agreement on the theological question and the bishop of Milan was eager to cooperate. Aquileia, by contrast, was going to prove to be a thorn in Rome's side right on through to the period of Lombard rule, first intervening on behalf of the wrong side in one of its episcopal elections, and then breaking communion with Rome altogether for a century and a half. Thus the trajectories of the two oldest metropolitan sees of northern Italy, which appear to have diverged first during the Pelagian controversy, have moved far enough along these trajectories by the middle of the fifth century for us to see clearly the different destinations toward which they were headed. Milan, its area of jurisdiction having been pared down steadily after its influence reached its height at the Council of Turin of 398/399, would be constrained to accept a diminished role in the new ecclesiastical world of the fifth and sixth centuries, in which no church could any longer rival Rome for influence.¹⁵⁵¹ But its association with bishop

¹⁵⁵⁰ *Ep.* 97.2, *PL* 54.946: "omnibusque sensibus convenire, quos beatus Ambrosius, de incarnationis Dominicae sacramento suis libris Spiritu sancto excitatus inseruit."

¹⁵⁵¹ The elevation of Arles by Zosimus to extraordinary metropolitan jurisdiction, along with the elevation of Ravenna to metropolitan status, were two important steps in limiting Milan's influence. See Charles Pietri, *Roma Christiana. Recherches sur l'église de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie de Miltiade à Sixte III (311-440)* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1976), 2.1005-1011. Ralph Mathisen suggests that the presence of the emperor in Milan at the time of the Council of Turin is what enabled the bishops of northern Italy to presume to settle the affairs of the Gallic church, which was not even in the same prefecture. The transfer of the imperial court to Ravenna naturally made it impossible for them to "draw on" the authority of the emperors in their attempts to adjudicate ecclesiastical disputes, and so their ability to intervene so far outside of their regular jurisdiction would have been considerably lessened. See "The Council of Turin (398/399) and the Reorganization of Gaul ca. 395/406," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 6.2 (2013): 264-307, at 302. See also *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 18-19 and 49-

Ambrose, who overcame the Arians, humbled emperors, and correctly taught about the two natures of Christ, would cover it with everlasting glory. His legacy continues to be proudly celebrated there today.

Aquileia could boast of no such illustrious past. Indeed, the literary achievement of its greatest bishop, already modest in comparison with that of his contemporary Ambrose, would largely be forgotten over the course of the fifth century.¹⁵⁵² And so, once the city had recovered from the devastation of the Huns, there was no reason to doubt that the greatest days of that see lay ahead of it.¹⁵⁵³ One of its bishops in the late sixth century, in the heat of the Three Chapters controversy, claimed the title of Patriarch, a signal that Aquileia possessed the necessary authority to resist the erroneous course followed by Rome. The schism was finally healed in the early eighth century, but the church of Grado, raised to metropolitan rank by Rome during the schism as a counterweight to Aquileia, alone retained the title. It passed eventually to the bishop of Venice, who retains it to this day, a survival in the modern era of the ancient attempt of Aquileia—now several miles inland and mostly hidden beneath a layer of topsoil—to find its place in the sun.¹⁵⁵⁴

50. The elevation of Ravenna likewise represented a check on Milan's authority. Imola, Peter Chrysologus' hometown, had previously been under Milan's jurisdiction, but Peter's Sermon 165, delivered on the occasion of his consecration of a bishop for that city, indicates that it had come under Ravenna's jurisdiction by the middle of the fifth century. See William B. Palardy, *FC* 109.10.

¹⁵⁵² As Étaix and Lemarié point out regarding *Par. Lat.* 1771, which was probably created in or near Ravenna, "The attribution to Jerome of Chromatius' commentary in a manuscript dating to the first half of the sixth century should be highlighted. A century and a half after the death of the bishop of Aquileia, a region that is a neighbor to the metropolis of the *Venetiae*, the memory of the true author of this writing had already been lost." See *CCL* 9A.xl.

¹⁵⁵³ Sotinel writes that "Aquileia was certainly not a dead city after the trial of 452, nor even a dying city, since it still had enough importance in the eyes of the royal power to merit being defended at great cost, and because its inhabitants disposed of surplus wealth that they invested in numerous religious constructions." See *Identité civique*, 292.

¹⁵⁵⁴ Giorgio Fedalto, *Aquileia. Una chiesa due patriarcati* (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, 1999), 109.

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APPENDIX: THE DATES OF THE BISHOPS CONSIDERED IN THIS STUDY

The dates of the six bishops who are at the center of this dissertation (plus Rufinus of Aquileia) were given at the beginning of chapter 1, on p. 15. Ambrose's dates (374-397) can be securely established and thus need not occasion further comment here. Hans von Campenhausen attempted to date his accession as bishop of Milan to 373, but later scholars have not followed him in this.¹⁵⁵⁵ The dates of Peter Chrysologus' episcopate have likewise been discussed in n.197, in chapter 1, in connection with the discussion of the elevation of Ravenna to the status of a metropolitan see. We do not know the years of Rufinus' birth and death with mathematical certainty, but his biographers are in basic agreement as to the span of his life, and so there is no need to look into the matter at length.¹⁵⁵⁶ A considerable amount of uncertainty, however, surrounds the dates of the other bishops: Chromatius, Vigilius, Gaudentius, and Maximus. In what follows, therefore, I will attempt to justify the dates I have indicated in chapter 1 and used throughout this study.

Chromatius of Aquileia: 388/389-ca. 407

The *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* gives November 26 as the date of the death of Valerian, Chromatius' immediate predecessor.¹⁵⁵⁷ There seems to be good reason to assign this

¹⁵⁵⁵ F. Homes Dudden and Jean-Rémy Palanque were persuaded by his arguments, but not long after the publication of their biographies of Ambrose Otto Faller argued authoritatively for the traditional date of 374. See Neil B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 3n.8.

¹⁵⁵⁶ Francis X. Murphy, as the title of his study indicates, suggests 345 for Rufinus' birth and 411 for his death (though he allows for an amount of uncertainty as to the year of his birth, which may have taken place as late as 347). See *Rufinus of Aquileia (345-411): His Life and Works* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1945), vii and 1 (for the birth) and 219 (for the death). Giorgio Fedalto dates his birth to the period 345-347, and his death to either 410 or 411. See *Rufino di Concordia (345 c.-410/411) tra Oriente e Occidente* (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, 1990), 5-6 (for the birth) and 159 (for the death). Hammond concurs with the date of 411 for his death. See "The Last Ten Years of Rufinus' Life and the Date of His Move South from Aquileia," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n. s. 28.2 (1977): 372-429, at 393.

¹⁵⁵⁷ Cited in Pio Paschini, *Storia del Friuli*, vol. 1, *Dalle origini alla metà del duecento* (Udine: Libreria Editrice Aquileia, 1953), 59.

event to the year 388, for Paulinus of Milan places Ambrose in Aquileia in the aftermath of Magnus Maximus' defeat at the hands of Theodosius.¹⁵⁵⁸ The fact that the victorious emperor was at this moment in Milan, as Paulinus tells us, means that Ambrose had not gone to Aquileia to meet him, or at least that this was not the sole purpose of his journey. The most logical explanation for his presence in that city would then be that he had come to consecrate a successor to Valerian.¹⁵⁵⁹ Thus we can date the beginning of Chromatius' episcopate to the very end of 388 or the beginning of 389.

The date of Chromatius' death is traditionally dated to 407/408, but scholars who suggest these dates are not always clear as to why.¹⁵⁶⁰ John Chrysostom wrote a letter to Chromatius to thank him for his support, and this can be dated to the year 406, meaning that he was still alive at this time.¹⁵⁶¹ Pier Franco Beatrice has recently attempted to argue that Chromatius was present at the Synod of Diospolis in 415, at which Pelagius was acquitted by the bishops of Palestine.¹⁵⁶² If this argument were sound, that would obviously push Chromatius' death back by nearly a

¹⁵⁵⁸ *Vita sancti Ambrosii* 22: "Exstincto itaque Maximo, posito Theodosio imperatore Mediolani, Ambrosio vero episcopo constituto Aquileia..." (ed. Kaniecka, p. 62).

¹⁵⁵⁹ Paschini, *Storia del Friuli*, 1.59. See also Carlo Truzzi, "L'ordinazione episcopale di Cromazio di Aquileia nel suo contesto storico-culturale," in *Chromatius Episcopus, 388-1988, AAAd* 34 (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1989), 27-44, at 31; and Zeno, *Gaudenzio e Cromazio. Testi e contenuti della predicazione cristiana per le chiese di Verona, Brescia e Aquileia (360-410 ca.)* (Brescia: Paideia Editrice, 1985), 76. Claire Sotinel agrees that "Chromatius' pontificate doubtless began in the troubled period that followed the defeat of Magnus Maximus," but does not specify the year. See *Identité civique et christianisme. Aquilée du IIIe au VIe siècle* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2005), 172.

¹⁵⁶⁰ Truzzi refers to the *Chronica* of Andrea Dandolo, the fourteenth-century *doge* of Venice, as the source of this supposition. See Zeno, *Gaudenzio e Cromazio*, 77. This date is accepted by Raymond Étaix and Joseph Lemarié in their critical edition of Chromatius' works. See *CCL* 9A.v-vi. A recent volume produced on the occasion of the sixteenth centenary of Chromatius' death is likewise premised upon the assumption that he died in 407 or 408, but none of the contributors discusses the rationale for assigning his death to these years. See *Cromazio di Aquileia. Al crocevia di genti e religioni*, ed. Sandro Piussi (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2008).

¹⁵⁶¹ *Ep.* 155, *PG* 52.702-703.

¹⁵⁶² "Chromatius and Jovinus at the Synod of Diospolis: A Prosopographical Inquiry," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 22.3 (2014): 437-464.

decade as compared with the traditional date. But for reasons that are discussed in chapter 7, it is not.¹⁵⁶³

Instead, there are several reasons to accept something like the traditional date for Chromatius' death. The first has to do with the incomplete nature of his *Tractatus in Mathaeum*, which stop before the end of the eighteenth chapter of the Gospel. As his editors Raymond Étaix and Joseph Lemarié point out, Jerome's commentary on the same book, which was completed in 398, makes no mention of the efforts of his friend, meaning that it was probably not begun until about 400.¹⁵⁶⁴ In this case, it is easy to account for the incomplete nature of the work by supposing that Chromatius died before he could finish it. For a bishop who, unlike some of his more prolific contemporaries, was not much given to producing original works other than his sermons, it seems reasonable to posit a space of five to ten years for the creation of a work like the *Tractatus*, which cover chaps. 1-18 of Matthew.¹⁵⁶⁵ The longer his life is presumed to have been, the more conspicuous becomes the fact that he failed to bring his work to completion. Second, as discussed in chapter 6, Chromatius has much to say about the issues that were discussed in the context of the Pelagian controversy.¹⁵⁶⁶ However, as clear as his views on these matters were, there is no indication that he was articulating them in a polemical context.¹⁵⁶⁷ For that reason, it seems more reasonable to place his death before the outbreak of the controversy in 411 than after it.

¹⁵⁶³ See p. 473n.1418.

¹⁵⁶⁴ *CCL* 9A.vii.

¹⁵⁶⁵ This assumes, of course, that the lacunae in the text that remain are a result of the transmission and not Chromatius' failure to comment on them.

¹⁵⁶⁶ Pp. 442-461.

¹⁵⁶⁷ If, as Beatrice, holds, Chromatius voted to acquit Pelagius at Diospolis, we might at least expect him to criticize the critics of Pelagius.

The final reason has to do with the timing of his friend Rufinus' return to Rome. To be sure, it is impossible to date this event with certainty. C. P. Hammond has argued quite ably that 402 is the latest date at which it is possible to be sure that Rufinus was in Aquileia, and suggests that he may have returned to Rome for a synod in 405 in the company of his friend and patron Chromatius, and remained there after Chromatius returned north.¹⁵⁶⁸ Francis X. Murphy, for his part, believes that Rufinus only left Aquileia after the death of Chromatius, which in his estimation occurred before the end of 407.¹⁵⁶⁹ Given that Rufinus was engaged in the translation of Origen's works from the time of his return to Italy until his death, and that this activity no doubt raised the ire of some prominent churchmen, it would have been wise for him to remain close to someone who could protect him.¹⁵⁷⁰ And the fact that Rufinus spent the last period of his life in the company first of Chromatius, then of his friend Paulinus of Nola and the circle of friends that they shared, suggests that he was aware of this fact.¹⁵⁷¹ And who could do this more effectively than the bishop who ordained him? Thus Murphy's supposition is to be preferred to that of Hammond. Chromatius most likely died in late 407.

Vigilius of Trent: Before 397-after 398

Scholars typically date the beginning of Vigilius' episcopate to the year 385 on the basis of Otto Faller's dating of Ambrose's Letter 62 [Maur. 19], written to the newly consecrated bishop. But the editors of the *PCBE* are correct in paying no heed to this dating. With regard to the beginning of Vigilius' episcopate, we can be sure of two things: First, he was not yet bishop

¹⁵⁶⁸ "The Last Ten Years of Rufinus' Life," 373, 378, 407-408, and 420-421.

¹⁵⁶⁹ *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 202 and n.66.

¹⁵⁷⁰ Anastasius' *Ep.* 1 indicates that he was one such churchman, and his displeasure was not insignificant. Cf. pp. 423-424 above.

¹⁵⁷¹ On this circle, see chap. 2, pp. 113-117.

in 381, when his predecessor Abundantius signed the *Acta* of the Council of Aquileia.¹⁵⁷²

Second, he became bishop sometime between September 381 and April 4, 397, when Ambrose died. There is nothing that requires us to assume that he died before 404, as the *PCBE* holds, since the letter he wrote to John Chrysostom does not allow us to establish a *terminus ante quem* for his death.¹⁵⁷³ In the case of Vigilius, then, we can only be sure that he was consecrated sometime before Ambrose's death, and died at an unknown date after John's consecration as bishop of Constantinople on February 26, 398.¹⁵⁷⁴

Gaudentius of Brescia: ca. 396-ca. 410

We know three facts with nearly absolute certainty with regard to the dates of Gaudentius' episcopate. First, he was bishop for at least fourteen years.¹⁵⁷⁵ Second, he was consecrated before Ambrose's death on April 4, 397.¹⁵⁷⁶ Finally, he was still alive when Rufinus of Aquileia dedicated to him the translation of the *Clementine Recognitions*, which he completed in 406 or 407.¹⁵⁷⁷ In order to establish the range of possible dates for his consecration, it is necessary to turn to the date of the death of his predecessor, Filaster. The sermon given by Gaudentius on the fourteenth anniversary of Filaster's death indicates that he died on the 18th of

¹⁵⁷² See §57, *CSEL* 82/3.360.

¹⁵⁷³ 2.2296.

¹⁵⁷⁴ On the date of John's consecration, see J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom—Ascetic, Bishop, Preacher* (London: Duckworth, 1995), 106, who cautions us that the sources for the date of this event are uncertain. He has opted for that of Socrates, which he describes as "characteristically precise."

¹⁵⁷⁵ *Tr.* 21.10, *CSEL* 68.188: "Nam cum multa meritorum eius praeconia quattuordecim iam per annos solemnitis huius cultum renovans auditui vestro intulerim, plura, quae praedicare adhuc oporteat, intacta perspicio."

¹⁵⁷⁶ *Tr.* 16.9, *CSEL* 68.139: "Nunc vero ... obsecrabo communem patrem Ambrosium, ut post exiguum rorem sermonis mei ipse inriget corda vestra divinarum mysteriis litterarum."

¹⁵⁷⁷ *Prologus in Recognitiones Clementinae*, *CCL* 20.279-282. For the date of the translation, see Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 195; and Stephen L. Boehrer, "Gaudentius of Brescia: Sermons and Letters," Ph.D. Dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1965, 4.

July.¹⁵⁷⁸ Augustine states that he had met Filaster during his time in Milan, between the summer of 384 and the summer of 387, meaning that the earliest possible date for his death was July 18, 384.¹⁵⁷⁹ In this case, the earliest possible date for Gaudentius' consecration would have been some months later. As he indicates in the short sermon he gave on the occasion of his consecration, he was in the east when envoys from Brescia arrived to inform him that his predecessor had died, and the Christians of the city had sworn on oath that they would accept none other than him as their next shepherd.¹⁵⁸⁰

Gaudentius had probably traveled to the east to pursue an ascetic life in the lands where Christian asceticism had been born; in doing so, he followed in the footsteps of such westerners as Rufinus and Jerome who had previously established themselves there. There is, in fact, good reason to believe that Gaudentius had taken up residence as a member of the monastic community of the Mount of Olives, presided over by Rufinus.¹⁵⁸¹ Gaudentius seems to have desired to delve more deeply into the Christian scholarship of the east as part of his ascetic education, and the school operated by Rufinus would have been an ideal place to undertake his studies.¹⁵⁸² In any case, this seems to be the simplest explanation for the origins of his friendship with that ascetic scholar.¹⁵⁸³

¹⁵⁷⁸ *Tr.* 21.10, *CSEL* 68.188: "Quinto decim autem Kalendarum Augustarum exiit hominem et migravit ad eum, quem dilexit."

¹⁵⁷⁹ *Ep.* 222.2, *CSEL* 57.446.

¹⁵⁸⁰ *Tr.* 16.2; cf. Boehrer, "Gaudentius of Brescia," 6. That Filaster was Gaudentius' immediate predecessor as bishop of Brescia is evident from the fact that he mentions no other previous bishop of Brescia except him. See *Praef. ad Beniv.* 4, and *Tr.* 21, *passim*.

¹⁵⁸¹ See Boehrer, "Gaudentius of Brescia," 5.

¹⁵⁸² He was disappointed in his hopes, however, for as he states in his ordination sermon (*Tr.* 16.1, *CSEL* 68.137): "erubesco, quod tantae exspectationi optatum doctrinae fructum praestare non valeo." Jerome refers to Rufinus' school in *Ep.* 125; cf. Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 54. Cf. Boehrer, "Gaudentius of Brescia," 5.

¹⁵⁸³ As Boehrer points out, Gaudentius' youth at the time of his consecration (attested in *Tr.* 16.1) probably rules out his having met Rufinus before the latter settled on the Mount of Olives in 380. It seems unlikely that the two could

Two further pieces of information allow us to suppose that his stay in the east came toward the end rather than the beginning of the 384-396 window for Filaster's death. First, Palladius, who himself lived on the Mount of Olives from 386 to 388, makes no mention of Gaudentius in his *Lausiaca History*, even though he became well acquainted with Rufinus and Melania the Elder during his stay there.¹⁵⁸⁴ Because Palladius and Gaudentius were allies in the cause of John Chrysostom, we would expect Palladius to mention having met the future bishop of Brescia during his two years in Jerusalem.¹⁵⁸⁵ But even more than Palladius' silence regarding Gaudentius in relation to his time in Jerusalem, there is Gaudentius' description of the nieces of bishop Basil of Caesarea at the time he was in the east, whom he characterizes as having "reached the years of old age and daily look[ing] for their passing from this world."¹⁵⁸⁶ Basil was not yet fifty when he died in 379. He had no older married sister, meaning that these women were the daughters of one of his younger sisters, and were therefore probably not thirty years old at the time of Basil's death.¹⁵⁸⁷ Even taking into account the possibility that Gaudentius was exaggerating their age somewhat, the description of them as old women requires the meeting to have taken place as late as is conceivable in the 384 to 396 window.¹⁵⁸⁸ And

have developed a friendship after Rufinus returned to Aquileia in 399, for Rufinus' productivity during the years he spent in Aquileia make it unlikely that he traveled much. Likewise, Gaudentius' opportunities to travel would also have been restricted on account of his episcopal responsibilities. Cf. Boehrer, "Gaudentius of Brescia," 4-6.

¹⁵⁸⁴ Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 56, cited in Boehrer, "Gaudentius of Brescia," 7.

¹⁵⁸⁵ Boehrer, "Gaudentius of Brescia," 7.

¹⁵⁸⁶ They gave Gaudentius relics of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste. See *Tr.* 17.15, *CSEL* 68.145: "quoniam essent ipsae in annis senilibus constitutae et transmigrationem de hoc mundo suam cottidie exspectarent" (trans. Boehrer, p. 194).

¹⁵⁸⁷ Boehrer, "Gaudentius of Brescia," 7.

¹⁵⁸⁸ Boehrer, "Gaudentius of Brescia," 7, concludes as follows: "Using these facts as our measure a date of 395 or later would still barely put these women in what can be considered the years of old age." A bit of quick arithmetic confirms this judgment. Basil was born ca. 330. If his sister who was the mother of these virgins was born in, say,

therefore, since we know that Filaster died on July 18, it seems best to place his death in 395 or 396. The delegation from Brescia would then have reached Jerusalem in the late summer or fall of the year of his death, and Gaudentius would have returned to Italy in the fall of that year or in spring of the following year. Since Ambrose's death on April 4, 397, was hastened by a journey he made to Pavia that spring to consecrate a new bishop for that city, we are left with one of two possible scenarios: 1) Filaster died in 395, but Gaudentius managed to return to Brescia only in early 396, and was duly consecrated in the spring of that year, and 2) Filaster died in 396, and after a rather swift return journey Gaudentius was consecrated in the fall of that year.¹⁵⁸⁹ If we are correct in dating Filaster's death to one of these two years, then Gaudentius' *Tr.* 21 would have been delivered on July 18 of 409 or 410. There is no reason to rule out the possibility that his episcopate may have lasted several years beyond that date, especially since he claimed to be too young for office when he became bishop.¹⁵⁹⁰

Maximus of Turin: ca. 398-ca. 420

Maximus is the first attested bishop of Turin.¹⁵⁹¹ The editors of the *PCBE* have offered May 29, 397, as a *terminus post quem* for his consecration.¹⁵⁹² In his Sermon 105, Maximus preaches on the martyrdom of Sisinnius, Martyrius, and Alexander in the Val di Non, which he says has taken place "*temporibus nostris*."¹⁵⁹³ It must be said, however, that such a conclusion

332, and their births clustered around the year 350, their average age in 395 would have been about 45—hardly an age at which they might expect to die any day!

¹⁵⁸⁹ For Ambrose's journey to Pavia in the spring of 397, see Paulinus, *Vita sancti Ambrosii* 45.

¹⁵⁹⁰ *Tr.* 16.1, *CSEL* 68.137: "Imperitiae meae conscius et aetatis ipsius immaturae..."

¹⁵⁹¹ F. Lanzoni, *Le diocesi d'Italia*, 2.

¹⁵⁹² 2.1469-1470.

¹⁵⁹³ *CCL* 23.414: "Cum omnes beatos martyres, quos nobis tradit antiquitas, honorificentia digna miremur, praecipue tamen sanctos Alexandrum Martyrium et Sisinium, qui temporibus nostris passi sunt, debemus tota veneratione suspicere."

cannot legitimately be drawn on the basis of this language. In the context, Maximus draws a contrast between “the martyrs that antiquity has handed down to us” and those who bore their witness in more recent times.¹⁵⁹⁴ It is more likely that by “*temporibus nostris*” Maximus simply means the time within living memory of his hearers. Thus whereas it is quite plausible that he gave this sermon within a few years of the martyrdom of these saints, nothing in it allows us to conclude that he must already have been bishop when their martyrdom took place on May 29, 397.¹⁵⁹⁵

But even if we cannot use the date of the Val di Non martyrdom to locate Maximus’ consecration chronologically, it seems likely that he had, in any case, become bishop before 400. In Sermon 78, he mentions the presence among his hearers of a bishop “*qui in pontificio primatus honorem obtinet*,” likely a reference to the bishop of Milan, the metropolitan who exercised authority over the bishop of Turin.¹⁵⁹⁶ Likewise, in Sermon 21 he encourages his listeners to practice hospitality toward the bishops who are visiting Turin.¹⁵⁹⁷ In neither sermon is the occasion for the visit specified, but one or both of them may well refer to the church council held there in 398 or 399.¹⁵⁹⁸ Ralph Mathisen points out that bishops might have gathered

¹⁵⁹⁴ CCL 23.414: “martyres, quos nobis tradit antiquitas.”

¹⁵⁹⁵ For the date of their martyrdom, see chap. 3 above, p. 231n.704.

¹⁵⁹⁶ Serm. 78.1, CCL 23.324.

¹⁵⁹⁷ CCL 23.79-80: “quanto magis nos debemus advenientibus sanctis occurrere sacerdotibus, atque eos omni praece in habitacula nostra suscipere, ut secundum David cum sanctis hospitibus sancti esse possimus! Nemo iam de conscientia peccatorum suorum metuatur, de indulgentia nemo diffidat: quisque episcopum hospitio susceperit iam iustus effectus est. Quamvis paulo ante scelera commiseris, quamvis noxius fueris, dum innocentem virum suscipis, innocentiae meritis reformaris, sicut ait propheta: *Cum viro innocente innocens eris*.”

¹⁵⁹⁸ On this council, see Mathisen, “The Council of Turin (398/399) and the Reorganization of Gaul ca. 395/406,” *Journal of Late Antiquity* 6.2 (2013): 264-307. For the date of the council, over which much ink has been spilled, see pp. 270-282; for the possibility that this council is the proper context for the sermons of Maximus that have been mentioned, see pp. 296-297. Vicenza Zangara also argues that the gathering of bishops referred to in these sermons is the council of 398/399. See “Eusebio di Vercelli e Massimo di Torino. Tra storia e agiografia,” in *Eusebio di*

in Turin also for a festival or a church consecration.¹⁵⁹⁹ One of Maximus' surviving sermons was delivered on the occasion of the consecration of a new church, but no mention is made in it of the presence of other bishops.¹⁶⁰⁰ Likewise, no mention is made of a festival in either of the two sermons that refer to the presence of bishops in Turin, so the most likely occasion is that of the council.¹⁶⁰¹ Rita Lizzi's supposition, that Maximus "was consecrated one or two years after Ambrose's death," thus seems quite reasonable.¹⁶⁰²

It seems, therefore, that we can date the beginning of Maximus' episcopate within a year or two. But an equal precision in dating his death is impossible. According to Gennadius of Marseilles, he died "*Honorio et Theodosio juniore regnantibus*."¹⁶⁰³ Honorius reigned from 393 to 423, and Theodosius II from 408 to 450, and so Maximus' death can be dated to sometime between 408 and 423. We may be able to narrow this range somewhat, for if, as Rita Lizzi suggests, Maximus' reference to the redemption of captives from barbarians can be situated in

Vercelli e il suo tempo, ed. Enrico dal Covolo, Renato Uglione, and Giovanni M. Vian (Rome: Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 1997), 257-321, at 257-259.

¹⁵⁹⁹ "The Council of Turin (398/399)," 297.

¹⁶⁰⁰ Sermon 87, *CCL* 23.355-357.

¹⁶⁰¹ However, as Mathisen points out, one festival held on September 22 and celebrated at Turin would have been of interest to the bishops of Gaul. This was the festival of the martyrs of the Theban Legion. Maximus' Sermon 12 is about Octavius, Adventus, and Solutor, who at a later time were numbered among these martyrs. See "The Council of Turin (398/399)," 298-299. Likewise, the possibility that a new church was consecrated at Turin during Maximus' episcopate cannot be ruled out. The partial remains of a fourth- or fifth-century church have been uncovered there. See P. Testini, G. Cantino Wataghin, and L. Pani Ermini, "La cattedrale in Italia," in *Actes du XIe congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne. Lyon, Vienne, Grenoble, Genève et Aoste (21-28 septembre 1986)*, vol. 1 (Vatican City: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1989), 5-231, at 26 and 225-227. In Fedele Savio's judgment, the context for these sermons was the council that he believes was held there in September 398. See *Gli antichi vescovi d'Italia dalle origini al 1300. Piemonte* (Turin: Fratelli Bocca Editori, 1898), 6.

¹⁶⁰² "Ambrose's Contemporaries and the Christianization of Northern Italy," *Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990): 156-173, at 159. Savio believed that Turin became an episcopal see (with Maximus its first bishop) in 397. See *Gli antichi vescovi*, 5-6. Zangara, however, is not so sure, accepting 398 as a firm *terminus ante quem*, but being willing to place the *terminus post quem* as early as 390. See Eusebio di Vercelli e Massimo di Torino," 259n.5.

¹⁶⁰³ *De viris illustribus* 40, *PL* 58.1032.

the context of the Visigoths' departure from Italy to Gaul in 412, we can push the *terminus post quem* for his death back by several years.¹⁶⁰⁴ If 398 is the correct (or nearly correct) date for Maximus' consecration, and if Boniface Ramsey is correct in assuming that Maximus' preaching career "must have extended over at least 20 years," then we can suggest an episcopate of ca. 398-ca. 420.¹⁶⁰⁵

¹⁶⁰⁴ See, for example, Sermm. 70.2, 72.2; cf. *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche*, 181.

¹⁶⁰⁵ *ACW* 50.5.