

OROSIUS OF BRAGA AND ECCLESIASTICAL POLITICS IN THE FIFTH CENTURY CE

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## OROSIUS OF BRAGA AND ECCLESIASTICAL POLITICS IN THE FIFTH CENTURY CE

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Most scholars view Orosius of Braga as a writer of history and a zealous partisan of Augustine and Jerome. In this dissertation, I re-examine Orosius' political activity and argue that he is an independent political actor who should be understood in the backdrop of Spanish ecclesiastical politics. The three body chapters examine, respectively, Orosius' publication of the *Commonitorium*, Orosius' anti-Pelagian activity, and Orosius' efforts to bring the relics of Stephen to the West. The *Commonitorium* has most commonly been seen as a document meant to inform Augustine about Priscillianism and Origenism so that Augustine could help Orosius argue against heresy. Instead, I argue that the *Commonitorium* and Augustine's reply are meant to be public documents intended to raise the status of the bishops of Galicia by linking them to a higher status bishop. Orosius' anti-Pelagian efforts in Jerusalem have been seen as unsuccessful and fueled by an impetuous zeal. In my analysis, I find that Orosius' accusations against Pelagius serve to solidify Augustine's opinions on original sin as the standards by which Pelagius should be judged. While Pelagius was acquitted, this step makes Orosius an essential strategic factor in Augustine's ultimate victory in the Pelagian controversy. Finally, the relics of Stephen have largely been understood by scholars to be intended to help the church of Braga deal with barbarian occupation. By examining how bishops use and write about the relics in Jerusalem, North Africa, and Minorca, I make the argument that the relics

were more likely intended to restore confessional unity in the religiously polarized region of Galicia. Finally, I conclude the dissertation by proposing a new model of ecclesiastical conflict, drawn from modern political science. This model will provide historians of ecclesiastical politics more powerful and precise tools to describe the construction and contestation of orthodoxy.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Colin is a seventh year PhD student on the Ancient History Track. His dissertation is centered on Orosius of Braga, a Spanish presbyter and historian who was involved in various religious controversies in the early fifth century. Colin employs modern political science to find new significance in Orosius' actions, leading to a re-evaluation of his importance in ecclesiastical politics. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Florida State University in 2016 with a degree in Greek and Latin Languages. Aside from Orosius of Braga, Colin's research interests include the Priscillianist Controversy, the Donatist Controversy, the relics of martyrs, Greco-Roman historiography, and political history more broadly.

To my father, Russ Behrens, for inculcating a love of politics in me.

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# Introduction

Orosius is one of the least studied, yet most impactful, historical figures of the early 5th century. Orosius is most often seen as a supporting character; he appears in biographies of Augustine and Jerome, or in monographs about Priscillianism or Pelagianism, before fading away into the background once he has done his duty.<sup>1</sup> Yet if he is a minor character, his impact outshines the amount of time he spends on the historical stage. His *Histories of the World Against the Pagans*, for instance, became the standard textbook from which medieval readers learned history.<sup>2</sup> He was the one who brought the relics of Stephen the Protomartyr to Western shores.<sup>3</sup> As I will argue in this dissertation, Orosius' actions in the Priscillianist and Pelagian controversies were far more important than previously assumed. Orosius deserves sustained analysis of his actions, and this dissertation is the first to do so. Rather than being seen as a lackey of Jerome and Augustine, Orosius should be seen as an independent political actor in his own right.

## Origins

Orosius was a Spanish presbyter, though his ultimate origins have been subject to some debate, which will be discussed below.<sup>4</sup> Augustine describes him as coming from "the shore of the ocean" and Avitus of Braga calls him his "copresbyter."<sup>5</sup> As such, it is most likely that

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. Brown 2000, Kelly 1975, Wermelinger 1975 and Chadwick 1976.

<sup>2</sup> Batley and Ross 1961 give an idea of how popular and widespread this text was, since no less than 245 manuscripts survive.

<sup>3</sup> For an overview of Stephen's cult in Late Antiquity and beyond, see Labadie 2021.

<sup>4</sup> The fullest biography of Orosius currently available is in Spanish, Torres Rodríguez 1985, 15-79. Readers of Spanish may also consult Vilella Masana 200. In English, one may consult Fear 2010, 2-25. Readers of French have Arnaud-Lindet 1990, IX-XXV.

<sup>5</sup> Avitus, *Ad Palc*, 5. Aug. *epist.*166.1.2.

Orosius worked in the church at Braga. He composed three works: a *Commonitorium* addressed to Augustine concerning Priscillianism and Origenism in Spain (ca. 414); a *Liber Apologeticus* which serves as a polemical tract against Pelagius (415); and the aforementioned *Histories of the World Against the Pagans* which was instigated by Augustine's suggestion (417-8). After composing his histories, Orosius disappears from the written record. The last inkling we hear of Orosius is when Augustine takes a swipe at his imprecise attempts to match the ten plagues of Exodus with ten persecuting emperors.<sup>6</sup>

While we know for certain that Orosius traveled from Spain to North Africa, we are less certain about where he was ultimately born. There are two competing hypotheses for where Orosius originated. One tradition, held by the majority of scholars, believes that Orosius was originally from Spain.<sup>7</sup> Their evidence for this is the fact that he uses the possessive *nostra* to discuss Tarragona and other ancient authors have pointed to his Spanish origins.<sup>8</sup> Another hypothesis, first suggested by Arnaud-Lindet and supported by Donnchadh Ó Corráin, holds that Orosius was a Briton who was kidnapped by Irish pirates and then fled to Spain.<sup>9</sup>

In order to argue for the British hypothesis, these two scholars combine two data points. First, Orosius' description of fleeing from barbarians by ship; this reference cannot be to the barbarian groups invading Spain. Orosius' passage is as follows:

If when I recount about myself, how I first saw unknown barbarians, how I avoided the hostile ones, how I flattered the ones in power, how I took guard against the unfaithful, how I fled in secret those who were plotting me harm, how afterwards I evaded those who were pursuing me into the sea and aimed at me with rocks and spears, how they almost grasped me with their hands when suddenly I was surrounded by a cloud, I would wish that everyone who was listening to me were moved to tears and I would

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<sup>6</sup> Augustine, *civ.*18.52.

<sup>7</sup> Chadwick 1976, 190; Burrus 1995, 138; Villela Masana 2000, 94; Torres Rodríguez 1985, 17; Fear 2010, 2-3.

<sup>8</sup> *nostra Tarragona*: Oros. *Hist.* 7.22.8; Both Braulio and Gennadius call him Spanish: Braulio *epist.* 44, Gennad.39

<sup>9</sup> Arnaud-Lindet 1995, X-XI; Ó Corráin 2017.

lament, silently, for those who did not lament, ascribing that fact to the hardness of those who do not believe that which they have not experienced.<sup>10</sup>

This is a highly rhetorical passage that is intended to cause pity for the author, not to provide a precise account of his past travails. That being said, we can extract a small bit of biographical data from this passage. Orosius defines those he fled from as *barbari*, indicating that they were not Roman. The fact that he fled in secret (*subterfugerim*) and was pursued with violence indicates that he felt in danger and was probably correct. It seems that Orosius had freedom of speech and movement when he first encountered the barbarians. Yet, the fact that when he tried to leave they resorted to violence to try and keep him there indicates that they wanted to capture and/or enslave him. Orosius managed to avoid this fate. Finally, the fact that he could flee into the sea implies that this encounter happened in a coastal, or near coastal, location.

Arnaud-Lindet has challenged the assumption that this encounter happened in Spain, when the Germanic tribes invaded.<sup>11</sup> She points out that, in Book 7 of the *Histories*, Orosius paints the Germanic tribes that invaded Spain as willing to help the locals relocate for a small fee.<sup>12</sup> She also points out the fact that the first barbarian presence in Spain was in 409, 5 or 6 years before Orosius left Spain; to her, this is too early to explain a quick flight from Spain. She is right to point out that it would be hard to identify the Visigoths with the *incerti barbari* since their invasion would closely correlate to when Orosius left for Africa, which Orosius describes

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<sup>10</sup> Oros. *hist.* 3.20.6-7. *Cum tamen, si quando de me ipso refero ut ignotos primum barbaros viderim, ut infestos declinaverim, ut dominantibus eblanditus sim, ut infideles praecaverim, ut insidiantes subterfugerim, postremo ut persequentes in mari ac saxis spiculisque adpetentes, manibus etiam paene iam adprehendentes repentina nebula circumfusus evaserim, cunctos audientes me in lacrimas commoveri velim et tacitus de non dolentibus doleam, reputans duritiae eorum qui quod non sustinere non credunt.* Translation my own.

<sup>11</sup> Arnaud-Lindet 1990, X-XI.

<sup>12</sup> Oros. *hist.* 7.41.5.

as happening without any compulsion or force.<sup>13</sup> As such, she suggests that we search for the *incerti barbari* elsewhere. For that hypothesis, we turn to our second datapoint.

The second data point is Orosius' knowledge of Ireland. Orosius' description of Ireland is as follows:

And since the ocean has islands which they call Britannia and Hibernia, which lie on the far side of Gaul looking toward Hispania, they shall be briefly described... The island Hibernia lies between Britain and Hispania, with its greatest length extending from the south-west to the north. Its nearer parts stretching into the Cantabric Ocean look toward the city of Brigantia in Galicia from the southwest at a great distance, especially from the promontory where the mouth of the Scena is and the Velabri and Luceni dwell. This island is nearer to Britain, smaller in land area, but more advantageous in the temperateness of its climate and soil. It is inhabited by Scotti. Also near to this is the island of Mevania, itself not small, with favorable soil. The Scotti dwell on this island as well.<sup>14</sup>

Most of this information can be found in the geographic tradition.<sup>15</sup> Orosius agrees with Ptolemy and Marcianus that Ireland is longest measured south-west to north, and he agrees with Pomponius Mela and Solinus that Ireland has an advantageous climate. Orosius innovates by asserting that Ireland as a *more* advantageous climate than Britain. Ptolemy mentions a river in the Southwest by the name of Σήνου, and knows of a people named the Ουελλάβοροι.<sup>16</sup> These are clear matches for Orosius' *Scena* and *Velabri*. The *Scena* should be identified with the River

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<sup>13</sup> We actually do not know for certain when he left for Africa, which could have happened anywhere from 409-414/5. An early date of 409 for his departure from Spain is unlikely because what little we only see him in the historical record from ca. 414/415, right before he leaves Africa for Jerusalem.

<sup>14</sup> *Hist.* 1.2.75, 80-82. *et quoniam oceanus habet insulas, quas Britanniam et Hiberniam vocant, quae in aversa Galliarum parte ad prospectum Hispaniae sitae sunt, breviter explicabuntur ... Hibernia insula inter Britanniam et Hispaniam sita longiore ab Africo in boream spatio porrigitur. Huius partes priores intentae Cantabrico oceano Brigantiam Gallaeciae civitatem ab Africo sibi in circium occurrentem spatioso intervallo procul spectant, ab eo praecipue promunturio, ubi Scenae fluminis ostium est et Velabri Lucenique consistunt. Haec proprior Britanniae, spatio terrarum angustior, sed caeli solique temperie magis utilis, a Scottorum gentibus colitur. Huic etiam Mevania insula proxima est et ipsa spatio non parva, solo commoda. Aequae a Scottorum gentibus habitatur.*

<sup>15</sup> Freeman 2001 lists all ancient sources on Ireland in chronological order.

<sup>16</sup> Ptolemy, *Alm.* 2.2.4.

Shannon. Orosius innovates by claiming that the *Luceni* live near the Shannon, a people not before mentioned in the geographic tradition. Orosius is also the first to explicitly associate the *Scotti* with Ireland, and he is the first to mention the Isle of Man (*Mevania*) and to assert that the *Scotti* live there as well.

Overall, when verifiable, Orosius' account of Ireland is accurate. Where it is unverifiable, we cannot make a judgment. The most mysterious aspect of his description of the Emerald Isle is the presence of the *Luceni*, whom no one has been able to pinpoint with certainty. Mac Neil has suggested that they are not Irish people at all, but rather are the inhabitants of *Lucensis*, a city in Galicia, Spain.<sup>17</sup> His reasoning for that is that Orosius writes *Velabri Lucenique consistunt*. In his reading of *consistunt*, Mac Neil sees the two peoples as settling up against each other in opposing directions, much like a military battle line. This does elegantly solve the textual problem and fits in with Orosius' description of Ireland facing Galicia from the promontory of the Shannon. However, one must do violence to the meaning of *consisto* to make this reading work.<sup>18</sup> *Consisto* most naturally means "settle" at this point, and therefore the text means that the *Velabri* and the *Luceni* have settled near the promontory at the River Shannon. As Ó Corrain points out, the promontory itself is not suitable to large scale settlement, but the surrounding lands are.<sup>19</sup>

To gain a better idea of what we should be looking for if we were to identify the *Luceni*, we should be more precise in our terminology. When describing peoples of Ireland, Orosius is actually describing two *tuatha* units; small scale clans that settle a rough geographical area.<sup>20</sup> It

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<sup>17</sup> MacNeill 1932, 132. This identification is further used to argue for a Spanish origin of the *Velabri*, a trope common to Irish legends of their origins.

<sup>18</sup> Lewis and Short S.v. "consisto."

<sup>19</sup> Ó Corrain 2017, 120.

<sup>20</sup> Mac Neill 1911.

is an unfortunate fact of early medieval Irish history that precise records of peoples or polities do not exist until after the 5th century. However, it is a feature of Irish geographical nomenclature that early placenames record the memory of now-lost *tuatha* units.<sup>21</sup> The Velabri have been identified by a mythological reference to a placename. In the *Book of Invasions*, the warrior Rudraige fought in the "heroic battle of Lúachair Fellubair."<sup>22</sup> Fellubair is derived from an original \*Velaboros, thus Orosius' Velabri.<sup>23</sup> The general area of Lúachair appears to be south of the River Shannon; while we do not have a precise idea of where Lúachair Fellubair was, we do have records for locations such as Ciarraige Luachra, Silab Luachra, and Muscraige Luachra.<sup>24</sup> Luachra is a declined form of Lúachair.<sup>25</sup>

Close attention to this word *luachra* can shed some light on where medieval commentators of Orosius' *Histories* thought the Luceni lived. *Luachra* can be the genitive form of the noun *lúachair*, meaning "rushes, rushland."<sup>26</sup> It can also be the plural form of the adjective *luchair* meaning "bright, glittering, resplendent."<sup>27</sup> One of the earliest manuscripts of the *Histories*, the 8th century *Donaueschingensis*, records a variation of *Lucenique* -- *lucernae quae*.<sup>28</sup> *Lucernae*, of course, means "lantern" but derives from *luceo*, which means "to be bright." If the copyist of the *Donaueschingensis* had knowledge of Irish geography, or was recording the "correction" of a previous copyist who did, then this variation can be explained by a scribe identifying the area south of the River Shannon as *Lúachair* and emending the *Lucenique* to a Latin word that would be closer to one of the meanings of *luachra*.

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<sup>21</sup> Ó Crónín 2017, 64-67.

<sup>22</sup> O Corraín 2017, 120.

<sup>23</sup> Mac Neill 1932, 132-3.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Thank you to Craig Lyons for checking my Irish grammar and for providing much fruitful conversation.

<sup>26</sup> eDIL s.v. 1 lúachair

<sup>27</sup> eDIL s.v. 1 luchair.

<sup>28</sup> See Arnaud-Lindet LXVII-LXXXIV for a discussion of the manuscript tradition.

Indeed, Ciarraige Luachra would fit nicely with Orosius' description of area in which the Luceni are said to have settled. This location is clearly associated with a 5th century *tuath*: the -raige ending of Ciarraige indicates that the name is derived from a *tuath*. In addition, as Paul MacCotter has pointed out, Ogham inscriptions featuring Ciarraige as a clan name exist from the fifth century in Kerry (which ultimately derives its name from Ciarraige).<sup>29</sup> If Orosius meant to indicate the people living in what would later be called Ciarraige Luachra, it would make sense. However, we cannot assume that Orosius only meant Ciarraige Luachra; other locations in Lúachair contain the name Luachra, like Muscraige Luachra. In addition, names of figures both historical (Moling of Lúachair) and mythological (the two Liath Luachra, or "Liath of Lúachair) indicate that Lúachair was a general geographical unit in which different *tuatha* lived.<sup>30</sup>

Ultimately identification of the Luceni with the geographical area of Lúachair in general, or with the people of Ciarraige Luachra in particular, is unverifiable. The main evidence for this suggestion comes from one manuscript variation that is suggestive, but not definitive. In addition, arguing for a strong identification of the Luceni with the residents of Ciarraige Luachra would assume that Orosius knew very detailed information about the inhabitants around the River Shannon. However, if we momentarily accept the hypothesis that Luceni refers to those living in Luachair, a critical reading of the terms Velabri and Luceni makes the assumption that Orosius had detailed knowledge about them doubtful. The Velabri were already known to Ptolemy, and can be identified with those living around Lúachair Fellubair. The Luceni, if we are to identify them with people living in an area with the name *Luachra*, would be pointing towards a larger area that would also include the Velabri themselves. At best, the Luceni might mean everyone who lives in Lúachair, but then it does not make sense for him to also name the

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<sup>29</sup> MacCotter 2008, 168.

<sup>30</sup> De Paor 2001; MacKillop 1998, 264-5

Velabri. It is possible to speculate that Orosius knew of the people living in *Lúachair* and then also knew of the Velabri from Ptolemy (or a Ptolemy-informed source) and then combined them both in his geographical excursus. If that's the case, however, then it suggests that Orosius did not have first-hand experience of the area he was describing; if he did, I suggest he would not have referred to a general *Luceni* but to more specific *tuatha* names. Rather, it is more likely that he had another source for his new Irish information, which would account for the accuracy of some of his information but also explain why he seemingly made a mistake with the Luceni.

Why does this matter? The supporters of the British hypothesis have used Orosius' knowledge of Ireland to argue that he ran into the same problems as St. Patrick did ca. 430; i.e., Just as Patrick was a Briton, kidnapped by Irish pirates, who then fled Ireland back to Britain, Orosius was kidnapped by Irish pirates and fled to Spain. This hypothesis does give us an identification for the barbarians Orosius encountered and attempts to explain why Orosius knows new information about Ireland. However, I suggest that this hypothesis fails on two counts. The first is that it assumes that Orosius' encounter could *not* have occurred in Spain, which is not proven; the only thing that is proven is that we cannot identify with certainty where the encounter occurred. The second is that this hypothesis assumes that Orosius got his information about Ireland from first-hand knowledge, but the placing together of the Velabri and the Luceni as co-equal peoples when the Velabri are one *tuatha* within the larger Luachair area is suspect. I do not think that we can accept the "Orosius as a Briton" hypothesis as it currently stands.

### Summary of Activity

Ultimately, his origins are unknowable. What we can say is that by the time Orosius appears in our sources, he is tied to the Spanish church, most probably in Galicia. Orosius appears in our sources for a period of 4 years at the maximum, 414 CE to 418 CE. During this time he left Spain to travel to North Africa, seeking Augustine's aid in the ecclesiastical politics

of Spain<sup>31</sup>. He was then sent to Bethlehem in order to study the origin of the soul with Jerome.<sup>32</sup> This was in response to some of Orosius' questions to Augustine on the nature of the soul in relation to his anti-Priscillianist and anti-Origenistic activity.

While in Palestine, Orosius became embroiled in the Pelagian controversy. Pelagius, a lay theologian probably from Britain (though denigrated as an Irishman by Jerome), had recently taken up residence in Jerusalem after living in Rome and (briefly) in North Africa. While we do not know how Orosius met Pelagius, while they were living in Jerusalem they did have an encounter. Orosius was called before the bishop of Jerusalem, John, to answer for one of his statements on grace: namely that man cannot be free from sin even with God's grace.<sup>33</sup> As a defense mechanism, Orosius accused Pelagius of teaching heresy, deploying a mixture of Augustinian and Hieronymian talking points. In response, the bishops of Palestine convened the council of Diospolis where they tried Pelagius, who was acquitted.<sup>34</sup>

Before he left, though, Orosius received the relics of Stephen the Protomartyr from Avitus of Braga, his "co-presbyter."<sup>35</sup> The relics had been discovered in the middle of the Council of Diospolis, a chronological coincidence so convenient that scholars have, probably rightly, seen as a stunt pulled by John of Jerusalem to offer additional legitimacy to the Council of Diospolis.<sup>36</sup> The agent of this "discovery" was Lucianus, a priest residing in the countryside of Jerusalem. He entrusted some of the relics to Avitus secretly, who gave them to Orosius in

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<sup>31</sup> Orosius, *comm.*1.

<sup>32</sup> Aug. *epist.* 166.2.2.

<sup>33</sup> Orosius, *apol.* 7.

<sup>34</sup> An account of the council can be found in Aug. *de gestis Pelagii*.

<sup>35</sup> Avitus, *Ad palc.* 5.

<sup>36</sup> Hunt 1982, 218-9.

the hopes that he would bring them back to Braga.<sup>37</sup> His wish, he wrote to the church in Braga, was that the relics would provide them a cure for their worldly ills.

Orosius sailed back to North Africa, where he informed Augustine and the other African bishops about the state of the Pelagian controversy in Jerusalem.<sup>38</sup> His information triggered two councils, one in Africa Proconsularis and one in Numidia, where the bishops wrote corporate letters to the bishop of Rome, Innocent, to protest Pelagius' acquittal.<sup>39</sup> Hence, the arrival of Orosius and his information triggered a change of phase in the Pelagian controversy: it was no longer a localized conflict in each city or area Pelagius resided, but now a pan-Mediterranean conflict. While in Africa, it also appears that Orosius left behind some of the relics he carried with the African bishops. While we do not know the exact circumstances, evidence for the presence of Stephen's relics in Uzalis coincides with Orosius' travels.<sup>40</sup>

Orosius began to sail home, but hit a storm on the way and landed in Minorca.<sup>41</sup> Welcomed by the bishop there, he decided to deposit some of his relics in his church. To hear Severus of Minorca tell it, this act triggered the mass conversion of the island's Jewish population, though his letter's veracity is unverifiable.<sup>42</sup> Orosius decided to go back to North Africa, though for what precise reason, we cannot say.

We only know one thing that Orosius did when he returned to North Africa: he composed his *Histories of the World Against the Pagans*. He presents this work as a commission from Augustine.<sup>43</sup> Augustine was in the process of writing the *City of God*, which argued that there is

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<sup>37</sup> Avitus, *Ad palc.* 7.

<sup>38</sup> Aug. *epist.* 175.1.

<sup>39</sup> Aug. *epist.* 175, 176, and 177.

<sup>40</sup> See the relevant pages in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>41</sup> That is if we believe the evidence of Severus of Minorca, which I argue we should do so in Chapter 3.

<sup>42</sup> Sev. Minor.

<sup>43</sup> Orosius *Hist.* pref.1.

no intrinsic link between the embrace of Christianity by the Roman emperors and the empire's worldly prosperity.<sup>44</sup> This was written in response to pagan criticisms of Christianity, which claimed that Rome was sacked in 410 because the emperors had neglected the traditional worship of Roman gods.<sup>45</sup> Augustine commissioned Orosius to write a history that would back up his thesis.

We will comment on the content of Orosius' works below, but this is the end of Orosius' presence in the written record. Presumably he left North Africa; Augustine never mentions him again. Unfortunately, the source record of affairs in Spain is so sparse that even if Orosius did arrive there with the relics of Stephen, we might never know. Some scholars have speculated that Orosius died in a storm en route.<sup>46</sup> This is possible, but is pure speculation with its only basis being that Orosius was prevented from going to Spain because of a storm the first time he tried to head back. Ultimately, we must admit the fact that we simply do not know what happened to Orosius after he finished composing his *Histories*.

## Works

Three works survive: the *Commonitorium*, the *Liber Apologeticus*, and the *Histories*. The *Commonitorium* is a letter written to Augustine, asking him to write against the heresies of Priscillianism and Origenism. To Orosius, Priscillianism is essentially Manicheanism with some additional traits thrown in, while Origenism is heretical because of incorrect beliefs about Creation and the nature of sin.<sup>47</sup> Scholars have, for the most part, treated this text as a straightforward document detailing theological beliefs in Spain, especially for Priscillianism. However, this thesis must be challenged. It is clear, as Spät argues, that the Priscillianism

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<sup>44</sup> Specifically this is the argument of books 1-10, which Augustine had finished composing before giving Orosius his history assignment.

<sup>45</sup> Aug. *civ.* 1.1.

<sup>46</sup> Martínez Caveró and Beltrán Corbalán 2006.

<sup>47</sup> See specifically Orosius, *comm* 2-3.

section of the letter pulls from anti-Manichean traditions.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, as Ramelli points out, the Origenism section bears a great resemblance to Jerome's letter to Avitus.<sup>49</sup> Instead of wondering what theological information this document gives us for the church in Spain, we should instead be asking ourselves why it was composed in the first place; this is a question I will answer in my first chapter.

The *Liber Apologeticus*, as the title implies, takes the form of a defense against accusations of heresy. In this work, Orosius describes how he had been accused of heresy by John of Jerusalem and was summoned to the church to answer the charge. In response, Orosius suggests that Pelagius' teachings were heretical, not his own, though he stops short of making a legal accusation.<sup>50</sup> The remainder of the text is an anti-Pelagian tract, drawing on Hieronymian polemic and Augustinian ideas of original sin.<sup>51</sup> Historians have generally read this text either for historical data on how the Pelagian controversy was carried out in Jerusalem, or to better understand the development of anti-Pelagian rhetoric.<sup>52</sup> Orosius has been seen as an unoriginal thinker whose only contribution to the conflict is an unintended and unsuccessful escalation driven by his hotheaded attitude.<sup>53</sup> In my examination of the text, I will argue that Orosius' actions to escalate the conflict plays into a larger strategy of inserting Augustinian talking points into the debate as the standard by which orthodoxy should be measured, even if Pelagius is ultimately acquitted at Diospolis.

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<sup>48</sup> Spät 1998.

<sup>49</sup> Ramelli 2013.

<sup>50</sup> Orosius, *apol.* 4-5.

<sup>51</sup> See Malavasi 2015 for an examination for how Orosius relies more on Hieronymian talking points in the construction of his text, though I argue in chapter 2 that Orosius' purpose was to establish Augustinian talking points as the standard by which Pelagius should be judged.

<sup>52</sup> E.g. Wermelinger 1975, 57-67; Bonner 2018, 166 examines how Orosius' arrival changes Jerome's positions on Pelagius.

<sup>53</sup> See, for example, Kelly 1975 318, Bonner 1993, 238: "By his aggressive behaviour and lack of tact in dealing with the Jerusalem synod Orosius contrived to alienate, not only himself, but the whole African tradition from John of Jerusalem."

Finally, Orosius composed his *Histories of the World Against the Pagans*. This work has received the most attention from scholars out of any of Orosius' works.<sup>54</sup> The work takes the form of seven books. The first six deal with world history beginning from the Assyrian empire up until the fall of the Roman Republic. The seventh book deals with the entire history of the Roman empire up until the Visigothic invasion of Spain. For the bare facts of his history, Orosius is reliant upon classical Latin historiographers like Sallust, Livy, the epitome of Pompeius Trogus, and Tacitus, in addition to some of the late antique historiographical sources.<sup>55</sup> Where Orosius differs from his sources is what he chooses to emphasize: where there is opportunity, Orosius will stress the awfulness of a particular event in the first six books, to show that the arrival of Christianity brought an amelioration to the human condition.

Historians have traditionally used the *Histories* for historical information -- and found it lacking -- or have used it to understand Orosius' theology of history.<sup>56</sup> Orosius' reputation has not held up well; Gibbon has dismissed him for engaging in superstitious nonsense and John Matthews has called him an "embarrassment to the profession."<sup>57</sup> It is hard not to sympathize with these viewpoints at times. Orosius is very thesis driven in his *Histories* and goes out of his way to avoid counter evidence in such a manner that a college writing instructor would cry upon reading it. His theology of history fares little better: while some ideas, such as the Four Empires of the World or the idea that the Ten Plagues of Exodus predict the Ten Persecutions of the Empire are interesting, they remain underdeveloped or imprecise. Augustine himself wrote against Orosius' version of the plague idea in the *City of God*.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> A good overview of the bibliography is given by Leonard 2022, 1-17. Examples of recent scholarship on the *Histories* include Van Nuffelen 2010, Van Nuffelen 2012, Ahern 2017, Gassman 2017, and Turner 2020.

<sup>55</sup> For Orosius' sources, see Fear 2010, 15-16 and Lacroix 1965, 58-63.

<sup>56</sup> See Lacroix 1965.

<sup>57</sup> Matthews 1989, 6.

<sup>58</sup> Aug. *civ.*18.52.

Currently there is a movement among scholars to view Orosius in a more positive light. Peter Van Nuffelen has recently argued that Orosius should be viewed in the same rhetorical tradition as "classical" historians like Livy, Tacitus, and even Ammianus.<sup>59</sup> Van Nuffelen pays special attention to his engagement with Vergil and other "classical" authors. Victoria Leonard has followed in the same vein, exploring how Orosius orders time, correlates emperors with divinity, and how he utilizes war as a literary device.<sup>60</sup> This growth in sympathetic scholarship has been mirrored by more scholars engaging with Orosius' medieval reception, such as the recently held *Orosius Through the Ages* conference.<sup>61</sup>

This dissertation will not deal substantively with the *Histories*. Rather, this dissertation will focus on the rest of Orosius' life. Specifically, it will place his career in his *Sitz im Leben* as a Spanish presbyter of the early fifth century. All too often has Orosius' actions been ignored or sidelined in favor of his more famous contemporaries Augustine and Jerome. Thus, following Van Nuffelen's and Leonard's approach to the *Histories*, I will engage in a more sympathetic understanding of Orosius' actions throughout his life. Specifically, I will use the tools provided by contemporary Political Science and International Relations to examine the underpinning logic of Orosius' actions in his ecclesiastical conflicts. To accomplish this goal, the reader must possess a knowledge of the Spanish context in the late fourth and early fifth century in which Orosius operates. The remainder of this introductory chapter will present this information.

### Spanish Context

The study of the church in general, and of ecclesiastical politics in particular, is dominated by the figure of the bishop. In many ways, this is understandable. Oftentimes, bishops are our main or only source of information, and they tend to center themselves in their

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<sup>59</sup> Van Nuffelen 2012.

<sup>60</sup> Leonard 2022.

<sup>61</sup> <https://orosiusconference.wordpress.com/>

narratives.<sup>62</sup> Certainly as the imperial court embraced the church in the decades after Constantine's patronage of it, bishops began to play more of an important role in municipal politics.<sup>63</sup> However, when studying the history of the church in Spain, a focus on the figure of the bishop in isolation renders a woefully incomplete picture.

The first piece of evidence for the Spanish church is Cyprian's letter that details a controversy over the ordination of two Spanish bishops.<sup>64</sup> However, after that early letter, our knowledge of Spanish bishops is almost nonexistent until the reign of Constantine.<sup>65</sup> Osius of Cordoba stands out as a particularly influential figure, who served as Constantine's chief adviser on church matters and ran the Council of Nicaea (325 CE).<sup>66</sup> A number of Spanish bishops attended the Council of Serdica (343 CE), though we are ignorant of how important or involved they were other than Osius, who presided over the council.<sup>67</sup> In 357 CE, Osius came out in favor of the Sirmian framework, and was therefore dubbed as a *praevaricator* by pro-Nicene hardliners. We gain a brief glimpse of episcopal activity in the *Libellus Precum* of Faustinus and Marcellinus, since a number of conflicts arose between members of the clergy in response to Osius' decisions.<sup>68</sup> It is only in the decades 380-400 that we have more evidence about episcopal activity, in the wake of the Priscillianist Controversy and its aftermath. The vast

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<sup>62</sup> See, for instance, Shaw 2011, 2-3 for the problems that Augustine's evidence base presents for an examination of the Donatist conflict, all while simultaneously making such an examination possible.

<sup>63</sup> Rapp 2005, 208-234; Brown 1992, 146-152.

<sup>64</sup> Cyp *Epist.* 67.

<sup>65</sup> While there are lists of bishops present at the Council of Elvira, the fact that the actual provenance of the *Acta* of the Council of Elvira is so muddled, and probably much later than the early 4th century, means that it will not be used in this study. For a review of this debate, see Lázaro Sánchez 2008. Meigne 1975 is the classic formulation of the "composite" thesis.

<sup>66</sup> De Clerq 1954 is the standard biography of Osius in English. Most recently there is Vilella Masana 2020, but it offers little in new information.

<sup>67</sup> Hess 2002, 211-255 collects the various canons of Serdica from Turner's critical edition and translates them into English. Lists of the western signatories can be found in Athan. *Apol. contra Arianos* 48 and in the letter of the Council of Serdica to Julius of Rome, preserved in the works of Hilary of Poitiers. See CSEL 65, pgs. 132-139.

<sup>68</sup> The Critical edition of the *Libellus Precum* is Canellis 2006.

majority of evidence for episcopal activity is polemic. As such, the history of the church in Spain can appear as a narrative of heresies and schisms for the entire fourth century.

The archaeological record, however, reveals a different side. Unlike other regions, like North Africa or Italy, churches in Spain in the fourth century were often located outside the city walls.<sup>69</sup> While some churches appeared in the city walls, such as in Mérida,<sup>70</sup> the majority of churches were built on rural estates.<sup>71</sup> The vast majority of fourth century *martyria* are found on rural villas, as well as the identifiable churches that we find in the archaeological record.<sup>72</sup> In addition, we possess literary evidence of lay activity in Spain. One of the most prolific Spanish authors, Prudentius, was a layman. We have a letter sent to Jerome by an ascetic husband-wife pair who sent a number of slaves along to copy his works. Paulinus of Nola moved to Barcelona and was influential in the church up until he was ordained a presbyter on Christmas Day, 394,<sup>73</sup> but after his ordination he refused to stay in Barcelona.

By paying attention to the prominence of the laity in the early fourth century, and their continued relevance and prominence in the mid-to-late fourth century, we see that the Spanish bishops are merely one group of actors among many. The story of the fourth-century church in Spain is not about the constant heresies and schisms that pop up, only to be defeated by orthodox bishops. Rather, it is a story about how the bishops sought to establish their authority over the churches they ran. Their efforts to do so sparked conflict, as ascetic laymen like Priscillian sought to rebuff the efforts of the Spanish bishops to control their private activity. Yet conflict was also the vehicle by which bishops could come together and, as a body, legislate and regulate

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<sup>69</sup> Kulikowski 2004, 220-240; Bowes 2005.

<sup>70</sup> Villela Masana 2002, 152-6.

<sup>71</sup> Kulikowski 2004, Bowes 2005.

<sup>72</sup> Bowes 2005, 208-234.

<sup>73</sup> Trout 1991.

their churches. This construction of a corporate identity was essential to strengthening the Spanish church as an institution.

This chapter explores how the Spanish bishops sought to establish their power during the fourth century. It also explores the divisions between different groups of Spanish bishops. It is important to do so because the conflicts the bishops participated in, and the issues that they chose to fight over, created the context within which we must understand Orosius. The main argument of this dissertation is that Orosius must be understood as an independent political actor, operating within a Spanish context, in contrast to the loyal lapdog of Augustine and Jerome that he is usually portrayed as. An understanding of that Spanish context is an essential foundation for my argument.

#### The Laity in Spain and the Rise of the Bishops

We can divide the types of churches found in the archaeological record of Spain into two types: churches associated with cities and rural churches. As Kim Bowes and Michael Kulikowski have pointed out, no churches were built within the walls of any city until the late fifth century.<sup>74</sup> For our time period, all the churches were constructed outside of the walls, indicating that the church did not have a very strong impact on civic life. Bowes has argued that the level of extramural churches is not remarkable in and of itself, as we find a similar amount in other regions.<sup>75</sup>

What is unique to Spain is the higher level of rural churches. In her overview of Spanish churches, Bowes has identified two types of rural churches: intra-villa churches and extra-villa churches.<sup>76</sup> Intra-villa churches refer to those like the Villa Fortunatus or the Monte de Cegonha

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<sup>74</sup> Kulikowski 2004, 220-240; Bowes 2005.

<sup>75</sup> Bowes 2005, 192.

<sup>76</sup> References for these sites can be found in Bowes 2001.

churches that were identified as physically part of the villa itself. Extra-villa churches, like the one at Torre de Palma or the one near Maternus' villa at Carranque, are rural churches found outside the walls of a given villa but still close enough to be considered related to the structure. The abundance of this archaeological evidence strongly suggests that rich landowners had a hand in building and patronizing church buildings in the areas under their control.

We have no evidence for how these villa owners would have interacted with the presbyters in charge of the rural churches, nor do we have any evidence for how those presbyters interacted with their bishops. That being said, what we do have evidence for is a confident laity. Rich laypeople had no compunction about pursuing ascetic practices or making connections with high profile churchmen outside of Spain, seemingly with no thought or reference to their own bishop. For example, Lucinius and Theodora are two Spanish landowners who wrote to Jerome while he resided in Bethlehem.<sup>77</sup> Jerome's reply to Lucinius urges him to set aside concerns for money and to come and reside in the holy land with him.<sup>78</sup> But Lucinius had no intention of moving to Bethlehem. He did, however, send his letter to Jerome along with a number of men in order to make copies of Jerome's works.<sup>79</sup> Lucinius also sent pieces of clothing as a gift, asked Jerome if he should fast during the Sabbath, and inquired if he should take the eucharist daily.<sup>80</sup> Instead of asking his own bishop, he asked a presbyter in Palestine for advice. This exemplifies the weakness of the episcopate in Spain at the end of the fourth century: Lucinius feels as if he can decide when to fast and when to take communion, even potentially outside the customs of the churches in Spain.

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<sup>77</sup> Hier. Epist. 71 and 75. Critical edition is Hilberg 1996 (CSEL 54 and 56).

<sup>78</sup> Hier. Epist. 71.3-4.

<sup>79</sup> Hier. Epist. 71.5. The phrase *hominibus tuis* is ambiguous.

<sup>80</sup> Hier. Epist. 71.6-7.

To further illustrate the laity's confidence in choosing their own ascetic practices, we may turn to two anonymous letters first edited by Morin.<sup>81</sup> These two letters, originally found in the *Codex Sangallensis* 190 in France, have been assigned a Hispano-Gallic provenance for two reasons: the second letter has a strong parallel to the Council of Saragosa in 380 concerning retreating from the church before Epiphany;<sup>82</sup> and there are a number of parallels to the works of Bachiarius.<sup>83</sup> Morin has identified parallels for both letters, but in my judgment the parallels are stronger for the first letter than for the second. Morin uses this to assert that Bachiarius served as a scribe for the woman writing the letters, in the same way that Jerome served as one for Paula and Eustochium.<sup>84</sup> This is a very speculative argument. We should note that a strong link to Bachiarius does not indicate a Spanish provenance, since Bachiarius cannot be securely located in Spain.<sup>85</sup> That being said, the fact that the parallels are stronger for the first letter than for the second letter means that the second letter, which fits into a Spanish context, can still be tentatively located there. Instead of treating the two letters as a unit, it is best to consider them each individually.

We should not necessarily assume that the two letters were written by the same person.<sup>86</sup> The first letter was clearly written by a woman, writing to another woman. The second letter is written to a woman, but the gender of the author is unclear. While the first letter is filled with self-deprecating sentiment and exaltation of the recipient as a model of virginity, the second letter is a confident exegesis of the figure of the she-ass as a means to provide ascetic and moral

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<sup>81</sup> Morin 1928.

<sup>82</sup> Morin 1928, 303.

<sup>83</sup> Morin 1928, 305-7. Most striking to me is that the phrase *totum canonem* is only used by Bachiarius and by the author of the first letter.

<sup>84</sup> Morin 1928, 307.

<sup>85</sup> Kulikowski 2003.

<sup>86</sup> Burrus and Keefer, 2000, 330.

instruction to a virgin.<sup>87</sup> This suggests to me that the two letters are not written by the same person. Because of the allusion to retreating from the church three weeks before Epiphany, an idea without parallel except at the Council of Saragossa, I accept the second letter as belonging to the Spanish context.

The identity of the author is not known. We do not know their gender, nor do we know whether or not the author is a cleric or a layperson. We know more about the recipient, who is a woman from a family that has a bishop as a family member.<sup>88</sup> The content of the letter is, as mentioned above, a figurative reading of the she-ass, combined with moral and ascetic instruction. Even though "their region" does not have deserts like Egypt, one can still find solitude in the mountains and forests.<sup>89</sup> Three weeks before Epiphany, the recipient should withdraw from the church for prayer and fasting.<sup>90</sup> The author outright acknowledges that this is an innovation, and writes a counter argument to the naysayers:

And if someone perhaps should object, saying that what the ordinances of the elders [*maiorum*] do not teach ought not to be done, let him hear that in Maccabees in the very month in which, Simeon, the last, is said to have been killed, the entire generation of fathers and priests [*patrum et pontificum*], along with their observances, came to an end, so that we may understand that we are not to be deterred from the observance of a novel custom, either by the precedent of law or by the teaching of the fathers.<sup>91</sup>

No matter the social status of the author, clearly the author does not think that ascetic practice should be dictated by tradition or institutions! By claiming that the "entire generation of

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<sup>87</sup> The figure of the she-ass primarily discussed is the talking she-ass of Balaam found in Num 22:22-40.

<sup>88</sup> Epist. II, pg. 55, as printed in Morin 1928, 296, lines 1-2.

<sup>89</sup> Epist II, pg. 59, as printed in Morin 1928 pg. 298, lines 15-17.

<sup>90</sup> Epist II, pg. 64, as printed in Morin 1928, pg. 300-1, lines 35-6 and 1-25.

<sup>91</sup> Epist II, pgs. 65-66 as printed in Morin 1928, pgs. 301-2, line 34 and 1-6. *Ac si quis fortassis occurrerit, qui dicat fieri non debere, quod maiorum institua non docent, audiat quia in Maccabeis in hoc mense omnis patrum et ponificum cum observationibus suis finita generatio est, in quo mense novissimus Symeon refertur occisus, ut intellegamus nos ab observatione novellae utilitatis nec legis praeiudiciis nec institutione paternitatis esse revocandos.* Translation by Burrus and Keefer 2000.

fathers and *pontifices*, along with their observances, came to an end" the author should be understood as advocating private practice unshackled by the decrees of the bishops. As we shall see, the Council of Saragossa legislated against precisely the practice advocated by this letter. We do not know whether this letter came before or after Saragossa, but here we can clearly see a competing claim to spiritual authority over and against the episcopacy.

Perhaps the most famous example of the confident Spanish layman is Priscillian of Avila. Priscillian was a rich, well-educated landowner who started to teach among different communities in Spain.<sup>92</sup> While we do not know precisely what he taught (the charges of Manichaeism his opponents lobbed at him were politically motivated, as the next chapter explores), what survives of his writings suggests that he preached a radical asceticism.<sup>93</sup> He got to be popular enough that it alarmed Hyginus, bishop of Cordova, who alerted Hydatius of Mérida.<sup>94</sup> Hydatius called the Council of Saragossa to rule against Priscillian, according to Sulpicius Severus, though Priscillian disputes that claim.<sup>95</sup>

The example of Priscillian shows the diversity of opinion among the Spanish bishops. When action was taken against Priscillian, he was ordained as bishop of Avila by two other Spanish bishops named Instatius and Salvianus.<sup>96</sup> Even the bishop who initially denounced him, Hyginus, ended up being one of his primary allies. After his death, the bishops in Galicia in particular appear to have had a particular affinity to his legacy.<sup>97</sup> This means that we should not take the Council of Saragossa as evidence for what *all* the Spanish bishops thought; rather, it is representative of a faction of Spanish bishops.

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<sup>92</sup> Sulpicius Severus *chron.* 2.46.2. Critical edition is Senneville-Grave 1999 (SC 441)

<sup>93</sup> Chadwick 1976, 57-110 is a good overview of Priscillian's theology including his asceticism.

<sup>94</sup> Sulpicius Severus *chron.* 2.46.3.

<sup>95</sup> Sulpicius Severus *chron.* 2.47.1; Priscillian *Tractatus* 2, lines 27-30 in Conti 2010, 2.42 in Schepss 1889.

<sup>96</sup> Sulpicius Severus *chron.* 2.47.2

<sup>97</sup> Evidence collected in Piay Augusto 2016.

In 380, 12 bishops (2 of whom, Phoebadius and Delphinus, are from Gaul) met at Saragossa for a council. The Council of Saragossa passed 8 canons. I have provided the canon headings below:<sup>98</sup>

1. That faithful women should be separated from meeting with men from outside their family.<sup>99</sup>
2. That no one should fast on Sundays, nor should they withdraw from the church for Lent.<sup>100</sup>
3. That if someone takes the eucharist in church and does not consume it there, they should be anathematized.<sup>101</sup>
4. No one should withdraw from the church for the three weeks before Epiphany.<sup>102</sup>
5. That those who are expelled by their bishops, they shall not be received by others.<sup>103</sup>
6. If any cleric wants to be a monk on account of luxury, he shall be excommunicated.<sup>104</sup>
7. That no one shall impose the name of teacher upon himself to whom it not granted.<sup>105</sup>
8. That holy virgins before the age of 40 should not be veiled.<sup>106</sup>

What we see in these canons are primarily a concern with controlling private ascetic practice. Canons 2 and 4, in the discussions of them later in the *Acta*, explicitly take aim at those withdrawing to their villas. Canon 3 means that no one can take the eucharist from the church and consume it in private. Canons 1 and 7 take aim at those who study in private in their villas, learning from laypeople, as Priscillian's followers seem to have done. In general, this council represents an attempt of a faction of Spanish bishops to assert their authority into the private practices of the rich ascetics we had surveyed above.

We do not know how effective this was, or if the canons were ever obeyed. What we do know is that the bishops at Saragossa were not the only ones seeking to assert the power of the

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<sup>98</sup> Text found in Martinez Diez and Rodriguez 1984, 291-296.

<sup>99</sup> *Ut feminae fideles a virorum alienorum coetibus separentur.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ut diebus Dominicis nullus ieiunet nec diebus quadragesimae ab ecclesia absentet.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ut qui eucharistiam in ecclesia accipit et ibi eam non sumit, anathematizetur.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ut tribus hebdomadis quae seunt ante epiphania, ab ecclesia nemo recedat.*

<sup>103</sup> *Ut qui a suis episcopis privantur, ab aliis non recipiantur.*

<sup>104</sup> *Ut clericus qui propter licentiam monachus vult esse, excommunicetur.*

<sup>105</sup> *Ut doctoris sibi nomen non imponat cui concessum non est.*

<sup>106</sup> *Ut ante XL annos sanctimoniales virgines non velentur.*

bishop. In the late 390s, Pacian of Barcelona wrote a series of letters and a treatise against one Sympronian, a layman who argued that Christians should not be forgiven for their sins after baptism.<sup>107</sup> Pacian argued that the bishops were put in place as God's helpers in dispensing forgiveness through the rite of penance. His rhetoric, at first glance, seems to downplay the authority of the bishop by giving the credit to God.<sup>108</sup> On closer inspection, however, Pacian makes the episcopacy central to the private life of the faithful. Through God, it is the bishop who can correct, punish, and forgive.<sup>109</sup> By arguing for forgiveness, against the perfectionist tendency of his lay interlocutor, Pacian makes a case for the essential function of the bishop.<sup>110</sup>

Again, we cannot know the individual impact the actions either of Pacian or of the bishops at Saragossa had. What we can observe is how the Spanish episcopacy began to regard itself as more of a corporate body. In 400, bishops from every province met at Toledo and passed 20 canons. In what follows, I have provided a translation of the canon heading along with any relevant supplementary information discussed later in the *Acta*:<sup>111</sup>

1. "About presbyters and deacons, if they produce children after their ordinations."<sup>112</sup> Deacons and priests must be celibate, even if married. This was something originally decided upon by the Lusitanian bishops, and is now codified by bishops from the rest of Spain. The canon states that if any presbyter or deacon was unchaste before the decision of the Lusitanian bishops took effect, then they can retain their post but will not be allowed to advance to the next rank.
2. "That a penitent, if necessity forces, may become a lector or an ostiarius."<sup>113</sup> Penitents are not allowed to become clergy, unless there is a shortage, in which case they can be admitted to the ranks of *ostarius* or *lector* but with some restrictions. They will not be allowed to read out selections from Paul's letters or the Gospel. The canon also provides a definition, albeit a vague one, of the conditions that necessitate penance:

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<sup>107</sup> See Domínguez del Val 1962 for a thorough overview of Pacian as a theologian and a writer.

<sup>108</sup> Pacian *Epist.* 3.7.3. Critical edition is Granado Bellido 1995 (SC 410).

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Here and elsewhere in the chapter I adopt the "perfectionist/mediocrity" dichotomy presented by Markus 1991 instead of the usual "rigorist/laxist." The rigorist/laxist dichotomy carries with it a value judgement that the "rigorists" are more steadfast and rigorous in their faith than the lazy masses.

<sup>111</sup> Text found in Martínez Díez and Rodríguez 1984, 323-344.

<sup>112</sup> *De presbyteris et diaconibus, si post ordinationem filios genuerint.*

<sup>113</sup> *Ut paenitens, si necessitas cogat, lector aut ostiarius fiat.*

murder or other heavy crimes/sins. Penitents must wear a goat-hair shirt, and then they can be reconciled.

3. "Concerning those who have married widows, lest they become deacons."<sup>114</sup> If a *lector* marries a widow, he is not to be advanced in rank but can keep his current rank, or perhaps become a subdeacon.
4. "That a subdeacon should be made an *ostiarius* if he took another wife after his first wife died."<sup>115</sup> If a subdeacon takes a wife after his dies, he shall be removed from his rank and enrolled in the ranks of the *ostiarii* and the *lectores*, though he will not be allowed to read from Paul's letters or the Gospel. He who takes a third wife shall be expelled from the clergy and only accepted as a layman after he does penance.
5. "That if a cleric of any rank comes late to church, he shall be deposed."<sup>116</sup> If any clergyman spends his time in a church belonging to a *castellum*, *vicus*, or *villa*, he must come to the church every day to make the sacrifice. If he does not, he is to do penance by the direction of the bishop, and if refuses to do so he will not be a clergyman anymore.
6. "That a religious girl shall not have familiarity with men."<sup>117</sup> No *puella Dei* shall be familiar with a confessor or any other layman not of her own family. If she is to attend gatherings, they should be gatherings of seniors and honorable people. Confessors and *lectores* should not be admitted into the rooms of the *puella Dei* unless they happen to be, by chance, related.
7. "That a cleric, against whom whose wife has sinned, in the place of death shall have the power of restraining her and shall not consume bread with her."<sup>118</sup> In the case that a wife of a cleric commits adultery, instead of killing her (as is traditional), the cleric should instead confine her to the house and force her to fast in order to promote a change of behavior and attitude.
8. "About he who becomes a soldier after his baptism, that he cannot be promoted to the diaconate."<sup>119</sup> If anyone does military service after being baptized, even if they haven't committed any grave sins, they can only acquire the ranks of the clergy below deacon.
9. "That no professed woman, or a widow, with a bishop absent, shall fulfill the sacerdotal office in her own house, nor the vespers."<sup>120</sup> No widow or ascetic woman is allowed to sing antiphons or vespers with a confessor or her slave without a bishop or a presbyter present.
10. "That no one can make anyone a cleric who is tied to another without the permission of the lord or the patron."<sup>121</sup> Clerics who have financial ties to a given *domus*, or any other kind of ties, should not be ordained unless their patron agrees and they have a *probata vita*.

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<sup>114</sup> *De his qui viduas acceperint, ne diacones efficiantur.*

<sup>115</sup> *Ut subdiaconus, si defuncta uxore aliam duxerit, ostiarius fiat.*

<sup>116</sup> *Ut si cuiuslibet ordinis clericus tardius ad ecclesiam venerit, deponatur.*

<sup>117</sup> *Ut religiosa puella virorum familiaritatem non habeat.*

<sup>118</sup> *Ut clericus cui uxor peccaverit, praeter necem potestatem habeat dstringendi eam et cum ea cibum non sumat.*

<sup>119</sup> *De eo qui post baptismum militaverit, ut ad diaconium non promoveatur.*

<sup>120</sup> *Ut nulla professa vel vidua absente sacerdote in domo sua sacerdotale officium vel lucernale impleat.*

<sup>121</sup> *Ut nullus obligatum cuiquam absque consensu domini vel patroni clericum faciat.*

11. "That if anyone of power robs another person, and does not return what he stole even with a bishop admonishing him, he shall be excommunicated."<sup>122</sup> If a *potens* robs a cleric or a poor person of their property, and a bishop orders him to return it and the *potens* refuses, then the bishop will write to the other bishops of the province and they will excommunicate the *potens* until the property is restored.
12. "That no cleric may recede from his own bishop and transfer himself to another."<sup>123</sup> A slave of a cleric who is freed is not allowed to break with his bishop and join with another, unless the one with whom he is breaking is a heretic and the one with whom he is joining is orthodox.
13. "About those who enter into the church but do not take communion, that they shall be excommunicated."<sup>124</sup> Those who enter into the church and do not take communion are to be warned, and if they persist in not taking communion, should be excommunicated.
14. "About those who take the eucharist but does not eat it, that they should be thrown out as if they were sacrilegious."<sup>125</sup>
15. "About those who are excommunicated by the bishops, that no one shall approach them."<sup>126</sup> If a layman is excommunicated, no clergyman should go to his house. If a cleric is excommunicated, he should be shunned by other clerics. This also applies to bishops.
16. "That a devoted woman shall perform penance for ten years if she commits adultery; if she took a husband, she is not to be permitted to the rite of penitence unless the husband dies."<sup>127</sup> If a devoted girl has sex, she is to be shunned by the church while she performs penance over a period of 10 years. The man who corrupted her should also pay the same punishment. If the woman persists in having a husband, she cannot start penance until the husband dies, though she can receive communion on her deathbed.
17. "About those who have a wife, if they also have a concubine, that they may not be admitted to communion."<sup>128</sup> If a man has a faithful wife and a concubine, he cannot receive communion. If he has no wife and has a concubine, that's fine, so long as it is a faithful relationship. If he has other women [?], he needs to perform penance.
18. "If the widow of a bishop or of a deacon takes a husband, she may take communion only at the end of her life."<sup>129</sup> If a widow of a cleric takes another husband, she is to be shunned by the church.
19. "If the religious daughter of a bishop or deacon commits sin, she may only take communion at the end of her life."<sup>130</sup> If the devoted daughter of a cleric takes a

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<sup>122</sup> *Ut si quis potentium quemlibet expoliaverit et admonente episcopo non reddiderit, excommunicetur.*

<sup>123</sup> *Ut nullus clericus de episcopo suo recedat et ad alium se transferat.*

<sup>124</sup> *De his qui in ecclesia intrant et non communicant, ut excommunicentur.*

<sup>125</sup> *De eo qui acceperit eucharistiam et non sumpserit, ut sacrilegus replatur.*

<sup>126</sup> *De his qui excommunicantur a sacerdotibus, ut nullus ad eos accedat.*

<sup>127</sup> *Ut devota, si adulteraverit, decem annos paeniteat; si maritum duxerit, non permittendam ad paenitentiam nisi maritus discesserit.*

<sup>128</sup> *De eo qui uxorem habet, si concubinam habuerit, ut non communicet.*

<sup>129</sup> *Si sacerdotis vidua vel Levitae maritum acceperit, in finem tantum communicet.*

<sup>130</sup> *Si sacerdotis vel diaconi filia religiosa peccaverit, in finem tantum communicet.*

husband, she is to be excommunicated until the husband dies and then she can perform penance. She is allowed to take communion on her deathbed.

20. "That no one can bestow the chrisma in the place of the bishops."<sup>131</sup> Bishops are the ones who can do the anointing of oil. If there are no bishops, presbyters can do it in a pinch, while deacons cannot.

21. Is omitted because it is most likely a later interpolation, as discussed in Chapter 1, XX.

These canons show that the Council of Toledo built upon the principles of the Council of Saragossa. Private ascetic practice in villas, especially by women, are continually restricted, while the role of the bishop is given center stage. However, the canons also show the growing ambitions of the bishops present at Toledo. Canon 11 shows that the bishops present are now confident enough to legislate against the actions of laypeople: instead of simply restricting their religious practice, the bishops are now angling to use their power to excommunicate individuals as a weapon to protect the property of the poor and, perhaps more importantly, themselves. The canons also show more attention paid to the regulation of clerics, laying out what types of people can ascend to which ranks and establishing punishments (penance, social exclusion) for certain behaviors (Canons 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 12, and 20).

We have two other pieces of evidence for the activity of the Council of Toledo that shows that the bishops have begun to see themselves operating as a group that needs to be self-regulated. The *Priscillianist Professions*, analyzed in detail in the next chapter, details the ritual by which previously pro-Priscillianist bishops gave up their former loyalties and sought the acceptance of the anti-Priscillianist bishops.<sup>132</sup> These actions show that there is a growing recognition of the two sides of the conflict acting as a conscious body. The anti-Priscillianists at

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<sup>131</sup> *Ut praeter episcopum nullus chrisma conficiat.*

<sup>132</sup> Chadwick 1976, 234-239.

Toledo agreed collectively to accept the now ex-Priscillianist bishops into communion (though not without some resistance in the rest of Spain).

The second piece of evidence is an anecdote written in a letter of Innocent I to the Spanish bishops criticizing two bishops for ordaining other bishops outside of their proper sphere. Innocent describes how two bishops, Rufinus and Minicius, usurped the right of ordaining other bishops from their metropolitans.<sup>133</sup> Rufinus admitted his error at the council of Toledo, but continued to persist in the practice.<sup>134</sup> Innocent suggests that the Spanish bishops explain to the newly (and improperly) ordained bishops that they cannot persist in their new office.<sup>135</sup> This suggests that the Spanish churches were conceived in the same terms as the metropolitan system designed at Nicaea. In practice this system appears unenforceable. We have no evidence that Rufinus and Minicius were punished, and the Spanish bishops in general did not act against bishops that they themselves deemed improperly ordained.<sup>136</sup>

As such, this anecdote reveals a growing sense of a corporate identity amongst the Spanish bishops and the limits thereof. By forcing Rufinus and Minicius to admit that what they had done was wrong at the council, the bishops at Toledo force out an admission that there is a hierarchy of bishops, recognized across Spain, that should govern their behavior. The fact that they crossed these boundaries meant that they had to make amends with the other Spanish bishops as a whole, not just those whose authority they overstepped. At the same time, there appears to be no punishment either for Rufinus and Minicius or those they've ordained. The

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<sup>133</sup> Innocent I, Ep 3.2.5 (= epist. pontiff. 288.2.5).

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> Innocent would not have had to suggest a course of action against these bishops if the Spanish bishops had already taken action.

bishops at Toledo can assert their power and the existence of the metropolitan hierarchy, but they appear to be less effectual at putting their legislation into operation.

Even at the close of the Council of Toledo, it is difficult to speak of "The Spanish Bishops" in the way we might speak of "The North African Catholic bishops."<sup>137</sup> Not every anti-Priscillianist bishop accepted the ruling of the Council of Toledo. But we can see that the bishops began to conceive of themselves as a group in the years 380-400. While the Council of Saragossa was a small council, and included two Gallic bishops, with limited scope in its legislation, the Council of Toledo included bishops from every *provincia* of Spain and had far more reaching legislation. We also see a difference in episcopal self-regulation. The bishops at Saragossa could only deal with their episcopal rivals, such as Hyginus of Cordoba, through the use of the court system.<sup>138</sup> At the Council of Toledo, bishops passed judgments themselves on other bishops. While this system was not yet fully developed, it is an important step in creating an institutional episcopacy.

#### Inter-episcopal Disagreements

We have discussed how the bishops in Spain gradually grew more confident about their group identity in the final years of the fourth century. However, I have also stressed that we should be careful of talking about the bishops at Saragossa or Toledo as *the* Spanish bishops. This is because the bishops in Spain themselves disagreed with and fought against each other. We have already briefly considered the Priscillianist controversy. In this section, let us examine two issues that divided the bishops that more directly connect with the wider issues of the broader church in the Roman Empire: how to deal with other bishops who had signed onto the

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<sup>137</sup> See, for example, the African bishops taking action as a corporate body in Aug. *Epist.* 175 and 176.

<sup>138</sup> Sulpicius Severus *chron.* 49-50.1.

Council of Ariminum, and whether the church should be only for the pure or if it should happily include sinners.

Lead up to Ariminum

Up until the Council of Ariminum in 359, Spanish ecclesiastical politics appears to be dominated by Ossius of Cordoba. At the very least he is the most significant Spanish bishop and is well respected by most pro-Nicene sources even after his "betrayal" when he accepted the Sirmian framework.<sup>139</sup> I use the words "Sirmian Framework" for what older scholarship refers to as the "Second Sirmian Creed" because, as Williams points out, it is not really a profession of faith.<sup>140</sup> Rather, it is a document that serves as the foundation for several later creeds, as will be discussed below. Ossius served as the leading bishop at the Council of Nicaea and at the (Western) Council of Serdica. Not only does this indicate his high status among the Western<sup>141</sup> bishops, it shows how strongly his (soft) power base is linked to the idea of the Nicene Creed: he and Nicaea are inseparable, since without him there would be no Nicene Creed.

The decade of the 350s sees a significant shift in official support for the Western Pro-Nicene bishops, however. While they had been supported by Constans in the 340s, Constans

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<sup>139</sup> References to Ossius being respected: Sozomen *HE* 3.12 describes the bishops at the Western council of Serdica as οἱ ἀμφὶ τὸν Ὄσιον; Theodoret *HE* 3.6 is the full letter of Serdica, which names Ossius as "worthy of all honour and respect, on account of his advanced age, his adherence to the faith, and his labours for the church"; Athanasius praises Ossius at *Fug.*5 and *H. Arian.* 42-45. After Ariminum, his reputation did change among anti-Ariminum partisans, such as Gregory of Elvira who called him "Ossius the Transgressor" at Hil. Pot. *coll. antiar.* 3.II.1.

<sup>140</sup> Williams 2021, 307 uses the language of the "Sirmian document" and "Sirmian Manifesto." I opt for "Framework" because this document forms the basis for several creeds later.

<sup>141</sup> Throughout this section, several terms are used to describe the various groups we are dealing with. By far the most theologically neutral and consistent label is that between Eastern and Western bishops, though these labels imply a geographical divide that is not consistent all of the time. There are Western bishops who belong to the "Eastern" camp, and vice versa; but these labels are used both by modern scholars and by our sources because they speak to two general groupings. For the years surrounding Serdica, Pro- and Anti-Athanasian groups are perhaps more precise, but this label loses its usefulness when the majority of the Western bishops become anti-Athanasian in the 350s. Pro-Nicene and Anti-Nicene have been used in modern scholarship but are only used occasionally here because, as I try to show, most of the conflicts are not actually about theology, but rather use theology as a way to carry out their conflicts over episcopal authority.

was overthrown by Magnentius in 350, who was in turn defeated by Constantius II in 353.<sup>142</sup>

Constantius' policy towards the Western bishops was to try to bring them into consensus with the Eastern bishops. In his view, there were two obstacles to this goal: theological disagreements between the *homoousians* and the *homoiousians*; and the destabilizing presence of Athanasius. As Stevenson has shown, Constantius systematically acted to isolate Athanasius by either exiling his supporters (such as Lucifer of Cagliari, Eusebius of Vercelli, and at first Liberius of Rome) or by bringing Athanasius' partners into Constantius' orbit (as happened with Liberius of Rome after his exile with Ossius).<sup>143</sup>

How precisely Constantius managed to separate Ossius from Athanasius and turn him into a supporter of Constantius' theological agenda is impossible to know. Our sources say that Ossius was held at the court in Sirmium for an entire year where Constantius worked to persuade him.<sup>144</sup> The method, whether with kindly words, threats of violence, or any combination thereof, differs depending on the source. Athanasius claims that Ossius was old and tired and on account of his bodily weakness gave in to Constantius; but Ossius did foreswear the "Arian heresy" before he died.<sup>145</sup>

The pro-Nicene slant of our sources prevents us from taking their descriptions as straight fact. The partnership that had existed between Athanasius and Ossius before the 350s would explain why Athanasius bends over backwards to defend him; and the ecclesiastical historians largely follow Athanasius' lead. Our anti-Ossius sources are not much better. The *Libellus Precum* of Marcellinus and Faustus just describes Ossius as a coward who gave in to bribery

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<sup>142</sup> For an overview of these events see Barnes 1993, 101-108 and Crawford 2016, 63-84.

<sup>143</sup> Stevenson 2021, 51-57.

<sup>144</sup> Socrates *HE* 2.31; Sozomen *HE* 4.16; Philostorgius *HE* 4.3b.

<sup>145</sup> Athanasius *H. Arian.* 42-45.

from the emperor.<sup>146</sup> All we as historians can do is observe that Constantius did manage to turn Ossius into a supporter of the Sirmian Framework (or the "Blasphemy of Sirmium" as Hilary of Poitiers calls it), and that Ossius' realignment provoked a further political realignment in the West.<sup>147</sup> This was a division in the pro-Nicene alliance: between those who would forgive those who had signed on to the Sirmian Creed, and those who would not.

The principle actors behind the Sirmian framework were Ursacius, Valens, Ossius of Cordoba, and Potamius of Lisbon. This text is short, inoffensive, and ambiguous.<sup>148</sup> It condemns *ousia* language for promoting discord, but there are no statements that would be easily attributable to a "Nicene" or "Arian" theology. Instead of *ousia* language, the Sirmian document uses the word *homoios*. There is one statement asserting the Son's subordination to the Father, though the Council of Serdica also asserted a degree of subordination.<sup>149</sup>

The initial reception of the Sirmian Framework in the East was positive. Basil of Ancyra and other Eastern bishops produced a creed that is consistent with it, and both Athanasius and Hilary of Poitiers approved of it.<sup>150</sup> Eudoxius of Antioch adopted the Sirmian Framework in the "Dated Creed" using the word *homoios*, a word that Athanasius and Hilary would later use.<sup>151</sup>

However, there was trouble brewing in the west. Hilary, from his exile, wrote to his Gallic colleagues about the "blasphemy" of Sirmium. Phoebadius of Agens' *Against the Arians*

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<sup>146</sup> Faustinus and Marcellinus *fid.* 9.32-3.

<sup>147</sup> There are other cleavages created by the Second Sirmium Creed in the Homoian camp, such as that between the followers of Aetius and Eunomius, on the one hand, and Basil of Ancyra on the other. See Ayres 2004, 144-153.

<sup>148</sup> The text can be found in Athanasius *Syn.* 28.

<sup>149</sup> The whole creed can be found in Theodoret *HE* 2.8 (2.6. in the NFPF translation). See especially the declaration in 2.8.45. that "No one denies that the Father is greater than the son: not on account of another essence, nor yet on account of their difference, but simply from the very name of the Father being greater than that of the Son." οὐδέ τις ἀρνεῖται ποτε τὸν πατέρα τοῦ υἱοῦ μείζονα, οὐ δι' ἄλλην ὑπόστασιν, οὐ διὰ τὴν διαφορὰν, ἀλλ' ὅτι αὐτὸ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς μείζον ἐστὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ. Critical edition is Parmentier and Hansen 1998.

<sup>150</sup> Williams 2021, 309.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.* See also Hanson 1988, 371 for a discussion of the Dated Creed.

is essentially a line by line commentary on the Sirmian framework, in an attempt to prove that the framework actually hides Arian theology behind its ambiguity. This lobbying work appears to have worked in 359 when a council of Western bishops met at Ariminum. They rejected the Dated Creed and voted to depose Valens and Ursacius. A delegation of ten bishops was sent to Constantius' court to explain their decision, but Constantius did not meet them right away. Instead, Constantius had them wait first at Hadrianople, and then at Nike.<sup>152</sup>

After meeting with bishops from the East, who had gathered in Seleucia in Cilicia, the delegation reversed course. They undid their deposition of Valens and Ursacius and embraced the Sirmian framework. When the delegation returned to Ariminum, the council wrote a letter to Constantius agreeing to drop *ousia* language and claimed to be in unity with the bishops who met at Seleucia. The creed adopted at Ariminum was ratified at a council of Constantinople in 360.<sup>153</sup>

The reaction to this news in the West was negative. Gregory of Elvira penned an attack against the Council of Ariminum. The Council of Paris condemned it in 360, and in 362/3 (after Constantius' death), Liberius of Rome followed suit. The Italian bishops declared that a condemnation of Ariminum was necessary for communion. Throughout these texts, the language of deceit is used; Ariminum is a *fraus* that leads the orthodox unwittingly into heterodoxy.

The Western church splintered on one issue: what to do with the bishops who had signed on to Ariminum? Athanasius and Hilary both promote a conciliatory approach, offering a conditional pardon to any bishop who now agreed to condemn Ariminum. Lucifer of Cagliari, however, thought that this was too lenient and held the position that those who had signed on to

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<sup>152</sup> Hanson 1988, 377-378; Athanasius *Syn.* 55.2-3 (277-8).

<sup>153</sup> Socrates *HE* 2.42 and Sozomen *HE* 4.24.1-26.1.

Ariminum were prevaricators and could not be allowed to keep their episcopal status. For our purposes, we will focus on the reaction to Ariminum in Spain.

#### Aftermath of Ariminum in Spain

For this conflict in Spain, we have three primary pieces of evidence: the career of Gregory of Elvira, the *Libellus Precum* of Marcellinus and Faustinus, and the letter of Siricius to Himerius of Tarragona. Let us begin with Gregory of Elvira.

Unfortunately, our historical knowledge about Gregory is slim.<sup>154</sup> Jerome's description of him is short: "Gregory, bishop of Elvira, in Baetica, writing even to extreme old age, composed various treatises in mediocre language, and an elegant work *On Faith*. He is said to still be living."<sup>155</sup> His *Chronicle* gives us slightly more information.<sup>156</sup> In the entry for the 287th Olympiad (369-373), he writes "Lucifer, bishop of Cagliari, who along with Gregory, bishop of the Spanish provinces, and Philo of Libya never involved himself with the Arian depravity, died."<sup>157</sup> From these two quotes, we can draw the following conclusions. Gregory was a prolific author (and his surviving corpus shows this), whose style Jerome did not find particularly noteworthy except for the *On the Orthodox Faith*. His *On Faith* was the most famous, since it is name-checked, and presumably circulated to Palestine so that Jerome could make judgements on the style. He might still be living in 397, when Jerome wrote the *On Famous Men*, but the *dicitur* makes it only a possibility. Finally, Gregory had a reputation for avoiding heresy.

Out of his works, the one that concerns us for this section is the *On the Orthodox Faith* which was written in the aftermath of the Council of Ariminum. Gregory states that he had sent

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<sup>154</sup> Shuve 2014 is the most recent, and most critical, re-evaluation of his life.

<sup>155</sup> Jerome, *vir. ill.* 105. Translation in NPNF 3, pg. 381. Critical edition is Barthold 2010, *Gregorius Baeticus, Eliberi episcopus, usque ad extremam senectutem diversos mediocri sermone tractatus composuit et de fide elegantem librum hodieque superesse dicitur*.

<sup>156</sup> The critical edition is Helm 1956.

<sup>157</sup> *Lucifer Caralitanus episcopus moritur, qui cum Gregorio episcopo Hispaniarum et Philone Libyae numquam se Arrianae miscuit pravitati*.

an earlier version to other bishops, who received it well but one pointed out that some statements were ambiguous enough to be considered heretical.<sup>158</sup> This suggests that Gregory is embedded in at least some sort of episcopal network with bishops of similar views. We know nothing else about this network, whether Gregory sent it to other Spanish bishops, to bishops later labeled "Luciferian", or a third network altogether. The work is largely a defense of the *homoousion*, arguing against an imaginary Arian strawman. Scholars have noted that Gregory is influenced by Phoebadius of Agens, who wrote his own takedown of the "Blasphemy of Sirmium."<sup>159</sup> Beyond this, though, the works of Gregory do little to shed light on his biography or his political activity.

One final episode of Gregory's life concerns us for this section: his relationship with Osius of Cordoba. In the *Libellus Precum* of Marcellinus and Faustinus (which will be discussed below more thoroughly), the two Roman presbyters outline how Gregory refused to hold communion with Osius after he supported the religious policies of Constantius II.<sup>160</sup> Osius reportedly used his connection with the *vicarius* at the time, Clementinus, to summon Gregory in his presence and urge him to enter into communion.<sup>161</sup> The presbyters are vague on the details, preferring instead to cast Osius as a judge presiding over the true Christian Gregory in a way reminiscent of early martyrdom texts, but Osius and Gregory had an altercation.<sup>162</sup> Unable to persuade Gregory to enter into communion with him, Osius asks Clementinus to send Gregory into exile.<sup>163</sup> Clementinus requests first that Gregory be deposed before sending him

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<sup>158</sup> Gregory of Elvira, *fid.* 2. Critical edition and translation is Brumbach 2014.

<sup>159</sup> Phoebadius of Agens, *c. Arian*. Brumbach 2014, 102 lists the similarities that lead some scholars to believe the *de fide orthodoxa* was actually composed by Phoebadius.

<sup>160</sup> Faustinus and Marcellinus, *fid.* 33.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.* We know nothing else about the Clementine; see PLRE Vol 1. (Clementinus 1).

<sup>162</sup> Faustinus and Marcellinus, *fid.* 35.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.* 36. This was a common way for Constantius to handle dissidents who did not want to sign on to the various Sirmian creeds.

into exile, but Gregory prays to Christ for judgment.<sup>164</sup> Ossius suddenly died, and Clementinus asked Gregory for mercy.<sup>165</sup>

This rendition of the story is highly rhetorical, and serves to explain why Gregory was never sent into exile despite his rejection of the Constantian program.<sup>166</sup> However, it is based on a kernel of truth, since we possess a letter from Eusebius of Vercelli to Gregory.<sup>167</sup> The letter commends Gregory for standing up to Ossius, and reassures Gregory that Eusebius of Vercelli remains in communion with Gregory. This letter sheds light on a few details. For one, it provides a *terminus ante quem* for Gregory's altercation with Ossius. Eusebius states that he is in his third exile, which means he was in the Thebaid. Eusebius was only allowed back to Vercelli when Julian allowed all of the Christian exiles to go back to their sees, which means that this letter had to be written before that edict was promulgated in 361.<sup>168</sup> Secondly, this letter provides evidence for the reach of Gregory's epistolographic network. He informed Eusebius of his altercation, and Eusebius lived far away in the Thebaid in Upper Egypt. Thirdly, it is evidence for some sort of 'alliance' between anti-Ariminum bishops. Eusebius exhorts Gregory to continue writing against the ideas passed at Ariminum. While Eusebius would later take a more moderate stance towards those who had signed onto Ariminum, at this stage we can see Eusebius acting like what modern scholars call a "rigorist."<sup>169</sup>

Traditional scholarship has, on the basis of this letter and the *Libellus Precum*, appointed Gregory of Elvira as the "leader" of the "Luciferian church" in Spain.<sup>170</sup> This view has been

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid. 36-7.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid. 38.

<sup>166</sup> As Shuve 2014, 253 notices, pointing at *fid.* 40.

<sup>167</sup> Hil. op. hist. frag. 11.5.

<sup>168</sup> Faustinus and Marcellinus, *fid* 51; Amm. 22.5.3-4; Rufinus *Hist. eccl.* 1.27; Socrates *HE.* 3.4; Sozomen *HE.* 5.5; and Theodore *HE.* 3.2.

<sup>169</sup> Fiano 2022 is an up to date examination of Eusebius' moderate activity at the Council of the Thebaid in 362.

<sup>170</sup> See, for instance, Hanson 1988, 519.

thoroughly and rightly debunked.<sup>171</sup> The so-called "Luciferians" are not a breakaway organized church, but are a loose collection of like-minded anti-Ariminum bishops who were labeled as "Luciferians" by Damasus and later church historians.<sup>172</sup> However, Gregory is the only hardline anti-Ariminum bishop from Spain of whom we are aware. Marcellinus and Faustinus only name one Spanish presbyter. Whether this means that Gregory was famous enough to "break through" to the public consciousness of the rest of the empire and the lack of evidence hides a wider group of bishops, or if Gregory was one of the few hardline bishops, we cannot say.

Gregory of Elvira is not the only person in Spain that the *Libellus Precum* discusses. It also names Potamius of Lisbon.<sup>173</sup> While the works of Potamius that survive cast him as a pro-Nicene writer, the *Libellus Fidei* claims that he "prevaricated" and joined the Arians.<sup>174</sup> We know from the evidence collected by Hilary that he was one of the framers of the Sirmian Consensus. Marcellinus and Faustus claim that he did this because he was given a farm by Constantius, but he died on the way to visit it for the first time. The Roman presbyters also describe the death of Florentius of Mérida, who was punished not for agreeing to the Sirmian Consensus, but for not withholding his communion from those who did. Potamius' death can be dated to the late 350s or early 360s because the *Libellus Precum* presents Potamius as dying on the way back from the imperial court.<sup>175</sup> It is likely that Florentius' death happened around the same time because Marcellinus and Faustinus present the episode as an event contemporary to Gregory's altercation with Ossius and Potamius' death. However, further specificity is impossible.

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<sup>171</sup> Pérez Mas 2008, 320-324; Shuve 2014; Whiting 2015, 54 disagrees with the aforementioned to some degree, giving Gregory a more prominent role among the "Luciferians."

<sup>172</sup> Faustinus and Marcellinus, *fid.*86-91.

<sup>173</sup> Faustinus and Marcellinus, *fid.*41.

<sup>174</sup> Conti 1998.

<sup>175</sup> Faustinus and Marcellinus, *fid.*41.

The structure of the *Libellus Precum* runs on two parallel tracks.<sup>176</sup> The first track goes around the Roman world, detailing the actions of hardline anti-Ariminum bishops in the 360s, starting with the events in Spain. The second track follows the same geographic path as the first, but details people being persecuted by other Christians for their hardline attitudes. For Spain, the *exemplum* the text deploys is that of Vincentius, a presbyter who held communion with Gregory of Elvira.<sup>177</sup> In this episode, Hyginus of Cordoba and Luciosus attempted to force Vincentius into entering communion with him by orchestrating a violent mob to attack his "basilica." Luciosus is probably the same Luciosus as the one present at the Council of Saragossa, and Hyginus certainly is the same Hyginus.<sup>178</sup> This episode stands in parallel to the Gregory/Ossius altercation, since Vincentius is glossed as "in communion with Gregory" and one of the leaders against him is the bishop of Cordoba, the same see as Ossius. The outcome is opposite, though; while Gregory survived his encounter and Ossius died, in the 380s Hyginus prevailed and Vincentius died.

Shuve has used the Vincentius-Hyginus episode to argue that Gregory was not so well regarded as Marcellinus and Faustinus depict.<sup>179</sup> Certainly we should take this to mean that Gregory was not well regarded by the "mainstream" Catholic bishops in Spain. Both the individuals were involved in the Council of Saragosa, and Hyginus was the one who denounced Priscillian to Hydatius of Mérida to begin with.<sup>180</sup> If the heresy accusations against Priscillian

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<sup>176</sup> Canellis 2006, 48-53; Whiting 2019, 32-34.

<sup>177</sup> Faustinus and Marcellinus, *fid.* 72-76.

<sup>178</sup> See Martínez Díez and Rodríguez 1984, pg. 292.

<sup>179</sup> Shuve 2014, 255.

<sup>180</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *chron.* 2.46.8.

were motivated by the desire to control ascetic practices, as Kulikowski argues, then Hyginus' actions against Vincentius can be seen in the same mold.<sup>181</sup>

Marcellinus and Faustinus only provide us with one perspective, of course. The *Libellus Precum* presents Damasus as a villain character, and implies that "true Christians" like Gregory, Vincentius, and the other heroes they mention would not hold communion with a man like Damasus. Yet, Damasus appears to have had good relations with a number of Spanish bishops, or at least a good enough reputation that Spanish ecclesiastics sought him out. In the outbreak of the Priscillianist controversy, for instance, the main actors of both factions reached out to him for aid.<sup>182</sup>

At some point before Damasus died, Himerius of Tarragona wrote to him to ask for advice about a number of issues that were dividing the Spanish bishops. Damasus died before he could answer, but Siricius sent an answer. This letter has been described as the first papal *Decretal*; as such, much of modern scholarship focuses on what the letter can tell us about the growth of papal authority.<sup>183</sup> Josep Villela Masana has done some good work on using the letter to identify the diversity of religious practices in Late Antique Spain, though it sometimes feels as if he is just reading the letter and taking it at face value.<sup>184</sup> A close reading of the letter allows us

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<sup>181</sup> Kulikowski 2004, 246-7. Escribano Paño 2005, 139 argues that the fact that both Vincentius and Priscillian were attacked by Hyginus suggests that both episodes spring from the laxist/rigorous split, and therefore we should consider Priscillian to be an anti-Ariminum rigorous. This is an overreading of the evidence; a desire for more episcopal control is simpler and fits the evidence equally well, if not better.

<sup>182</sup> Priscillian's *tract.2* is a letter written to Damasus. In it, he alludes to the fact that Damasus had heard from Hydatius before receiving his own letter: Lines 145-154 in Conti, *tract.2.50-51* in Schepss.

<sup>183</sup> Jaspas and Fuhrmann 2001, Hornung 2015, Ferreiro 2015, and Ferreiro 2020, 45-56 are examples of this type of scholarship and provide bibliography.

<sup>184</sup> See Villela Masana 2004 for this approach. Villela Masana 1998, 277 uses this letter to claim that Himerius of Tarragona is the primate of all Tarraconensis, but this is speculation based on an assumption that Spain adopted the Nicene Primate System at this point; yet as I've pointed out above, this system was still being developed and realized into the 5th century.

to ascertain what issues Himerius, and by consequence other Spanish bishops, were concerned with.

The first issue Himerius brought up to Damasus is whether or not people who had previously accepted the decisions of the Council of Ariminum, but now condemned it, should be rebaptized.<sup>185</sup> Some Spanish bishops thought that they should be; Siricius' answer was that only the laying on hands was necessary for them to be reconciled with the church.<sup>186</sup> Some Spanish clergy bestow baptism at Christmas, Epiphany, and during the feasts of the martyrs, while Siricius states that baptism should only be given on Easter or Pentecost.<sup>187</sup> Siricius advises that apostates should be exiled from the church, though offered communion on their death bed if they remain repentant.<sup>188</sup> He also advises that marriage betrothals are sacred and should not be broken.<sup>189</sup>

Himerius brought up the issue of penance.<sup>190</sup> It seems that people were receiving penance and then repeating the same sin.<sup>191</sup> Siricius advises that these people should be allowed in the church but kept from communion until their deathbed.<sup>192</sup> This section of the letter is important not, strictly speaking, for the advice Siricius gave, but as evidence for the fact that this issue was under consideration by the Spanish bishops collectively. As we saw, penance did not play a role in the Council of Saragosa, which took place before Siricius sent this letter. 20 years later at Toledo, multiple canons prescribe conditions for penance.

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<sup>185</sup> Siricius *Epist.* 1.1 (= epist. pontiff. 255.1.1. Critical Edition is Zechiel-Eckes 2013.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> Siricius *Epist.* 1.2.

<sup>188</sup> Siricius *Epist.* 1.3.

<sup>189</sup> Siricius *Epist.* 1.4.

<sup>190</sup> Siricius *Epist.* 1.5.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

Himerius is also concerned about the sexual life of ascetics and clergy.<sup>193</sup> He asked for advice concerning monks who broke their vows; Siricius suggests they should be excommunicated from the church and only given communion on their deathbed.<sup>194</sup> More appalling to Siricius is the fact that some Spanish clergy have produced offspring even after taking their clerical oaths and defended their procreation using the Old Testament<sup>195</sup>. Siricius is horrified by this line of reasoning, and completely condemns it.<sup>196</sup> Those who procreated out of ignorance should be allowed to keep their current rank without any possibility of advancement, but those who rely on Old Testament *exempla* to justify their actions should be expelled "from every ecclesiastical office by the authority of the apostolic see."<sup>197</sup> Clearly Siricius is making a play at building up papal authority, though he holds no formal authority over any bishop in Spain.

Finally, Siricius is concerned about unworthy people becoming clergy out of ambition.<sup>198</sup> Siricius lays out a timeline for when and how people should advance through the ranks, so that their worthiness can be judged.<sup>199</sup> He also advises that anyone who had performed penance should not be admitted into the ranks of the clergy.<sup>200</sup> Those that already are, "due to ignorance," should be allowed to keep their offices, but he advises that from now on no penitent should be

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<sup>193</sup> Siricius *Epist.* 1.6.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Siricius *Epist.* 1.7.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid. *apostolicae sedis auctoritate deiectos*.

<sup>198</sup> Siricius *Epist.* 1.18..Hornung 2015 argues that, in this section, Siricius moves away from Himerius' own concerns and tries to legislate on his own concerns. This is because he drops references to learning about phenomena from Himerius' letter, and only focuses on his own opinions about the clergy. Of course, we should not distance this too much from Himerius' original letter, since these suggestions grow out of consideration for the problems Himerius presented, and we lack the original letter besides.

<sup>199</sup> Siricius *Epist.* 1.9.

<sup>200</sup> Siricius *Epist.* 1.14.

allowed into ecclesiastical office.<sup>201</sup> Siricius ends his letter by asking Himerius to send it to all the other Spanish bishops.<sup>202</sup>

What this letter shows is that the Spanish bishops were divided on a number of issues concerning clerical discipline. Multiple opinions on the issues of rebaptism, penance, and clerical misbehavior existed and were offered as answers to the problems presented to the Spanish bishops. The normative texts that survive, such as the canons of the Council of Toledo, reveal which alternatives ultimately won the consensus of the Spanish bishops. Unfortunately, other than in glimpses that we see in this letter, we cannot precisely map out how the agenda of the Council of Toledo was set.

One issue in which we can see wider range of opinions, however, is the different understandings of the nature of the Church itself. The question at stake is as follows: does the church contain sinners, or is it spotless and pure? Siricius offers a moderate position on the issue of laity who commit sin: he recognizes that sin will occur after baptism, and penance is an available tool to purge that sin. Upon repeat offenses, he advises exclusion, but throughout his letter Siricius stresses mercy as a guiding tenet for his decision making. From Spanish bishops, we possess two differing visions that stand at the opposing flanks of Siricius' middle position: the perfectionist Gregory of Elvira and the moderate Pacian of Barcelona.

We do not possess any specific treatise by Gregory about his views about the nature of the church. To reconstruct it, we must look at his statements in his *Commentary on the Song of Songs* and his *Tractates on Origen*. What emerges from these texts is an image of the church as pure, spotless, and without stain.<sup>203</sup> Penance is not offered as a tool to be forgiven for sin after

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<sup>201</sup> Siricius *Epist.* 1.15. *sola excusatio ignorantionis obtenditur, cui nos interim solius pietatis intuitu necesse est clementer ignoscere.*

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>203</sup> Gregory of Elvira, *Tract.* 1.8; l.28.

undergoing baptism. Instead, penance is only mentioned as something that one does *before* baptism in preparation for the sacrament.<sup>204</sup> Heretics are to be shunned from the church completely, but so too are *peccatores*.<sup>205</sup> As Karl Shuve has noted, Gregory has much more in common with the Donatists on this question than what would eventually be accepted as orthodoxy.<sup>206</sup>

In contradistinction, Pacian offers a radically different and less stringent image of the church. To Pacian, humans were doomed to sin due to the deceitfulness of Adam.<sup>207</sup> It is only with the coming of Christ that humans were freed from the original sin of Adam. Unlike figures like Pelagius, who saw the Law as a guide to avoid sin, Pacian sees it as a double edged sword. "Without the Law [man] perished because he could not recognize sin; and under the Law he perished because he rushed into that very sin which he saw."<sup>208</sup> It was only through grace, which is defined as "the remission of sin," brought by Christ that mankind could be free.<sup>209</sup> Adam's original sin passed down the generations through carnal generation; but the grace of Christ is passed down via the practice of baptism. However, Pacian recognizes that people will sin even after baptism. Pacian condemns all sins, of course, but makes a division between minor sins and mortal sins.<sup>210</sup> In this he is followed by Augustine, who makes a similar demarcation.<sup>211</sup> Minor sins can be compensated for by good works, while mortal sins (such as idolatry, murder, and adultery) require penance.<sup>212</sup> Unlike for Gregory, penance *is* a tool for acquiring the forgiveness

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<sup>204</sup> Gregory of Elvira, *Tract.* 2.22-27.

<sup>205</sup> Gregory of Elvira, *Tract.* 2.22-23.

<sup>206</sup> Shuve 2016, 79-106.

<sup>207</sup> Pacian. bapt. 5.1-2.

<sup>208</sup> Pacian. bapt. 2.3. *Sine lege ideo periit, quia peccatum videre non potuit; et in lege ideo, quia in idipsum quod videbat incurrit.*

<sup>209</sup> Pacian. bapt. 3.1.

<sup>210</sup> Pacian. paraen. 3.1.

<sup>211</sup> Poschmann 1964, 84-85.

<sup>212</sup> Pacian. paraen. 4.3.

of sin after baptism to Pacian. While heretics are to be kept out of the church, *peccatores* are explicitly to be kept in the church so that they may be corrected.<sup>213</sup>

Scholars have noticed the similarities between Pacian's theory of sin and Augustine's elaboration of *peccatum originale* in the context of the Pelagian controversy.<sup>214</sup> Augustine does not appear to have read Pacian, so we cannot claim that Pacian was an influence on him.

However, Augustine does name drop one *Olympius Hispanus* in his works against Julian.

Augustine writes:

Olympius, a Spanish bishop, a man of great renown in the Church and in Christ, stated in an ecclesiastical discourse, "If faith had remained ever inviolate on earth and had continued to follow the determined and well-marked paths which it abandoned, it would never have sown by the deadly transgression of the human being the defect in the seed so that sin is born along with a human being."<sup>215</sup>

To summarize, Olympius believes that sin is born within a human simultaneously with the birth of the human, because faith had been broken in the past. This is the only fragment of Olympius' text we possess. While we lack fundamental biographical information for Olympius, we can construct a relative chronology for when he lived. Augustine names those whom he considers his predecessors in chronological order: "Irenaeus, Cyprian, Reticus, Olympius, Hilary, Ambrose, Gregory, Innocent, John, Basil and... Jerome."<sup>216</sup> Reticus was active in the early 4th century, and Hilary of Poitiers was active until 367. Olympius' period of activity should be placed, therefore, somewhere in the middle of the fourth century.

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<sup>213</sup> Pacian *Epist.* 3.4.5.

<sup>214</sup> For instance, see Granado Bellido 1990 and Duval 2004.

<sup>215</sup> Aug. c. *Iulian.* 1.3.8 *Olympius Hispanus episcopus, vir magnae in Ecclesia et in Christo gloriae, in quodam sermone ecclesiastico: "Si fides - inquit - umquam in terris incorrupta mansisset, ac vestigia defixa tenuisset, quae signata deseruit, numquam protoplasti mortifera transgressione vitium sparsisset in germine, ut peccatum cum homine nasceretur."*

<sup>216</sup> Aug. c. *Iulian.* 2.10.33.

These four figures -- Gregory, Siricius, Olympius, and Pacian -- offer the range of views on the nature of the church present in Spain at the end of the fourth century. This contributes to the Spanish context that Orosius grew up in. This is important because it goes a long way in explaining why Orosius emerged as a participant in the Pelagian Controversy, as we will explore in chapter 3. Orosius did not approach the problem *ex novo*, as if these questions had not been debated and thought through in Spain. Rather, we see in Orosius someone who appears to have sided with Pacian. This is not to say that Orosius read Pacian, since we do not know; but that if Pacian represents a portion of society that supported a more welcoming church, Orosius' actions in Palestine suggests that he leaned in the same direction as Pacian.

### Spanish Context and Orosius

In the above sections, we have summarized the various conflicts that the Spanish church faces in the latter half of the fourth century. These conflicts, with the exception of the Priscillianist controversy, are not mentioned in historical overviews of Orosius' life.<sup>217</sup> Even when the Priscillianist controversy is brought up, it is to provide readers with the knowledge of the theological conflict that Orosius appears to contribute to, not the political dimensions. However, all of these conflicts construct and shape the context that Orosius acts in when he emerges on the world stage in 415 CE. However, because the relationships between his actions and the Spanish context in which he operates are not readily obvious, they shall be elucidated in this section.

In chapter 1, I examine how Orosius' composition of the *Commonitorium* is not an attempt to accurately describe Priscillianist and Origenist beliefs or to find answers that would

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<sup>217</sup> E.g. Vilella Masana 2000; Fear 2010, 1-6.

satisfactorily answer their theological concerns. Instead, this document is meant to bolster the status of the Galician bishops by associating a presbyter from that region with a more famous outsider. The Galician bishops have that need because of their ambiguous status after the Council of Toledo; many were pro-Priscillianists who moved to condemn Priscillian at the council, but were not accepted into communion by all of the anti-Priscillianist bishops outside of Galicia. However, as we have seen, that conflict itself is rooted in a deeper competition between laity and clergy. The Priscillianist conflict ended in the way it did because of the efforts of Hydatius and Ithacius to assert their authority over a lay teacher, Priscillian. Their methods caused division not only between clergy and laypeople, but also within the clergy itself. Orosius' method is to adopt the aggressive *language* of Hydatius and Ithacius, but in *action* work to heal the divides that still exist amongst different Spanish bishoprics.

In Chapter 2, I demonstrate how Orosius' "failed" attempt to get Pelagius convicted for heresy was actually a political strategy meant to set Augustine's ideas of original sin as the basis for any subsequent dialogue on the topic. Scholars have typically seen the *Liber Apologeticus* as proof that Orosius was a lackey of Augustine (and, to a lesser extent, Jerome); hot headed and zealous, but loyal to his masters. However, by paying attention to the fact that Pacian of Barcelona and Olympius of Hispania (whom Augustine himself acknowledges as a forerunner) dealt with questions of grace and original sin, we can see Orosius in a different light. Instead of being a lackey of Augustine and just pushing his ideas, we can present Orosius as choosing to ally with Augustine because of pre-existing connections between Augustine's thought and thoughts that were already being discussed in Spain. Augustine's anti-Pelagian formulations are perhaps more polished, and therefore more useful, to set the debate around original sin and grace.

In this light, then, we can see Orosius as an independent actor *using* Augustine as a partner to push for his own agenda, rather than blindly serving Augustine's.

Finally, in chapter 3, I examine the available evidence for the relics of Stephen the Protomartyr in the West, because Orosius is the one who brought them westward from Jerusalem. The reason why Orosius was sent with the relics, what he intended the bishops in Galicia to use them for, and even if they arrived in Spain at all are unknowable questions because of the dearth of evidence. Instead, what I do is look at how bishops used the relics of Stephen in their own contexts. Every bishop uses the relics differently, but all for the same purpose: to heal divides in their congregations. Given the heavily divided nature of the Spanish episcopacy detailed in this chapter, it is easy to see that the relics could have been used in similar ways; as such, the chapter ends with informed speculation as what that would look like.

# Chapter One -- Orosius and Priscillianism

## Introduction

Political scientists have long recognized the importance of two political strategies: manipulating the scope of a conflict and changing how the political conflict is defined (a tactic known as "problem definition").<sup>218</sup> Knowledge of these strategies offer historians an opportunity to better understand how the Priscillianist controversy played out. Analyzing how the participants in the Priscillianist controversy employed both techniques gives us a new lens to view Orosius' own activity and the nature of his *Commonitorium*.

Scholars of Priscillianism or of Orosius have relatively little to say about his *Commonitorium*. In older scholarship, the focus is on Orosius' citation of one of Priscillian's lost works.<sup>219</sup> For more recent historians of Priscillianism, Orosius serves as Augustine's informer about Priscillianism.<sup>220</sup> Only two scholars have given Orosius an active role in the conflict. Virginia Burrus has noted how Orosius contributed to Jerome's presentation of Priscillian as a gnostic seducer of women.<sup>221</sup> Daniel König portrays Orosius' actions as a means of combatting Priscillianism in Spain, but this is a minor point in his study that is not fleshed out in any detail.<sup>222</sup>

Some scholars of Orosius argue that he left Spain out of a pious desire to ask Augustine theological questions.<sup>223</sup> Others claim that he fled the barbarians in Spain, citing a personal

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<sup>218</sup> Schattschneider 1960, 1-19, 60-75; Cobb & Elder 1972, 110-129; Baumgartner & Jones 1993, 25-38, 83-102; Kingdon 1985, 152-172; Adamany 1972; Rochefort and Cobb 1993; Dery 2000.

<sup>219</sup> Babut 1909, 279-283; Chadwick 1976, 190-208.

<sup>220</sup> Villela Masana 1997, 181; Sanchez 2009, 51; Piay Augusto 2018, 30.

<sup>221</sup> Burrus 1995, 138-9; on 166n7 she claims that Orosius invented the term *Priscillianista*, but this term is first found in *C. Th. XVI.5.40*, see Sanchez 2009, 93-4 for discussion.

<sup>222</sup> König 2008, 20.

<sup>223</sup> See Martínez Calvero 1999, 69-71 for this hypothesis and an overview of earlier literature; de Lasala 2008, 8.

anecdote in his *Histories*.<sup>224</sup> Maribel Dietz and Francisco José Lamas Noya independently argue that Orosius fled Spain because of the barbarians, but used the opportunity to ask Augustine questions as a cover up for his act of flight.<sup>225</sup>

In this chapter, I will argue that Orosius' decision to involve Augustine in the Priscillianist controversy was a political strategy intended to raise the status of those bishops in Galicia who were refused communion by bishops in Betica and Carthaginiensis in the aftermath of the Council of Toledo. By "widening the scope" of his conflict to include Augustine as a participant, Orosius sought to tie the Galician bishops closer to the Catholic African bishops. Orosius did this by defining Priscillian as a Manichaean<sup>226</sup>, an appropriate action to take when appealing to a man who sought to cast himself as an anti-Manichaean theologian.<sup>227</sup> By composing the *Commonitorium* and having Augustine reply to it, Orosius advertised the close relationship between the two men. The two works depict a shared understanding of Priscillianism as a heresy and not a schism. By introducing Augustine to the Priscillianist conflict, Orosius has a large enough impact on anti-Priscillianist discourse that later Galician bishops are accepted by the other Spanish bishops.

To make this argument, this chapter will first present two earlier phases in the Priscillianist controversy that set the stage for Orosius' later actions. The first phase is Hydatius' and Ithacius' actions in the early years of the controversy. This phase is characterized by participants who define the conflict in such terms that maximize difference between the two sides, with the goal of achieving the condemnation of the other side. They define Priscillian as a Manichaean. These participants widen the scope of the conflict in order to include other

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<sup>224</sup> Personal anecdote: *Hist.* 3.20. Villela Masana 2000, 96-97.

<sup>225</sup> Dietz 2005, 55-64. Lamas Noya 2013, 86.

<sup>226</sup> Oros, *Comm.* 2.1

<sup>227</sup> For Augustine's efforts against Manichaeism, see Lancel 2002, 121-4, 152-6, and 272-5.

participants who join the conflict on their side. The second phase is the Council of Toledo in ca. 400. This council is characterized by participants who define the conflict in terms that minimize difference between the two sides, with the goal of reconciliation. They widened the scope of the conflict in order to facilitate peace between the two parties. This was done by characterizing Priscillian as a heretic because of his teachings on the nature of the Son, instead of as a Manichaean.

Orosius returns to the aggressive approach of Hydatius and Ithacius, maximizing distance between himself and Priscillian. He also presents Priscillian as a heretic because of his teachings on the nature of the Son, which transformed a talking point meant to reduce difference between two conflicting groups into one that maximized it. Orosius' activity can be read as a rejection of the reconciliatory mode of the Council of Toledo while attempting to achieve the same ends: the communion of Galician bishops with the other Spanish bishops.

### Narrative of the Priscillianist Controversy

In order to understand Orosius' role in the Priscillianist controversy, it is necessary to set out the events that happened before Priscillian's death. Sulpicius Severus is the main narrative source for understanding the Priscillian controversy while Priscillian was still alive. In 380, Hydatius called a council in Saragossa.<sup>228</sup> Priscillian, a layman at the time, as well as Instantius and Salvian, two bishops, did not attend.<sup>229</sup> However, it should be noted that the conference was poorly attended in general.<sup>230</sup> The bishops present were: Phoebadius of Agen,<sup>231</sup> Delfinus of Bordeaux, Euticius, Ampelius, Lucius, Ithacius of Ossonuba, Splendonius, Valerius, Simposius,

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<sup>228</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *chron.*2.47.1.

<sup>229</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *chron.*2.47.1.

<sup>230</sup> Chadwick 1976, 29. *Concilio I de Zaragoza* 18-20.

<sup>231</sup> Phoebadius of Agen had previously signed the creed at Ariminum, although he had previously written a *Liber contra Arianos* in reaction to the Second Sirmian Creed. Hanson 1988, 516-7.

Carterius, and Hydatius of Merida. Sulpicius frames the issues as if the "heretics" did not show up to the council, but neither did the majority of Spanish or Aquitanian bishops. Sulpicius Severus claims that the council condemned Priscillian in absentia.<sup>232</sup> However, both the Acts of the Council<sup>233</sup> and Priscillian's own story<sup>234</sup> claim that, since Priscillian was not at the council, he was not actually condemned. Rather, as Chadwick has argued, it is likely that the council passed *sententiae* that were hostile to Priscillian implicitly but not explicitly.<sup>235</sup> As such, it seems likely that the bishops at Saragossa were concerned with Priscillian's unauthorized ascetic teachings, as outlined in the Introduction.

Priscillian's *Liber ad Damasum* provides a narrative for what happened after the council. According to Priscillian's narrative,<sup>236</sup> after Hydatius came back from the Synod of Saragossa, he was "publicly indicted by his own presbyter with ecclesiastical decrees."<sup>237</sup> What those *actis ecclesiasticis* were is not discussed by the text. A few days after, more charges were brought against Hydatius and communicated to other churches in Spain, including those of the Priscillianists. "Many separated from his churchmen, declaring that they would communicate with the bishop not without him being made pure."<sup>238</sup> The Priscillianists claim to have written a letter which asks that the peace of the churches be restored. This was given to Hyginus and Symposius. A reply was written, though the text does not say by who, that states that if Hydatius was accused by laymen, a confession of the catholic faith of the *laici* would be enough, but that

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<sup>232</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *chron.*2.47.1. *In absentes tamen lata sententia damnatique Instantius et Salvianus episcopi, Helpidius et Priscillianus laici.*

<sup>233</sup> *Concilio I de Zaragoza.*

<sup>234</sup> Priscillian, *tract.*2.27-30. *Denique in conventu episcopali qui Caesaraugustae fuit nemo e nostris reus factus tenetur, nemo accusatus, nemo convictus, nemo damnatus est, nullum nomini nostro vel proposito vel vitae crimen obiectum est, nemo ut evocaretur non dicam necessitatem sed nec sollicitudinum habuit.*

<sup>235</sup> Chadwick 1976, 25.

<sup>236</sup> This narrative is from *tract.*2.110-160.

<sup>237</sup> *tract.*2.115-116. *in media ecclesia sedens reus a presbytero suo actis elesiasticis petitur.*

<sup>238</sup> *tract.*2.118-19. *segregant se de clericis ipsius plurimi, profitentes non nisi purgato sacerdote se communicaturos.*

in the future a council will be necessary to sort out this situation. It also, reportedly, adds that no one was condemned at Saragossa.<sup>239</sup>

The Priscillianists traveled to Merida in order to talk to Hydatius in person, but were prevented from entering the presbyterium by the mob outside. Despite this setback, the Priscillianists received the profession of the *laici* and judged them to be orthodox. Writing to the other bishops, the Priscillianists claim that the *sacerdotalis reverentia passa fuisset*, that the reverence owed to bishops had suffered. The Priscillianists received the reply that a council was still necessary, clarifying that "just as the dedication of a bishop lies in another bishop, so the choosing of the candidate rests in the *plebs*."<sup>240</sup> In other words, since Hydatius was facing a revolt from his *laici*, presumably because of the charges brought forth by one of his own presbyters, his status as bishop is in question.

Afraid of this council, according to Priscillian's narrative, Hydatius appealed to the emperor, "weaving a story of what happened with our names dissembled within."<sup>241</sup> Ithacius acquired a rescript from Gratian against "pseudobishops and Manicheans."<sup>242</sup> Around this time, Instantius and Salvian ordained Priscillian as the bishop of Avila.<sup>243</sup> Severus claims that Priscillian, and the bishops allied with him, left their churches of their own free will, because they did not dare to contest the legal judgment.<sup>244</sup> Priscillian also presents the accused bishops as

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<sup>239</sup> *tract.2.125-6. nullum autem in Caesarugustana synhodo fuisse damnatum.*

<sup>240</sup> *tract.2.139-141. Rescribitur ad nos dandum super ista concilium; credendum habitae professioni et sicut dedicationem sacerdotis in sacerdote, sic electionem consistere petitionis in plebe.*

<sup>241</sup> *tract.2.142-3. rei gestae fabulam texens dissimulatos nominibus nostris*

<sup>242</sup> Priscillian, *tract.2.142-145. Hinc ille plus quam oportebat timens concinnat preces falso et rei gestae fabulam texens dissimulatis nominibus nostris rescriptum contra pseudoepiscopos et Manichaeos petit et necessario inpetrat, quia nemo non, qui pseudoepiscopos et Manichaeos audiret, odisset.*

<sup>243</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *tract.2.47.2. Interim Instantius et Salvianus damnati iudicio sacerdotum Priscillianum etiam laicum, sed principem malorum omnium, una secum Caesaraugustana synodo notatum, ad confirmandas vires suas episcopum in Abilensi oppido constituunt, rati nimirum, si hominem acrem et callidum sacerdotali auctoritate armassent, tutiores fore sese.*

<sup>244</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *tract.2.47.2. Quo comperto gnostici diffisi rebus suis, non ausi iudicio certare. Sponte cessere qui episcopi videbantur, ceteros metus dispersit.*

leaving their churches after hearing of the rescript.<sup>245</sup> No source mentions the use of imperial troops to throw Priscillian and his followers out of their churches, but the threat of the rescript should be understood as coercion.

After leaving their churches, Priscillian and his followers traveled to Rome in order to petition Damasus for his aid.<sup>246</sup> Even before they left, however, both sides of this conflict sought the support of Italian bishops. Priscillian claims that Ambrose had already been convinced by Hydatius,<sup>247</sup> and the Priscillianists had sent letters to Damasus before they left for Rome.<sup>248</sup> Priscillian's supporters were never given the opportunity to plead their case in front of Damasus, according to Sulpicius.<sup>249</sup> Rejected, Priscillian and his supporters turned to imperial officials. The first attempt worked, temporarily, when he appealed to Macedonius and acquired a rescript which allowed them to go back to their churches.<sup>250</sup> After Maximus usurped the purple, however, Ithacius widened the scope of the conflict to include the new emperor, who wrote a letter ordering that "all of those whom this debacle involved be lead to a synod at Bordeaux."<sup>251</sup> However, Priscillian bypassed the potential synod by directly appealing to Maximus.<sup>252</sup> This is probably because Delfinus was bishop of Bordeaux, who was already openly against him. Unfortunately, Maximus needed to appease the bishops in his new role as emperor, and

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<sup>245</sup> Priscillian, *tract.*2.149-150. *ecclesias nostras commendavimus deo.*

<sup>246</sup> Priscillian, *tract.*2.151-154. *et ad te qui potuimus venientes voluimus quidem absentes supplicare, ut si haberet quod Hydatius obiceret sacerdotum audientiam postulantes nec refugientes tamen iudicium publicum, si ipsum malluisset; Sulpicius Severus, chron.*2.48.1. *Ac tum Instantius, Savianus et Priscillianus Romam profecti, ut apud Damasum, urbis ea tempestate episcopum, obiecta purgarent.*

<sup>247</sup> Priscillian, *tract.*2.145-6. *Viro etiam spectabili fratri tuo Ambrosio episcopo tota mentitur.*

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*150-151. *quarum communicatorias ad te epistulas detulimus totius cleri et plebis suscriptione transmissas.*

<sup>249</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *chron.*2.48.2. *Hi ubi Romam pervenere, Damaso se purgare cupientes, ne in conspectum quidem eius admissi sunt.*

<sup>250</sup> Sulpicius Severus *chron.*2.48.2. *Ita corrupto Macedonio, tum magistro officiorum, rescriptum eliciunt, quo calcatis, quae prius decreta erant, restitui ecclesiis iubebantur. Hoc freti Instantius et Priscillianus repetivere Hispanias (nam Salvinus in urbe obierat) ac tum sine ullo certamine ecclesias, quibus praefuerant, recepere.*

<sup>251</sup> Sulpicius Severus *chron.*2.49.2. *omnes omnino, quos labe illa involuerat, deduci in synodum Burdigalensem iubet.*

<sup>252</sup> Sulpicius Severus *chron.*2.49.3. *Priscillianus vero, ne ab episcopis audiretur, ad principem provocavit.*

calculated that killing Priscillian would be a good way to appeal to the Spanish bishops who were, at this time, in communion with Damasus and Ambrose.<sup>253</sup>

### Hydatius and Ithacius

Scholars have long recognized that Hydatius and Ithacius defined the Priscillianist controversy as a conflict over heresy by labeling Priscillian as a Manichaean first, and then a sorcerer.<sup>254</sup> As Maijastina Kahlos has most recently pointed out, participants in theological conflicts deployed "Manichaean" as a common label, along with other terms such as "Jews," "Judaizers," and "sorcerers" in order to deny the label of "Christian" to their opponent.<sup>255</sup> Labeling their opponents as heretics or Others in this way made it easier for participants in conflicts to simultaneously paint their rivals as illegitimate and present their own theological statements as orthodox.<sup>256</sup>

Likewise, the Priscillianist controversy has been used as a case study for examining so-called "scale-jumping" in ecclesiastical politics. Natal and Wood have recently examined how participants in ecclesiastical conflicts "jump scales" in order to buttress their own local authority in both the Priscillianist Conflict and Zosimus' intervention into ecclesiastical politics in Gaul.<sup>257</sup> They define scale-jumping as "how actors operating at a given scale are able to connect to processes operating at another -- higher or lower -- scale in order to reinforce claims within their own context."<sup>258</sup> Scale-jumping is comparable to "widening the scope" of a conflict. Jumping from one scale to the other had effect of building up the "Church" as an institution, as ties with

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<sup>253</sup> Chadwick 1976, 120–21.

<sup>254</sup> For example, Chadwick 1976, 22-4, 34-5, and 147-8; Van Dam 1985, 101-103; Lieu 1985, 148-150; Burrus 1995, 47-78, 94-98; König 2008, 10-19, Sanchez 2009, 90-103.

<sup>255</sup> Kahlos 2020, 108-9.

<sup>256</sup> Kahlos 2020, 106-7. For the application of this framework to the Pelagian controversy, see Bonner 2018, 260-288 and especially Rebillard 2013.

<sup>257</sup> Natal and Wood 2016.

<sup>258</sup> Natal and Wood 2016, 37.

outside bishops were formed and strengthened. At a local level, this had the side effect of strengthening intra-group connections between bishops. This manifested as stronger inter-group conflict later when other controversies broke out.<sup>259</sup>

These perspectives, rooted in the social sciences, have undoubtedly enriched our knowledge of how ecclesiastical conflicts play out. However, so far the scholarship on the Priscillianist controversy has ignored the role that problem definition has on the strategy of widening the scope. As conflicts widen to include other participants, the terms by which they are defined may be simplified or otherwise changed in order to appeal to a wider coalition.<sup>260</sup> Similarly, as conflicts change venue the participants will change how they define the conflict to better suit the venue.<sup>261</sup> Accordingly, this section will analyze how Hydatius' and Ithacius' efforts at problem definition both facilitated their attempts to widen the scope of the conflict and inhibited Priscillian from doing the same.

This section will largely rely on two texts: Priscillian's *Liber ad Damasum* and Sulpicius Severus' *Chronicle*. Neither of these texts are straightforward documents and should not be treated as such.

Priscillian's *Liber Ad Damasum* is a written petition to Damasus. Priscillian, or his allies, wrote it to defend Priscillian against accusations of heresy and persuade Damasus to enter the conflict on their side.<sup>262</sup> Therefore, we must remember that Priscillian had a vested interest in proclaiming his own orthodoxy and presenting Hydatius' accusations as baseless. For this analysis, the *Liber Ad Damasum* is important because we can see what charges Priscillian

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<sup>259</sup> Wood 2019, 236-7 uses the Priscillianist controversy as an early example of this phenomenon.

<sup>260</sup> See, for example, Lisa Miller's analysis of this phenomenon in contemporary racial politics in the contemporary USA: Miller 2007.

<sup>261</sup> Baumgartner and Jones 1993, 25-38; Pralle 2003; and Constantelos 2010.

<sup>262</sup> For scholarly analysis of the *Liber ad Damasum* see Conti 2010, 268-278 and van Waarden 2014.

attempts to answer and we can analyze what rhetorical arguments Priscillian employs in his efforts to win over Damasus. This text is evidence that Hydatius sought to cast Priscillian as a heretic. Defining Priscillian in this way served as a means to widen the scope of the conflict to the imperial court and to include Italian bishops.

Sulpicius Severus' *Chronicle* is the only extant narrative account of the Priscillianist controversy. As a consequence, we are forced to rely on it to some extent, despite the fact that it was written about 15 to 20 years after Priscillian's execution.<sup>263</sup> Severus has his own literary aims that we must keep in mind. Central to his depiction of the Priscillianist controversy is Priscillian's heresy, on one hand, and Ithacius' bad behavior on the other.<sup>264</sup> In both the *Chronicles* and the *Dialogues*, Ithacius is presented as hostile to Martin of Tours, Severus' hero.<sup>265</sup> His distaste for both sides leads him to present the controversy in almost purely political terms, modeling his depiction after Sallust's monograph on Catiline.<sup>266</sup> On the one hand this is useful for historians of ecclesiastical politics, as his narrative includes events, which no other source includes, that allow us to trace how the Priscillianist controversy played out. However, he has some surprising omissions that can only be detected with evidence from other sources. For example, Priscillian is only referred to as a gnostic in Sulpicius' narrative, not as a Manichaean, despite Ithacius' efforts at labeling him as such.<sup>267</sup> It is only by supplementing his account with other evidence, such as Priscillian's *Tractates* and a few sources written closer to Priscillian's execution that we can really trace the political maneuvers by which Hydatius and Ithacius achieved their success.

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<sup>263</sup> Stancliffe 1983, 80 argues for a date range between 403 and 406.

<sup>264</sup> Priscillian's heresy: Sulp. Sev. *chron.* 2.46.1-5. Ithacius' bad behavior: *chron.* 2.50.1-4.

<sup>265</sup> Sulp. Sev. *chron.*, 2.50.3-4 and *Dial.* 3.11-13.

<sup>266</sup> Stancliffe 1983, 58-9.

<sup>267</sup> A good examination of this can be found in Burrus 1995, 126-148.

Some time after the Council of Saragossa, Hydatius sought an imperial rescript to use against Priscillian and his allies.<sup>268</sup> In Severus' account, Priscillian and his allies appealed to Ambrose and Damasus in retaliation, but were rejected by both.<sup>269</sup> Priscillian gives one reason for Ambrose's rejection in his petition: Hydatius sent letters to Ambrose and other bishops, accusing him and his allies (including Hyginus of Cordoba, Hydatius' rival) of heresy.<sup>270</sup> Hydatius also included a text of Priscillian as proof of his assertions.<sup>271</sup>

Priscillian asks Damasus to take a critical eye to Hydatius' assertions, but he recognizes that he needs to defend himself against the charges of Manichaeism. He first claims that Manichaeans are more than heretics, but are idolaters and sorcerers. He then brings up the fact that he has been accused of being a Manichaean.<sup>272</sup> He then puts Hydatius' accusations in the context of local ecclesiastical politics in Mérida. Priscillian and his allies attempted to intervene in Méridan affairs when one of Hydatius' own presbyters accused him of wrongdoing.<sup>273</sup> Priscillian presents Hydatius as seeking the rescript in order to punish him, obtained by "singing prayers in a false manner and weaving a fable of what happened while our names were concealed."<sup>274</sup> Priscillian claims that when Hydatius wrote to Ambrose to inform him of his charges against Priscillian, Hydatius lied to him.<sup>275</sup> Finally, Priscillian presents himself as a more generous bishop. He asks Damasus to call a council in order to settle the dispute, but

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<sup>268</sup> Sulp. Sev. *chron.* 2.47.5-6 labels this rescript as written against *haeretici*, while Priscillian presents the rescript as *contra pseudoepiscopos et Manichaeos* in *tract.* 2.50..

<sup>269</sup> Sulp. Sev. *chron.* 2.48.4.

<sup>270</sup> Priscill. *tract.* 2.50-51.

<sup>271</sup> Priscill. *tract.* 2.52. We do not know what text this was.

<sup>272</sup> Priscill. *tract.* 2.47.

<sup>273</sup> Priscill. *tract.* 2.48-50 for the narrative of Méridan affairs.

<sup>274</sup> Priscill. *tract.* 2.50. *concinat preces falso et rei gestae fabulam texens dissimulatis nominibus nostri.*

Translation by Conti 2010.

<sup>275</sup> Priscill. *tract.* 2.50.

requests that no charge be brought forth so that Hydatius does not have to fear being condemned.<sup>276</sup>

Comparing Sulpicius Severus and Priscillian's account allows us to give a rough sketch of how the conflict between Hydatius and Priscillian escalated. Both Priscillian and Severus agree that Hydatius reached out to Gratian's court after the Council of Saragossa. While the way they frame it is different, both sources agree that Hydatius passed judgment against Priscillian and that Priscillian resisted.<sup>277</sup> As a response, Hydatius sought the help of the imperial government. The two sources disagree on what precisely the rescript was, but Priscillian's version seems to be confirmed by later evidence.

Priscillian presents two different examples of political activity. Hydatius maximizes difference between himself and Priscillian by labeling him a heretic and working to obtain the recognition of his claims by other figures important to ecclesiastical life. Hydatius uses that rescript, combined with other "proof," to close off different avenues for Priscillian. For instance, Ambrose had already been convinced by Hydatius by the time that Priscillian appealed to him, and refused to help Priscillian. Hydatius' aim was to obtain the condemnation of Priscillian as a heretic. On the other hand, Priscillian seeks only to clear his own name. Instead of pursuing Hydatius' condemnation, he attempts to minimize difference with Hydatius by asking Damasus only to help reconcile the two sides.

Hydatius' definition of Priscillian as a Manichaean allows us to analyze how problem definition and widening the scope of a conflict are intertwined. Moving the conflict from ecclesiastical circles, such as the Council of Saragossa, to the imperial court involves a change in

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<sup>276</sup> Priscill. *tract.* 2.54.

<sup>277</sup> Priscillian claims that Hydatius had no cause and no charge against him, yet still excommunicated him. *tract.* 2.48. Sulpicius claims that the council itself condemned Priscillian, but he was raised to the office of bishop as an act of resistance against the council. *chron.* 2.47.4.

venue. As previously mentioned, participants in a conflict often change how they present a conflict to better fit the venue in which they are operating.<sup>278</sup> Simplifying the terms that define the difference between the two sides allows Hydatius to more easily attract people to his faction. Simplifying the conflict to "Manichaeism vs. Orthodoxy" allowed Hydatius to tap into previous legislation promulgated against Manichaeans by the imperial government.<sup>279</sup> "Changing the image" of the conflict in this manner made it more fitting for Hydatius' new venue.

The rescript gave Hydatius one more weapon in his arsenal -- the imperial government recognized the legitimacy of his accusations. Thus, when Hydatius sent Ambrose a letter claiming that Priscillian was a Manichaean, Ambrose did not only have Hydatius' word for it, but also a rescript from Gratian's court. While Ambrose's relationship with Gratian is complicated, in the years leading up to Hydatius' actions Ambrose had sought to present himself as Gratian's theological advisor.<sup>280</sup> Consequently, it would not be politically advantageous to ignore a charge of Manichaeism endorsed by Gratian. This is most likely why Ambrose refused Priscillian's pleas for help. Hydatius defined Priscillian as a Manichaean in order to widen the scope of the conflict and include the imperial government, but it had the added effect of inhibiting Priscillian's attempts to appeal to Ambrose.

Similarly, Hydatius inhibited Priscillian's attempts to recruit Damasus to his side. Priscillian in the *Liber ad Damasum* implies that Damasus already heard the accusations. Priscillian had both to defend himself against the charges themselves and to claim that they are lies born out of personal animosity in an attempt to convince Damasus not to follow Ambrose's

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<sup>278</sup> Baumgartner and Jones 1993, 36; Pralle 2003.

<sup>279</sup> *C. Th. XVI..5.3-5.*

<sup>280</sup> McLynn 1994, 98-106.

lead. According to Sulpicius Severus, however, this was done in vain. Damasus did not allow Priscillian into his sight, and we have no idea if Damasus even read the *Liber ad Damasum*.<sup>281</sup> If we follow Priscillian's fears, then it appears that Damasus had already chosen to believe Hydatius' accusations. Hydatius' acts to widen the scope of the conflict to include the imperial government had the effect of inhibiting Priscillian's attempts to obtain Damasus' help.

The process by which Ithacius extended the definition of Priscillian as a "Manichaeian" to a "sorcerer" is more difficult to trace because Sulpicius Severus is almost our sole source. However, we can establish how the definition of "sorcerer" played a complementary role to the definition of "Manichaeian" and how the "Manichaeian" Priscillian was useful to Maximus after he was executed. This process helps us understand ecclesiastical activity in general: participants in ecclesiastical conflicts may define their problems in such a way that better aligns with their target's interests or expertise.

Maximus executed Priscillian on charges of *maleficium*, an accusation Priscillian claims came from Ithacius.<sup>282</sup> Manichaeism has often been associated with magic.<sup>283</sup> Diocletian's edict on Manichaeans defines Manichaeian practices as *genera maleficiorum*.<sup>284</sup> The *Epistle Against the Manichaeans* claims that the Manichaeans took the menstrual blood of their *electae* for sacramental functions, a magical practice.<sup>285</sup> Later, Procopius would link Manichaeans to sorcerers as examples of the sordid people in which Barsymes took an interest.<sup>286</sup> Labeling

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<sup>281</sup> Sulp. Sev. *chron.* 2.48.4. van Waarden 2014 argues that the *Liber ad Damasum*'s very nature prompted Damasus to reject Priscillian, because it didn't give him enough wiggle room to operate. However, this argument assumes that Damasus even read the text.

<sup>282</sup> Priscillian's execution: Sulp. Sev. *chron.* 2.50.8. Ithacius as source of accusation: Priscill. *tract.* 1.28.

<sup>283</sup> Lieu 1985 109-116.

<sup>284</sup> *Lex Dei sive Mosaicarum et Romanorum legum collatio* 15.3.5.

<sup>285</sup> P. Rylands *Greek 469*, lines 30-35. Text found in Roberts 1938, 42.

<sup>286</sup> Procop. *Arc.* 22.25.

Priscillian a Manichaean opened the way for Ithacius to add the charges of *maleficium* and make them credible.

While Priscillian was executed on charges of *maleficium*, he would be understood as a Manichaean after his death. Philastrius of Brescia refers to individuals from Spain who follow the teachings of the Gnostics and Manichaeans.<sup>287</sup> Modern scholars understand this to be a reference to Priscillianists. When Maximus corresponded with Siricius, he referred to his recent efforts against "Manichaeans," which modern scholars also understand to mean Priscillian.<sup>288</sup> Hydatius and Ithacius were successful in problem definition.

Maximus' reference to punishing Manichaeans must be understood in the context of his own political strategy. Throughout his five-year reign, Maximus relied on religious messaging to assert his legitimacy.<sup>289</sup> This extended to his dealings with Valentinian and his court. In a letter to Valentinian, Maximus chastises him for changing his father's religious policy and judging bishops as heretics who were formerly seen as orthodox.<sup>290</sup> Maximus presents himself as a champion of religious orthodoxy, signaling to the "Nicene" faction of Valentinian's court that he would be a more effective emperor.<sup>291</sup> His alliance with Ithacius and Hydatius allowed him to offer concrete proof of his effectiveness to Siricius. "May Your Sanctity recognize [my piety] from these acts rather than from our mouth."<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> Filastrius 38.32. Reference to Priscillianism: Chadwick 1976, 119; Van Dam 1985 101n62; Burrus 1995 89; Sanchez 2009 94-95.

<sup>288</sup> This letter is Maximus Augustus, *Epistula ad Siricium papam* (CPL 1594) preserved in the *Collectio Avellana* (Avell. 40) and among Siricius's Letters (epist. 3). Avell. 40.4.

<sup>289</sup> See Matthews 1975, 165 and 181 and Omissi 2018, 281. His presentation in the ancient historians: Sulp. Sev. *Dial.* 3.11; Soz. *HE* VII.13 and Zos. IV.42.1.

<sup>290</sup> This letter is *Maximus Augustus, Epistula Valentiniano Augusto* (CPL 1593) preserved in the *Collectio Avellana* (Avell. 39). Avell. 39.5.

<sup>291</sup> Avell. 39.3. is a reference to the "Siege of the Basilica". On that episode, see McLynn 1994 170-180 and Williams 2017, 227-239.

<sup>292</sup> Avell. 40.4: *ex gestis ipsis tua sanctitas quam ex nostro ore cognoscat*. My translation.

The alliance between Ithacius, Hydatius, and Maximus offers an example of how problem definition facilitates the widening of the scope. By defining Priscillian as a Manichaean and a sorcerer, Ithacius and Hydatius provided Maximus with an opportunity for mutual cooperation. On the one hand, Maximus' cooperation with Ithacius and Hydatius led to their victory over their ecclesiastical rivals: many were executed or condemned.<sup>293</sup> On the other hand, Maximus obtained the *bona fides* to present himself as a champion of orthodoxy to both the bishops under his control and to those in Italy. This confluence of interests inhibited Priscillian's ability to widen the scope himself. When he appealed to the emperor instead of cooperating with the Council of Bordeaux, he was found guilty of *maleficium* and executed.<sup>294</sup>

Viewed from the lens of modern political science, Hydatius' and Ithacius' actions against Priscillian can be better understood. They sought to maximize difference between themselves (the "orthodox") and their opponents (labeled as some form of Other, such as Manichaean or sorcerer). Their attempts at problem definition were successful because they intersected with the interests or expertise of the individuals they wished to bring into the conflict. Maximizing difference between the two sides also inhibits Priscillian's ability to widen the scope to his advantage, because his target already accepted how the problem is defined. This type of activity works well for individuals or groups who seek the condemnation of their opponent, as it offers little to no room for finding reconciliation.

### The Council of Toledo

The Council of Toledo (ca. 400) is the second phase of the Priscillianist controversy. The Council itself has been understood as the anti-Priscillianist bishops' attempt to stop the spread of Priscillianism.<sup>295</sup> Their attempts at ending the controversy have been variously described as

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<sup>293</sup> See Sulp. Sev. *chron.* 51.3-4. For Hyginus' exile, see Ambr, *epist.* 30 [24].12.

<sup>294</sup> Sulp. Seve. *chron.* 2.49.9.

<sup>295</sup> See, for instance, Chadwick 1976, 170 and Burrus 1995, 190.

mild<sup>296</sup> or as coercive and final.<sup>297</sup> While the anti-Priscillianist bishops certainly presented Priscillian's supporters as heretics, this view of the council requires revision. At first glance, the bishops at the Council of Toledo appear to have applied the same political strategies as Hydatius and Ithacius. They expanded the scope of the conflict by involving the bishoprics of Milan and Rome. They defined Priscillian as a heretic because of his teachings on the nature of the Son.<sup>298</sup> However, if we pay attention to how those strategies are deployed, the Council of Toledo is best understood as an effort to minimize difference with their two rival factions in order to facilitate reconciliation. Thus, the Council employs the same strategies as Hydatius and Ithacius, but for opposite ends.

In this section, I use three labels to discuss three groups: Priscillianist, Anti-Priscillianist, and ex-Priscillianist. "Priscillianists" or "Priscillianist bishops" refer to the bishops in Galicia that still hold themselves away from the rest of the bishops in Spain because of their veneration of Priscillian. Anti-Priscillianists are the bishops who contend that Priscillian is a heretic. Ex-Priscillianists are the bishops who were formerly Priscillianists, but have become anti-Priscillianists as a result of the Council of Toledo.

The text of the Acts of the Council of Toledo has a complicated history.<sup>299</sup> The Hispana Collection contains a preface, listing the 19 bishops who were present, opening remarks by Patruinus of Mérida, and twenty canons. An editorial remark reveals that the compiler of the

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<sup>296</sup> Piay Augusto 2018, 72: "Evento fundamental en la historia del antipriscilianismo fue la celebración en el año 400 del Concilio de Toledo, sínodo cuya firme intención era *paliar* [emphasis mine] la expansión del priscilianismo en el noroeste hispano."

<sup>297</sup> Natal and Wood 2016, 45: "The council should therefore be seen as a determined effort to stamp out Priscillian's supporters and their practices once and for all."

<sup>298</sup> Modern scholars, such as Toom 2014, have identified this as "Monarchianism." No such label is used at the council. Later anti-Priscillianist discourse would identify Priscillian as a "Sabellian," which anti-Sabellian rhetoric has defined as the belief that the difference between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is only nominal. (Cf. Epiphanius, *Panar.* 62).

<sup>299</sup> See overview in Chadwick 1976, 171-182 All line number references to the *Acta* and the *regula fidei* are to Rodriguez' edition except for the *Exemplar professionum* which is to be found in Chadwick 1976, 234-9.

Acts in the Collection had his eye towards anti-Priscillianist activity.<sup>300</sup> After the *constitutio concilii Toletani*, the Collection lists a *regula fidei*. This *regula fidei* exists in two recensions. The longer recension is explicitly anti-Priscillianist, but is also manifestly written long after the Council of Toledo took place.<sup>301</sup> Chadwick has argued that the shorter recension (found only in a few manuscripts outside of the Hispana Collection) was also written after the council took place because Hydatius makes no mention of it in his Chronicle when he discusses the council.<sup>302</sup> While this is only an argument from silence, we should nevertheless keep a skeptical eye on both *regulae fidei*.

Finally, a text survives outside of the Hispana collection that provides more details about the Council's anti-Priscillianist activity allows historians to produce an account of how the bishops in Galicia condemned Priscillian. While its lone manuscript was lost in a fire in 1671, transcriptions survive in the work of Ambrosio de Morales and Juan Bautista Pérez. Chadwick has collated these two transcriptions into a sort of critical edition, which this analysis relies on.<sup>303</sup> Precisely when this text was composed and circulated is unknown, but Hydatius is aware of its contents.<sup>304</sup>

The *Exemplar professionum*'s provenance is unknown. Virginia Burrus has proposed that it was compiled or edited by someone from Astorga who wanted to document the orthodoxy of Dictinius, Symphosius, and Comasius, because they are all described as "of blessed memory."<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> The remark is Conc. Tolet. a. 400. 51-2. *isti sunt qui et in aliis gestis adversus Priscilliani sectatores et haeresem quam adstruxerat, libellarem direxere sententiam*.

<sup>301</sup> The *regula fidei* states that it should be sent to Balconius, bishop of Braga, along with the precepts of Leo, bishop of Rome (Conc. Tolet. a. 400. 200-204). We first see Balconius as the bishop of Braga in Avitus' letter on the relics of Stephen in 415. At the time of the council of Toledo itself, Paternus is the bishop of Braga. Leo was bishop of Rome from 440-461.

<sup>302</sup> Hyd., *Chron.* II p. 16.31; Chadwick 1976, 177. For Hydatius' Chronicle, I use the edition of Burgess 1993.

<sup>303</sup> Chadwick 1976, 234-239 for the text.

<sup>304</sup> Hyd., *Chron.* II p. 16.31 appears like a summary of the *Exemplar* and claims he got his account from the *gestis* of the council.

<sup>305</sup> Burrus 1995, 104-5.

While this confirms that the editor is sympathetic to the ex-Priscillianist bishops, this explanation does not address every aspect of the text. The text details how Ambrose and Siricius were involved in the ex-Priscillianists' defection to the anti-Priscillianist side. It also narrates why some Priscillianist bishops reneged on their decision to reconcile with the anti-Priscillianists, and lays down conditions for the ex-Priscillianist's future behavior. Taking these features into account, I propose that we can approach this document as a text compiled to defend the anti-Priscillianist bishops' decision to pursue reconciliation with the ex-Priscillianists. In so doing, the editor of the *Exemplar* allows us to analyze the political strategies deployed by the anti-Priscillianist bishops.

Instead of presenting Priscillian as a Manichaean, the bishops at Toledo condemn Priscillian for his beliefs on the nature of the Son. The bishops presiding over the council presented a text to the Priscillianist bishops that described the Son as *innascibilis*.<sup>306</sup> Each bishop was asked to read aloud the text and condemn the text "along with its author," which the *Exemplar* presents as Priscillian. By condemning Priscillian for "his" teachings on the Son, the ex-Priscillianists consent to the anti-Priscillianists' problem redefinition.

Whether or not Priscillian was a Monarchian or a Sabellian has been discussed at length elsewhere.<sup>307</sup> The text that was presented to the pro-Priscillianist bishops was most likely Tractate 6, which contains the phrase *innascibilis nascitur*.<sup>308</sup> Tractate 6 shows signs that the author was influenced by Hilary of Poitiers, who argues at length that the Son should not be

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<sup>306</sup> *Exemplar* II. 27-37. For a discussion of how this relates to Monarchianism, see especially Sanchez 2009, 170-174.

<sup>307</sup> Toom 2014 and Sanchez 2009, 170-174 argue that Priscillian was not a Monarchian, though he used sloppy language that allowed his opponents to think that he was.

<sup>308</sup> Priscill. *tract* 6.99.

called *innascibilis*, but should be termed *unigenitus*.<sup>309</sup> The contrast between *innascibilis* and *nascitur* appears to be wordplay meant to play up the miraculous nature of the Son's incarnation in the flesh, rather than a precise trinitarian statement. In addition, the authorship of the 6th Tractate has been debated by scholars: some think that it was written by Priscillian himself and others think it was composed by one of his followers after his execution.<sup>310</sup>

Whatever the authorship of the 6th Tractate or Priscillian's teachings on the Son is irrelevant for our purposes. What matters is that at the council, a text was presented as Priscillian's and depicted as if it reflected heretical theology. In a ritual ceremony of identification and condemnation, the ex-Priscillianist bishops agree that the author is Priscillian and that he is a heretic. Their assent is operative in allowing the conflict over Priscillian as a Manichaeon to be displaced with a trinitarian conflict.

While scholars have noticed the shift in the terms of the conflict, no one has satisfactorily answered why the Council of Toledo concentrates on trinitarian issues. I propose that displacing the previous conflict with a Trinitarian one allows the ex-Priscillianist bishops a "way out" of the former status quo. After Priscillian's death, the conflict became more polarized as Priscillian began to be venerated as a martyr in Galicia.<sup>311</sup> Something had to change in order to bring about reconciliation. That change is the redefinition of Priscillian's heresy; where before he was a Manichaeon and a sorcerer, by 400 he was presented heretic because of his teachings on the nature of the Son.

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<sup>309</sup> Sanchez 2009, 171-2. See Hil. *Trin.* 4ff. Clearly stated in *Trin.* 4.6: [*Ecclesia*] *novit unum innascibilem Deum. Novit et unigenitum Dei Filium.*

<sup>310</sup> Toom 2014, 471-2 and Conti 2010, 16 think that Tractate VI is written by someone else other than Priscillian. Sanchez 2009 75-78 gives a survey of the earlier literature on the question, and thinks that Tractate 6 is written by Priscillian (pp. 170-174).

<sup>311</sup> Sulp. Sev. *chron.* 2.51.7-10.

The *Exemplar* presents Ambrose and Siricius as mediators.<sup>312</sup> Before examining how this shapes our understanding of the Council of Toledo, it will be profitable to discuss the process of political mediation.<sup>313</sup> Mediation can be understood as when one or more third parties are invited into a conflict with the agreement of the parties involved. Mediation occurs when both sides of a conflict calculate that a mediated peace would be preferable to a long, protracted conflict.<sup>314</sup> A mediator will decide to join the conflict when he or she believes that they can bring the conflict to a peaceful resolution. They will also be motivated by the belief that doing so will help their own position in some way (normally out of concern for their own defense or in an effort to increase their own status abroad).<sup>315</sup> Mediators need not be seen as "unbiased," but they do need to be seen as credible and to have enough weight to provide benefits to both sides of the conflict.<sup>316</sup>

Mediators can play three types of roles during mediation: the role of communicator, the role of formulator, and the role of manipulator.<sup>317</sup> As communicator, mediators can facilitate talks between two parties that are, for whatever reason, unable to directly communicate.<sup>318</sup> As formulators, mediators can propose or push for new ways of thinking about the conflict that

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<sup>312</sup> *Exemplar* 74-82. Burrus 1995, 106 uses the same "mediator" language.

<sup>313</sup> I take the term "political mediation" from Touval 1985, written to bring more precision to the categories of "traditional" and "nontraditional" mediation proposed by Smith 1985. Political mediation refers to mediation inside of a "political system," where two sides "are locked in a continuous, ongoing relationship, with virtually no ability to escape the system or terminate their interaction. (pg. 374)"

<sup>314</sup> Terris and Maoz 2005, 564.

<sup>315</sup> Maoz and Terris 2005; Zartman and Touval 1985, 32-33. Touval 1982 provides an excellent account of the various attempts to mediate the Arab-Israeli conflicts from 1948-1978 that highlights how the interests of the mediators interacted with the interests of the mediatees. The pursuit of status abroad is the most likely explanation for Siricius' involvement, since his letter to Himerius is evidence for his status-building efforts; see Ferreiro 2015 and Hornung 2015.

<sup>316</sup> Maoz and Terris 2006.

<sup>317</sup> Zartman and Touval 1985, 38-9

<sup>318</sup> The US often played the role of communicator between Egypt and Israel when Egypt could not be seen to be openly considering peace due to domestic concerns, yet still wanted to participate in the mediation process. Touval 1982, 120-130.

bring the mediatees closer to a settlement.<sup>319</sup> Finally, as manipulators they can assert their own power and resources to influence one side's ability to come to an agreement.

The *Exemplar* text presents the pro-Priscillianist bishops as meeting with Ambrose and agreeing on conditions for their reconciliation with the anti-Priscillianists.<sup>320</sup> Ambrose and Siricius then wrote to the anti-Priscillianist bishops in Spain to communicate the conditions that they agreed upon.<sup>321</sup> The anti-Priscillianist bishops agreed to these conditions and had, according to the text, summoned a council to put the conditions into practice.<sup>322</sup> The pro-Priscillianist bishops demurred and did not attend that council. However, they later worked to become compliant with the conditions agreed between them and Ambrose, after which they attended the Council of Toledo a few years later in 400.<sup>323</sup>

In establishing the conditions that both sides could agree to, Ambrose and Siricius play the role of communicator and formulator. They are communicators because they wrote to the anti-Priscillianists to inform them of the conditions agreed to with the pro-Priscillianists. Thus, they lend their personal prestige to the conditions, pressuring the anti-Priscillianists to accept them. However, by having the Priscillianists "condemn whatever they had wrongly done,"<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> Zartman and Touval 1985, 38. "Mediators may also perform a more active role. The breakdown of communication may not only impede the delivery of messages without the services of a messenger; it may also keep the parties from even thinking of solutions that meet the needs of both sides. In such a situation, the second role-mediator as formulator-is needed as well. Third parties must be capable of innovative thinking that is not possible for the parties to the conflict, constrained as they are by their commitments. Redefining the issues in a conflict, or finding a formula for its management or resolution, is the substantive key to its termination, and the parties frequently need help not only in finding a key hidden in the morass of bad relations but, more frequently, in inventing a key out of pieces of the conflict itself (Zartman & Berman, 1982). In this role, mediators need to add the qualities of creativeness and invention to the communicator's traits of tact and empathy, and must seek to discover the parties' real and basic interests, and their component ingredients."

<sup>320</sup> *Exemplar* 79-81

<sup>321</sup> *Exemplar* 75-78.

<sup>322</sup> *Exemplar* 78-79.

<sup>323</sup> *Exemplar* 79-100.

<sup>324</sup> *Exemplar* 75-6. *ut si condemnassent quae perperam egerant.*

Ambrose's role becomes that of a formulator aligned with the anti-Priscillianists. Part of the conditions of reconciliation is that the Priscillianist bishops admit that they were wrong.

It is under these conditions that we should understand why the Council of Toledo had the pro-Priscillianist bishops condemn the teaching that the Son is *innascibilis*. That this was an acceptable condition to the ex-Priscillianists is proven by the fact that they did so. We may explain the condition's ability to be acceptable to both sides by looking at how Priscillian himself condemned Patripassians (Sabellians).<sup>325</sup> The fact that Priscillian condemns them implies that he was accused of wrong teaching on the trinity since the beginning.<sup>326</sup> While Priscillian had been defined as a Manichaean and sorcerer, the trinitarian issues were lurking in the background. Priscillian's constant claims to *not* be a Sabellian or any other kind of heretic, however, also implies that the *innascibilis* was not a central teaching that Priscillian's sympathizers would feel obligated to follow. Hence, it was not a difficult leap for the anti-Priscillianists to condemn the *innascibilis*. The only stumbling block would be that they had to condemn Priscillian himself, but they were helped over that block by being confronted with a text that presents Priscillian as a heretic because of his teachings on the Son.

Outside involvement in Toledo does not stop at Ambrose and Siricius' efforts to formulate the means to peace, however. The Council of Toledo decreed that the other Galician bishops should only be received into communion once they obtained the approval by "whoever the pope is now" and Simplicianus, bishop of Milan, as well as other bishops.<sup>327</sup> Dictinius and

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<sup>325</sup> For example, Priscillian condemns Arians and Patripassians in tract. 1.27. and Binionites (unknown of outside of this text, but glossed as a heresy who wants to "put divine things in the same class with the human" and "divide the substance united in the power of God and break up the venerable greatness of Christ") in 1.3. This issue is discussed in Sanchez 2009, 163ff and Escribano Paño 2005, 142-146.

<sup>326</sup> Chadwick 1976, 87.

<sup>327</sup> *Exemplar* 126-132.

Anterius are supposed to not ordain any other bishops, presbyters, or deacons until they receive approval by either the bishop of Rome or Simplicianus.<sup>328</sup>

This arrangement had the potential to work well for both sides of the conflict after the formal mediation was completed. For the anti-Priscillianists, it provides further assurances that the ex-Priscillianists would behave themselves in accordance with the rulings of Toledo. For the ex-Priscillianists, the approval of prestigious bishops offers them leverage against other bishops in Spain who might balk at their new status. As we will see below, this is exactly what happened.

While this strategy proved successful in bringing some ex-Priscillianist bishops back into communion, it was not universally successful. A member of Herenias' clergy reportedly cried out while Herenias was about to condemn Priscillian that Priscillian was a catholic, a holy martyr, and had been falsely condemned by the bishops.<sup>329</sup> This outburst caused Herenias and three other bishops to confirm their loyalty to Priscillian's memory. I propose that, while a shift to a trinitarian conflict was enough to convince bishops who already wanted to enter into communion with the anti-Priscillianists, it was not enough to convince the other, more entrenched pro-Priscillianists.

The shift to a conflict over the nature of the Son did not address their core concerns. Their main contention, characterized by the outburst, was that Priscillian was killed unjustly. He was executed because he was convicted of sorcery, a charge that carried a capital sentence. Now the anti-Priscillianists were claiming he was a heretic because of his teaching on the Son? While no one can deny the contentiousness of trinitarian debates, possessing wrong trinitarian views did

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<sup>328</sup> *Exemplar* 141-146.

<sup>329</sup> *Exemplar* 108-11

not carry a death sentence. While a shift to a trinitarian conflict could convince some bishops to cross over, it did not convince them all because it did not address their core grievance.

We cannot quantify how successful the anti-Priscillianists were. We should assume that the pro-Priscillianist bishops who attended had agreed beforehand to condemn Priscillian. These same bishops had refused to attend an earlier council addressing the same issues, but now agreed to come. We also know that there were Galician bishops who did not attend the council.<sup>330</sup> The most we can say is that the anti-Priscillianists at Toledo were successful in convincing Symphosius and his son Dictinius, who appear to be the leaders of the Priscillianists after Priscillian's execution, to join the anti-Priscillianist side and were successful in persuading the bishop of Braga to do the same.<sup>331</sup> This is important because, after the invasions of 409, Braga became the provincial capital of Galicia. It is also important for understanding Orosius' activity, since it is likely that Orosius came from Braga.<sup>332</sup>

The Council of Toledo defined the political geography of Spain after its canons were sent out. Bishops in Betica and Carthaginiensis broke communion with the Anti-Priscillianists at Toledo because they balked at receiving ex-Priscillianists into the clergy.<sup>333</sup> At least one bishop, John, rescinded his acceptance of Toledo after a representative told him what they actually were.<sup>334</sup> Two other bishops ordained other bishops outside of their provinces, in clear violation of the canons of Nicaea (which Toledo promoted) despite their public acknowledgement of Toledo's authority.<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>330</sup> Exemplar 126-7.

<sup>331</sup> Symphosius is presented in the *Exemplar* as the leader of the Priscillianists. Dictinius is presented as its intellectual leader because he wrote the *Libra* in Augustine, *c. Men.* 5.

<sup>332</sup> Scholars have argued that Orosius is from Braga on the grounds that Avitus of Braga writes to Balconius and the *plebs* of Braga, claiming that Orosius "brought back all of your presence to me." Avit. Brac. *ad Palc.* 5

<sup>333</sup> Innocent I, *Ep.* 3.1.2. (Innocentius papa *epist. pontif.* 287.1.2).

<sup>334</sup> Innocent I, *Ep.* 3.3.6. (Innocentius papa *epist. pontif.* 287.3.6).

<sup>335</sup> Innocent I, *Ep.* 3.2.5. (Innocentius papa *epist. pontif.* 287.2.5).

All of this left the ex-Priscillianist bishops in Galicia isolated. While they retained communion with the bishops at Toledo, they were not received into communion by at least some sizeable percentage of the other Spanish bishops. The ex-Priscillianists were also likely to be seen as prevaricators by the Priscillianist bishops remaining in Galicia.

Because the Council of Toledo was not respected by a large number of Spanish bishops, a bishop named Hilarius widened the circle to include Innocent I. Innocent I wrote a letter recognizing the orthodoxy of the ex-Priscillianist bishops in Galicia and condemned those who would not admit them into communion as being schismatics.<sup>336</sup> We cannot measure what impact this had on Spanish episcopal politics, and the situation was only complicated by the invasions by the Vandals a few years later. That being said, we can summarize the status of Galicia ten years before Orosius traveled to North Africa: isolated in Spain but recognized as orthodox by some bishops abroad. This is important to understand Orosius' actions ten years later. The Council of Toledo established the precedent that, in order to handle religious disagreements at home, Galicians should reach out to outside parties.

The Council of Toledo tried a different method for handling Priscillianism in Spain than Hydatius and Ithacius. Hydatius and Ithacius shifted the terms of the conflict in order to more effectively combat Priscillian and his followers. Their goal was to get Priscillian and their other ecclesiastical rivals condemned. Their efforts towards this goal won them success; Priscillian and some of his followers were either executed or exiled. In the long run, however, both Ithacius and Hydatius lost their episcopal seats and were condemned for their brutality, either because they were too involved with Maximus or because they employed state power at all.

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<sup>336</sup> Innocent I, *Ep.* 3.1.3-4. (Innocentius papa *epist. pontif.* 287.1.3-4.)

Toledo offered a less aggressive approach towards the rest of Priscillian's followers by offering a path towards reconciliation. Unlike Hydatius and Ithacius, the bishops at Toledo did not involve state power and only sought the involvement of other ecclesiastical figures. It was successful to some degree by restoring five bishops to communion. However, this mediated peace failed to convince other Priscillianist bishops *and* anti-Priscillianist bishops in Betica and Carthaginiensis. Its ultimate effect was to leave Galician anti-Priscillianists isolated "at home," but also opened them up to communion and relations to bishops outside of Spain.

## Commonitorium

### Introduction

Previous efforts to understand the *Commonitorium* have focused on what it can tell us about Priscillian's teachings. Older scholarship has focused on whether or not the *epistula* quoted in the *Commonitorium* is genuinely Priscillian's.<sup>337</sup> Commentators on the text have concentrated on identifying scriptural quotations, deciding whether Priscillian was more of a Manichaean or Gnostic, and finding passages in Origen that most closely resemble Orosius' talking points.<sup>338</sup> The common assumption is that Orosius is reporting to Augustine what he understands Priscillian and the Origenists to teach, drawing from his first-hand experience. However, as Eszter Spät has shown, Orosius' description of Priscillian is not based on first-hand knowledge of Priscillian, but is instead heavily indebted to anti-Manichaean discourse.<sup>339</sup> Similarly, Ilaria Ramelli has suggested that Orosius acquired his talking points about the Aviti from Jerome's *Epistula* 124 to Avitus.<sup>340</sup> This is quite likely, as almost every point Orosius

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<sup>337</sup> For example, Babut 1909, 282 rejects this as an authentic letter fragment on stylistic grounds and because of its content; Chadwick 1976, 192 accepts its authenticity on the grounds of style.

<sup>338</sup> María Sáenz de Argandoña 1990; Martínez Caveró et al. 1999; Martínez Caveró 2002; Lamas Noya 2013.

<sup>339</sup> Spät 1998.

<sup>340</sup> Ramelli 2014, 118.

makes about the Aviti can also be found in this epistle, including several that are only present there.<sup>341</sup> Therefore, instead of approaching the *Commonitorium* as a source for Priscillian's teachings, we should recognize the *Commonitorium* as a heresiological text that sets out to define Priscillian as a heretic while appearing as if it is draws from Orosius' first-hand knowledge. Following Cameron's analysis, we should approach the *Commonitorium* as a piece of performative literature, rather than a source of information.<sup>342</sup>

Yet, performing for whom? The common assumption is that the *Commonitorium* works to inform Augustine about the affairs in Spain, or to persuade him to take action against them. This carries with it the assumption that Augustine's reply would then be effective against Priscillianists. Yet, the fact that Orosius bases his account on anti-Manichaean discourse gives the lie to that assumption: how could Augustine's reply be persuasive for Priscillianists when they do not hold the beliefs Orosius ascribes to them? In addition, it is hard to accept the assumption that the text is meant to convince Augustine to undertake a reply. While he is the recipient of the *Commonitorium*, the beginning of the text makes it clear that he and Orosius have already discussed the contents contained within, and that he has already agreed to help Orosius. I suggest, then, that the real targets of the *Commonitorium* are the hardline Spanish bishops that have refused communion to the ex-Priscillianist bishops. Orosius composed the *Commonitorium* to advertise his connection with Augustine and increase the status of anti-Priscillianist ecclesiastics in Spain.

#### Status Building

Recent scholarship in International Relations has examined how a desire to build status drives both individual and state action on an international stage. Larson and Shevchenko began

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<sup>341</sup> See notes 141 and 142 below.

<sup>342</sup> Cameron 2003.

this trend in scholarship by introducing Social Identity Theory to their study of Soviet foreign policy.<sup>343</sup> They have proposed that a member of a lower-status group may change their position in one of three ways: “(1) joining a higher-status group (social mobility); (2) mobilizing resources to improve the group's relative standing (social competition); or (3) reevaluating the meaning of the group's negative features or finding new dimensions on which the group is superior (social creativity).”<sup>344</sup>

Status can be defined as “standing or rank in a status community.”<sup>345</sup> It is made up of three critical attributes: status is positional, perceptual, and social. It is positional in that status must always be measured against other members of a status community. It makes no sense to say that someone “has status” – rather, we must ask how *much* status someone has *relative to* someone else. It is perceptual in that status is decided by how a given individual or group is perceived by others, regardless of the reality behind those perceptions. And it is social in that status does not exist in a material sense but exists only in the minds of the relevant status community.

Given status' inherently relational nature, we should also recognize that groups seek status in relation to so-called “reference groups.”<sup>346</sup> Groups compare themselves to other, similar groups, instead of groups that are drastically different. Among important concerns are geographical distance, relative status in the global community, and ideological similarities or differences. For example, “Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser initiated and escalated a conflict in Yemen to preserve his status among the group of states that he viewed as peers: other Arab, Muslim, and nonaligned states, and *not* because he aimed to supplant the United States or

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<sup>343</sup> Larson and Shevchenko 2003.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.* 79.

<sup>345</sup> Renshon 2017, 33.

<sup>346</sup> Renshon 2017, 42-44.

Soviet Union (or even necessarily saw those states as belonging to the same group as Egypt).”<sup>347</sup>

In the same vein, we should expect Spanish bishops to care more for their status relative to other Spanish bishops than some other, far away bishops.

The ex-Priscillianist bishops, after the Council of Toledo, should be considered as having a low status compared to the rest of the Spanish bishops. We can measure this by pointing to Innocent’s letter, which shows that bishops in Betica and Carthaginiensis rejected communion with them. The ex-Priscillianist bishops in Galicia are perceived as being false converts by the bishops in Betica and Carthaginiensis. The literature on status-competition would have us expect that the ex-Priscillianist bishops would seek to raise their status as a consequence.<sup>348</sup>

Recent work in status-building has argued that one strategy for raising local status is to increase extralocal status. Paci et al. have used Piedmont’s position as a leader in Italian unification (ca. 1860) as a case study to explore this hypothesis. By winning international prestige for Piedmont, Cavour also worked to increase support for Italian unification under Piedmont amidst the people of Northern Italy.<sup>349</sup> I argue that Orosius’ act of widening the scope of the Priscillianist controversy worked under similar circumstances. In so doing, Orosius engaged in both social mobility and social competition in order to raise his group’s status back in Spain.

We can see it as an analog to social mobility because he is part of an effort to tie the bishops in Galicia closer to the African bishops. By being associated with another, higher status group, the Galician clergy would rise in status at home. Recognition of their orthodoxy by

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<sup>347</sup> Renshon 2017, 43.

<sup>348</sup> For more on “status dissatisfaction” see Renshon 2017, 53-63 and *passim*.

<sup>349</sup> Paci et al. 2020, 76-93.

figures like Augustine would put pressure on the bishops in Betica and Carthaginiensis to reconsider their hardline stance against the Galicians.

We can see this as social competition because other groups in Spain were already citing Augustine as an authority figure. Consentius claims that some try to protect Priscillianist clergy by citing Augustine's actions during the Donatist controversy, providing this as their reasoning:

The African bishops did not remove the Donatists who returned to them from the rank of the priesthood, and indeed the illustrious and famous teacher Augustine, or rather the grace of the Holy Spirit which speaks through his mouth, believed that, though there is among us such great relentlessness that we remove from the priesthood priests proven guilty of the crime of holding this teaching and impose upon them a uniform severity of judgment, the sanction ought to be that, for none of them among those sacrileges have been discovered, will the doors of the Church be opened except through their doing penance.<sup>350</sup>

If we take Consentius at his word, Augustine is used as an authority to argue that the Priscillianists should be accepted into communion by the other Spanish bishops. The African bishops, in *Epistula* 128, argued that the Donatist clergy should maintain their status as clergy members because the Donatists were in schism; once the schism had been healed, the two sides could reunite as one.<sup>351</sup> This is the same type of thinking that ran through the Council of Toledo when some Priscillianist bishop were allowed to keep their seat, and is the same philosophy that the bishops in Betica and Carthaginiensis rejected in the aftermath. The citation of Augustine suggests that Augustine's name carried weight in this conflict.

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<sup>350</sup> Aug. *Epist.* 11\*.25. *Dicunt enim: "Africani episcopi Donatistas quoquomodo ad se conversos nequaquam gradu sacerdotii pepelerunt et hoc doctor illustris ac nobilis Augustinus immo ipsa Spiritus Sancti gratia quae per os eius loquitur creditur sanctificandum, cum apud nos tanta crudelitas sit, ut deprehensos in huius dogmatis crimine sacerdotes a sacerdotio detrudamus aut tam inconditam severitatem iudicii tatuamus, nemini eorum apud quos haec sacrilegia fuerint deprehensa, nisi per poenitentiam fores Ecclesiae reserandas."* Translation from Teske 2005, 277.

<sup>351</sup> Aug. *Epist.* 128.2-3.

In composing the *Commonitorium*, then, Orosius achieves two things for the ex-Priscillianist bishops: he ties them closer to the African bishops with his own personal involvement and he brings Augustine into the conflict. Orosius minimizes distance between himself, his predecessors, and Augustine, while maximizing distance between himself and his theological opponents. As we will see, Augustine confirms Orosius' definition of Priscillian as a heretic, and Augustine goes on to portray Priscillianists as hiding their heresy in the shadows instead of living openly in schism.

In so doing, Orosius rejects the objections to ex-Priscillianist orthodoxy. By arguing that Priscillian is a heretic, Orosius sets to prove that the ex-Priscillianists are actually orthodox. I will argue that the *Commonitorium* and the outcomes of its composition are instrumental in restoring recognition of the orthodoxy of the bishops in Galicia by the other Spanish bishops. I will do this by first analyzing how Orosius presents his relationship with Augustine and his theological opponents in the *Commonitorium*. Then I will examine the immediate outcomes of the *Commonitorium*: Augustine's involvement in the Priscillianist controversy and Orosius' rise in status. Finally, I will look at the evidence of Galician efforts against Priscillianism in the 440-50s to establish the effect Orosius' *Commonitorium* had on Galicia's ecclesiastical status.

#### Rhetorical Analysis of the *Commonitorium*

As I argued above, I suggest that the *Commonitorium's* true audience is not Augustine – its dramatic audience – but the bishops in Spain. This letter's existence serves to advertise Orosius' close relationship with Augustine. In this rhetorical analysis of the *Commonitorium*, I will demonstrate that Orosius composes this text to give the impression that there is minimal distance between himself and Augustine and that there is maximal distance between Orosius and his theological opponents. While the *Commonitorium* remains the focus, Augustine's reply will

also be considered at relevant points because these two texts are related and could have circulated together.<sup>352</sup> If the *Commonitorium* proffers to advertise the theological closeness between the Galician clergy and Augustine, Augustine's reply is the proof of the advertisement's validity.

Orosius calls this text a *commonitorium*.<sup>353</sup> A *commonitorium* is a letter with two constituent parts: (1) information about a given situation (be it historical narrative, theological arguments, or other) and (2) a call to action.<sup>354</sup> We can establish this by looking at some of the *commonitoria* in Augustine's own corpus. For example, *Epistula* 126 is a *commonitorium* to Albina, informing her why Pinian was pressured by the *plebs* of Hippo to be ordained into the priesthood, and calling her to not think or spread the idea that they were motivated by money.<sup>355</sup> *Epistula* 148, labeled a *commonitorium* to Fortunatianus, provides information about why Augustine has a conflict with a certain *frater* (they have a disagreement about whether or not the eyes will ever see God) and the reasoning Augustine has for denying that the eyes will ever see God. It then calls Fortunatianus to action by asking him to intercede with the *frater* on Augustine's behalf. This description of the genre fits Orosius' *Commonitorium*. It offers information on Priscillian and the Aviti, and calls Augustine to write against the beliefs Orosius has outlined.

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<sup>352</sup> See Daur 1985, 139-151 for the manuscript tradition. Many manuscripts contain both texts, though this is not true for all manuscripts.

<sup>353</sup> Oros. *Comm.* 1.1. As my analysis shows, this might properly simply be called a "letter to Augustine" instead of as "Orosius' *Commonitorium*" because that is a modern title given to the text by editors. In this chapter I maintain use of *Commonitorium* because it is how the text is referred to by other scholars, and because it is an accurate description of the sub-genre of letter the text belongs to.

<sup>354</sup> This is a similar definition that Rodríguez Gervás 2013, 627, offers when looking at Symmachus' letters. "El término *commonitorium* designa, de forma general, un breve billete añadido a una carta, cuya finalidad es la de informar de forma privada o confidencial, siendo utilizado en ciertos casos para incorporar diversas instrucciones de carácter técnico, aunque también es posible encontrar dicho vocablo haciendo referencia al ámbito jurídico-administrativo."

<sup>355</sup> Aug. *Epist.* 126.6 for Augustine calling it a *commonitorium*.

The *Commonitorium* can be divided into four parts: (1) An introduction; (2) a description of Priscillian's teachings; (3) a description of the actions and teachings of the Aviti and (4) a conclusion.

The introduction sets out to describe Orosius' project. It asks Augustine to give him aid against the heresies now plaguing Spain by writing against them. This is not a new or sudden request. Orosius claims that he had already suggested the idea to Augustine in the past, but thought it best to write a *commonitorium* so that he could have all of the necessary information at hand. The pluperfect *suggesteram* and the imperfect *meditabar* position the request as one that had been considered for quite a long amount of time before the actual composition of the *Commonitorium*.<sup>356</sup> Orosius then cites Paul and Eutropius, his *domini*, who had asked Augustine to write against heresies before he had.<sup>357</sup> In so doing, Orosius presents his request to Augustine as a continuation of his previous efforts. The implication of this inclusion is that Orosius is not the only Spaniard to appeal to Augustine for help. This also puts Orosius' relationship with Augustine front and center. He had conversed with Augustine over a period of time about these problems and Augustine agreed to help him.

The introduction is replete with scriptural references, as Martínez Cavero et al. have pointed out.<sup>358</sup> Orosius describes Augustine's project as burning and cutting down the "trees of perdition" with his "fiery spirit."<sup>359</sup> We can see this as an adaptation of Matthew 7:19: "Every

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<sup>356</sup> Oros. *Comm.* 1.1. *Iam quidem suggesteram sanctitati tuae, sed commonitorium suggestae rei tunc offerre meditabar, cum te expeditum animo ab aliis dictandi necessitatibus esse sensissem.*

<sup>357</sup> Paul and Eutropius might be the recipients of the *de perfectione iustitiae hominis* but we cannot be sure they are the same Paul and Eutropius.

<sup>358</sup> Martínez Cavero et al. 1999, 76-7

<sup>359</sup> Oros. *Comm.* 1.1. *neesse fuit me festinato edere et coacervare in unum omnes perditionum arbores cum radicibus et ramis suis et offere ignienti spiritui tuo. 1.2. malignas aliorum plantationes vel insertiones erue atque succide*

tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”<sup>360</sup> Augustine’s response to his request similarly plays on the tree imagery in Matthew: “Why should we go about cutting off the branches of this wordiest of errors, when it is efficient to dig out and destroy the root?”<sup>361</sup> Martínez Cavero et al. see this as a reference to Matthew 15:13: “He said in reply, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.””<sup>362</sup>

Orosius then describes his decision to leave Spain. “I do not know why I have come: I left my country without my will, without the necessity, without consent, but I was acted upon by some unknown force until I was carried to the shore of this land.”<sup>363</sup> Without a doubt, we should not read these words literally. Rhetorically, they serve to place the agency for Orosius’ actions in God’s hands, not in Orosius’. His trip has divine sanction; consequentially, Augustine has the obligation to answer Orosius’ request for help. Orosius wishes to return to Spain as a “merchant” with a “pearl” instead of as a “fugitive slave.”<sup>364</sup> We can read this as another reference to Matthew, this time the Parable of the Pearls: “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it.”<sup>365</sup>

The numerous allusions to the Gospel of Matthew should be understood as a type of literary game that signals Orosius’ ties to Augustine. In the same way that Cicero will cite Greek

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<sup>360</sup> Greek: Πᾶν δένδρον μὴ ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλὸν ἐκκόπτεται καὶ εἰς πῦρ βάλλεται. Vulgate: *Omnis arbor, quae non facit fructum bonum, excidetur, et in ignem mittetur.*

<sup>361</sup> Aug. c. Priscill. 1.1. *Quid autem opus est ire per amputandos ramos loquacissimi erroris, cuius radicem effodere atque extirpare compendium est?*

<sup>362</sup> Greek: ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν Πᾶσα φυτεία ἣν οὐκ ἐφύτευσεν ὁ Πατὴρ μου ὁ οὐράνιος ἐκριζωθήσεται. Vulgate: *At ille respondens ait: Omnis plantatio, quam non plantavit Pater meus caelestis, eradicabitur.*

<sup>363</sup> Oros. Comm. 1.3. *Agnosco, cur venerim: sine voluntate, sine necessitate, sine consensu de patria egressus sum, occulta quadam vi actus, donec in istius terrae litus allatus sum.*

<sup>364</sup> Oros. Comm. 1.3. *Fac me ad dilectam dominam meam idoneum negotiatorem iuventa margarita, non fugitivum servum eversa substantia reverti.*

<sup>365</sup> Matthew 13:45-6. Greek: Vulgate: *iterum simile est regnum caelorum homini negotiatori quaerenti bonas margaritas; inventa autem una pretiosa margarita abiit et vendidit omnia quae habuit et emit eam.*

or Latin authors in his letters to reference a shared understanding of literature or philosophy, Orosius participates in a Christian *paideia* that, in this case, is focused on the Gospel of Matthew.<sup>366</sup> Orosius' use of the tree metaphor, then, serves as an invitation into a type of literary game based on common knowledge of the Gospel of Matthew, one which Augustine takes up. In his reply, Augustine participates in the same game, making reference to the same tree metaphor that Orosius deploys.<sup>367</sup> Thus, Augustine establishes their participation in a common literary culture, reducing the distance between the two men.

After establishing the point of his text, Orosius proceeds to inform Augustine of Priscillian's teachings. Here we should pay attention to the mode in which Orosius writes. Scholars, such as Spät, have identified the *Commonitorium* as a polemical text.<sup>368</sup> This is certainly true when it comes to the stated intention of the piece: by having Augustine write against his opponents, Orosius engages in polemics. However, the mode by which Orosius arrives at this result is didactic. His descriptions of Priscillian and the Aviti contain no arguments against their positions; rather, Orosius only includes descriptions of their teachings. Every rhetorical feature of the text in these two sections are meant to reinforce Orosius' efforts at problem definition by appearing to be drawn from his first-hand knowledge.

Orosius uses three literary techniques in his description of Priscillian's teachings, all with varying levels of directness. The first is to directly attribute a teaching to Priscillian, by using *Priscillianus* in the nominative case and indicative verbs (*confirmavit, firmabat, loquebatur*) or present participles (*docens, asserens*). We may describe this a paraphrase of Priscillian's beliefs.

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<sup>366</sup> For Cicero and Greek, see Baldwin 1992.

<sup>367</sup> Aug. c. *Priscill.* 1.1. *Quid autem opus est ire per amputandos ramos loquacissimi erroris, cuius radicem effodere atque exstirpare compendium est, cum praesertim et ipse gratuleris iam illa fabulossima deliramenta apud vos esse convicta?*

<sup>368</sup> Spät 1998, 378.

The second is a direct quotation of a *quadam epistula*, which Orosius claims to be written by Priscillian. The third is to paraphrase a source that Orosius claims Priscillian learned from, the *Memoria Apostolorum*. Orosius ties one teaching of Priscillian directly to this book (*confirmans ex libro quodam*), but also provides an additional teaching (*in quo etiam libro*) that is not directly tied to Priscillian.

In his direct attributions to Priscillian, Orosius immediately sets the frame of reference for Augustine: Priscillian is worse than a Manichaean.<sup>369</sup> He is worse than a Manichaean not because his theology is any different, but because he accepts the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. Therefore, we should take *miserior* to have the force of “more dangerous” or “more threatening” rather than suggesting that Priscillian is different from Manichaeans altogether. Priscillian’s core teaching, Orosius claims, is that the soul is born from the substance of God. This belief is attributed to Manichaeans by other Christian authors.<sup>370</sup> Thus, by directly attributing this belief to Priscillian, Orosius defines Priscillian as a Manichaean. Orosius then claims that Priscillian strengthened his teaching with reference to *mathesim*, astrology. Through astrology, Priscillian claimed “Christ loosened the *chirographum* and affixed it on his cross through his passion.”<sup>371</sup> The effect of this section is to create negative feelings towards Priscillian: he is defined as a Manichaean, and supports his teachings with astrology, a field that Augustine wrote against in the *Confessions*.<sup>372</sup>

Orosius supports his allegation by providing a direct quotation from a letter of Priscillian (*sicut ipse Priscillianus in quadam epistula sua dicit*). It should be noted that scholars are

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<sup>369</sup> Oros. *Comm.* 2.1.

<sup>370</sup> Aug. *Epist.* 166.3.7. *Epiph. Pan.* 2.46.8.6-7.

<sup>371</sup> Oros. *Comm.* 2.1. *quia hoc chirographum soluerit Christus et affixerit cruci per passionem suam*. My translation

<sup>372</sup> Aug. *Conf.* 7.6-9.

divided on whether or not this is an authentic letter.<sup>373</sup> However, for this analysis, this is a moot question: within the *Commonitorium*, the letter is presented as authentic and serves the same rhetorical purpose as if it were authentic. Orosius quotes the letter with a didactic purpose, to reinforce that Priscillian actually taught what Orosius claims he taught. We may compare Orosius' use of the letter with Eusebius' use of documents in the *Ecclesiastical History* or with other classical historians.<sup>374</sup> By quoting a document, Orosius implies that he has direct access to Priscillian's writings.

Muir Sternberg has written at length about the interaction between quotation (what he calls “inset”) and the framing around the quotation.<sup>375</sup> As he puts it, “However accurate the wording of the quotation and however pure the quoter’s motives, tearing a piece of discourse from its original habitat and recontextualizing it within a new network of relations cannot but interfere with its effect.”<sup>376</sup> Instead of analyzing the letter quotation on its own, attempting to identify what type of theology it contains for its own sake, we should examine how it interacts with the rest of Orosius' *Commonitorium*.

The least textually problematic portion of the fragment draws a stark division between the virtues of divine things and the “disposition of the body.”<sup>377</sup> This is reinforced by Orosius' presentation of Priscillian as “worse than the Manichaeans.” By framing Priscillian as a Manichaean, he guides Augustine's interpretation of the quotation. This works in the other direction as well. Orosius discussed Priscillian's teachings on the *chirographum* before quoting

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<sup>373</sup> Chadwick 1976, 192-13.

<sup>374</sup> Inowlocki 2005; Inowlocki 2006; Haimson Lushkov 2013; Spielberg 2015. Zecchini 2017 examines how Orosius uses citation in his *Histories*.

<sup>375</sup> Sternberg 1982, 108.

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>377</sup> Oros. *Comm.* 2.2. *Haec prima sapientia est in animarum typis divinarum virtutum intellegere naturas et corporis dispositionem.*

the letter. The quotation itself also discusses the *chirographum*. It is not an exact one to one match in content, but the shared word reinforces Orosius' framing of the letter as one that supports his allegations. To use Sternberg's terms, the inset and frame interact with each other to guide the interpretation of the other.

After the quotation, Orosius reverts back to his previous mode of presenting Priscillian's teachings: direct attribution (*tradidit*). Orosius claims that Priscillian names each part of the soul after the Patriarchs and each part of the body after the Zodiac. The reference to the Zodiac builds off of what Orosius already claimed for Priscillian: that he used astrology in his teaching. The reference to the Patriarchs similarly hearkens back to a sentence in the quoted letter, which claims that the power of creation is in the hands of the Patriarchs.<sup>378</sup> This description, then, serves to demonstrate the cohesiveness of Orosius' portrait of Priscillian, as it acts as an elaboration of two points Orosius had already made.

Orosius claims that Priscillian "confirms this teaching from a certain book" called the *Memoria Apostolorum*.<sup>379</sup> For the next few sentences, Priscillian is no longer the subject. Rather, Orosius paraphrases two stories reportedly contained within the book. The first story claims that the sower in the Parable of the Sower sowed souls, and he is considered *non bonus* because he allowed souls to fall into rocky ground. Instead, he is characterized as neglectful. The second story is a version of the Light Virgin myth. Spät has pointed out that this version most closely resembles the version found in Hegemonius.<sup>380</sup> A reader with knowledge of anti-Manichaean discourse could interpret this version of the Light Virgin myth to be a Manichaean one.

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<sup>378</sup> Oros. *Comm.* 2.2. *Nam primum dei circulum et mittendarum in carne animarum divinum chirographum, angelorum et dei et omnium animarum consensibus fabricatum patriarchae tenent*

<sup>379</sup> Oros. *Comm.* 2.4. *et hoc ipsum confirmans ex libro quodam, qui inscribitur "memoria apostolorum."*

<sup>380</sup> Spät 1998, 375.

It should be noted that Orosius nowhere claims that Priscillian actually teaches these stories. Instead, he claims that Priscillian confirms his teaching on the Zodiac and the Patriarchs using the book, and then goes on to associate Priscillian with other, more clearly heretical beliefs. Associating the Patriarchs and the Zodaic together can be found in a number of Christian authors, not to mention astrological authors in general.<sup>381</sup> Augustine might find it troubling based on his distaste for astrology, but the belief is not completely without Christian precedent. Providing an alternative explanation to the Parable of the Sower that attributes negative characteristics to God and a version of the Light Virgin myth has more clearly heretical connotations. By including the story of the Light Virgin, Orosius characterizes the *Memoria Apostolorum* as a Manichaean text. Thus, by having Priscillian *hoc ipsum confirmans ex libro quodam*, the alleged contents of the book contributes to Orosius' work at problem definition.

Orosius ends his description of Priscillian by moving back to ascribing a belief directly to Priscillian (*loquebatur*). Orosius claims that Priscillian teaches that Christ is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is not exactly the same as claiming that the Son is *innascibilis*, but it led Augustine to understand Priscillian as a Sabellian all the same.<sup>382</sup> This section of the *Commonitorium* has received relatively little attention because it is only a sentence long and it seems disjointed from Orosius' greater efforts at defining Priscillian as a Manichaean. However, the effect of this sentence is to take the innovation of the Council of Toledo (defining Priscillian as a heretic because of his teaching on the Son) and transforming it. Whereas the Council of Toledo did this in order to minimize distance between two competing groups, Orosius incorporates Toledo's definition into his wider efforts to maximize distance between himself and Priscillian.

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<sup>381</sup> Daniélou 1959 and Chadwick 1976, 195-6.

<sup>382</sup> Aug. c. *Priscill.* 4.4.

After his presentation of Priscillian's teachings, Orosius moves to his depiction of the actions and teachings of the Aviti. Two men, both named Avitus, disagreed with Priscillian and sought to find theological answers abroad.<sup>383</sup> One traveled to Rome, while the other traveled to Jerusalem. They returned to Spain, one with the writings of Marius Victorinus, the other with the writings of Origen. Both decided that it was better to follow Origen, and proceeded to write theological texts, which contain beliefs Orosius finds problematic.

The above story has not received much attention, outside of efforts to determine who precisely the various Aviti in Orosius' life are.<sup>384</sup> Rhetorically, however, the inclusion of the Aviti travel story allows Orosius to demonstrate the consequences of Priscillian's heresy. Orosius glosses them both as opponents of Priscillian (*Priscillianum tamen ambo damnarunt*) and claims that they provided solid theology on the Trinity, one of Priscillian's weak spots; this implies that they traveled to find answers against Priscillian. In their efforts to fight Priscillian, they turned to the writings of prestigious theologians, but did so without proper guidance. The problem, to Orosius, is that the works of the Aviti have been received well in Spain, and the problematic points need refutation.

Orosius then lists the beliefs he finds heretical. This list is likely an adaptation of *Epistle* 124 from Jerome to Avitus. Every point Orosius presents as heretical is either found in the letter or it is close enough that it is easy to see how Orosius came to his own version.<sup>385</sup> While some of the talking points Orosius puts forward can be found in other pieces of anti-Origenist writings,

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<sup>383</sup> Oros. *Comm.* 3.1.

<sup>384</sup> Altaner and Cloeren 1968.

<sup>385</sup> Compare *Comm* 3.4 with *Epist.* 124.6; 3.5 with 124.3 and 124.15; 3.6 with 124.9; 3.7 with 124.3 and 124.7; 3.9 with 124.4 and 124.6. The logic of 3.8 can be compared to 124.13, but they are not exact matches; but compare the idea that Jesus was preaching the remission of sins to the angels with the concept found throughout letter 124 that Origen taught A) angels could fall to become humans or demons, and B) demons could rise up to become humans or angels.

two of them are only found in Jerome's letter to Avitus: the idea that the sun, moon, stars, etc. are alive and rational powers; and the idea that all rational beings are of one essence with God (and thus, with each other).<sup>386</sup>

Yet, Orosius does not present his list as an adaptation of Jerome's letter to Avitus. Instead, he ascribes beliefs to the Aviti directly using present participles (*dicentes, praedicentes*) and twice presenting quotations (*hoc verbo*). By depicting the Aviti in this way, Orosius presents himself as drawing directly from the Aviti's works. This is important, because it serves to make Orosius' information appear accurate. If the point of a *commonitorium* is to provide information about a situation and to ask the recipient to do something with that information, the information must be understood to be accurate to fit generic expectations.

The inclusion of Origen's name in this section serves the same function as Orosius' citation of the *Memoria Apostolorum*. By claiming that the Aviti taught things that were *non recta* because of their reading of Origen, Orosius creates distance between himself and the Aviti. This is compounded by the composition of the *Commonitorium*: if it is the case, as is likely, that Orosius drew from Jerome's letter to Avitus, then built into the *Commonitorium* itself is an anti-Origenist source. In either case, the effect is to cause Augustine himself to draw distance between himself and Origen.<sup>387</sup>

The work ends by returning to the themes of the introduction. Orosius asks for Augustine to provide "medicine" for the "sicknesses" he has outlined.<sup>388</sup> He makes another scriptural citation, this time to 2 Corinthians: because of Augustine's teachings, now "the truth of Christ" is

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<sup>386</sup> See Clark, 1992, 145.

<sup>387</sup> Aug. c. *Priscill.* 4.4.

<sup>388</sup> Oros. *Comm.* 4. *Hoc, sicut retinere potui, breviter expositum est, ut perspectis omnibus morbis medicinam adhibere festines.*

within Orosius.<sup>389</sup> This conclusion has the effect of a ring composition. The introduction reduced the distance between Orosius and Augustine, signaling that they were both on the side of orthodoxy. The two sections in the middle works to maximize distance between Orosius and Augustine, on the one hand, the Priscillian and the Aviti on the other. Now, the conclusion returns to minimizing the distance between Orosius and Augustine.

Outcomes

#### *Augustine Enters the Conflict*

The most obvious outcome of the *Commonitorium* is that it successfully introduced Augustine as a participant in the Priscillianist controversy. Any participation in the Priscillianist conflict by Augustine can only occur after Orosius' travels because Augustine tells Jerome that he had not heard of the Priscillianists until Orosius arrived.<sup>390</sup> While his reply to Orosius concentrates more on refuting the Aviti than Priscillian, Augustine participated in the Priscillianist conflict directly three other times: an epistolary exchange with Consentius, an epistolary exchange with Ceretius, and the composition of the *de haeresibus*.

Augustine's reply to Orosius serves a number of purposes. The first is that it confirms the close relationship between Augustine and Orosius: Augustine calls him "my son," praises his zeal, and proceeds to fulfill Orosius' request.<sup>391</sup> He points Orosius towards his other anti-Manichaean works, to find arguments that would work against the Priscillianism he has presented, and then proceeds to argue that the soul is not an emanation of God.<sup>392</sup> Augustine also contributes to the definition of Priscillian by labeling him a "Sabellian" for his teachings on

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<sup>389</sup> Oros. *Comm.* 4. *Est veritas Christi in me, quia propter venerabilem reverentiam sanctitatis tuae esse impudens non audeam, nisi evidenti iudicio et ordinatione dei ad illius tanti et talis populi, cui sicut peccanti plaga imposita est, sic post plagam cura debetur, remedia proferenda te electum me missum esse cognoscerem.*

<sup>390</sup> Aug. *Epist.* 166.7. *nam de priscillianistis adhuc nihil audieram.*

<sup>391</sup> Aug. *c. Priscill.* 1.1.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.* 2.2.

the Trinity.<sup>393</sup> Where the works of the Aviti are effective in combatting Priscillianism, they should be praised,<sup>394</sup> yet Augustine spends the rest of his reply refuting the errors of the Aviti that Orosius had reported.<sup>395</sup> The effect of the work is to reinforce Orosius' definition of Priscillian, to advertise the relationship the two men share, and to confirm Orosius' zealotry and his orthodoxy.

Consentius previously had contact with Augustine before he involved Augustine in the Priscillianist conflict: *Epistulae* 119, 120, and 205 show their relationship before this.<sup>396</sup> In letter 11\*, Consentius tells Augustine of Fronto's attempts to root out Priscillianists in Tarragona by pretending that *he* was a Priscillianist.<sup>397</sup> Consentius sends Augustine this narrative in order to demonstrate the duplicity of the Spanish bishops; to tell Augustine how those bishops will not attend a council at Béziers called by Patroclus, a bishop in Southern Gaul; and to ask Augustine for his intervention. Some people, according to Consentius, were using Augustine's talking points about maintaining Donatist clergy in their offices to argue that the Priscillianists should receive the same treatment.<sup>398</sup> In other words, there were some people using Augustine's arguments to support the Council of Toledo's reconciliatory stance. Consentius would like Augustine to write to Patroclus in support of the removal of Priscillianists from their priesthods.<sup>399</sup> We do not know if Augustine wrote to Patroclus.

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<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.* 4.4.

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>395</sup> *Ibid.* 5.5-11.14

<sup>396</sup> See Van Dam 1986 on the Consentius Dossier, though I do not find his arguments for three different Consentii to be convincing.

<sup>397</sup> The best treatment of the Fronto narrative is Burrus 1995, 115-122.

<sup>398</sup> *Aug. Epist.* 11\*.24-5.

<sup>399</sup> *Aug. Epist.* 11\*.26.

Augustine replies to Consentius that he is not in support of people lying in order to capture Priscillianists.<sup>400</sup> In so doing, he reinforces the idea that Priscillians hide themselves from the general public, in order to hide their heresy.<sup>401</sup> Orosius appears to have provided Augustine with the core knowledge to condemn the Priscillianists as heretics because of what they think “of God, of the soul, of the body.”<sup>402</sup> This is glossed later: the Priscillianists say that “the soul is part of God, and it is of the same nature and substance as He is.”<sup>403</sup> In the *Contra mendacium*, Augustine appears to have learned new things about Priscillianism. He knows that Dictinius was a Priscillianist bishop, but later became a “Catholic”<sup>404</sup>; he knows Dictinius wrote the *Libra*, a text which commands Priscillianists to lie in order to cover their real beliefs;<sup>405</sup> and he knows that some consider Priscillian’s followers to be martyrs, persecuted by the bishops.<sup>406</sup> These new tidbits of knowledge are only about historical events, however; Orosius’ *Commonitorium* provides Augustine’s understanding of the heresy itself. The *contra Mendacium* accepts Consentius’ core point about the Priscillianists: Priscillianists hide in plain sight and do not reveal their heresy except to other Priscillianists. By writing the *contra Mendacium*, Augustine accomplishes two goals: he reinforces Consentius’ representation of Priscillianist duplicity, and he reinforces Orosius’ definition of Priscillian as a heretic because of his teachings on the soul.

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<sup>400</sup> Aug. c. mend. 1.1.

<sup>401</sup> Aug. c. mend. 2.2.

<sup>402</sup> Aug. c. mend. 3.6. *Remanet igitur, ut quod sentiunt Priscillianistae secundum haeresis suae nefariam falsitatem, de Deo, de anima, de corpore, et de caeteris rebus, non dubitemus veraci pietate damnare*

<sup>403</sup> Aug. c. mend. 5.8. *Priscillianista dicit quod anima sit pars Dei, et eiusdem cuius est ille naturae atque substantiae.*

<sup>404</sup> Aug. c. mend. 3.5.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> Aug. c. mend. 5.9.

We cannot date Augustine's *Epistula* 237 precisely, but it is likely that it was composed after his exchange with Consentius because Augustine includes the commandment "Swear, perjure yourself, but do not disclose the secret" as one of the Priscillianist's core tenets.<sup>407</sup> Likewise, we know nothing about Ceretius other than he is a bishop, so we cannot locate him geographically. However, he did write to Augustine looking for advice. Someone named Agrigius appears to have fallen in with the group, and so Ceretius sent Augustine two Priscillianist books and asked him to comment on them.

In this letter, Augustine presents the Priscillianist's main danger as the fact that they "accept all the canonical and apocryphal writing together."<sup>408</sup> This differentiates them from other groups, like the Manichaeans and the Marcionites, because those other groups remove books from the canon that they do not like.<sup>409</sup> We can compare this distinction to Orosius' comment that Priscillian was worse than the Manichaeans because he accepted both the Old and New Testament, though in the *Commonitorium* that comment does not serve to differentiate Priscillianists from Manichaeans as it does in this letter. Augustine does not name any specific examples of "apocryphal" writings, but he presents the Priscillianists as teaching different interpretations of Scripture in secret based on them while outwardly teaching from the "canonical" writings.<sup>410</sup> Again, this is reminiscent of Orosius' presentation of the *Memoria Apostolorum*, which he claims presents Jesus as offering a different interpretation of the Parable of the Sower to his apostles in secret. Augustine spends the rest of the letter arguing against such

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<sup>407</sup> Aug. *Epist.* 237.3. *etiam verba ipsa praecepti huius ista commemorant: iura, periura, secretum prodere noli.*

<sup>408</sup> *Ibid.* *Priscillianistae vero accipiunt omnia, et canonica et apocrypha simul.*

<sup>409</sup> Aug. *Epist.* 237.2

<sup>410</sup> Aug. *Epist.* 237.2

dual teaching, pointing out that the meaning the Priscillianists ascribe to a “spiritual” reading of a hymn Ceretius sent can be found via a “carnal” reading of canonical Scripture.<sup>411</sup>

This is not to say that Orosius is behind every detail of Augustine’s letter to Ceretius. However, the *Commonitorium* offered Augustine a framework to understand the material Ceretius sent him, contributing to the conclusions Augustine draws. In this letter, the Priscillianists are tied closer to “apocryphal literature” than they are in earlier anti-Priscillianist polemic.<sup>412</sup> As we will see, this is a theme that is repeated in later anti-Priscillianist discourse.

Finally, Augustine includes the Priscillianists in the *de Haeresibus*.<sup>413</sup> Augustine wrote this work on the request of Quodvultdeus, who wanted a reference work for the priests of Carthage that would include brief descriptions of each heresy.<sup>414</sup> The majority of his description is based on Orosius’ work. I have quoted the entry below; the bold sections are taken from Orosius, the italics are drawn from Consentius or Ceretius.

The Priscillianists, whom Priscillian founded in Spain, follow a mixture of teachings, especially those of the Gnostics and the Manichees, though filth from other heresies as well has flowed into them in horrible confusion as if into a sewer. *For the sake of concealing their foul and shameful practices, they even have in their teachings these words, “Swear, commit perjury, never betray a secret.”*

**These people say that souls have the same nature and substance as God, that they come down by stages through the**

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<sup>411</sup> Aug. *Epist.* 237.5-9.

<sup>412</sup> Polemic that survives, in any case. Priscillian’s *Tractatus III* is, in part, a defense of reading literature outside of the “canon” to inform Scriptural interpretation, which scholars have taken to indicate that Priscillian was accused of reading “apocryphal literature” from the start (see, e.g. Jacobs 2000). However, we should note that Augustine’s letter to Ceretius is the first explicit link between Priscillianists and “apocryphal literature” that survives in the polemical literature. The *Exemplar* does mention a ban against reading “apocryphal literature” (lines 149-50) but this is a command to bishops, not explicitly linked with the followers of Priscillian. Obviously, Orosius attempts to link Priscillian to the *memoria Apostolorum*, but no where calls the work *apocrypha*.

<sup>413</sup> Aug. *de haer.* 70.

<sup>414</sup> Aug. *Epist.* 221-4.

**seven heavens and their various principalities to enter into a certain voluntary contest on earth, that they came upon the evil prince who, they claim, made the world, and that they are sown by this prince in different bodies of flesh.**

**They also claim that human beings are controlled by the stars that govern their fate and that our body has been composed in accord with the twelve signs of the zodiac, as those who are commonly called astrologists claim. They locate Aries in the head, Taurus in the neck, the Gemini in the shoulders, Cancer in the chest, and they run through the rest of the signs by name until they come to the feet which they assign to Pisces, which the astrologers call the last sign. This heresy has put together these and other mythical, vain and sacrilegious things, which it would take a long time to spell out.**

This heresy also shuns meat as unclean food. And if it can persuade them to this evil, it separates spouses, both husbands from unwilling wives and wives from unwilling husbands. **They assign the production of all flesh, not to the good and true God, but to the wicked angels. They are more clever than the Manichees, insofar as they repudiate none of the canonical scriptures. They read them all, along with apocryphal writings and take them as authorities, but twist to their own meanings by the use of allegory whatever there is in the holy books that overthrows their error. With regard to Christ they follow the Sabellian sect, saying that not only the Son, but the Father and the Holy Spirit are one and the same.**<sup>415</sup>

In Latin, this entry contains 245 words. The Orosian material makes up 151 of those words. In other words, Orosius' *Commonitorium* supplied the information for fully 62% of the entry. The Ceretian and Consentian material make up only 42 words, or 17% of the text. Thus, we may conclude that Orosius was the dominant source for Augustine's information on Priscillianism. More than that, in four different texts (*Epistula* 166, *ad Orosium*, *contra Mendacium* and *de Haeresibus*), Augustine confirms and uses Orosius' definition of Priscillian

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<sup>415</sup> Aug. *de haer.* LXX.1-2. Translation from Teske 1995.

in his own discussions of Priscillianism. Orosius brought Augustine into the Priscillianist Conflict; he was also fundamental in shaping Augustine's approach to writing against it.

### *Orosius' Rise in Personal Status*

The second immediate outcome is an increase in Orosius' own personal status.

Measuring status is difficult, since status is not a material thing one possesses, but rather refers to social position relative to others and to the esteem others hold for the individual. Paci et al. were able to approximate the rise of Piedmont's status on an international stage by looking at the increase in attention and positive coverage Piedmont and Cavour received by foreign newspapers.<sup>416</sup> We can approximate Orosius' new status using a similar method: by looking at the increase in attention and positive coverage he receives in letters.

The first piece of evidence for Orosius' rise in status is in Augustine's reply to the *Commonitorium*. In the beginning of his reply, Augustine writes "I am quite pleased by your zeal."<sup>417</sup> At the end of the work, Augustine writes "Indeed, that one and true teacher will teach you either through those persons or by whatever means he wants. For He sees you laboring for his Church in your inner self where he has also given you this gift. He will open the door to the truth more widely as he sees that charity knocking, which is also his gift."<sup>418</sup> Thus, in this letter to Orosius intended to be sent back to Spain and distributed throughout, Augustine praises Orosius for his zeal, desire to learn, and for his charity, claiming that God recognizes these characteristics and will reward him.

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<sup>416</sup> Paci et al. 2020, 80-81.

<sup>417</sup> Aug. c. *Priscill.* 1.1. *studium tuum, quod mihi gratissimum est*

<sup>418</sup> Aug. c. *Priscill.* 11.14. *Immo docebit ille unus magister et verus sive per illos sive quibus modis voluerit, qui te pro sua Ecclesia laborantem intus inspicit, ubi et hoc in te contulit: ipse reserabit latius veritatem, qui pulsantem pervident, quam donare dignatus est, caritatem.*

Because of the *Commonitorium*, Augustine decided to send Orosius to Bethlehem, in order to study under Jerome about the origins of the soul. While Paul Onica has argued that this is merely Augustine taking advantage of Orosius as a reliable letter carrier, Augustine's action has the effect of adding Orosius to the Augustine-Jerome network.<sup>419</sup> This provides more opportunities for Orosius' status to rise. In the letter to Jerome introducing him, Augustine praises Orosius, calling him "alert in mind, ready in speech, afire with zeal, a man who desires to be a useful vessel in the house of the Lord for refuting the false and destructive teachings that have slain the souls of Spaniards much more tragically than the barbarian sword has slain their bodies."<sup>420</sup> While most people commenting on this passage take this as a personality description of Orosius,<sup>421</sup> we should instead see this as a performative characterization. Any one reading the letter will be introduced to the personage of Orosius, described only in terms of his zeal for fighting heresy. We know from the *Retractiones* that this letter (referred to as a book on the origin of the soul) was made publicly available after Augustine learned of Jerome's death.<sup>422</sup>

While in Palestine, two texts were written and distributed outside of Palestine that speak well of Orosius. The first is Jerome's letter to Augustine, explaining why he has not yet responded to Augustine's inquiries. Jerome writes "I welcome the priest Orosius, an honorable man, my brother, and the son of Your Excellency, on his own merit and at your orders."<sup>423</sup> This advertises to anyone reading it that Orosius is linked to both Jerome and to Augustine, that Augustine has acted as Orosius' patron, and that Jerome holds Orosius in good standing. The

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<sup>419</sup> Onica 1987, 19-20.

<sup>420</sup> Aug. *Epist.* 166.1.2. *vigil ingenio, promptus eloquio, flagrans studio, utile vas in domo Domini esse desiderans, ad refellendas falsas perniciosasque doctrinas, quae animas Hispanorum multo infelicius, quam corpora barbaricus gladius, trucidarunt.*

<sup>421</sup> Most recently Leonard 2017, 280-1.

<sup>422</sup> Aug. *retract.* 2.45.

<sup>423</sup> Aug. *epist.* 172.1.1 = Hier. *epist.* 134. *Virum honorabilem fratrem meum, filium Dignationis tuae, orosium presbyterum, et sui merito, et te iubente suscepi.*

second text is the *Epistula Aviti*. Avitus writes of Orosius “But God, pitying me, because of my prayer and your merit deemed it worthy to procure the grace of his indulgence: in the first place, my most dear son and fellow priest Orosius was sent all the way to these parts by the African bishops, whose charity and comfort returned your presence to me.”<sup>424</sup> Avitus is a Galician priest from Braga. He is sending this letter back to Braga with Orosius, to whom he has entrusted the relics of Stephen. The important part to note here is not only the praise (*dilectissimus, caritas, consolatio*) but the connection Avitus makes between Orosius and the African bishops. In Avitus’ account, not only is Orosius an agent of Augustine, but an agent of the African bishops as a whole. The letter not only serves to tell Balconius and the people of Braga why he is sending the relics of Stephen *via* Orosius, but serves to advertise Orosius’ connection with the African bishops.

Augustine talked favorably about Orosius to at least two other African bishops: he wrote to Evodius that Orosius was “very holy and enthusiastic” and was “ablaze only with the love of the holy Scriptures.”<sup>425</sup> In the *de gestis Pelagii*, addressed to Aurelius, Augustine calls Orosius one of “our brothers,” together with Hero, Lazarus, and other unnamed individuals.<sup>426</sup> More to Avitus’ point, however, the African bishops advertised their connection to Orosius. The corporate letter of the African bishops written to Innocent of Rome, *Epistula* 175 in Augustine’s corpus, mentions that their *compresbyter* Orosius gave them letters from Hero and Lazarus, which lead them to denounce Pelagius and Caelestius and send a corporate letter to Innocent.<sup>427</sup>

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<sup>424</sup> Avit. Brac. *ad Palc.* 5. *Sed quoniam misericors Deus, meo voto vestroque merito procurare dignatus est indulgentiae suae gratiam, primum ut dilectissimus filius et compresbyter meus Orosius usque ad has partes ab Africanis episcopis mitteretur, cuius mihi caritas et consolatio vestram omnium praesentiam reddidit.*

<sup>425</sup> Aug. *epist.* 169.4.13. *Occasionem quippe cuiusdam sanctissimi et studiosissimi iuvenis presbyterii Orosii, qui ad nos ab ultima Hispania, id est, ab oceani littore, solo sanctarum Scripturarum ardore inflammatus advenit.*

<sup>426</sup> Aug. *gest. Pelag.* 16.39.

<sup>427</sup> Aug. *epist.* 175.1.1.

Hence, we can say that in the early phase of the Pelagian controversy, multiple texts advertise a connection between Orosius and the African Bishops, either as an agent or an ally. We can call this an increase in “international” status, to use the language of International Relations, or at least an increase of status outside of Spain. Unfortunately, the lack of evidence for Orosius’ return to Spain prohibits us from claiming that Orosius’ status definitely increased in Spain as Paci et al.’s model would predict. However, as a proxy for that evidence, we may examine the effect Orosius’ written work had on the ecclesiastical situation in the 440s-50s. The evidence will show that Orosius was read, alongside Augustine, and that how these two writers defined Priscillianism contributed to the recognition of some bishops in Galicia by the rest of the Spanish bishops.

#### *Turibius of Astorga and Leo of Rome*

We hear nothing about Priscillianism in Spain until ca. 445-7. Turibius of Astorga<sup>428</sup> (a city in Galicia) wrote a letter concerning Priscillianists to the bishops Hydatius of Cheves (the Chronicler) and Coeponius, about whom nothing else is known. This letter is probably written before Turibius’ correspondence with Leo, dated to 447, because Leo seems aware in his reply of the relationship between Turibius, Hydatius, and Coeponius. Hydatius and Turibius were partners in another situation – in 445, the two of them discovered Manichaeans hiding in Astorga, and wrote reports about it to the bishop of Mérida.<sup>429</sup>

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<sup>428</sup> We know little about Astorga's ecclesiastical background with certainty. Scholars of Priscillianism have assumed that Symphosius was the bishop of Astorga because he appears to have acted as the leader of the Priscillianists in Galicia, and Astorga was the capital of Galicia until 409 (see, e.g. Chadwick 1976, 27-9 and Burrus 1995, 105-107). If this is true, then Turibius' ecclesiastical lineage would include a leading ex-Priscillianist. However, as Van Dam 1985, 109n100 points out, there is no concrete evidence that Symphosius was bishop of Astorga.

<sup>429</sup> Hyd. *Chron.* II p 24.130.

The letter to Hydatius and Coeponius is a report to the two bishops about Turibius' discovery of Priscillianists in Astorga. Turibius claims that Priscillianist customs have been so ingrained in the Astorgan church that he did not suspect them until he had traveled to other places and discovered what real orthodoxy looked like.<sup>430</sup> In this letter, the key distinguishing feature of Priscillianism is the use of “apocryphal literature,” a practice that he uses to show their similarity to Manichaeans.<sup>431</sup> The Priscillianists read out their books in an “almost public” setting, and yet hide their “perfidiousness” by lying.<sup>432</sup>

This appears to be a blending of two of Augustine’s contributions to anti-Manichaean discourse: the theme of reading and teaching “apocryphal literature” from the letter to Ceretius, and lying to escape censure. As Turibius discusses what kinds of books the Priscillianists reads, he cites two types: different Acts of the Apostles (Acts of Thomas, Andrew, and John are specifically mentioned) and the *Memoria Apostolorum*.<sup>433</sup> The *Memoria Apostolorum* is a *blasphemissimus* book, because in it the Priscillianists “falsely invent a doctrine of the Lord to the end that the authority of their perversity might be greater; which destroys the Law of the Old Testament in its entirety, together with all those things which have been divinely revealed to St. Moses concerning the differences between creature and Creator; in addition there are other blasphemies in this book, which would be far too tedious to relate.”<sup>434</sup> Here, Turibius is pulling from the *Commonitorium*, which claims that the *Memoria Apostolorum* teaches that the Creator

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<sup>430</sup> Turibius, *Turrib. Epist.* 1.

<sup>431</sup> Turibius, *Turrib. Epist.* 4-5.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid. quae cum a multis publico pene magisterio doceantur, si catholicorum aliquis paulo constantius destructionis causa, assertioni resistat, continuo inficias eunt, et perfidiam perfidia occultunt.*

<sup>433</sup> Turibius, *Turrib. Epist.*

<sup>434</sup> Turibius, *Turrib. Epist.* 5. *et maxime ex blasphemissimo illo libro qui vocatur Memoria apostolorum, in quo ad magnam perversitatis suae auctoritatem doctrinam Domini mentiuntur, qui totam destruit legem veteris Testamenti et omnia quae S. Moysi de diversis creaturae factorisque divinitus revelata sunt; praeter reliquas eiusdem libri blasphemias, quas referre pertaesum est.*

is neglectful (a trait only creatures should have).<sup>435</sup> Turibius follows Orosius in using the *Memoria Apostolorum* to link Priscillianists and Manichaeans.

In 447, Turibius sent Leo multiple texts about Priscillianism (Leo mentions *libelli*, a *commonitorium*, and an *epistula*) that do not survive.<sup>436</sup> However, Leo replied to Turibius, and his method was to follow Turibius' description of Priscillianists point by point and offer his own commentary.<sup>437</sup> Therefore, we can use Leo's letter to access, in general terms, what Turibius wrote. Leo agrees with Turibius on every point, reinforcing Turibius' definition of Priscillianism as similar to, or related to, Manichaeism. Indeed, this very definition is probably why Leo agrees with Turibius.<sup>438</sup>

By examining Leo's letter, it becomes clear that Turibius' description of Priscillian draws from Augustine's *de haeresibus*. Out of the sixteen points that Turibius sets out, seven of them also appear in the *de haeresibus* (of which five appear in Orosius).<sup>439</sup> Chapter 15 is an elaboration of Turibius' own letter to Hydatius and Coeponius. Chapter 16 draws on the comments about Dictinius from Augustine's *Contra Mendacium*. At the end of the letter, Leo turns to a question Turibius raised that was not explicitly linked to Priscillianism.<sup>440</sup> This question concerns whether or not Christ set aside his flesh when he descended into Hell. Leo answers in the affirmative, and proceeds to claim that this is "pertinent" to Priscillianists and

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<sup>435</sup> Oros. *Comm.* 2.4. This relationship has been noted by Villela Masana 2007, 27n88.

<sup>436</sup> Leo M. *epist.* 15.praef.2.

<sup>437</sup> Leo M. *epist.* 15.praef.12.

<sup>438</sup> As noted by Ferreiro, 2020, 115.

<sup>439</sup> Leo M. *epist.* 15.1; 5;7; 8; 10; 12; 13;

<sup>440</sup> I agree with Vollmann 1965, 144-5 that this question is not about Priscillianism per se, *contra* Schipper and Van Oort 2000, 75n120.

Manichaeans.<sup>441</sup> This question most likely comes from Orosius' description of the Aviti, who Orosius claims taught that the body was never discarded.<sup>442</sup>

Leo's advice is to call a council of bishops from every province in Spain to investigate if any bishops follow Priscillianism; if any are found, communion should be broken immediately.<sup>443</sup> If conditions do not permit a general council, at least the Galician church should meet.<sup>444</sup> Leo then sends letters to the bishops in Galicia, Tarraconensis, Carthaginiensis, and Lusitania to urge them to meet in a general council.<sup>445</sup> According to Hydatius, these letters were sent via Turibius' deacon, Pervincus, and some of the Galician bishops approved of these measures "deceitfully" (*subdolo*).<sup>446</sup>

For unknown reasons, the Galicians did not meet with the rest of the Spanish bishops. However, because of how the documents related to the First Council of Toledo were compiled, we do have a *regula fidei* that was composed by the bishops of the other provinces. This *regula fidei* was composed against "all heresies" but "especially against Priscillianism."<sup>447</sup> It was composed and then sent, along with the "precepts of the bishop of the City, Leo" to Balconius.<sup>448</sup>

Precisely why the *regula fidei* was sent to Balconius is unclear, but scholars have pointed towards a rivalry between Galician bishops.<sup>449</sup> When Hydatius and Turibius take actions against Manichaeans, they sent reports to Antoninus, the bishop of Mérida, *not* to Balconius, the metropolitan of Galicia. Similarly, Leo asks Turibius to convene a Galician council, along with

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<sup>441</sup> Leo M. *epist.* 15.17.5. *Quod non credere satis impium est et ad Manichei Priscillianique doctrinam pertinere non dubium*

<sup>442</sup> Oros. *Comm.* 3.8. *ita neque depositum usquam fuisse corpus*

<sup>443</sup> Leo M. *epist.* 15.17.5.6-7

<sup>444</sup> Leo M. *epist.* 15.17.5.13

<sup>445</sup> Leo M. *epist.* 15.17.5.11

<sup>446</sup> Hyd. *Chron.* II p 24.135.

<sup>447</sup> Conc. Tolet. a. 400. 200-1 *Contra omnes haereses et quam maxime contra Priscillianos*

<sup>448</sup> Conc. Tolet. a. 400. 201-3 *Quam episcopi Tarraconenses, Cartaginenses, Lusitani, et Betici fecerunt et cum praecepto papae urbis Leonis ad Balconium episcopum Galliciae.*

<sup>449</sup> Chadwick 1976, 208-9; Mathisen 1994, 92-95; Vilella Masana 2007, 64.

Hydatius and Coeponius, and does not make reference to the metropolitan whatsoever.<sup>450</sup> This is possible, but ultimately conjectural because we simply do not know enough about the ecclesiastical status of Braga at this time.

However, what we can say is that the *regula fidei* is proof that bishops from Betica and Carthaginiensis, along with the other Spanish bishops, decided to convene a council based on the suggestions of Leo, brought to them by a deacon from a Galician church. This suggests that these bishops, which historically had refused to commune with Galician bishops because of their past as Priscillianists, now recognized the validity of some Galician bishops.

This should be seen as a rise in status for, at the very least, some Galician bishops. While after the Council of Toledo they were denied communion from hardline bishops, now they are in a position to call them to a council to denounce Priscillianism. Orosius' *Commonitorium* was instrumental in this process, both because of the talking points Orosius himself introduced into anti-Priscillianist discourse and because of the impact Augustine's involvement had.

## Conclusion

This chapter uses insights from political science and international relations to offer a better understanding of the Priscillianist controversy than has been previously offered. By analyzing the political strategies that participants in the controversy employed, I have offered a new picture for each phase of the conflict. As labels and definitions of different "heretics" shift in the sources, we should resist the temptation to see this as a reflection of evolving theologies. Rather, we should investigate the potential reasons for the *author* to define his subject the way he has.

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<sup>450</sup> Leo M. *epist.* 15.17.5.13

In the first phase of the Priscillianist controversy, Hydatius and Ithacius facilitated their efforts to invite other participants onto their side of the conflict by defining Priscillian as a Manichaean and a sorcerer. They also inhibited Priscillian's ability to do the same, as even neutral parties were hesitant to be seen consorting with "Manichaeans." By defining the conflict as one over heresy, Hydatius and Ithacius maximized difference between their "orthodoxy" and Priscillian's "heterodoxy," seeking his condemnation. This resulted in Hydatius' and Ithacius' rise in status in the court of Maximus and in Priscillian's execution, but it also resulted in an increase of polarization between the Priscillianists and anti-Priscillianists in Spain.

The Council of Toledo employed the same strategies in own effort to bring about an opposite effect. The bishops at the Council of Toledo widened the scope of the conflict to include the bishops of the same cities Priscillian had tried to invoke to his side: Milan and Rome. With Ambrose and Siricius as mediators, the Priscillianists and anti-Priscillianists agreed on a definition of Priscillian's heresy that minimized difference between the two groups, making it easier to produce reconciliation. This was successful to some degree, as prominent Priscillianist bishops crossed over to the anti-Priscillianist side. However, the agreed-upon definition did not satisfy all participants, and not every Priscillianist bishop condemned Priscillian at the council. In addition, hardline bishops in Betica and Carthaginiensis balked at taking up communion with former Priscillianists. As a result, the Galician bishops were of a lower status than the rest of the Spanish bishops.

These two phases set the stage for Orosius' own activity. Instead of seeking to understand Orosius by participating in *Quellenforschung*, I have sought to place Orosius in his Spanish context. In so doing, I have produced a new reading of the *Commonitorium*.

The scholarship surrounding Orosius' *Commonitorium* has almost universally presented the text as Orosius' first-hand knowledge of heresies in Spain. The claim is that the text was written in order to procure Augustine's help in his conflict against Priscillianism. However, the text itself does not reflect "historical" Priscillianism, but instead constructs its case from anti-Manichaean discourse. The text also states that Augustine had already agreed to help Orosius, before he even wrote the text.

In this chapter, I have argued that the real targets of the *Commonitorium* are the hardliners in Spain who deny the orthodoxy of the Galician bishops because of their past as Priscillianists. A rhetorical analysis of the *Commonitorium* shows that Orosius sought to minimize distance between himself and Augustine and maximize distance between himself and his theological opponents. The text's existence, and Augustine's reply, serves as an advertisement for the closer relationship between the two men and for Augustine's approval of Orosius' orthodoxy. It also contributes to anti-Priscillianist discourse by returning to Hydatius' and Ithacius' methods and building on them.

This analysis of the *Commonitorium* may raise an old question: was Orosius an ex-Priscillianist, as Braulio of Saragossa claims?<sup>451</sup> The evidence available makes this question impossible to answer with certainty. Braulio's claim seems more of a misconstrual of the *Commonitorium* itself rather than a local tradition, since he claims that Augustine convinced Orosius that Priscillianism was a heresy and yet in the *Commonitorium* Orosius has already reached that conclusion. Just because the See of Braga had, at one time, been occupied by a pro-Priscillianist bishop does not necessitate that Orosius was also a pro-Priscillianist.

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<sup>451</sup> Braul. epist. 37.82-85 (as printed in CCSL 114).

The composition of the *Commonitorium* produced two outcomes. The first is Augustine's involvement in the Priscillianist controversy. Augustine reinforced Orosius' definition and provided his own innovations. The second is Orosius' personal rise in status. After the composition of the *Commonitorium*, Orosius is presented numerous times as a zealous individual, allied with the African bishops.

The current research on status-building would suggest that an increase in extralocal status would naturally lead to an increase in local status. We cannot confirm that Orosius himself increased in status back in Spain, since he disappears from the historical record after the composition of the *Histories*. However, it is clear that his *Commonitorium* was used by Turibius of Astorga, along with the Augustinian anti-Priscillianist literature that Orosius also contributed to, in his own efforts to fight "Priscillianism." It was instrumental in forging an alliance between certain Galician bishops (Turibius, Hydatius, and Coeponius) and Leo of Rome. The other Spanish bishops convened a council at Leo's recommendation, carried by one of Turibius' deacons. Even if not immediately, Orosius' efforts at restoring the status of the Galician bishops in the eyes of the hardliners appears to have been successful.

# Chapter Two-- Orosius and Pelagianism

## Introduction

Orosius traveled to Bethlehem in 415 in order to study the soul with Jerome. Orosius' time in Palestine is opaque to modern historians, because the only information we have for his visit comes from his *Liber Apologeticus* or from short mentions in the epistles of Augustine and Jerome. As a consequence, Orosius is often an overlooked figure in the scholarly discourse surrounding Pelagius and the conflict on the issue of grace. In contrast, this chapter stresses the influence Orosius had on how that conflict was carried out, both in Palestine and elsewhere. Drawing on insights from political science, I will argue that far from being an unsuccessful agent of Augustine, Orosius shaped the discourse around Pelagius by acting as a political entrepreneur, which Augustine would exploit in his later anti-Pelagian writings.

Orosius has been relegated to being merely an agent of Augustine by some scholars. Kelly writes "Augustine's sending of Orosius 'to sit at Jerome's feet' was thus a deliberate move in the controversy; we need not doubt that he was anxious to alert the church at Jerusalem, where Pelagius was being hospitably entertained, and Jerome in particular to the dangers of the new movement."<sup>452</sup> Wermelinger imagines that Orosius is sent, among other reasons, to see "to what extent Jerome was correctly cited as a witness for sinlessness in the *De Natura*."<sup>453</sup> Orosius' only import is to carry news of what occurred in Palestine back to the bishops in Africa.<sup>454</sup> In other accounts of the "Pelagian controversy," Orosius does not appear at all.<sup>455</sup>

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<sup>452</sup> Kelly 1975, 318.

<sup>453</sup> Wermelinger 1975, 43. "Augustinus möchte in Erfahrung bringen, wieweit Hieronymus zu Recht als Zeuge für die Sündlosigkeit in *De Natura* in Anspruch genommen wurde."

<sup>454</sup> Wermelinger 1975, 60–68; 88–90.

<sup>455</sup> For example, Evans 1968, Bonner 2018.

Gerald Bonner gives Orosius far more importance in the Pelagian controversy than most other scholars do. Orosius' importance lies in adding fuel to the fire of conflict between Pelagius and Jerome. As Bonner wrote, as of 415, "there was disagreement, there was suspicion; but there was no reason to expect the sequence of violent events which marked the three following years."<sup>456</sup> Orosius is compared to John Wilkes Booth, as an individual "whose influence on the course of history is out of all proportion to the time which they occupy the stage" because of the "violence" they cause.<sup>457</sup> Yet what violence Bonner attributes to Orosius is unclear, other than impertinence in his behavior and, in Bonner's belief, a fissure between the bishops in Africa and Palestine.<sup>458</sup> To Hamman, Orosius' innovation lies in his efforts to link Pelagius with the teachings of Caelestius.<sup>459</sup>

Though some scholars recognize Orosius' importance, the words they use to describe his actions are almost universally negative. Acting under Augustine's direction, Orosius' methods are due only to his personality, he is "aggressive" and "tactless."<sup>460</sup> Bonner paints all anti-Pelagian efforts in Palestine with the same negative brush, writing "The *débâcle* at Jerusalem in the summer of 415 was consummated by the fiasco at Diospolis, when Pelagius was exonerated from all the charges brought against him."<sup>461</sup> Hamman points to the tenuousness of Orosius' tactics when he writes "[Orosius] would like to convince the hearers in Jerusalem that the condemnation [of Caelestius] applies to Pelagius, which is absolutely not proven."<sup>462</sup>

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<sup>456</sup> Bonner 1992, 43.

<sup>457</sup> Ibid.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid. 43-44 and er 1993, 238-39.

<sup>459</sup> Hamman 1968. Malavasi and DuPont 2022 makes this argument as well but appears ignorant of Hamman's contribution.

<sup>460</sup> Kelly 1975, 318. See also Hamman 1968, 354, "Il s'ajoute à cette considération qu'Orosius écrit avec trop de passion, trop d'agressivité"

<sup>461</sup> Bonner 1992, 44.

<sup>462</sup> Hamman 1968, 353. "Il voudrait convaincre l'auditoire de Jérusalem que la condamnation atteint Pélage, ce qui n'est absolument pas prouvé."

This chapter seeks to contribute to the historiographical picture of Orosius by analyzing the process by which he instigates conflict around Pelagius. Rather than interpreting Orosius as a failure, I suggest that Orosius should be understood as a political entrepreneur. Hamman is correct to point out that he is important for introducing Caelestius to the discourse in Jerusalem; however, he does not explain why this is important or what impact it has on the rest of the conflict with Pelagius. I argue that by introducing Caelestius into the discourse in Jerusalem, Orosius introduced a new issue dimension into the conflict and forced Pelagius to be handled on an episcopal level, first by John and then by the bishops of Palestine.

Bonner correctly suggests that Orosius was responsible for shifting "disagreement" to political conflict,<sup>463</sup> but he is wrong to characterize the synod of Diospolis as a fiasco or to suggest that the decisions taken at Diospolis put the Carthaginian condemnation of Caelestius at risk.<sup>464</sup> Instead, while Pelagius was acquitted by the bishops at Diospolis, the synod concurred in condemning Caelestius. This condemnation would be used by Augustine as confirmation that his ideas on original sin should be accepted.

This chapter will examine the process by which Orosius caused action to be taken against Pelagius in Palestine, as well as what impact he and his fellow anti-Pelagian allies, Heros and Lazarus, had on the conflict as a whole. The first part will sketch out John Kingdon's Multiple Streams Theory of agenda setting. This model explains how ideas, political realities, and daily circumstances each contribute to when action is taken on any given issue. Kingdon's model is fruitful for understanding why the bishops in Palestine decided to convene the synod of Diospolis at all. I will describe this model first because it provides us with the vocabulary

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<sup>463</sup> Bonner 1992, 43.

<sup>464</sup> *Ibid.* 44.

necessary to sketch out how Augustine and Pelagius' conflict on man's capacity to avoid sin played out.

The second section outlines how various conflicts surrounding Pelagius flared up and were carried out before Orosius arrived in Palestine in 415.<sup>465</sup> Augustine's conflict with Pelagius was an extension of his earlier conflict with Caelestius over man's responsibility for sin and his ability to avoid it. In Palestine, Jerome carried out a different conflict with Pelagius that largely centered around which one of them was an Origenist. Up until 415, there appeared to be no reason for any bishops to take legislative or judicial action.

The third and final section analyzes the political tactics of Orosius, Heros, and Lazarus, and evaluates their impact on Augustine's rhetorical strategies in the years after 415. Orosius injected Augustine's writings against Caelestius into the Palestinian discourse by declaring before John of Jerusalem that Pelagius taught the same thing. This heightened the attention given to Pelagius' teachings. When the bishops of Palestine convened, they considered a list of charges submitted by Heros and Lazarus. This *libellus* developed the initial complaints presented by Orosius and sought to link Pelagius and Caelestius. Caelestius' ideas on Adam and the inefficacy of original sin to impact the nature of mankind were condemned by the synod of Diospolis. This set one precedent and one principle: Caelestius and Pelagius could be considered together by an official body as potentially teaching the same things, and Caelestius' ideas on sin were condemned by two different councils.

Thus, this chapter argues that Orosius' importance is far greater than normally recognized. Instead of merely following Augustine's instructions to talk to Pelagius about Augustine's writings,<sup>466</sup> Orosius and his allies manipulated the political process in such a way

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<sup>465</sup> For a paper with a similar idea, but slightly different conclusions, see Rackett 2002.

<sup>466</sup> Aug. *serm.* 438A.6.

that Augustine's ideas were upheld by implication: because Diospolis condemned the ideas of Caelestius, Augustine could argue that his ideas should be accepted because they are the opposite of Caelestius'. Thus, for Augustine and other anti-Pelagian partisans, Diospolis was not a debacle but a stepping stone in obtaining widespread acceptance, over time, for Augustine's ideas of *tradox peccati*.

### Three Streams of Agenda Setting

For more than thirty years, John Kingdon's work on agenda setting has been used by political scientists to answer one question: what makes political bodies attend to some subjects and not others?<sup>467</sup> Pulling from Hugh Heclo's concept of "issue networks" and Cohen et al.'s "garbage can" model of decision making, Kingdon describes how political realities and ideas work together to form the agenda of a given governing body.<sup>468</sup> He presents three streams: a problem stream, a policy stream, and a political stream. These three streams often develop independently, but when they intersect, changes in the operative agenda become likely. In this section, I will sketch out Kingdon's model and explain how it is useful for scholars of ecclesiastical politics.

In a given political body, there will be a long list of problems that demand the attention of officials. A "problem" may be defined as a condition which is recognized to be important enough that political bodies as a whole, or individuals within them, desire to take action to solve it. These conditions may be presented by a variety of indicators. In modern politics, these indicators often take the form of statistics. These statistical indicators have the advantage of being presented as an objective measure of a given condition. However, these statistics have to

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<sup>467</sup> Kingdon 1984, 1 poses that question. Baumgartner 2016 gives an account of Kingdon's influence over the past 30 years.

<sup>468</sup> Cohen et al. 1972, Heclo 1978.

be interpreted to show why a condition should be defined as a problem. When American spending on healthcare reached 8% GNP in 1976, politicians were divided as to whether or not this was too much, too little, or just right.<sup>469</sup> Conditions must be "translated" into problems. This principle works even for political contexts that lack such statistical information. In ecclesiastical politics, a written text can provide the same "objectivity" as modern statistics, as a tangible object that a "translator" can point to as an indicator of a condition. That condition can then be translated into a "problem."

Kingdon has identified three fundamental components that aid the translation of a condition into a problem: values, comparisons, and categories. A condition can be translated into a problem if "a mismatch between the observed conditions and one's conception of an ideal state" is observed.<sup>470</sup> If this mismatch appeals to one's values, or invites comparison to a condition elsewhere that reveals that one is at a disadvantage, the condition may be seen as a problem. Placing a condition in a given category is key in defining a problem because the category a condition is placed under delimits what values the condition may appeal to and defines what comparisons can be drawn.

Just because a condition is translated into a problem does not mean it will be seen as an urgent enough problem to be considered worthy of a spot on the agenda. Sometimes a problem needs a push to get to that level of urgency. "That push is sometimes provided by a focusing event like a crisis or disaster that comes along to call attention to the problem, a powerful symbol that catches on, or the personal experience of a policy maker."<sup>471</sup> Focusing events in particular

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<sup>469</sup> Kingdon 1984, 99.

<sup>470</sup> Kingdon 1984, 116.

<sup>471</sup> *Ibid.* 99-100.

have the potential to capture public attention on a given issue that was, before the event, ignored.<sup>472</sup>

Focusing events do not bring problems to the agenda by themselves, however. The problem must already be in the "back of people's minds," ready to be activated, before a focusing event can give it additional focus. One airplane crashing randomly is an event that demands attention, but may not bring the problem of aviation safety to the forefront if other similar incidents had not occurred. A second plane crash, however, will focus the public's attention on aviation safety because of the pattern of incidents. In this scenario, the first focusing event retroactively points to the problem that the second event successfully brought to the agenda.

"Failure to solve or even address a problem, as well as success, may result in its demise as a prominent agenda item."<sup>473</sup> In other words, problems often only have a short time on the agenda unless it is a chronic issue that keeps being brought back to prominence. If a political body deals with a problem, they often move on, no matter the quality of their solution. If they fail to make headway, the problem is dropped from consideration because it is considered to be intractable.

To conclude, the problem stream is made up of three potential categories: conditions, recognized problems, and urgent problems. Conditions have to be interpreted in order to be recognized as a problem, but recognition is not enough to have a problem rise to the level where action is considered or taken. Political bodies must feel that a recognized problem is urgent enough to put it on the agenda usually through the intervention of "focusing events" that force attention on a given problem. However, a problem being considered urgent does not guarantee action will take place. For that to happen, the other two streams must also be favorable.

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<sup>472</sup> See Downs 1972 for a description of the Issue-Attention Cycle.

<sup>473</sup> Kingdon 1984, 109.

The policy stream consists of the different ideas that are developed to solve potential and present problems. These ideas are developed by policy communities -- groups consisting of academics, governmental officials, and other interested parties that exchange proposals and ideas until the available options are narrowed. So-called "policy entrepreneurs" emerge within these communities. These are individuals who spend their resources -- intellectual, temporal, financial, etc. -- to promote their own ideas and exclude others. Thus, they play a pivotal role in "specifying the alternatives." The "alternatives" are discrete policy ideas that are developed and available to be implemented.

We should not always envision one monolithic policy community. As Kingdon points out, differences in geography and local politics create different policy communities on the same issue, even if there is some cross-over.<sup>474</sup> Even within the same geographical area and political circumstances, policy communities can fragment over differences in values and personal networks. The consequences of this "policy fragmentation" is that alternatives stemming from different values and epistemic frames emerge, leading to vastly different solutions to the same problems.

The political stream consists of the political conditions of any given political body -- what the leanings of each individual officeholder are, what the perception of what is "politically possible" is, and what coalitions are present that allows political action to take place. Most importantly, "the political stream is an important promotor or inhibitor of high agenda status."<sup>475</sup> It is the make-up of the political stream that determines what is on the agenda or not (recognizing that the political stream can, and is, often impacted by outside factors like focusing events).

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<sup>474</sup> Kingdon 1984, 141 uses the example of Swedish and American public transportation to illustrate this possibility.

<sup>475</sup> Kingdon 1984, 171.

"The agenda is affected more by the problems and political streams, and the alternatives are affected more by the policy stream."<sup>476</sup> Understanding how a given idea or proposal reaches consideration as an agenda item in its own right<sup>477</sup> is to understand how these three streams come together. It is only when a problem is given a high place on the agenda, developed policy proposals are available, and the political environment is deemed favorable enough that action will take place.

Sometimes the streams join together naturally. As one analyst told Kingdon, "When you lobby for something, what you have to do is put together your coalition, you have to gear up, you have to get your political forces in line, and then you sit there and wait for the fortuitous event."<sup>478</sup> When the streams intersect, a "policy window" opens, and action can take place. In a world in which resources are limited, it can be preferable to simply wait for the stars to align.

There are those, however, who seek to bring the streams together themselves. These "political entrepreneurs" choose from the available alternatives developed in the policy stream and work to get that alternative on the agenda.<sup>479</sup> They do so by, for example, changing how a particular issue is framed to make their favored proposal more fitting. They work to create new coalitions that make the political stream more conducive to action. Political entrepreneurs take known policy elements and produce "creative recombination" that better suit the current political landscape. Finally, in the absence of any crisis, political entrepreneurs may forcefully reinterpret current events *as* crises, or engineer new crises while then providing the answer (termed "creative destruction").

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<sup>476</sup> Kingdon 1984, 176.

<sup>477</sup> Consider the difference between having the goal "providing healthcare to all Americans" on the agenda and having "passing the policy proposals in the Affordable Care Act" on the agenda.

<sup>478</sup> Kingdon 1984, 173.

<sup>479</sup> For the following traits of political entrepreneurs, see Sheingate 2003, 188-189.

It must be stressed that joining the three streams together does not guarantee victory. Sometimes the principle players miscalculate, or an outside event can change where political attention goes. But victory is not the only positive outcome of entrepreneurial activity. While the window for a given proposal may close, the very fact that the opportunity was present and acted upon may open a window for an adjacent policy area. The action taken during a given window can establish principles that govern or impact how future efforts are handled. These principles can also have an effect on adjacent conflicts, a process known as "spillover." These small steps might seem inconsequential when everything is said and done, yet they are an integral part of the process towards achieving the ultimate goal.

Kingdon's model has been used to analyze the development of public policy in a variety of political contexts, from the EU in the 1950s-70s to contemporary China.<sup>480</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that Kingdon constructed his model by interviewing US Congressmen and other individuals involved in American national politics. Thus, his model refers everything to one, centralized representative body -- the United States Congress.

Ecclesiastical politics in Late Antiquity does not work that way. Even ecumenical councils are not as representative as Congress, and the vast majority of councils are local, regional ones, where a subset of a region's bishops would meet to solve local problems. Of course, while councils were largely regional, networks of Christians and theological debates spanned the empire. Thus, we have a situation in which "theological communities" share and hone ideas with contacts outside of their region, while each region has its own political landscape to take into account. The result is a large number of decision making bodies with their own particular political streams, that remain permeable to an extra-regional policy stream.

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<sup>480</sup> Zhu 2008.

In addition, the nature of the legislative activity of church councils is very different.<sup>481</sup> Congress votes on bills that, once passed, direct money and other resources towards solving a problem. Church councils usually make decisions about clerical behavior, organization, and theology. These are either behavioral or ideological decisions, rather than decisions that cost material resources. As a result, conciliar decisions more easily impact the "theological stream."<sup>482</sup> This aspect of conciliar decisions, combined with their decentralized nature, also results in frequent opening and closing of windows. The same solutions to problems can be tested out in a variety of different decision-making bodies. Because of these differences, I use the terms "theological community" and "theological stream" as a replacement for "policy community" or "policy stream" to better reflect the types of ideas debated by the participants.

Despite these differences, Kingdon's model remains useful as an aid for thinking through how ideas influence the political process and vice versa. It is a virtue of Kingdon's model that it does not subordinate ideas to politics, nor politics to ideas. Likewise, we must avoid the temptation to subordinate theology to politics, or politics to theology when analyzing ecclesiastical controversies. This chapter, by applying Kingdon's model to the debate over the nature of grace in the early 5th century, will seek to avoid that temptation. By considering how the theological debates over the problem interact with, change, and are changed by the political maneuvering of church councils, I will demonstrate that Orosius' actions in Palestine are best described as entrepreneurial activities.

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<sup>481</sup> MacMullen 2006, esp. 1-11.

<sup>482</sup> For example, theological writers may cite conciliar decisions as if that is proof of an idea's legitimacy or orthodoxy.

## Augustine, Pelagius, and Jerome

Scholarship on the so-called "Pelagian Controversy" tends to focus on the three principle figures: Augustine, Pelagius, and Jerome.<sup>483</sup> Augustine and Jerome are seen to have set aside their differences and come together in an effort to defend their conception of grace against Pelagius' heresy. However, as Ali Bonner has recently argued,<sup>484</sup> historians should avoid accepting the rhetorical construction of "Pelagianism" that we find in Augustine and Jerome. "Pelagianism" does not exist. Instead of a monolithic conflict between orthodoxy and heresy, there are two separate conflicts that appear concurrently. Augustine participated in a debate over man's propensity to sin and the nature of God's grace, while Jerome sought to defend himself from Pelagius' criticism of his scholarly activity. Understanding how these two conflicts developed, independently of each other, is essential for analyzing Orosius' activity in Palestine.

In the final years of the fourth century and during the first decade of the fifth, Christian intellectuals in the West were grappling with the issue of man's responsibility for sin and the nature of God's grace. In particular, they were reflecting on different ways to interpret chapters 5 and 9 of the Letter to the Romans. Romans 5:15 highlights how the human race was condemned by Adam's sin, yet was redeemed by Christ's sacrifice. Romans 9:1-29 discusses how God gives his favor to some, yet withholds it from others ("Jacob I have loved, but Esau I hated"). These passages brought questions to the fore: is man still tainted by Adam's sin? Or was man freed and thereby able to hew to God's commandments? Is God just if he does not give His grace to all equally? Ultimately, these questions boil down to two key questions: what is the character of man's nature, and what role does God's grace play in man's ability to avoid sinning? These

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<sup>483</sup> For example, Evans 1968; Kelly 1975; 309-323; Clark 1982; 194-244; Bonner 1992; Brown 2000 340-377; Lancel 2002 325-346; *inter alia*.

<sup>484</sup> Bonner 2018.

issues were not new, of course. Ambrosiaster had dealt with it in his Commentary on Romans, and Cyprian already wrote on the issue in the third century.<sup>485</sup> We have seen already how Gregory of Elvira and Pacian of Barcelona treated these issues. However, it is in this period that we see the rise of two different theological entrepreneurs: Augustine and Pelagius.

Augustine's main contribution to the debate over man's propensity to sin is the concept of *tradux peccati* -- that is, the idea that Adam's first sin, the *peccatum originale*, fundamentally altered man's nature. Because man became mortal, both the sin itself and the punishment for the sin were passed generation by generation. Therefore, in the eyes of God, the human race is a mass of sin (*massa peccati*) by default. It is only by his gift of grace that humans can be saved. This idea was first expressed in the 390s in the work *Miscellany of Questions for Simplicianus*.<sup>486</sup> Simplicianus was Ambrose's successor to the see of Milan, and one of Augustine's associates while he resided in the city.<sup>487</sup> Simplicianus had sent Augustine a letter asking him two questions on Romans and six on the Book of Kings, in reply to which Augustine composed the *Miscellany*. By answering Simplicianus, Augustine developed his thought and produced the idea of the *tradux peccati*. By sending the text to Simplicianus,<sup>488</sup> Augustine introduced the concept to Italy, where it would be critiqued and answered in time.

Somewhere between the years 397-412, Pelagius wrote his *Commentary on Romans*.<sup>489</sup> Commenting on Romans 5:15, Pelagius includes two quotes that argue against the idea of transmission of sin.<sup>490</sup> The first quote argues that, if Adam's first sin brought condemnation to

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<sup>485</sup> Beatrice 2013, 128-157. Ambrosiaster discusses the idea of the human race as a *massa peccati* in *In Rom.* 163-165 and 327-329. Cyprian discusses the "contagion of ancient death" in his letter to Fidus, *epist.* 64.5.

<sup>486</sup> Aug. *quaest. Simpl.* 1.1.10-11; 1.2.16.

<sup>487</sup> Aug. *conf.* 7.2-5; see Lancel 2002, 90-94.

<sup>488</sup> Possibly along with the *Contra Epistolam Manichaei quam vocant Fundamenti, de agone Christiano*, and the early books of the *de Doctrina Christiania*. See Steinhauser 2014.

<sup>489</sup> de Bruyn 1993, 24-26.

<sup>490</sup> Pel. *exp. Rom.* 5.15.

mankind, then Christ's sacrifice erased that original sin. The second quote reasons that if two parents had been cleansed of original sin, then their children should not be able to receive the sin. Pelagius only includes these quotes, excluding any quotations in support of the idea of the transmission of sin and including no commentary of his own. The impression one gets from the text is that the idea of the transmission of sin is riddled with logical holes and should not be seriously considered. In contrast to the idea of *tradux peccati*, Pelagius develops the idea that man's nature is good and uncorrupted elsewhere in the *Commentary* and in the *de Natura*.<sup>491</sup> Instead of envisioning sin as some insidious substance that changes man's nature, sin is defined as a wrongful action.<sup>492</sup> Therefore, because man's nature is good, man can avoid sinning.

In the decade 400-409, we can describe Augustine and Pelagius as competing theological entrepreneurs in one community. Their ideas were considered in the same geographical area (Italy). Pelagius appears to be directly responding to Augustine.<sup>493</sup> They share some of the same intellectual influences: Pelagius quotes Augustine's earlier work favorably, and both appear to have drawn from Rufinus' translation of Origen's *Commentary on Romans*.<sup>494</sup> That being said, signs of fragmentation do appear. While their ideas are in dialogue, Augustine and Pelagius do not communicate directly. While they share some common acquaintances,<sup>495</sup> their social networks do not substantially overlap. The alternatives specified are almost complete opposites: human nature is either a *massa peccati*, or good and uncorrupted. Until 411, this disagreement never left the theological stream.

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<sup>491</sup> Pel. exp. Rom. 3.24 argues that mankind already belongs to God, but we are separated from him by our sins. The *redemptio* is a *return* to our original, good state.

<sup>492</sup> This definition is present in the *De Natura*, quoted in *Aug. nat. et grat.* 19.21.

<sup>493</sup> The term *tradux peccati* is first found in Augustine's writing to Simplician, so its appearance in Pelagius' commentary is striking.

<sup>494</sup> *Aug. nat. et grat.* 67.80. Hammond Bammel 1992.

<sup>495</sup> Most notably Paulinus of Nola, Pinian and Melania; see Brown 1968 and 1970.

At the same time that Augustine and Pelagius were developing their ideas, Jerome was asked similar questions. Faced with questions on Romans by Paulinus of Nola ca. 399, Jerome directed him to read Origen's *On First Principles*.<sup>496</sup> Later, a woman named Hedibia asked him similar questions. Jerome wrote back that man has the free will to avoid sin, and thus the obligation to do so, but that free will is granted to man by God.<sup>497</sup> Jerome's answer to Hedibia places him closer to Pelagius than Augustine on the question.

After the sack of Rome, Pelagius and his associate, Caelestius, fled Italy, going first to Sicily and then stopping in Africa.<sup>498</sup> While Pelagius traveled onward to Palestine, Caelestius remained in Africa and sought to be ordained a presbyter. However, while the African bishops initially appeared sympathetic to Caelestius' desire, he met a roadblock: Paulinus of Milan.<sup>499</sup>

Paulinus was a deacon of the Milanese church during Ambrose's final years. He also appears to have been in charge of church property. While most famously connected to Ambrose, he was still in Milan in 398 or 399, which suggests he also served under Simplician.<sup>500</sup> This would place him in an opportune location to read about Augustine's ideas on the transmission of sin and to follow the ensuing scholarly debate.

When Paulinus learned that Caelestius applied for ordination, he submitted a *libellus* to Aurelius of Carthage informing him that Caelestius denied that Adam's sin impacted the rest of the human race and, therefore, that babies are not tainted by original sin.<sup>501</sup> In so doing, Paulinus translated a condition into a problem. The fact that Caelestius taught certain ideas about the

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<sup>496</sup> Hier. Epist. 85.3.

<sup>497</sup> Epist. 120.10.

<sup>498</sup> For biographical information on Caelestius, see TeSelle 1972 and Honnay 1994. Malavasi and DuPont 2022 argue that they were not associates, but they are certainly in the same "camp" in this conflict.

<sup>499</sup> Paredi 1963 provides an overview of the biographical information we have on Paulinus, and I draw from that here.

<sup>500</sup> Paul. med. vita Ambr. 51.

<sup>501</sup> Aug. *grat. Christ. et pecc. orig.* 2.3.3.; Marius Mercator *Cael.* 1.1-2.

transmission of sin is merely a condition. He is reported to have said: "With regard to the transmission of sin, I have already said that I heard many within the Catholic Church argue against it and some others defend it, inasmuch as it was open to discussion and not a matter of heresy."<sup>502</sup> By raising these points as objections to Caelestius' ordination, Paulinus frames them as, if not explicitly heretical, incorrect and disqualifying. As an addendum to his charges, Paulinus brought a text of Caelestius' (otherwise unidentified) that provided Paulinus "objective" proof that Caelestius taught as Paulinus claimed.

It must be recognized that Paulinus framed his objections to Caelestius' ordination in such a way that appealed to the African political stream. The fact that Caelestius went on to be ordained in Ephesus shows that, elsewhere, Caelestius' teachings remained only a condition. The African bishops were sympathetic to Paulinus' framing of the problem, either because of their relationship with Augustine or because of traditional African beliefs on the problem.<sup>503</sup>

This meeting of the political and problem streams would serve to encourage fragmentation and development in the theological stream. Marcellinus informed Augustine of what happened to Caelestius and asked Augustine to respond to criticism of his own ideas concerning original sin and, by extension, the fate of unbaptized babies.<sup>504</sup> Augustine had a text at hand which he quotes as if representative of a potential interlocutor.<sup>505</sup> One of the criticisms

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<sup>502</sup> Ibid. 2.3.4. *Coelestius dixit: Iam de traduce peccati dixi, quia intra Catholicam constitutos plures audivi destruere, necnon et alios astruere: licet quaestionis res sit ista, non haeresis.*

<sup>503</sup> Aug. *pecc. mer.* 1.24.34. specifies that "Punic Christians" believe that without baptism and communion, one cannot enter heaven, which would mean that unbaptized babies who die cannot either. Of course, we should not take this as descriptive of all African Christians, but it does suggest that the African bishops are agreed with Augustine on this issue. For Cyprian's writings on something that looks like a precursor to Augustine's conception of original sin, see Beatrice 2013, 152-7.

<sup>504</sup> Aug. *pecc. mer.* 1.1.

<sup>505</sup> This text has been identified as Rufinus' *liber de fide*, while others have thought it to be a text of Caelestius'. Dunphy 2005, 415 considers it the author to be Caelestius. *Pecc. mer.* 1.18.23 bears remarkable similarities to Rufinus' *fide* 40, suggesting some sort of connection, although the exact relationship is unclear. See also TeSelle 1972, 76.

he responds to sounds similar to one from Pelagius' commentary: "If a sinner gave birth to a sinner so that a little one is freed from the guilt of original sin in the reception of baptism, [a righteous person] ought also to give birth to a righteous child."<sup>506</sup> However, in a letter sent to Marcellinus after he sent him the two books of the *de peccatorum meritis*, Augustine writes "But only a few days later I read certain writings of Pelagius, a holy man, as I hear, and a Christian of considerable religious development. They contain brief explanations of the letters of the Apostle Paul."<sup>507</sup> Thus, Augustine was not replying to Pelagius in the first two books, but was replying to general criticisms of his ideas on the *tradux peccati* that Pelagius happened to include in his *Commentary*. Marcellinus wrote back to Augustine because he was troubled by the conclusion that it was *possible* to be sinless with God's help, but no one (except Christ) had done so.<sup>508</sup> Paul and Eutropius requested that Augustine answer a text entitled *Definitions according to Caelestius*, brought to Africa from Sicily.<sup>509</sup> Hilary of Syracuse asked Augustine to respond to certain theological ideas present in Sicily that Orosius would later present as "Pelagian."<sup>510</sup>

Through these requests, Augustine could respond to criticisms and develop his own ideas. This allowed him to develop criticism of Pelagius' ideas, as well, identifying and elaborating *why* he believes Pelagius to be incorrect on original sin. For example, Augustine counters the criticism that the *peccatum originale* is transmitted to babies despite the baptism of their parents by pointing out that even Pelagius and other critics think that babies should be baptized.<sup>511</sup> If baptism exists to wipe away sin, what sin other than the *peccatum originale* do they think babies

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<sup>506</sup> Aug. *pecc. mer.* 2.9.11.

<sup>507</sup> Ibid. 3.1.1. *Verum post paucissimos dies legi Pelagii quaedam scripta, sancti viri, ut audio, et non parvo provectu christiani, quae in Pauli apostoli epistolas expositiones brevissimas continerent*

<sup>508</sup> Aug. *litt. et spirit.* 1.1.

<sup>509</sup> Aug. *perf. iust.* 1.1.

<sup>510</sup> Oros. *apol.* 3.4.

<sup>511</sup> Aug. *pecc. mer.* 3.3.6.

need to be cleansed of? The transmission of the *peccatum originale* demands, as a corollary, that God's grace intervene and cooperate with human free will to avoid sin. By working out ideas and producing texts, Augustine crafted an alternative to Pelagius' answer to the problem of sin that could be imported into other political streams.

In Palestine, Jerome and Pelagius began a conflict of their own. Theirs was less about doctrine and more about personal criticisms. We can sketch out the conflict between the two by using three texts: Jerome's *Commentary on Jeremiah* and the letters written to Demetrias by both Pelagius and Jerome. Scholars have traditionally seen Jerome's letter to Ctesiphon as an anti-Pelagian text written before Orosius arrived in Palestine, but Virginia Burrus has persuasively argued that the text shows signs of Orosius' influence.<sup>512</sup> Thus, it will be excluded from our consideration of Jerome's conflict with Pelagius before Orosius' arrival.

By looking closely at Jerome's *Commentary on Jeremiah*, we can ascertain that Pelagius criticized his use of Origen when composing the *Commentary on Ephesians*.<sup>513</sup> Pelagius also criticized Jerome for going too far in his condemnation of marriage during his conflict with Jovinian.<sup>514</sup> In retort, Jerome sought to define Pelagius as an Origenist. Throughout the commentary, Jerome identifies his opponents as "new heresy out of the old one" (*nova ex veteri haeresis*).<sup>515</sup> He links them explicitly to "Grunnius," a label for Rufinus.<sup>516</sup> He claims that this "new heresy from an old one" resurrects the Origenist teaching of ἀπάθεια.<sup>517</sup> Jerome recognizes many of the same features of Pelagius' teaching as Augustine does, such as a stress on free

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<sup>512</sup> Evans 1968, 7 and Wermelinger 1975, 48-56 for examples of the traditional view. Burrus 1995, 138-9 shows how Orosius' presentation of Priscillian as a Manichaean shaped Jerome's portrait of Priscillian in the letter to Ctesiphon. See also Ferreiro 1993 for an examination of how Jerome presents the figure of Priscillian in this letter.

<sup>513</sup> Hier. *in Ier.* Pref. 3.

<sup>514</sup> Hier. *in Ier.* Pref. 5. Cf. Evans 1968, 6-26 and Wermelinger 1975, 46-56.

<sup>515</sup> Hier. *in Ier.* 1.17.3; 1.46.2; 1.56; 2.5.2; 6.6.4.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid. 4.41.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid. 4.41.4.

will,<sup>518</sup> but the strategy is different. Jerome merely asserts that a stress on the power of free will is heretical and Origenist, while Augustine develops a new doctrinal teaching to explain why a focus on free will without *Augustine's* conception of grace is heretical.

In 414, Pelagius wrote a letter to Demetrias, a daughter of the Anician family who decided to dedicate herself to an ascetic lifestyle.<sup>519</sup> While the majority of the letter is dedicated to moral instruction, Pelagius opens it with a defense of human nature: God created man with a good nature, with the free will to decide good and evil.<sup>520</sup> While Pelagius was residing in Palestine at the time of its composition, the letter's recipient was living in Africa. Pelagius was responding to the criticisms of his own position as developed by Augustine, and so we should not see Pelagius' letter to Demetrias as a part of his conflict with Jerome. After all, his presentation of man's relationship to free will and his duty not to sin is similar to the one Jerome expressed in the letter to Hedibia.<sup>521</sup>

Jerome's letter to Demetrias, however, is a part of *his* conflict with Pelagius. While most of the letter is either praise or advice, he does take a swipe at unnamed theological opponents who discuss the fate of babies when they die.<sup>522</sup> Their error in discussing this question, however, is the claim that souls must pre-exist life on earth so as to explain how misfortune falls upon babies without calling God's righteousness into question. He explicitly links this heresy to the one condemned by Anastasius, by which he means the Origenists.<sup>523</sup>

A comparison between Africa and Palestine reveals two very different conflicts that vary in their focuses, strategies used by their participants, and number of people involved. In Africa,

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<sup>518</sup> Ibid. 2.83.3; 2.96; 4.3.4. 4.60.4; 5.5.3.

<sup>519</sup> See Rees 1991, 29-35 for date and discussion.

<sup>520</sup> Pelag. *Epist. ad Demetriadem* 3.

<sup>521</sup> Hier. *epist.* 120.

<sup>522</sup> Hier. *epist.* 130.16.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid.

the fact that Caelestius was refused ordination because of his teachings on sin triggered development in the policy stream. Augustine undertook a number of written works at the request of a governmental official (Marcellinus) and other bishops (Hilarius of Syracuse, Paul and Eutropius). In so doing, Augustine identifies precisely what he finds heretical in Pelagius' teaching while also developing his idea of original sin and the *tradux peccati*.

In contrast, the conflict between Jerome and Pelagius in Palestine appears to only take place on the written page. Both sides accuse the other of being, to some degree, Origenists: Pelagius criticized Jerome for using Origen in a sympathetic way in his *Commentary on Ephesians*, while Jerome continuously linked Pelagius to Origen and Rufinus. While Jerome raises up some of the same issues as Augustine, he does so in order to define Pelagius as an Origenist, an already established heretical category. Thus, we can say that while Augustine and Pelagius carried out an issue-centric debate in the theological stream, Jerome and Pelagius' conflict was more personal and did not lead to any development of ideas in the theological stream.<sup>524</sup>

This was a prime situation for Orosius to act as a political entrepreneur. In Palestine, the conflict between Jerome and Pelagius had not yet broken out into the political stream; no bishop had tried to pass judgment, nor had a council been called. What was missing from the conflict in Palestine is any sort of reasoned elaboration for why Pelagius' teachings should be dismissed as heretical that might prove persuasive to anyone not already on Jerome's side. When Orosius arrived in Palestine with Augustine's writings, he worked to combine Jerome's Origen-based attacks with Augustine's theory of original sin in order to push an alternative that stands a better chance of working in Palestine's political climate.

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<sup>524</sup> See Bonner 2018, 111-196 for the case that Jerome and Pelagius taught similar things until their conflict broke out.

## Orosius, Heros, and Lazarus

After Orosius presented his *Commonitorium* to Augustine, Augustine suggested that Orosius travel to Jerome's residence in Bethlehem in order to learn more about the origin of the soul.<sup>525</sup> Orosius took with him two letters from Augustine addressed to Jerome, along with several anti-Pelagian texts, including the works addressed to Marcellinus and the letter addressed to Hilary of Syracuse. While in Palestine, Orosius worked to inject Augustine's ideas into the Palestinian theological stream, both by bringing his texts and by operating in the political stream himself. Heros and Lazarus developed on Orosius' entrepreneurial activity in their efforts against Pelagius at the synod of Diospolis. While these political entrepreneurs were unsuccessful in the immediate conflict, since Pelagius was acquitted by the synod of Diospolis, their efforts at setting the agenda established the principles by which Pelagius was to be judged in other venues. In other words, while Orosius may have lost his battle, his tactics were important instruments with which Augustine would win the war.

Orosius's actions in the political sphere can be reconstructed by a critical reading of his *Liber Apologeticus*. This text was written as a defense against John of Jerusalem, who accused Orosius of blasphemy.<sup>526</sup> Orosius presents himself as a David fighting against a Goliath, and attacks John by associating him with Pelagius, who Orosius sets out to paint as a heretic. To set out his defense, Orosius constructs a narrative that describes how he arrived in Jerusalem and informed John that Pelagius was teaching things that had been condemned by the African bishops. A critical reading of his text allows historians to approach the political tactics he used, and to ascertain how John reacted. Essential to this reading is to pay close attention to what

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<sup>525</sup> Aug. *epist.* 166.2 and Oros. *apol.* 3.2.

<sup>526</sup> Oros. *apol.* 7.1; 9.2.

Orosius says John actually *said*, and what Orosius "believes" John meant (*volens, ut credo, intellegi*).<sup>527</sup>

Orosius addressed his *Liber Apologeticus* to "the most blessed bishops" (*beatissimi sacerdotes*). They are not identified by name, but they appear to have been opposed to Pelagius. Orosius claims that they invited him to the church in Jerusalem in order to inform them of what the African bishops had decided concerning "that heresy which Pelagius and Caelestius have sown."<sup>528</sup> Orosius informed them of how Caelestius had tried to be ordained as a presbyter before being denounced by the African bishops. Orosius went on to describe how Augustine was presently writing against Pelagius' *de Natura*, and then presented Augustine's letter to Hilary of Syracuse as one that "refuted the many arguments of the heretics."<sup>529</sup> Orosius then read out the letter.

This letter is the basis for Orosius' efforts to translate Pelagius into a problem for the Jerusalemite church. The letter addresses issues of man's ability to avoid sin, the fate of unbaptized babies, the impact Adam's original sin had on the fate of the human race, and the status of the rich. Augustine explicitly states "But clearly one who is helped by the mercy and grace of God and holds himself back from the sins that are also called grievous and does not neglect to purify himself by works of mercy and by pious prayers from those sins without which no one lives here will merit to leave here without sin, though, while he lives here, he will have some sins."<sup>530</sup> In other words, even with the help of God's grace, man cannot avoid sinning

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<sup>527</sup> For example, see *apol.* 7.1.

<sup>528</sup> Oros. *apol.* 3.3.

<sup>529</sup> Oros. *apol.* 3.4.

<sup>530</sup> Aug. *epist.* 157.1.3. *Sed plane qui misericordia Dei adiutus et gratia se ab eis peccatis abstinerit quae etiam crimina vocantur, atque illa peccata sine quibus non hic vivitur, mundare operibus misericordiae et piis orationibus non neglexerit, merebitur hinc exire sine peccato, quamvis cum hic viveret habuerit nonnulla peccata.*

while alive. Caelestius is mentioned by name in the letter as one who spreads teachings contrary to Augustine's.<sup>531</sup> Pelagius' name is not mentioned.

By reading out this letter after mentioning Augustine's actions against Pelagius, Orosius claims that Pelagius teaches the same things as Caelestius. This is Orosius translating a condition into a problem. He takes a condition: Pelagius' teaching on man's ability to avoid sinning, and makes a connection with someone who had, in his narrative, already been denounced by the African bishops. By making these allegations publicly, in front of John, Orosius simultaneously translated Pelagius' teachings from a condition into a problem and raised the problem to high agenda status. Orosius simultaneously brought the problem stream and the theological stream together, by raising a problem and offering a solution: Pelagius taught incorrect things about man's ability to avoid sin, and Augustine's elaboration of original sin explained why.

In response, John summoned Pelagius to answer Orosius' insinuations. John asked Pelagius if he taught the things that Augustine criticized, and Pelagius responded "Who is Augustine to me?" Pelagius rejected Augustine's ability to judge him out of hand. John's famous remark, "I am Augustine" is an assertion of episcopal authority over the situation.

John pointed out that Orosius' arguments against Pelagius were not, in fact, directed against Pelagius. If Orosius had any proof that Pelagius was teaching heresy, he should disclose it. Orosius' proof was an oral remark from Pelagius: "Pelagius told me that he was teaching that a person could be without sin and could easily observe God's commandments if he so wished it."<sup>532</sup> Pelagius confirmed that he taught this. Orosius then repeated that this is what Caelestius

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<sup>531</sup> Aug. *epist.* 157.3.22.

<sup>532</sup> Oros. *apol.* 4.4.

taught, and what had been condemned, and cited Jerome's letter to Ctesiphon as an example of another writer who argued against this idea.

We know from Augustine's *de gestis Pelagii* more about how John interrogated Pelagius. John claimed at the synod of Diospolis to have found Pelagius in error in his alleged remark that human beings can be without sin without the grace of God.<sup>533</sup> John offered quotes from Paul and the Psalms which stressed the role that grace played, and then asked if Pelagius accepted that man is reliant on God's aid to develop virtues. Pelagius accepted John's emendation.

To take control of the proceedings, John asked Orosius if he intended to submit a formal charge. This would activate John's role as a bishop in a court of law. This would give John the authority to decide whether or not Pelagius was a heretic, and it would raise the standard of proof that Orosius would have to present.<sup>534</sup> Orosius did not submit a charge. His strategy was to assert that, because Augustine and the African bishops had already judged Caelestius, anyone who taught what Caelestius taught was already condemned. Thus, Orosius appealed to the values of ecclesiastical unity and placed Pelagius in the "heretic" category. When John offered the emendation discussed above, that man could avoid sin *with God's help*, Orosius rejected it and claimed that Pelagius needed to be tried by the Roman bishop because this was a Latin heresy.

These moves suggest that Orosius recognized that the political stream in Palestine was not favorable to his cause. While all three streams here intersected, that only indicated that action would happen -- a trial over Pelagius' teachings. By rejecting John's jurisdiction, but

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<sup>533</sup> Aug. *gest. Pelag.* 14.37.

<sup>534</sup> Humfress 2007, 209-10.

simultaneously suggesting that the trial be moved to a different venue, Orosius sought to change the political stream to one that was more sympathetic to his aim.<sup>535</sup>

That Orosius was correct to assume that John would rule against him is proven by an event that happened 47 days later. During the Festival of Dedication, John refused to allow Orosius to approach him. His reason was "I myself heard you say that not even with God's assistance can a person be without sin."<sup>536</sup> Orosius' objections in the text imply that John heard Orosius make the remark sometime in the intervening days. However, it is far more likely that John is referring to Orosius' recital of Augustine's letter to Hilary, where Augustine makes this exact point.

It should be noted that, in the *Liber Apologeticus*, Orosius attempts to walk back his statement:

If anyone at all thinks that this should be stated in such a manner in order to prove that God, subject to the infirmity of the human being, has no power and in order to suggest that, in the matter of every creature residing in the heavens, the earth, and the infernal regions, something that is impossible for the omnipotence of God, then that kind of blasphemer, I should say, not only ought to be anathematized in my view, but also punished after the example of Nadab and Abihu by divine fire, or as in the destruction of Dathan and Abiram by the earth opening up, receiving him, and plunging him alive into hell.<sup>537</sup>

Note that he only claims that the statement "even with God's assistance can a person be without sin" is blasphemous if uttered *with the purpose* of limiting God's power. This is because he has to defend the statement -- by implying that the reasons why the statement was actually uttered were innocent -- while defending himself against charges of blasphemy by a bishop.

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<sup>535</sup> Humfress 2013.

<sup>536</sup> Oros. apol. 7.2. *ego te audiui dixisse, quia nec cum Dei adiutorio possit esse homo sine peccato*

<sup>537</sup> Ibid. 9.2. *hoc si quisquam hominum ita dicendum putet, ut sub infirmitate hominis Deum non posse confirmet et omnipotentiae Dei aliquid impossibile suspicetur in omni creatura caelestium et terrestrium et infernorum, hunc non tantum sententia mea dixerim blasphemum anathema detestandum, sed etiam uel in exempl<um> Nadab et Abiu diuino igne damnandum uel iuxta perditionem Dathan atque Abiron hiatu terrae receptum uiuum ad inferna mergendum.*

The end result of Orosius' actions is to divide the church in Jerusalem. Orosius claims that the priests Avitus and Vitalis stood by him, along with Passerius and Domnus, while John was joined by an unnamed translator.<sup>538</sup> By accusing Orosius of blasphemy for a statement found in Augustine's letter to Hilary, John consented to Orosius' determination of alternatives. In Palestine, the conflict between Pelagius and Jerome had centered around who was more of an Origenist. Now, the conflict spun on the axis of man's propensity to sin.

Orosius' actions set the groundwork for the synod of Diospolis. Orosius translated the condition of Pelagius' teachings on sin into a problem that drew the attention of the ecclesiastical authorities. Simultaneously, he injected Augustine's ideas on the same problem into the Palestinian theological stream by both introducing Augustine's texts to Palestine and by influencing Jerome, who was already a presence in the Palestinian theological stream. He also injected Caelestius into the conflict, who was not discussed until Orosius brought both news of his connection with Pelagius and of his condemnation by the African bishop. Finally, he changed the political stream by polarizing it. Jerome and John had been on relatively neutral-to-good terms for the previous decade, yet now they found themselves on the opposite side of another conflict.<sup>539</sup> The words "heretic" and "blasphemy" were used to describe concepts that had not yet risen to the level of dogma. The synod of Diospolis would not be necessary without Orosius' actions, nor would the charges Heros and Lazarus bring against Pelagius make much sense.<sup>540</sup> As we will see, the charges Heros and Lazarus brought are ultimately elaborations of Orosius' initial attempts at translation. The importance of Orosius' discussions with John is reflected by how the synod of Diospolis asked John about his interrogation of Pelagius, which

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<sup>538</sup> Oros. *apol.* 7.

<sup>539</sup> Kelly 1975, 310-311.

<sup>540</sup> As Wermelinger notes, "Ohne den Rückbezug auf das Jerusalemer Gespräch schwebt die Anklageschrift des Heros und Lazarus im luftleeren Raum." Wermelinger 1975, 76.

Orosius had made necessary.<sup>541</sup> This makes the conference of Jerusalem retroactively a focusing event; even if we do not know the exact circumstances that brought the synod of Diospolis together, it is clear that the participants saw the conference of Jerusalem as an event linked to the problem they sought to deal with.

Hamman was correct to stress the importance of introducing Caelestius and his teachings into the discourse in Jerusalem, but did not elaborate the reasons why Orosius would seek to make a connection between Pelagius and Caelestius. By introducing the issue of the transmission of sin into the conflict with Pelagius, Orosius provided the anti-Pelagian faction in Palestine an avenue to create a problem out of Pelagius and give it high-agenda status. Unlike Pelagius, Caelestius had already been condemned by a group of bishops and had been attacked by a bishop in public by name. Now that Orosius had made a connection between Pelagius and Caelestius, Heros and Lazarus could build on Orosius' initial charges in their *libellus* to the synod of Diospolis.

### Diospolis

The synod of Diospolis was convened on the 20th of December, 415.<sup>542</sup> Present at the council were 14 Palestinian bishops: Eulogius, John, Ammonianus, Porphyry, Eutonium, Porphyry, Fidus, Zoninus, Zoboennus, Nymphidius, Chromatius, Jovinus, Eleutherius, Clematius.<sup>543</sup> We can tentatively identify some of these bishops.<sup>544</sup> Eulogius is the metropolitan of Palestine, and is the bishop of Caesarea. John is the bishop of Jerusalem. Eutonium is the bishop of Sebaste, and Eleutherius is the bishop of Jericho.<sup>545</sup> One of the

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<sup>541</sup> Aug. *gest. Pelag.* 14.37-16.39

<sup>542</sup> Lucian. *epist. Rec. A.* 48.

<sup>543</sup> Aug. *c Iulian.* 1.5.19.

<sup>544</sup> For a prosopography of Diospolis, see Beatrice 2014 and Zumkeller 1964, 48.

<sup>545</sup> Lucian. *epist. Rec. A.* 44.

Porphyrys should be identified with Porphyry of Gaza. Sozomen mentions a Zebennus of Eleutheropolis, claiming that God showed him where to find the relics of Habakkuk and Micah in a dream shortly before Theodosius died.<sup>546</sup> Palladius mentions a Jovinus of Ascalon.<sup>547</sup> In addition, we know the name of one of the translators, Anianus of Celeda, who later wrote pro-Pelagian works.<sup>548</sup>

Pelagius' accusers were Heros and Lazarus, two Gallic bishops in exile. We know from Augustine's *de gestis Pelagii* that they submitted a *libellus* with objections against Pelagius, but were not actually present at the council: Augustine claims one of them got sick, so both did not attend.<sup>549</sup> Heros and Lazarus appear to have had a controversial career before the synod of Diospolis. Zosimus of Rome gives us most of the details in a series of letters he wrote to the African bishops, though he takes a polemical attitude.<sup>550</sup>

Before they became bishops, we know very little about them. Heros is called a "disciple of blessed Martin" by Prosper.<sup>551</sup> Heros was installed as the bishop of Arles in 408 by Constantine III, and was driven out by its people in 412. His successor was Patroclus, who would be an ally of Zosimus' after his ascension to the Roman bishopric. Of Lazarus, we only know that at the Council of Turin he was called a *calumniator* by Proculus of Marseilles because he

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<sup>546</sup> Soz. HE 7.29.2.

<sup>547</sup> Palladius, *H.Laus.* 55. I should note that Beatrice 2014 argues that this Jovinus used to be the bishop of Padua, and further claims that this Chromatius should be identified with Chromatius of Aquileia. I am not convinced by his arguments.

<sup>548</sup> Hier. *epist.* 143.2.

<sup>549</sup> Aug. *gest. Pelag.* 1.1.

<sup>550</sup> The relevant letters are "Magnum pondus," "posteaquam a nobis" and "Cum adversus." "Magnum pondus" and "posteaquam a nobis" are found in the *Collectio Avellana* as letters 45 and 46. "Cum adversus" is found in the *Epistolae Arelatenses genuinae*, as the 2nd letter in the 3rd book. See also Mathisen 1989, 29-30; 34-41 and PCBE: Gaul 981-984 and 1107-1109.

<sup>551</sup> Prosper, *chron.* 1247 s.a. 412

had accused Briccius, Martin's successor, of unspecified charges.<sup>552</sup> He was installed as the bishop of Aix by Constantine III, and Proculus oversaw his ordination; a sign of the changing loyalties in Gallic ecclesiastical politics. After Constantine's downfall, Lazarus was either ordered to abdicate or abdicated of his own free will.<sup>553</sup> The two ex-bishops disappear from the historical record until they appear at Diospolis in 415.

Most of the attention given to Heros and Lazarus' *libellus* concentrates on its mode of composition.<sup>554</sup> However, this aspect of scholarship sidesteps the question of *why* Heros and Lazarus presented the accusations that they did. Out of the 29 objections raised in the libellus, 19 are actually statements that belong to Caelestius. This section will analyze why the figure of Caelestius has an outsized presence in a council purportedly about Pelagius.

Appendix 3 is an adaptation of Wermelinger's reconstruction of the Acts of the Council, based off of Augustine's *de gestis Pelagii*. There are two tables, one outlining the charges ascribed to Pelagius, and one outlining the charges ascribed to Caelestius. This will be useful to show that the majority of the charges were directed towards Caelestius, and it will facilitate comparisons between charges. Identical, or near identical charges, have been color coded to blue. These have also been collected in a third table. Statements of condemnation from the presiding bishops have been coded to red, while statements of support and approbation have been coded to green.

A look at the table containing charges against Pelagius' own statements reveals that the bishops had no words of condemnation for Pelagius. The only words of condemnation that the

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<sup>552</sup> Zosimus, *Epist.* "Posteaquam a nobis" = *Coll. Avel.* 46.5.

<sup>553</sup> Zosimus, *Epist.* "Posteaquam a nobis" = *Coll. Avel.* 46.5. for a voluntary abdication. Yet see "Cum adversus": M.G.H. 3.7-9 for his orders to abdicate.

<sup>554</sup> Burnett 2003, Wermelinger 1975.

bishops had were directed towards doctrines that Pelagius claimed not to be his; doctrines which can also find a parallel with charges directed towards Caelestius (compare D 9 with D 25).

When looking at the charges against Caelestius, however, the bishops condemn a large number of them. Out of the 19 charges directed towards Caelestius, the bishops condemn 15 and uphold 4. Of those 4, 2 of them (D 20 and 24) are only accepted after they are modified or explained by Pelagius.

What this tells us is that, while the Palestinian bishops are sympathetic to Pelagius' teachings on sinlessness, they are less sympathetic to Caelestius' teachings against the *tradux peccati* and original sin. The only times that the bishops at Diospolis uphold Caelestius' doctrines is when Pelagius affirms that he also says the same, or when he modifies them in some way to make them more acceptable to the bishops. There are four charges that Pelagius and Caelestius have in common. These charges show that Heros and Lazarus designed the *libellus*, in part, to show that similarities exist between Pelagius and Caelestius. In so doing, they force Pelagius to affirm that, in three of these cases, these similarities are real. Only the similarity between D 9 and D 25, both of which present the worthy man as one who does not have sin, is rejected because Pelagius claims he did not write the text cited in D 9. The doctrine contained therein is rejected by the bishops at Diospolis.

An important departure from Orosius' efforts in Jerusalem is Heros' and Lazarus' reliance on documents. While the *libellus* does not cite the titles of where every quote is sourced from, the fact remains that every charge is reliant upon either a written work or conciliar acts that are themselves reliant upon written works. In Late Antique law courts, written evidence served to prove the authenticity of the statements or deeds under question.<sup>555</sup> By presenting written works,

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<sup>555</sup> See Posner 1972, 213-6 for a summary of how late antique bishops participated in Roman legal norms.

Pelagius would either have to confirm that he wrote said sentence and to affirm it, to confirm that he wrote it and to denounce it, or claim he did not write it. Much as how modern statistics aid politicians in translating conditions into problems, so too do specific written statements ease Heros' and Lazarus' efforts at presenting Pelagius as a problem that has to be solved.

Something important to note is that, while there is some overlap between the charges against Pelagius and the charges ascribed to Caelestius, they largely differ as to subject matter. The charges against Pelagius are rooted in his conflict with Jerome: a focus on man's ability to be sinless, with a charge of Origenism thrown in. This is why Pelagius claimed that anyone who did not believe in real fire in Hell was an Origenist; Origenism was still a hot issue in Palestine. That particular objection (D 3) accused him of being an Origenist in a location where such a charge, if it stuck, would make him a heretic. The charges against Caelestius, however, have more to do with the concept of original sin and *tradox peccati*. This is due to the fact that many of the charges were drawn from the Acts of the Council of Carthage (411). In this way, Heros and Lazarus force the Synod of Diospolis to deal with two issue dimensions in one council. The Synod upholds Pelagius' ideas on sinlessness but agrees with the council of Carthage on their articles, thus giving institutional confirmation to Augustine's ideas of original sin.

### Aftermath

In order to evaluate the importance of Orosius', Heros', and Lazarus' actions in Palestine, we must see what impact the events in Palestine had on the rest of the conflict. The most immediate consequence is that they raised the agenda status of Augustine's conflict with Pelagius and changed it from a conflict within the theological stream into the political one. The synod of Diospolis also established the precedent that Pelagius and Caelestius can be considered together

(regardless of their actual connection to one another) and the principle that council of Carthage correctly judged Caelestius' teachings on the transmission of sin as blasphemous.

As Augustine told his congregation after Orosius and a deacon, Palatinus, brought him news about what happened in Palestine, he had kept his conflict with Pelagius under wraps by keeping it in texts and by avoiding mentioning names.<sup>556</sup> Now that news of the synod of Diospolis had reached Africa, Augustine felt the need to share it with his congregation, claiming that news of violent attacks on monasteries in Jerusalem had already reached the ears of some in the audience, and an explanation was due.<sup>557</sup> Of course, it is impossible to ascertain whether or not the attacks on the monasteries were really committed by Pelagians.<sup>558</sup> Far more pressing for Augustine is the need to explain why someone he had been arguing against had been acquitted by a synod of bishops. It is in this sermon that Augustine begins to develop the argument that what Pelagius had sworn in front of the bishops was not what he really thought, and thus that Pelagius was not actually acquitted.<sup>559</sup> However, he himself acknowledges that he does not have the full acts of the synod.<sup>560</sup>

Now that the conflict with Pelagius was fully in the political stream, the African bishops used the principle that Diospolis had established: Pelagius and Caelestius are comparable. The situation at Diospolis was more nuanced, of course: the *libellus* presented objections to Pelagius that stemmed from his writings and Caelestius.' The bishops at Diospolis acquitted Pelagius, but condemned Caelestius. Now, the African bishops would present Caelestius and Pelagius as co-equal heresiarchs, teaching the same thing. In letters to Innocent, the councils of Carthage and

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<sup>556</sup> Aug. *serm.* 348A.5.

<sup>557</sup> *Ibid.* 7.

<sup>558</sup> Dunn 2006; Lössl 2004.

<sup>559</sup> Aug. *serm.* 348A 15.

<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.* 7.

Milevis asked him to condemn Pelagius and Caelestius for their denial of the efficacy of grace and their positions on the fate of unbaptized babies.<sup>561</sup> In his replies to the councils, Innocent affirmed the coupling of Caelestius and Pelagius, likely because Innocent's only information about Pelagius came from these letters.<sup>562</sup> This connection was pushed by the African bishops working only from the reports of the synod of Diospolis brought to them by Orosius and Palatinus. As such, we can draw a direct line from Orosius' conduct in Jerusalem to Innocent's mobilization against Caelestius and Pelagius.

After receiving the full proceedings from Cyril of Alexandria,<sup>563</sup> Augustine developed his strategy to use the synod of Diospolis as support for his ideas on the transmission of sin. Working from the principle that Diospolis condemned Caelestius' teachings, Augustine writes in the *de Gestis Pelagii*: "Now after this judgment, when we argue against opinions of this sort, we are certainly arguing against a condemned heresy."<sup>564</sup> When writing to Paulinus of Nola, Augustine and Aurelius stressed that adherence to the decisions of the synod of Diospolis necessitated that one believe in the transmission of sin. Pelagius condemned the teachings of Caelestius concerning Adam at the synod of Diospolis, and "for this reason, it follows that whoever accepts the authority of that episcopal court and the confession of Pelagius himself ought to hold what the Catholic Church has always held: Adam would not have died if he had not sinned. His sin harmed not him alone but also the human race. Newborn infants are not in the same state in which Adam was before the transgression... it turns out that, if they are not baptized, infants are unable to attain not only the kingdom of heaven but also eternal life."<sup>565</sup> In

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<sup>561</sup> Aug. *epist.*.175.1; 175.5-6; 176.3-5.

<sup>562</sup> For the argument that Innocent was unfamiliar with the contents of the Pelagian Controversy, see Lamberigts 2017. Innocent groups Caelestius and Pelagius in Aug. Epp. 181.6; 182.4-6

<sup>563</sup> Aug. *epist.*.4\*.

<sup>564</sup> Aug. *gest. Pelag.* 14.30.

<sup>565</sup> Aug. *epist.* 186.9.33.

a book written to Albina, Pinian, and Melania, Augustine praised the synod of Diospolis for condemning Caelestius' teachings on Adam.<sup>566</sup> Augustine then went on to argue that positions that Pelagius holds in the *de natura* lead, by implication to the positions held by Caelestius, which the synod had condemned.<sup>567</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter has sought to re-evaluate our understanding of Orosius' actions in Palestine. Scholarship traditionally assigns Orosius little significance; he is an agent of Augustine's who fails to get Pelagius convicted by the Palestinian bishops. In contrast, this chapter has sought to restore agency and significance to Orosius by concentrating on how his actions set the tone for how the rest of the controversy carried out.

Orosius changed how the conflict against Pelagius was carried out in Palestine. Before his arrival, the conflict concentrated on Origenism and Pelagius' idea that man had the potential for sinlessness. Orosius added several new issues: the transmission of sin, the fate of unbaptized babies, and Pelagius' connection to Caelestius. By doing this in public, in front of John, he successfully translated Pelagius' teachings from a condition into a problem, and necessitated that John take some sort of action.

While one cannot draw a direct line from the conference of Jerusalem to the synod of Diospolis, it is clear that the conference of Jerusalem sets the scene by which to understand Diospolis, both in its role as a retroactive focusing event and because the issues that Orosius introduced during the conference of Jerusalem set the agenda for the synod of Diospolis. Heros' and Lazarus' *libellus* should be understood as an elaboration of Orosius' efforts to accuse

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<sup>566</sup> Aug. *grat. Christ. et. orig. pecc.* 2.10.11-11.12.

<sup>567</sup> *Ibid.* 13.14-14.15.

Pelagius of heresy by providing textual proofs for his allegations. The end result was that, while Pelagius was acquitted, Caelestius and his teachings concerning Adam and original sin were condemned by the bishops of Palestine. Augustine would exploit this fact to argue that his ideas on *tradux peccati* had been implicitly endorsed by the Palestinian bishops, thus strengthening his claim to orthodoxy for his theological innovation.

Seen in this way, Orosius is not merely an agent of Augustine. He is a political entrepreneur that worked outside the bounds of his original directions from Augustine to create opportunities that would potentially lead to Pelagius' condemnation. While that immediate effort failed, Orosius was responsible for moving the controversy surrounding Pelagius from a theological disagreement to a political conflict, both in Palestine and beyond. Orosius' efforts, combined with those of Heros and Lazarus, ultimately served to strengthen Augustine's attempts to present his teachings on the *tradux peccati* as the orthodox understanding of human nature. Rather than being relegated to the footnotes of history, Orosius' actions should be understood as fundamental steps in the process of Augustine's influence in the history of orthodoxy.

# Chapter Three-- Orosius and the Relics of Stephen

## Introduction

This chapter is centered around Orosius and the relics of Stephen. Aside from being the author of the *Histories of the World against the Pagans*, Orosius is best remembered in the Middle Ages as the first one who brought the relics of Stephen to the West.<sup>568</sup> The scholarship on Stephen is vast.<sup>569</sup> However, to date, a comprehensive treatment of Stephen's relics focused around Orosius has not been written. This chapter will fill in this gap by examining the three episodes Orosius was involved with: reception of the relics from Avitus of Braga, bringing them to North Africa, and bringing them to Minorca. By examining these three case studies, we will be in a position to evaluate the range of possibilities Galician bishops had at their disposal if Orosius successfully arrived with the relics.<sup>570</sup>

## Chronology of Stephen's Relics

First, we must establish the chronology. Orosius received the relics of Stephen from Avitus of Braga in early 416, shortly after their *inventio*.<sup>571</sup> Whenever Orosius left Jerusalem, he must have arrived in North Africa before June of 416 because the material he brought from Jerusalem about Pelagius was the catalyst for the Council of Carthage of 416.<sup>572</sup> It is certain that Orosius had the relics with him on this trip, but we have no explicit evidence about what he did with them. The *de miraculis Sancti Stephani* mentions a *presbyter* coming from Jerusalem

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<sup>568</sup> Gennad. 40.

<sup>569</sup> But for a comprehensive look at the evidence for Stephen, see Bovon 2003, Saxer 2006, and Labadie 2021.

<sup>570</sup> It is possible that he did, but we simply lack the evidence. Those who speculate that Orosius died in a winter storm, such as Martínez Caverro and Beltrán Corbalán 2006, are completely without evidence; but we also must face the fact that no positive evidence of the relics of Stephen's presence in Spain survives until the 7th century, and then we only see evidence outside of the Galicia region. See García Rodríguez 1966, 164-5.

<sup>571</sup> Avit. Brac. *ad Palc.* 5.

<sup>572</sup> Aug. *epist.* 175.1.

carrying the relics as the ultimate source for their presence in Uzalis, but we lack any knowledge of how that transfer happened, through how many intermediaries, or any other information. After the Council of Carthage, Orosius left for Spain, but was prevented from reaching it because of storms. He spent an unspecified amount of time in Minorca, where he deposited the relics in a church outside of Magona, and then returned to Africa.<sup>573</sup> It is in this second trip to Africa that Orosius wrote the *Historiae*.<sup>574</sup>

While this is the most likely chronology, it is not the timeline for the composition of the textual evidence surrounding these episodes. The receipt of the relics closely aligns with the composition of the *Revelatio Sancti Stephani* and the *Epistula ad Balchonium*. However, while Orosius brought the relics of Stephen to Africa in 416, the earliest evidence for the relics (the *de miraculis Sancti Stephani*) explicitly mentions the *Epistula Severi*.<sup>575</sup> In other words, Severus of Minorca wrote his account of the relics' arrival on the island before any texts concerning Stephen were produced in Africa, despite the fact that Orosius brought them to Africa before he brought them to Minorca. While the first book of the *de Miraculis* was likely written around 418, we can only say that the second book was written after the first, with no further precision.<sup>576</sup> The evidence from Augustine all comes from the middle of the 420s, centering around 425/426.

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<sup>573</sup> Sev. Minor. 4. Bradbury 1996, 24-25 correctly posits that Orosius' deposit of the relics would have occurred in 416, instead of 418 like the letter claims. This fits better with what we know of Orosius' travel goals, if we assume that Orosius left for Spain shortly after the Council of Carthage of 416. For more on Orosius' travels, see Gauge 1998. This means that whatever actions the Christians took on the island, it was not because of the immediate inspiration of the martyr's relics, but rather it was something that had to be built up over a period of a year and a half.

<sup>574</sup> This is, to my mind, the most likely reconstruction of events. There are other hypotheses, all explored in Gauge 1998.

<sup>575</sup> Sev. Minor. I.2.

<sup>576</sup> See Meyers 2006, 23-24 for discussion, and Saxer 1980, 249-251 for a discussion of the chronology of the miracles. 418 is the *terminus post quem* because the text demonstrates knowledge of the letter of Severus of Minorca, which is internally dated to 418. By 424, Augustine is familiar with the practice of writing down miracles in Uzalis as mentioned in the *City of God* 22.8. However, while this is the bounds of the composition of the text, the only thing we can say about the relics is that they arrived before the composition of the text; logic dictates that they arrived in 416 or after, when Orosius brought them to Africa.

## Orosius as a Relic Carrier

I have presented Orosius as the individual responsible for bringing the relics to Africa and Minorca, but we must note that he is not explicitly named as such in the sources. The evidence for Minorca is relatively straightforward. Severus mentions a "certain presbyter" that traveled from Jerusalem, stopped in Africa, and was attempting to return to Spain.<sup>577</sup> The fact that we know Orosius has the relics and the fact that his itinerary matches Severus' description makes it quite probable that Orosius is the one who brought the relics of Stephen to Minorca.

In North Africa, the evidence is more opaque, and so demands more sustained discussion. To this day, it is a disputed question whether or not it was Orosius who brought the relics of Stephen to North Africa. We know that Orosius left Palestine with the relics in the first half of 416, and that he came to Africa before the Council of Carthage in 416. However, the precise way the relics arrived in Uzalis, where they are first attested in our sources, is difficult to determine. Our only evidence is the first chapter of the anonymous *de miraculis Sancti Stephani*. In the first chapter, the author of this text presents the relics as having been sent to certain holy persons at Uzalis.<sup>578</sup> A *sacra famula Dei* began to have doubts that these were really the relics of Stephen. In a dream, a presbyter proved the authenticity of the relics by putting an *ampulla* into the mouth of the woman's brother, a *monachus*. When the monk held the *ampulla* in his mouth, fire came out of his eyes and ears.<sup>579</sup> The text interprets the dream for the reader.

The fire through the *ampulla* then seized the ears and eyes, which foreshadowed nothing other than the announcement of the holy relics, coming to the mouths of the monks and kindled with fire the one body of the Church through the hearing and sight of the clarity of God, so that all can rightly say: "What we have heard, we have also seen." And even the apparition of the priest who applied the *ampulla* to the monk's mouth which gave birth to the flames was not without significance. It was in fact the priest recently returned

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<sup>577</sup> Sev. Minor. 4.

<sup>578</sup> *Mirac. Steph.* l.1, l. 7-9.

<sup>579</sup> *Ibid.* l. 10-17.

from the East who, by placing in the mouths of the servants of God the discourse on the holy relics that he had seen there, in a way brought the *ampulla* to their lips and set them ablaze with a sacred fire.<sup>580</sup>

This paragraph contains two features of note. The first is that it suggests that the relics of Stephen as something that can bring about unity within the church. This takes on an additional meaning within the context of North Africa where only a few years before, Donatist and Catholic churches began the process of reunification. The second is that the responsibility for delivering the relics to Uzalis (or North Africa as a whole?) is assigned to a presbyter *nuper rediens ex Oriente*. No other details about how the relics got to North Africa are given, so the question is: can we identify this traveling *presbyter* with Orosius?

As early as Tillemont, we can find skeptical voices. Tillemont's reasoning is twofold.<sup>581</sup> For one, he considers it unlikely that Orosius should deliver the relics to anyone but Augustine, given the relationship between the two men. Since Uzalis had the relics long before Hippo, *ipso facto* Orosius could not have given the relics to Uzalis. However, this logic assumes that Augustine would have desired the relics of Stephen for Hippo, yet scholars have long noted that Augustine's attitude towards relics, miracles, and martyr cult shifts from skepticism to an active embrace only after Stephen arrived at Uzalis.<sup>582</sup> As to precisely how the relics arrived at Uzalis, we only know that the relics were sent to certain individuals there. Tillemont reads the passage as claiming that the monks received them directly from the East while he admits that Orosius might be the *presbyter* mentioned in the dream who enflamed the desire in the hearts of the

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<sup>580</sup> *ibid.* l. .22-29. *Quod deinde ignis per ampullam aures atque oculos comprehendit, quid alius tunc praesignavit nisi quod praedicatio sanctarum reliquiarum perveniens ad os monachorum, unum corpus Ecclesiae per auditum atque visum claritatis Dei igne succendit, ut omnes merito dicerent: Sicut audivimus, ita et vidimus. Nec quod ille presbyter apparuit qui ad os monachi ampullam applicuit quae ignem emisit, inane fuit. Is enim erat qui, nuper ex Oriente rediens et de sanctis reliquiis quas illic viderat in ore servorum Dei verbum ponens, quasi ampullam admovit et sancto igne succendit.*

<sup>581</sup> Le Nain de Tillemont 1709, II, pg. 467.

<sup>582</sup> See, for instance, van Bavel 1995 with references.

monks "to find a means of possessing them from the East."<sup>583</sup> However, since we know that Orosius carried the relics from Palestine and it is highly likely that he deposited a portion of them in Minorca, there is no reason to discount the possibility that these monks received them from Orosius rather than directly from the East. As such, while exact knowledge is impossible, the most likely candidate for the *presbyter nuper rediens ex Oriente* is Orosius, for reasons of chronology, clerical status, comparison with behavior elsewhere, and the fact that Orosius is the only person we know of who possesses the relics in the West at this time.<sup>584</sup>

## Chapter Methodology

In this chapter, my method consists in examining the texts related to the relics of Stephen. This is because, as Patrick Geary once wrote, "The relics themselves, physical remains of saints, are essentially passive and neutral, and hence not of primary importance to historians. It is the individuals who came into contact with these objects, giving them value and assimilating them into their history, who are the proper subject of historical inquiry."<sup>585</sup> For a historian of late antiquity, our ability to analyze how individuals gave relics value is rooted in textual analysis. For Avitus of Braga and Severus of Minorca, this will mean reading their texts for the themes and messages they contained, as well as identifying how the relics themselves play a role in constructing those themes. For North Africa, we do have more historical context for how the

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<sup>583</sup>Le Nain de Tillemont 1709, II, pg. 467. "Mais Orose pourroit bien estre ce Pretre, qui ayant raporté ce qu'il avoit vu de ces saintes reliques en Palestine, dont il estoit revenu depuis peu, enflamma tellement le cœur de ces saints moines, qu'ils trouvant moyen d'en avoir de l'Orient."

<sup>584</sup> Thus, it is not uncommon for some modern scholars to assert that Orosius brought the relics to North Africa as a simple fact. For example, Saxer 1980, 246: "Il en laissa une partie à Sévère, évêque de Minorque, d'où il n'avait pu passer en Espagne en raison de l'invasion barbare qui déferlait sur la péninsule. Il en donna une autre à Évode, évêque d'Uzali en Afrique Proconsulaire, où il était revenu." Labadie 2021, 357: "Le *De miraculis*, un recueil anonyme africain narrant dix-neuf miracles qui eurent lieu dans des sanctuaires dédiés à Étienne, signale simplement que les reliques arrivées à Uzalis ont été remises par un certain prêtre récemment revenu d'Orient (*presbyter... nuper ex Oriente rediens*); nous devons y reconnaître, naturellement, Orose."

<sup>585</sup> Geary 1978, 1.

relics could have been used, and thus I will place the texts surrounding Stephen in the context of the Donatist controversy.

Our authors construct different and distinct meanings out of the relics of Stephen. What form those meanings took differs depending on the situation. In the texts produced by Avitus of Braga and Lucianus, the theme is peace within a particular church. Avitus explicitly sends the relics to Braga to deal with their worldly ills, including but not limited to the trials and tribulations of barbarian occupation. Lucianus presents the discovery of the relics as a blessing for the entire church of Jerusalem. In North Africa, the values and themes associated with the figure of Stephen lend themselves well to dealing with Donatist concerns vis-à-vis reconciliation with the Catholics. Hence, the relics of Stephen play a role in the ongoing efforts to heal the divide between two schismatic groups. Conversely, Severus of Minorca uses the relics of Stephen in his *Epistula Severi* to justify coercion to produce unity under the Church on the island.

These differing themes and values demonstrate the range of possibilities that the relics of Stephen can be employed for. This chapter will conclude comments about how and why the relics of Stephen could be deployed in a Galician context. Most historians take Avitus of Braga's lead and treat the relics of Stephen as an answer to barbarian occupation. In my analysis, the possibility of using the relics of Stephen to heal ecclesiological divides is the focus, without excluding the possibility of people praying Stephen to handle more mundane problems.

#### Avitus of Braga and the *Revelatio Sancti Stephani*

The earliest evidence we possess for the *inventio* of Stephen's relics is the letter of Avitus of Braga written to bishop Balchonius of Braga, as well as the *Revelatio Sancti Stephani*. Before

we can discuss the content of Avitus' letter to Balchonius, we must first untangle the complex web of manuscript relationships and identify which surviving texts are most relevant.

Éric Vanderlinden published the first, and to date only, critical edition of the Latin recensions of the *Revelatio Sancti Stephani*.<sup>586</sup> Before Vanderlinden, Migne had printed two texts: Version A and Version B.<sup>587</sup> When collating the manuscripts, Vanderlinden found four separate versions of the text, which he has named A', A", B, and C. Version A" is a text shorter than Version B, and they differ in content. Version A' is a text that sometimes agrees with Version A" and sometimes agrees with Version B. Version C is a late version with clear reliance upon versions A" and B, and so is discounted. Out of these four families, Vanderlinden constructs two independent Latin texts: Version A and Version B.<sup>588</sup>

Oftentimes transmitted with the *Revelatio* is Avitus' letter to Balchonius. The text of the letter is found appended to eight manuscripts that belong to the A' family, four that belong to the B family, and in one eighteenth century copy. However, there is only one version of the letter. The letter states that Avitus heard the account from a presbyter (named Lucianus) in Greek, which Avitus then translated into Latin, so the question becomes: which version of the text is the letter referring to? Vanderlinden assigns version A to Avitus' letter for stylistic reasons<sup>589</sup> and because version A names Avitus as the one who prompts Lucianus to write the account.<sup>590</sup>

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<sup>586</sup> Vanderlinden 1946. See pages 180-188 for a discussion of the manuscripts. To this list of manuscripts, Gibson 1998 has found a new witness to Vanderlinden's A text, though it does not change the core text in a meaningful way.

<sup>587</sup> Version A: PL XLI Col. 807-815. Version B: PL XLI Col. 808-817.

<sup>588</sup> The text edited as Version A is the Version A" that Vanderlinden has identified.

<sup>589</sup> The example he gives is a comparison of the letter's *pro salute mundi periclitantis se manifestare* (chapter 10) with the *Revelatio's perclitatur enim saeculum* (A. 8.). Vanderlinden also cites arguments by Tillemont, who points out that the version which Latin authors refer to (such as Augustine, Hydatius, and Marcellinus) appears to be version A because version A is addressed to everyone, instead of one bishop. Le Nain de Tillemont 1709 II, p 463-467.

<sup>590</sup> Lucian *epist. Rec.*A.1.2. To these arguments, Labadie 2021, 147 adds the claim that Lucianus "s'adresse deux fois, directement à Palchonius de Braga." His evidence for this is A.I.1 and A.IX.49. Those sentences are as follows. A.I.1: *Lucianus misericordia indigens et omnium minimus, presbyter ecclesiae Dei quae est in villa Caphargamala in*

The next question is: what is the other Latin version? Version B has been posited as a type of "official" translation of Lucianus' original text, sponsored by John of Jerusalem to make himself look good.<sup>591</sup> Nothing in the text explicitly supports this assertion, and the supposition is tenuous. Whatever the reason for its existence, it does appear to be composed for an Eastern audience: the text itself is formatted as a letter to the bishop Hymenius.<sup>592</sup> The surviving Greek version, as well as the Syriac and Armenian versions, adhere closely to B, although it is impossible to ascertain if the Greek text is the Greek original or if it is a Greek translation of the Latin B.<sup>593</sup>

The precise nature of B and its closer relationship to the surviving versions allow us to note one particular point: Avitus' version cannot be a straight translation from Lucianus' mouth, despite claims to the contrary. Rather, Avitus' version is based on Lucianus' account but adapted for a Latin speaking audience, as evidenced by a number of editorial comments.<sup>594</sup> That being said, this is the version that Orosius takes to the West, and it becomes the foundation for Western understanding of the *inventio* of Stephen's relics. This is why version A is the version we will examine most closely, regardless of whether or not it is the closest to the "original" text.

#### The Letter to Balchonius

Avitus is, besides Orosius, the only writer from Braga whose work survives from this time period. Consequently, this letter has been used as a source for historical data for Spain and

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*territorio Hierosolymorum, sanctae ecclesiae omnibus sanctis qui sunt in Christo Iesu in universo mundo, in Domino salutem.* This first sentence only establishes that Lucianus is the author and is addressing other churches. Labadie asserts that Vanderlinden is mistaken in omitting the 49th chapter, present in Migne's Version A.9, and so adds it: *ex his ergo reliquiis transmissi Beatitudini vestrae.* However, I do not see how this is a reference to Balchonius, since the first sentence greets all churches, and the second sentence uses the 2nd person plural pronoun (*vestrae*) which could be a reference to the fact that this text was addressed to multiple bishops.

<sup>591</sup> Peeters 1908, 367.

<sup>592</sup> Lucian *epist. Rec.B.I.1.* Le Nain de Tillemont 1701, II, 466 suggests that this is a version of the text Lucianus wrote for Eastern consumption, while version A is one meant for "worldwide" consumption.

<sup>593</sup> Labadie 2021 147-8. Martin 1957 is an excellent comparison of the A, B, and Greek versions.

<sup>594</sup> See for example Avitus' translation of *amaxicon* as "We are able to call this *carri tractorem*," A.V.30.

the Bragan church. However, a rhetorical analysis reveals that we should not use the letter as a straightforward source. After his initial greeting, Avitus writes:

I desire and pray that you be mindful of me; insofar as I can, I do not cease to have memory of you in the holy places, suffering your own tribulations with my own pain, and shedding unceasing tears amidst the holy places because of the discord of your *patria*, crying so that either the Lord might restore your liberty to you, whom he wished to admonish, or that he may grant gentleness to those whom he allowed to prevail. And certainly, most blessed brothers (I speak with our Lord Jesus Christ as witness), I frequently wanted to come to you, so that I might either tolerate the bad things with you or enjoy the good things; but my desire is impeded by the enemy now diffused through the entirety of Spain. For I am afraid that, both leaving the holy places and not coming, perhaps, to you, being irrational [for leaving] and being intercepted somewhere, I would suffer for my audacity.<sup>595</sup>

This excerpt implies that Avitus had been away from Braga for quite some time.

Evidence from Jerome corroborates this.<sup>596</sup> The *patria* is described as existing in a state of *discidium*, a word that generally indicates a sharp division or separation. It is most often used to indicate a separation of friends, or spouses, or the disruption of unity. It's also used to describe civil war, as well as a religious schism or disagreement.<sup>597</sup> The next clause clarifies what this *discidium* is -- the Bragans no longer possess *libertas*; the Vandals have invaded. The word *discidium* must mean a general upending of the political order, rather than a schism or separation between two previously unified parts. To fully understand why Avitus describes Braga in this way, we need to understand the military situation present in Spain.

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<sup>595</sup> Avit. Brac. *ad Palc.*2-4. *Memores esse mei vos cupio et deprecor; sicut et ego, in quantum valeo, in sanctis memoriam vestri habere no cesso, tribulationibus vestris meo dolore compatiens, et pro discidio patriae vestrae in locis sanctis incessabiles lacrimas fundens, ut aut vobis Dominus restituat libertatem quos admonere voluit, aut illis tribuat mansuetudinem quos praevalere permisit. Et ego quidem, beatissimi fratres (teste Domino Nostro Iesu Christo loquor), frequenter volui venire ad vos, ut vobiscum vel mala tolerarem vel bonis furer, sed impeditum est desiderium meum, per totas iam Hispanias hoste diffuso. Veritus enim sum ne et sancta local relinquens et ad vos forte non perveniens, ubicumque interceptus irrationabilis audaciae poenas luerem.* I am relying on the translation provided by Martin Szada at <http://presbytersproject.ihuw.pl/index.php?id=6&SourceID=1341>

<sup>596</sup> Altaner and Cloeren 1968.

<sup>597</sup> Lewis and Short s.v. "discidium"

## Invasion of Spain

In 409, four warbands crossed the Pyrenees and invaded Spain, defeating the troops left by Gerontius: the Alans, the Suevi, the Asding Vandals, and the Siling Vandals.<sup>598</sup> After two years of raiding and pillaging, the four groups settled down and divided Spain among themselves: the Alans were given the provinces of Lusitania and Carthaginiensis, the Siling Vandals were given the province of Betica, and both the Suevi and the Asding Vandals were given Galicia.<sup>599</sup> Precisely how Galicia was divided is unknown, but events later in the decade suggest that the Asding Vandals had control over Braga.<sup>600</sup>

Both Orosius and Hydatius stress that the barbarian groups came to a living arrangement with the locals. Hydatius writes "the Lord in his compassion turned the barbarians to the establishment of peace. ... The Spaniards in the cities and forts who had survived the disasters surrendered themselves to servitude under the barbarians, who held sway throughout the provinces."<sup>601</sup> We should not imagine that the barbarians actually enslaved those they conquered; rather, Hydatius probably refers to the conquered living under a new regime.<sup>602</sup> Orosius writes that, after a period of pillaging, "immediately after these events, the barbarians foreswore their swords and turned them to the plough, and cherished the remaining Romans as

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<sup>598</sup> Hyd. *Chron.* II p. 17, 42. The fact that the Vandals are two different groups comes from Hyd. *Chron.* II p. 18, 49.

<sup>599</sup> Hyd. *Chron.* II p. 18, 49.

<sup>600</sup> Hyd. *Chron.* II p. 20, 74 has the Vandals escaping from Braga after they were attacked by the Romans in 420. Thompson 1981, 155 misreads this passage to claim that the Suevi possessed Braga while the Vandals had everything to the west of the city; a look at a map suggests this to be an untenable position, since there are only 20 miles from Braga to the coast. This arrangement would give the Vandals practically no territory. Hydatius writes that the Vandals had besieged the Suevi in the Erbasian mountains (pp. 20, 71) which could point towards one of the mountain ranges in the north of the province; this would suggest that the Vandals had control over the south of the province, while the Suevi resided in the north. This is far from definitive, as we cannot firmly identify the Erbasian mountains, and Hydatius' narrative is very compressed.

<sup>601</sup> Hyd. *Chron.* II p. 18, 49. *barbari ad pacem ineundam domino miserante conversi ... Spani per civitates et castella residui a plagis barbarorum per provincias dominantium se subiciunt servituti.*

<sup>602</sup> Compare, for example, Tacitus' *Agricola* 21 and *passim*. The fact that the Britons were conquered by Romans and were governed by them, instead of being ruled by themselves. This act of colonization was dubbed *servitus*. We can also see "captivity" used to indicate rule by barbarians in Salvian of Marseilles, as Kulikowski 2004, 367n80 points out: *De Gub* 5.22: *malunt enim sub specie captivitatis vivere liberi quam sub specie libertatis esse captivi.*

allies of a kind and friends, with the result that some Romans who prefer freedom in poverty to trouble and taxation under Rome can be found among them."<sup>603</sup> Thus, it appears that the warbands had settled down and asserted peaceful, if exploitative, control over the population. How much this differed from Roman governance itself is unknown; but if the warbands relied on the institutions already in place, it is unlikely to have been remarkably different.

While this was the status quo for the provinces under barbarian control, there was further warfare in Tarraconensis. In 415, the Roman armies fighting the Goths forced Athaulf, the Gothic king, to flee Narbonne and reside in Barcelona.<sup>604</sup> While in Barcelona, Athaulf was murdered by one of his compatriots and was succeeded by Sergeric. Vallia killed him, in turn, and became King of the Goths.<sup>605</sup> Vallia made peace with the Romans in 416, and turned his military towards the other barbarians in Spain.

It is key to pay special attention to what events our sources actually describe and how that differs from what rhetoric they use. Hydatius and Orosius both present the ensuing conflicts as taking part against "the barbarians in Spain."<sup>606</sup> Orosius imagines that all of the barbarian warbands offered to fight the other groups in exchange for Roman recognition.<sup>607</sup> Orosius seems a bit defensive, however. "Who would believe this, if it were not confirmed by the facts? At the present, every day we learn from frequent, reliable reports that in the Spanish provinces these people wage war and slaughter each other, and that Vallia, the king of the Goths, in particular

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<sup>603</sup> Oros. *hist.* 7.41.7. *quamquam et post hoc quoque continuo barbari exsecrati gladios suos ad aratra conversi sunt residuosque Romanos ut socios modo et amicos fovent, ut inveniantur iam inter eos quidam Romani, qui malint inter barbaros pauperem libertatem, quam inter Romanos tributariam sollicitudinem sustinere.*

<sup>604</sup> Hyd. *Chron.* II p. 19, 60

<sup>605</sup> Ibid. See also Orosius, *hist.* 7.43.7-8.

<sup>606</sup> Hyd. *Chron.* II p. 19, 63. *Vallia rex Gothorum Romani nominis causa intra Hispanias caedes magnas efficit barbarorum.*

<sup>607</sup> Orosius, *hist.* 7.43.14.

wishes to make peace."<sup>608</sup> The facts that are explicit in the sources only allow us to say that the Goths waged war on the Alans and the Siling Vandals. In 417 or 418, the Goths defeated the Alans and Vandals in battle. Hydatius writes that the Siling Vandals were wiped out. The Alans were beaten so badly that their king, Addax, led the survivors to Galicia to find protection under Gunderic, the king of the Asding Vandals.<sup>609</sup> The Goths meant to pursue them, but were broken off by the Romans and settled in Aquitaine and Toulouse.<sup>610</sup>

Warfare did not come to Galicia until 419, when the Vandals and Suevi went to war with each other. The Suevi were blockaded by the Vandals, but the Romans intervened in 420 under the command of Asterius and saved the Suevi.<sup>611</sup> The Vandals left Braga and fled to Betica, whence they would later cross into Africa in the ensuing decade. The Suevi stayed in Galicia, having established peace between themselves and the Romans.<sup>612</sup>

To summarize, from the years 409-411, barbarians rampaged across the Spanish countryside. From 411-416, the warbands settled down and there was a period of peace. In 416, Vallia entered into an alliance with the Romans, and in 417-418 he waged war against the barbarians in Betica, Carthaginiensis, and Lusitania before the Goths were pulled off and settled in southern Gaul. Galicia was unimpacted by these events until 418, when a stream of refugees appealed to the Vandals for protection. War broke out between the Vandals and Suevi in 419, and Roman intervention brought peace to the region in 420, which was not broken again until 430.

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<sup>608</sup> Orosius, *hist.* 7.43.15. *Quis haec crederet, nisi res doceret? Itaque nunc cottidie apud Hispanias geri bella gentium et agi strges ex alterutro barbarorum credbris certisque nuntiis discimus: praecipue Valliam Gothroum regem insistere patrandae paci ferunt.*

<sup>609</sup> Hyd. *Chron.* II p. 19, 67-8.

<sup>610</sup> Hyd. *Chron.* II p. 19, 69.

<sup>611</sup> Hyd. *Chron.* II p. 20, 71 and 74. For the career of Asterius, see Kulikowski 2000.

<sup>612</sup> Hydatius alludes to the Suevi "breaking the peace" when they pillaged the Galician countryside in 430, but they restored it after they were beaten back by Roman soldiers. Hyd. *Chron.* II p. 121, 91.

Back to Avitus' Letter to Balchonius

Avitus' comments must, of course, be put in the context of the years 411-416, when the warbands had settled and established arrangements over the Spaniards. That the arrangement was not a completely awful one is reflected in the ambiguity of Avitus' hopes: either the Bragans regain their liberty, or those that rule over them are kind. In addition to these comments, we should note that the opening of this letter contains elements of what Stowers names the "friendship" letter and the "family" letter. Asking that the recipient be mindful of him is customary in a friendship letter, as does the excuse of why the sender cannot physically be with the recipient.<sup>613</sup> Similarly, shedding a tear for their misfortunes is a common trope of letters written to family members, even if this is only written to a metaphorical family (the church) rather than a blood family.<sup>614</sup> Thus, Avitus' description of Spains *discidium*, while based on current events, should be read as an instance of a rhetorical trope meant to signal to the Bragan church that Avitus considers himself to still belong to them through some sort of family and friendship ties, rather than a straight description of Spain's political rupture.

The next section reads:

But because God is tender-hearted, he deemed my prayer and your merit worthy to procure the grace of his indulgence, first with the result that his most loved son and my co-presbyter Orosius was sent all the way to these parts by the African bishops; his charity and consolation has returned the presence of all of you to me; then in those days in which he was preparing to return to you because of his unbelievable longing, the first martyr Stephen (truly the crown of our glory in Christ Jesus) deemed it worthy to reveal himself and to make it manifest most evidently with signs and the fitting virtues. On the occasion of God ordering the knowledge of these matters, I thought it good to dispatch to your charity Stephen, so that he himself, being present as your advocate and patron, may condescend to assist the petitions of those paying homage to him

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<sup>613</sup> Stowers 1986, 58-70.

<sup>614</sup> Cf. Cic. *fam.*14.2 and Stowers 1986, 71-76.

who, when he was suffering, also thought it fitting to pray for his enemies.<sup>615</sup>

This section establishes the relationship between Avitus and Orosius. By virtue of "returning the presence" of the Braga church to Avitus, we can establish that Orosius is also from Braga. It also helps to establish the chronology for Orosius' departure from Palestine; the *Revelatio* makes it clear that the relics of Stephen were found during the Synod of Diospolis, which then must be the same time that Orosius was preparing (*parabat*) to leave. Clearly, Orosius delayed his plans and left after Avitus received the relics of Stephen and entrusted them to him.

The language of praying to martyrs as patrons of the community has a parallel in Prudentius' *Peristephanon*.<sup>616</sup> Prudentius' poems are, with a few exceptions, the main body of evidence we possess for the cult of martyrs in Spain. Taking them into account with a few remarks from Paulinus of Nola and Sulpicius Severus, we notice that most of the martyrs in Spain are venerated in the regions outside of Galicia.<sup>617</sup> The only evidence for the cult of the martyrs we possess for Galicia are comments from Sulpicius Severus and Hydatius, who write that Priscillian was the object of veneration after his remains were brought back.<sup>618</sup> Of course, it could be a problem of a lack of sources, but no evidence survives for "orthodox" martyr

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<sup>615</sup> Avit. Brac. ad Palc.5-6. *Sed quoniam misericors Deus, meo voto vestroque merito procurare dignatus est indulgentiae suae gratiam, primum ut dilectissimus filius et compresbyter meus Orosius usque ad has partes ab Africanis episcopis mitteretur, cuius mihi caritas et consolatio vestram omnium praesentiam reddidit; deinde ut in diebus ipsis quibus iam ipse reditum ad vos incredibili desiderio parabat beatus et sanctus, vere corona gloriae nostrae in Christo Iesu, primus martyr Stephanus se revelare et manifestare signis et virtutibus evidentissime consequentibus dignaretur. Quem ego, tantarum rerum ordinantis Dei occasione percepta, signius duxi Caritati vestrae praemittere, ut ipse praesens advocatus et patronus obsequentium sibi petitionibus dignetur assistere qui, cum pateretur, etiam pro inimicis orare dignatus est.*

<sup>616</sup> Prud. perist.10-11: *fama nam terras in omnes percucurrit proditrix hic patronos esse mundi, quos precantes ambient.;* II.579 *sed per patronos martyras;* VI.144-6: *exultare tribus libet patronis, quorum praesidio fovemur omnes terrarum populi Pyrenaeum;* X.835 *memento matris, iam patrone ex filio;* XII.104-6 (about Cyprian) *praesidet Hesperiae, Christum serit ultimis Hiberis, denique doctor humi est, idem quoque martyr in supernis, instruic hic homines, illinc pia dona dat patronus.*

<sup>617</sup> Prud. *cath.*31; See also Castillo Moldanado 2005.

<sup>618</sup> Sulp. Sev. *chron* II.51; Hyd. *Chron.* II p. 15, 16; *Exemplar* 108-11.

veneration in Galicia. Hence, so far as we can tell, Avitus is filling a need by providing them with the relics of Stephen.

The final section of the letter reads:

And so, most blessed and most loved brothers, possessing memory of you incessantly and seeing that the arrangement of God's order is fitting, I was ready to receive some part of the body which was found by the presbyter to whom it was revealed; the part which having been sought after and taken in secret I did not delay in sending to you. For this reason I sent to you, through my holy son and co-presbyter Orosius, relics from the body of blessed Stephen the first martyr, that is dust of his flesh and sinews and, what must be more faithfully and certainly believed, bones that are solid and manifestly more rich with the new colors and odors due to his sanctity. But so that there might be no doubt, I have sent to along to you this very letter, attached to the end of my writings, and a composition of the holy presbyter to whom these relics were revealed, a letter which, since I had asked and sought to know the truth more fully (for the sake of faith), he dictated first in Greek, and then the letter was turned into Latin by me. I implore you to hold these things as faithfully as the things are as truthful, holy and blessed brothers. For I am certain that, just as the blessed martyr himself deemed it worthy to announce and manifest his presence for the health of the world, if you love such an offering with worthy zeal, then you will live safe and quiet with the aid provided by the presence of such a patron.<sup>619</sup>

This section deals with the authenticity of the relics. Avitus establishes that he obtained the relics for the sake of the church at Braga, an instance of the "I am working for your interests" trope in the friendship letter.<sup>620</sup> Avitus stresses that the relics are substantial (in particular the

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<sup>619</sup> Avit. Brac. ad Palc. 7-10. *Itaque, Beatissimi dilectissimique Fratres, memoriam vestri incessabiliter habens et tam congruentem ordinantis Dei dispositionem videns, promptus fui de presbytero cui revelatum fuerat partem aliquam inventi corporis promereri; quam festinato expetitam secretoque perceptam ad vos dirigere non distuli. Quamobrem misi vobis per sanctum filium et compresbyterum meum Orosium reliquas de corpore beati Stephani primi martyris, hoc est pulverem carnis atque nervorum et, quod fidelius certiusque credendum est, ossa solida atque manifesta sui sanctitate novis pigmentis vel odoribus pinguiora. Ut autem nulla possit esse dubitatio, ipsam ad vos, subditam scriptis meis, sancti presbyteri cui haec revelata sunt epistolam conscriptionemque transmisi, quam, me pro fide veritatis plenius cognoscendae rogante et expetente, dictavit graeco primum ipse sermone, sed per me postea in latinum versa est. Quae et vos, sancti et beati Fratres, quam veraciter gesta sunt, tam fideliter suscepta habeatis imploro. Certus sum enim quia sicut ipse beatus martyr dignatus est nuntiare et pro salute munit perclitantis se manifestare, auxilio ex praesentia tanti patroni, si vos tale pignus digno studio diligitis, tuti ex hoc quietique vivetis.*

<sup>620</sup> Stowers 1986, 58-59.

*ossa solida*) and their authenticity is evident in their very appearance (*manifesta sui sanctitate novis pigmentis vel odoribus pinguiora*). He also asserts his personal involvement in hearing the story, writing it down, and translating it. Thus, faith in the relics' authenticity should be based on three pillars: the look and smell of the relics themselves, the testimony of Lucianus, and Avitus' own role and connection with both the Bragan church and Lucianus. The letter ends with a promise: if the Bragans believe his testimony and venerate Stephen as he deserves, he will solve their earthly problems.

Thus, Avitus' letter is written to the Bragans for two purposes: to confirm his connection with the church there, and to vouch for the authenticity of the relics. He offers the relics as solutions to the Bragans' misfortunes, which include (but are not explicitly limited to) suffering under barbarian occupation. The relics are authenticated by his own personal relationship with the Bragans, his friendship with the *inventor* of the relics, and the physical attributes of the relics themselves.

#### Revelatio Sancti Stephani

While we have examined the letter to Balchonius, this letter serves as a preface to the *Revelatio Sancti Stephani* both for us and for its ancient audience. As such, we must examine the *Revelatio* alongside the *Epistula ad Balchonium*. The *Revelatio Sancti Stephani* is structured as a letter, sent from Lucianus to "all the saints of the holy church, who are in Christ, in the whole world."<sup>621</sup> He introduces himself as the presbyter who had received visions about the revelation of the relics of Stephen, Nicodemus, and Gamaliel, and notes that it was Avitus who "commanded" him as a "father" to write down what happened in a "straight forward manner."<sup>622</sup>

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<sup>621</sup> Lucian. *epist. Rec.A.I.1.*

<sup>622</sup> Lucian. *epist. Rec.A.I.2.*

On Friday, December 3rd 415,<sup>623</sup> Lucianus was sleeping in the church in Caphargamala.<sup>624</sup> While he was sleeping, Gamaliel appeared to him and told him to go tell bishop John where to find his relics, as well as the relics of Stephen, Nicodemus, and Abibas, namely outside the northern gate "on the road going to Cedar."<sup>625</sup> Specifically, they should look in the village of Delagabri.<sup>626</sup>

Upon waking up, Lucianus prays to God for a second and third vision, in order to ascertain if it was a true vision or not.<sup>627</sup> Gamaliel returns in his dreams, and is very angry; Lucianus provides the reason that he asked for more visions so that he would not be accused of being a deceiver.<sup>628</sup> Caroline Burnett claims that this reason is meant to cast aspersion on John -- John would be a bad bishop if he did not believe his own presbyter on something so holy.<sup>629</sup> However, one could easily flip this on its head: John would be a bad bishop if he did not call for due diligence, especially in a world where demons can deceive people in their dreams.<sup>630</sup> Rather than a critique of John, I read Lucianus' actions as part of the text's larger efforts at proving the authenticity of Stephen's relics.

The second and third visions are allegories. This first allegory revolves around *kalathoi* (in Latin, *calathi*). All four martyrs are described as *kalathoi*, which are multipurpose baskets. "The *kalothos* could contain wool, but also food (bread, cheese, milk, fruits, and vegetables), small animals, or flowers."<sup>631</sup> While regular *kalathoi* were formed out of organic material,

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<sup>623</sup> Lucian. *epist. Rec.A.II.3 Die parasceve, (hoc est feria sexta) quae est tertio nonas decembris, consulatu Honorii decies et Theodosii sexies Augustorum*

<sup>624</sup> Lucian. *epist. Rec.A.II.3.*

<sup>625</sup> Lucian. *epist. Rec.A.II.4-III.14.*

<sup>626</sup> Lucian. *epist. Rec.A.III.16.*

<sup>627</sup> Lucian. *epist. Rec.A.IV.17.*

<sup>628</sup> Lucian. *epist. Rec.A.IV.19.*

<sup>629</sup> Burnett 2006, 342

<sup>630</sup> See Keskiäho 2015, 29 and Aug. *civ.4.26.*

<sup>631</sup> Trinkl 2014, 191.

*kalathoi* formed from metal were seen as luxury goods.<sup>632</sup> While difficult to see fully in the archaeological evidence, due to how organic material breaks down, it does appear likely that *kalathoi* were used as grave goods.<sup>633</sup> Miniature *kalathoi*, and *kalathoi* made of clay, have been found in Greece and Italy respectively. The *calathi* the martyrs are represented as are made of metal (three of them were buried in gold *calathi*, Abibas was buried in a silver one).<sup>634</sup> Stephen's *calathus* contained red roses; Abibas' contained crocus flowers, and the other two martyrs were buried with white roses. In this allegory, the red rose symbolizes Stephen's act of martyrdom; the other three died bloodless deaths. The crocus is meant to symbolize Abibas' purity. Finally, the metal *kalathoi* symbolize how "ordinary" men, through their faith, can be heightened and live on through the time their bodies would normally decompose, just as a regular *kalathos* would decompose in the ground, but metal ones still survive.

In the third vision, Lucianus sees himself informing John of Jerusalem about the location of the relics. John replies to him "If you have seen these things, most beloved, it is right for me to take from there the ox which ploughs and pulls the cart and to give up to you the field which contains the fruit." Lucianus expresses confusion at this statement, asking "what use is the field to me if I do not have an ox to work it?" John replied "I have made my decision. I shall collect from there the ox which ploughs and pulls the cart."<sup>635</sup>

This vision operates on two different scales. The most basic level is the bare allegory itself: what does the ox represent? What does the fruit represent? The fact that John takes the relics of Stephen to consecrate the church at Jerusalem, and leaves the rest at Delagabri, suggests

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<sup>632</sup> Ibid. 193. See especially Homer's description of Helen's silver *kalathos* with a gold rim and wheels: Hom. Od. 4.125; 131-2. The poet of the Odyssey uses the word *τάλαρον* instead of *κάλαθος* but these words possess the same meaning and the same semantic range.

<sup>633</sup> Trinkl 2014, 195.

<sup>634</sup> Lucian. *epist. Rec.A.IV.22-24*.

<sup>635</sup> Lucian. *epist. Rec.A.V.31*.

that Stephen is the ox and the other martyrs are the fruit. This plays into Stephen's status as the protomartyr: his prayer and subsequent death triggered Saul's conversion into Paul, and Gamaliel's claim to sanctity is contingent on his relationship to Paul.<sup>636</sup> Hence, Stephen plows the field that sows the martyrs that follow him. Version B of the text explains the allegory in this manner: "For I had understood that saint Stephen was the mighty ox and that the wagons about which he spoke were the holy churches, and that Jerusalem, as the first church, was the greater wagon."<sup>637</sup> In Vanderlinden's Version A, however, the allegory is unexplained.

The second facet of the allegory is the speaker and how it is presented. John asserts his right (*me oportet*) to seize Lucianus' ox and grant him lands. The right to take oxen from his subjects is part of God's explicit description of kingship in 1 Samuel.<sup>638</sup> The absence of the right to take livestock and other economic products from people is highlighted by Samuel as proof that he is a just priest.<sup>639</sup> Jerome highlights Samuel's speech as proof that priests should abjure greed.<sup>640</sup>

John's imperious command to take the ox is contrasted with Lucianus' characterization and response to John's order. In the text, Lucianus is characterized as an ascetic: he vows to fast

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<sup>636</sup> Lucian. *epist.* Rec.A.III.9

<sup>637</sup> Lucian. *epist.* Rec.B.VI.32. This explanation is also present in Migne's Version A.

<sup>638</sup> 1 Sam 8:16, "He will take your male and female slaves, as well as your best oxen and donkeys, and use them to do his work." Septuagint: και τοὺς δούλους ὑμῶν και τὰς δούλας ὑμῶν και τὰ βουκόλια ὑμῶν τὰ ἀγαθὰ και τοὺς ὄνους ὑμῶν λήψεται, και ἀποδεκατώσει εἰς τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ

<sup>639</sup> 1 Sam 12:2-4. "As for me, I am old and gray, and my sons are among you. I was your leader from my youth to the present day. Here I stand! Answer me in the presence of the LORD and the LORD's anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I cheated? Whom have I wronged? From whom have I accepted a bribe and shut my eyes because of it? I will make restitution to you." Septuagint: και νῦν ἰδοὺ ὁ βασιλεὺς διαπορεύεται ἐνώπιον ὑμῶν, κἀγὼ γεγήρακα και καθήσομαι, και οἱ υἱοὶ μου ἰδοὺ ἐν ὑμῖν· κἀγὼ ἰδοὺ διελήλυθα ἐνώπιον ὑμῶν ἐκ νεότητος και ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης. ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ, ἀποκρίθητε κατ' ἐμοῦ ἐνώπιον Κυρίου και ἐνώπιον χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ· μόσχον τίνος εἴληφα ἢ ὄνον τίνος εἴληφα ἢ τίνα κατεδυνάστευσα ὑμῶν ἢ τίνα ἐξέπιασα ἢ ἐκ χειρὸς τίνος εἴληφα ἐξίλασμα και ὑπόδημα; ἀποκρίθητε κατ' ἐμοῦ, και ἀποδώσω ὑμῖν. What the NABRE translation depicts as "ox" is, in the Septuagint, μόσχον which more specifically refers to a calf rather than a plowing animal. That being said, the parallel of kings being allowed to tax, and the absence of tax being taken as a sign of good leadership is still present.

<sup>640</sup> Hier. *epist.* 69.9.

after receiving the first vision.<sup>641</sup> His response to John demonstrates that he does not interpret John allegorically: "Master, what use is the field to me if I do not have an ox to work it?"<sup>642</sup> John's decision to double down does not explain the allegory to Lucianus, and serves to reinforce that he is speaking in allegory. While Lucianus realizes the meaning of the allegory in Version B, as quoted above, he does not do so in Version A. Thus, Version A uses this episode to draw a contrast between Lucianus, the simple, ascetic, country presbyter, and John, the urban, regal, and "sophisticated" (because speaking in allegory) bishop.

This contrast does not necessarily indicate that the text views John in a negative light.<sup>643</sup> Burnett notes that the "portrait of the bishop here is one of acquisitiveness and indifference to his subordinate's welfare."<sup>644</sup> This is true, but is also a feature of kingship as found in the book of Samuel itself. While kingship is described as tyrannical, individual kings may or may not be judged so depending on their other actions. John's actions might appear to be callous on first reading, but can also be read as what he is meant to do as bishop. The text is explicit that Gamaliel desires Lucianus to report the visions to John, and John is ultimately the one who confirms that the relics that were dug up belong to Stephen (see below). Rather than criticize John, both versions of the text depict the complementary nature of the urban bishop and the ascetic, rural priest: while the ascetics may be the ones receiving visions from the martyrs, it is John who is called to incorporate the relics into the institution of the church and who provides direction for doing so.

Upon waking up, Lucianus reports the visions to John, who tells him to go find the relics. Lucianus went to the village of Delagabri and told everyone to start digging at dawn. However,

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<sup>641</sup> Lucian. *epist. Rec.A.IV.17.*

<sup>642</sup> Lucian. *epist. Rec.A.V.31.*

<sup>643</sup> Contra Burnett 2006.

<sup>644</sup> Burnett 2006, 342.

this was the wrong place. Gamaliel appeared to a *monachus* named Migetius and revealed the true location, at a place named Dabatalia, to the north of Delagabri. Migetius told his vision to his brothers, who told Lucianus, and they went to the correct location.

Having gone to the correct location, the party discovered an inscription that identified the spot as the burial place for "Celihel," "Nasaom," and Gamaliel. John had translated these names into Stephen, Nicodemus, and Gamaliel. It is unclear whether, when the text reads "I myself heard this translation from the bishop himself" whether the first person refers to Avitus or Lucianus, but it is more likely to refer to Lucianus since John came to the burial spot once the coffins had been found and this would be where Lucianus would hear him read out and translate the inscription. John came from the Synod of Diospolis, accompanied by Eutonium of Sebaste and Eleutherius of Jericho.<sup>645</sup> The tombs (*thecas*) were opened, and a sweet smell filled the area; it should be remembered that the smell was one of the signs of authenticity mentioned by Avitus in his letter to Balchonius.

Stephen's relics are taken to Jerusalem on December 26th, his feast day.<sup>646</sup> Immediately thereafter, a "great downpour came" after a period of drought. This closing episode is meant to emphasize how Stephen's discovery, and the veneration of his relics, help the community that he is the patron of.<sup>647</sup> Just as Avitus' letter to Balchonius starts with recognizing the trials and

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<sup>645</sup> Hunt 1982, 219 claims that this is proof that the *inventio* of Stephen's relics was orchestrated to demonstrate God's favor over the decision at the Synod of Diospolis.

<sup>646</sup> Lucian. *epist. Rec.A.VIII.48*. See Méndez 2017 for an examination of how the church in Jerusalem celebrated Stephen's feast day.

<sup>647</sup> We cannot verify whether or not this rainfall event occurred, or if there was indeed a drought in December 415 near Jerusalem. What we can note is that the "Wet Season" for this region, during Late Antiquity, began in November, hit its peak around January, and ended in April. Near the beginning of the fifth century, Wet Seasons became shorter and the number of dry years increased. A drought, followed by the normal rainfall expected at the peak of the Wet Season, is a plausible occurrence for this time. See Orland et al. 2009.

tribulations of the Bragans, the end of his translation of the *Revelatio Sancti Stephani* stresses how martyr can cure those societal ills.

To conclude, the *Revelatio Sancti Stephani* and the *Epistula ad Balchonium* present the *inventio* of Stephen's relics as solutions for a church's ills. In the *Revelatio*, miracles appear that directly answer the community's harshest problems, such as drought. In the *Epistula*, Avitus offers the relics as salves for their suffering. However, as our other examples show, this is not the only meaning authors can construct concerning the relics of Stephen, even if they share some of the same literary topoi (such as miracles).

### Relics of Stephen in North Africa

Evidence for the relics of Stephen exist throughout the broad expanse of North Africa; however, most of the inscriptional and archaeological evidence surviving today is dated to post-Roman Africa (either during the Vandal kingdom or during the Byzantine reconquest).<sup>648</sup> At the beginning of the fifth century, the relics of Stephen are centered around the leading Catholic bishops in what Duval terms the "NE triangle" of North Africa, constructed of Hippo Regius, Uzalis, and Carthage.<sup>649</sup> To this we can also add the city of Calama.<sup>650</sup> While these are the big areas, we also possess literary evidence for the following towns or smaller cities contained within the environs of Uzalis, Carthage, and Hippo Regius: *Castellum Sinitense*,<sup>651</sup> Audurus,<sup>652</sup> and Aquae Tibilitanae.<sup>653</sup> So far as the surviving evidence allows us to see, the early spread of the relics of Stephen was controlled by Catholic bishops; specifically, those within Augustine's network (including Uzalis, where they first appear). There are three pieces of literary evidence

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<sup>648</sup> See Duval 1982 volume 2, 628-630.

<sup>649</sup> Ibid. 624-628.

<sup>650</sup> Aug. *Civ.* 22.8.13

<sup>651</sup> *Civ.* 22.8.12

<sup>652</sup> *ibid.* 22.8.16

<sup>653</sup> *ibid.* 22.8.11.

that allow us to ascertain where Stephen's relics were located, and, perhaps more importantly, to ascertain how the relics were discussed.

#### De Miraculis Sancti Stephani

The earliest piece of evidence, already discussed in the introduction, is the *de miraculis Sancti Stephani*, written by an anonymous presbyter from Uzalis, at some time between the years 418 and 424. It consists of two books. The first book contains miracle stories centered around either healing physical disabilities or problems, such as paralysis or blindness, or else resurrecting people from the dead. The individuals featured in these stories tend to come from a non-elite background: bakers and barbers are some of the occupations described.

In the second book, the presbyter claims that the individuals described in the first book gave eye witness testimony to the church in Uzalis. It then begins to tell three stories, all about elite (or at least wealthy) subjects. Megetia, a Roman noblewoman residing in Carthage, suffered a number of physical traumas that were eventually healed by Stephen, which also caused the males in her family to convert to Christianity.<sup>654</sup> A man named Donatus owned a vineyard, and he faced the prospect of financial ruin when his entire crop produced bad wine for the year; the intervention of Stephen saved his wine and allowed him to turn a tidy profit instead.<sup>655</sup> A *dispensator pecuniae publicae* named Florentius was saved by Stephen from execution on the order of the proconsul.<sup>656</sup> In addition to these stories that show how Stephen can protect from every day disaster, in chapter four the presbyter details how a dragon appeared above the city of Uzalis, only to be fought off by Stephen; an angel, in the guise of a merchant, appeared the next day to give them a painting that detailed the event.<sup>657</sup>

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<sup>654</sup> *Mirac. Steph.* 2.2.

<sup>655</sup> *Mirac. Steph.* 2.3.

<sup>656</sup> *Mirac. Steph.* 2.5.

<sup>657</sup> *Mirac. Steph.* 2.4.

Overall, this text focuses on how Stephen restores prosperity to the people in Uzalis. All of the events detailed, be it the early death of a husband, a disability, the souring of a wine crop, or the appearance of a dragon, show a deviation from what should be the norms of every day life. Through proper veneration and supplication, Stephen fixes whatever ruptures occurred in the lives of each individual, whether it is political trouble (Florentius), nature threatening people's livelihood (Donatus and the dragon), or things just going physically wrong (Megetia and the majority of stories in book one). The text hints that Stephen even played a role in healing the Donatist and Catholic rupture (more on that below).<sup>658</sup>

#### Augustine

The evidence from Augustine largely shares the same overall message. In a series of sermons, Augustine encourages his congregation to frequent the *memoria* of Stephen and pray to him.<sup>659</sup> He also stresses the miracles that were performed at Uzalis and even in Hippo. A traveling brother and sister pair sailed from Cappadocia, to Italy, to Hippo in order to be healed by Stephen; not only does Augustine read out a leaflet they had written describing their ordeals, he has them publicly testify to the success of Stephen's intervention.<sup>660</sup> In the middle of one of his sermons on this family, someone barged into the church to announce that Stephen had saved a baby in Uzalis.<sup>661</sup>

Augustine's promotion of Stephen's miracles did not merely occur locally, to his own congregation; it also featured in book 22 of the *de civitate Dei*. The beginning of book 22 is a sustained argument that miracles are reasons for non-Christians to believe in Christianity.

Augustine posits that there are three evident miracles: that Christ arose from the dead, that the

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<sup>658</sup> *Mirac Steph.* 1.7 l. 31-33.

<sup>659</sup> *Aug. serm.* 318.

<sup>660</sup> *Aug. serm.* 322.

<sup>661</sup> *Aug. serm.* 323.4.

world believes Christ rose from the dead, and that it was illiterate and uneducated fisherman that convinced the world of Christ's resurrection.<sup>662</sup> To bolster these claims to miracles, Augustine asserts that miracles happen even in the present day. Section 8 of book 22 goes through a list of miracles that occurred in North Africa, centered around the shrines or relics of different martyrs. Most of these miracles are healing miracles, and most of them are performed by Stephen.<sup>663</sup> In general, these miracles follow the same pattern as those found in the *de miraculis Sancti Stephani*: life is thrown out of disorder, and the intervention of a martyr or other pious act serves to restore order.

The relics of Stephen arrived in North Africa probably in 416, when Orosius came back from Palestine. The literary activity surrounding the relics begins in ca. 418 and continues into the latter half of the 420s. Scholars have noticed that these dates correlate with another challenge the African bishops sought to overcome: difficulties in unifying the Catholic and Donatist factions. While the attempts to unify the Donatists and Catholics formally began after the Conference of Carthage in 411, this was a process that would continue into the later 410s and 420s, if not later.<sup>664</sup> Bruno Pottier<sup>665</sup> and Damien Labadie<sup>666</sup> have recently argued that the relics of Stephen were used by the Catholic bishops in North Africa as a tool to convince Donatists to turn to the Catholic side. Labadie argues that Augustine promoted Stephen's miracles in order to

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<sup>662</sup> Aug. *Civ.* 22.5.

<sup>663</sup> There are 22 miracles recounted in 22.8. 12 of them are performed by Stephen. In general, there are 12 healing miracles, of which Stephen performed 7, in addition to 5 resurrection miracles (counted separately from healing). There are 4 exorcism miracles, one of which are performed by Gervasius and Protasius, one by a relic from Jerusalem, one by oil infused with a presbyter's tears, and one by a bishop's prayers. One individual was healed and exorcised by baptism, and another was only healed by baptism. The Twenty Martyrs provided money to buy clothes to an unfortunate person.

<sup>664</sup> Hermanowicz 2021 looks at how Augustine and the other Catholic bishops handled Donatist concerns over property. Conant 2016 is an overview of Donatist survival in the fifth and sixth centuries.

<sup>665</sup> Pottier 2015, 158-166

<sup>666</sup> Labadie 2021, 380-401.

persuade the Donatists that Stephen's miracles outclassed the miracles of their own martyrs.<sup>667</sup>

While Stephen's miracles may have held some ability to "outclass" Donatist martyrs we should also consider how Stephen's presence could be used to foster unification. Donatist and Catholic unification was a multi-layered process, occurring over a number of years and operating on various different levels. How the Catholic bishops deployed the relics of Stephen needs to be understood as a part of this larger process, rather than an isolated political maneuver.

The lens of the politics of reconciliation could shed some light on the Donatist/Catholic unification process. This is hinted at by the *de miraculis Sancti Stephani*, in which Stephen's miracles are explicitly used to signify the unity of the church.<sup>668</sup> The inhabitants of Uzalis stop their bishop from sharing the relics of Stephen because they are afraid that the absence of the relics would undo the newfound unity the Donatists and Catholics had forged.<sup>669</sup> While our sources do not explicitly show how this process worked, insight from modern social science can help us think through how the relics of Stephen fostered the reconciliation we see in the *de miraculis*.

Among scholars of political science and international relations, there are two schools of thought in the study of political reconciliation: a "forgiveness" school and a *rapprochement* school. The "forgiveness" school stresses fostering a sense of forgiveness and desire for unity among the grassroots and mid-tier actors, while the *rapprochement* school focuses more on easing tensions between elites.<sup>670</sup> The "forgiveness" school reflects a philosophical/emotional aspect to reconciliation, while a *rapprochement* school emphasizes pragmatic/material concerns. As Gardner-Feldman has pointed out, this bifurcation between approaches should not be taken as

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<sup>667</sup> Labadie 2021, 393.

<sup>668</sup> *Mirac. Steph.* I.1.22.29.

<sup>669</sup> *Mirac. Steph.* I.7.

<sup>670</sup> For an example of the forgiveness school, see Lederach 1997; for *rapprochement*, see Rock 1989.

an either/or equation, but rather as a tool to analyze how the reconciliation process works.<sup>671</sup>

Both schools target essential processes.

There are certain base requirements for two sides of a conflict to reconcile.<sup>672</sup> They can be summarized as follows: mutual consent/desire; the acknowledgement of grievances; humanizing “enemy” leaders; the presence of unifying institutions; and successful leadership. There must also be some “reconciliation event” – an event that is major enough to trigger a change in relations drastic enough to move both sides away from conflict and violence and towards peace and reconciliation. We should not conceive of these facets of reconciliation appearing overnight, or working immediately; reconciliation is a process that takes place over a long period of time, and reacts to changes in the political environment. Reconciliation is dynamic, not static. Thus, when examining the role that the relics of Stephen play in fostering reconciliation, we should not expect to see a direct correlation between the existence of unity and the presence of Stephen's relics. Rather, we should interrogate how the Catholic bishops can exploit Stephen's presence to build the conditions necessary for reconciliation to succeed.

It is with this framework in mind that we can approach Catholic efforts to promote Catholic/Donatist unity. First, let us turn to Augustine’s letter 185, to the *comes* Boniface. Boniface had written to Augustine in 417 to inquire about the nature of the Donatist/Catholic conflict; while no specific reason for the inquiry is given, it is possible that this was done because Donatists opposed to reconciliation would seek to delay or stop the process by appealing to the courts.<sup>673</sup> Within the letter, Augustine presents various Donatist talking points before

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<sup>671</sup> Gardner-Feldman 1999a.

<sup>672</sup> Gardner-Feldman 1999b.

<sup>673</sup> Reason for writing: Aug. *epist.* 185.1. Donatists appealing to the courts: Aug. *epist.* 28\*. 28\* is addressed to the bishop of Sitifis, and Augustine expects that Boniface would be able to acquire a synopsis of the Conference of Carthage from the church of Sitifis: *epist.* 185.6.

providing his own solution. As a result, we can use this letter as a source to access various Donatist concerns about the reconciliation process.

The first Donatist talking point Augustine addresses is about Caecilian's status as bishop ordained by *traditores*.<sup>674</sup> This is the root cause of the schism. Augustine's reaction is twofold: to reject the authenticity of the charges in the first place ("I do not know whether Caecilian was ordained by those who surrendered the books of God; I did not see it; I heard it from his enemies") and to reject the validity of the schism even if Caecilian was guilty ("And yet, even if the charges they brought against Caecilian were true and could at some point be proved to us, and we anathematized Caecilian, who is now dead, we should still not for the sake of any human being abandon the Church of Christ"). We should not expect Augustine to acknowledge the validity of Donatist concerns here in this piece of anti-Donatist polemic, but built within the argumentation is room for doing so in the future.

Augustine then addresses the claim that the Donatists suffered martyrdom on account of the laws; not only during the Great Persecution, but in the years ensuing as Constantine and later Honorius after him legislated against them. To this point, Augustine responds with his general maxim that it is not death that makes the martyr, but the right cause.<sup>675</sup> While Catholics and Donatists shared many of the same martyrs, a number of Donatist *passiones* show how remembrances of Donatus, Marculus, Maximianus, and Isaac served to consistently draw a line between the two communities.<sup>676</sup> In addition, at least in Hippo after Augustine reformed

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<sup>674</sup> Aug. *epist.* 185.4-6.

<sup>675</sup> For discussion on this (re)construction of martyrdom, see Den Boeft 1989, Dupont 2006, Dupont 2012, Ployd 2018 and Ployd 2020.

<sup>676</sup> On these *Passiones*, see Dearn 2016, 80-100. The martyrs mentioned are those we can securely tie to Donatists from the hagiographical record. See Dearn 73-79 for a critical discussion of why the wider corpus of Donatist hagiographical texts presented in Tilley 1997 does not stand up to scrutiny, as well as the general practice of attributing a Donatist origin to a work because of the presence of the words *deo laudes*.

*refrigerium* practices among his own congregation, the officially sanctioned celebration practices towards the martyrs differed between the two communities.<sup>677</sup> Augustine's contention that Donatist martyrs were not "true" martyrs might work for audiences already sympathetic to the Catholic faction, and would give license to those wishing to destroy local Donatist martyr shrines in accordance with earlier conciliar decisions.<sup>678</sup> However, at this stage, his stance towards martyrs does not provide a route to reconciliation for those who tied their identity to them.

The Donatists objected against the use of the state to force the unification. This objection is tied to their belief in continued martyrdom, of course, but Augustine's retort suggests that the Donatists are also arguing against coercion itself. Augustine writes, referencing Terence's *Adelphi*, "Some of them quote for us the lines of a certain worldly author who said 'It is better, I believe, to hold children\ In check by self-respect and kindness than by fear.'"<sup>679</sup> Augustine has a retort for this, of course, upholding a father's right to beat his kids, quoting from the same play.

We gain a keener sight into Donatist arguments by looking at how Augustine presents his exegesis for the Parable of the Wedding Feast. I quote it in full:

From this we can without any absurdity understand the statement of the apostle where blessed Paul says, *We are prepared to punish every disobedience once your earlier obedience is carried out* (2 Cor 10:6). For this reason the Lord himself orders that guests first be invited to his great banquet and afterward forced. For, when his servants answered him, *Lord, we have done what you ordered, and there is still room*, he said, *Go out into the roads and pathways and force whomever you find to come in* (Lk 14:16, 21, 23). In those who were first gently invited the earlier obedience is carried out, but in those who are afterward forced their disobedience meets with coercion. For what does *force them to*

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<sup>677</sup> Aug. *epist.* 29 for Augustine's efforts to reform the practices of his own congregation, and his observation that he could hear the reveling of the Donatists from his own church. Shaw 2012, 609-612 examines how the practice of eating meals among the graves of martyrs both tied these communities closer together to themselves and to the memory of the martyrs.

<sup>678</sup> As might have happened to an inscription in Numidia, see Duval 1982, nr. 79. See *Reg. Eccl. Carth.* 83.

<sup>679</sup> Aug. *epist.* 185.6.21. *Proponunt nobis quidam sententiam cuiusdam saecularis auctoris, qui dixit: Pudore et liberalitate liberos\ Retinere, satius esse credo, quam metu."*

*come in* mean after he had first said, *Invite them* and received the reply, *We have done what you ordered and there is still room? If he had wanted us to understand that they were to be forced by awesome miracles, many more divine miracles were produced for those who were first called, especially for the Jews, of whom scripture says, The Jews seek signs (1 Cor 1:22). At the time of the apostles such miracles also commended the gospel among the Gentiles so that, if the Lord ordered that guests be forced to come in by such miracles, we would rightly believe that it was rather the first guests who were forced.* Hence, if the power that the Church received as God's gift through the religion and faith of rulers is at the proper time forcing to come in those found on the roads and pathways, that is, those in heresies and schisms, they should not complain because they are being forced, but they should pay attention to where they are forced to go. The Lord's banquet is the unity of the body of Christ not only in the sacrament of the altar but also *in the bond of peace* (Eph. 4:3). We can indeed say of these Donatists with complete truth that they force no one to what is good, for they force whomever they force only to what is evil.<sup>680</sup>

The bolded section appears, at first glance, to be a digression. In the middle of his justification of coercion, Augustine suddenly argues against interpreting this parable in a way that gives persuasive agency to miracles rather than coercive power to the Lord at the banquet. Given the logic of the text, this appears to be a Donatist counter-argument to Augustine's coercion theory. The way Augustine expresses his objection is through two conditionals. The first, *Si miraculorum terroribus cogendos voluisset intellegi; magis ad eos qui prius vocati sunt, divina miracula multa facta sunt*, has a past contrary-to-fact condition in the protasis, and a past particular condition in the apodosis. This allows Augustine to express the idea that while we should not interpret this parable as having to do with miracles, miracles have performed that very function on other occasions. The second, *ut si talibus cogi iuberentur, priores, ut dixi, potius*

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<sup>680</sup> Aug. *epist.* 185.6.24.

*convivae coacti esse merito crederentur*, is a present contrary-to-fact condition. This allows Augustine to express the idea that while we should not interpret the parable in a way that gives agency to miracles, if we *did*, we would see the ability for miracles to equalize the relationship between those who were invited first and those coerced later. In other words, miracles are a method by which God called both the Jews and the Gentiles in the time of the Apostles. The Gentiles were not discriminated against even though they were called later than the Jews because of the mechanism of miracles. To Augustine, this would do violence to the parable in question because the parable calls for a division between those who are called first and those who are called second. Within his rebuttal of the Donatist counter-interpretation, he recognizes the ability for miracles to erode differences between communities.

The Donatists object that the Catholics seek to take possession of their property. Augustine's reply is to point out that all churches now, both Catholic and formerly Donatist, are co-owned by the Catholic and Donatist bishops. The Council of Carthage in 418 makes these mechanics more explicit.<sup>681</sup> Once the Donatist bishop has turned to the Catholic side, both bishops meet to redivide the territory between them. All other things being equal, the one who has been bishop longer makes the division of the territory, and the one who has been in office for less time decides which apportionment he desires. In the case where the territory is indivisible, the one who lives closer takes control. In the case where a community is found on the border between the bounds of each territory (*ambabus catedris aequaliter vicinus*), the *plebs* of that community may choose. In the case where a Catholic community desires to keep their own bishop, and the former Donatists wish to keep theirs, "the will of the many is to be preferred to

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<sup>681</sup> *Reg. Eccl. Carth.* 118. Hermanowicz 2021 explores how these provisions concerning the division of property might not have been satisfying to Donatist clergy who faced the loss of a more prosperous church. While this is possible, no evidence exists to really judge one way or the other. The importance for my argument is that the Catholic side makes a good faith effort towards property equity in the face of unification.

the will of the few.” In a case where there is no way to solve the conflict, the older bishop will make the decision. If the population is particularly mixed, and no clean division can be made, there may be further redistributions.

Finally, Donatists express reservations about their clergy’s ability to retain their office. If they must do penance, as the Catholics claim, then they recognize that they were acting outside of and against God’s church. Does that not make them fake clergy? Augustine defends the ability for Donatists to retain their office by pointing out that by doing penance, they heal the wound that would have caused them to have to lose their office; thus, there is no need to lose the office. He appeals to two historical precedents: positively to the Donatists’ own treatment of the Maximianists, and negatively to the Luciferian controversy.

The following table attempts to track the Donatist concerns along either emotional/philosophical lines and material/pragmatic lines. Here I label a concern as “Emotional/Philosophical” if it is integral to identity formation; i.e. a concern that is essential for identifying as “Donatist”,<sup>682</sup> over and against the Catholics. A concern is considered “Material/Pragmatic” if it concerns the day-to-day living during the reconciliation process. I find that among the five concerns addressed in this letter, 3 are emotional/philosophical and two are material/pragmatic.

Donatist Concerns	Emotional/Philosophical	Material/Pragmatic
Caecilian’s status		

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<sup>682</sup> Recognizing, of course, that none of these men identified as “Donatist.” They recognized themselves as Christians or Catholics. The word “Donatist” is kept merely as label to more easily delineate it from what we now call the Catholic faction. While the “Donatist” label is not accurate, the fact that there were two identities forged in opposition to each other is.

Donatist Martyrs		
State Coercion		
Control of churches		
Reservations about admitting that they were outside of the church.		

We also must evaluate Augustine’s responses. Again, this is drawn from a piece of anti-Donatist polemic, so we need not expect Augustine to deal with the Donatists in a sympathetic manner. Nevertheless, if the Catholics wish to establish sustainable peace with the Donatists, their concerns must eventually be addressed in a way that treats their grievances seriously and moves towards accommodation. I track Augustine’s success at that in the following table.

Donatist Concerns	Augustine is successful	Augustine is not successful
Caecilian’s status		
Donatist martyrs		
State coercion		
Control of churches		
Reservations about clergy		

On some level, of course, these judgments are subjective on my part. We do not have Donatists writing about how they feel about concessions that Catholics made during unification. Nevertheless, I shall explain why I’ve made my judgements. First the successes. In my view,

the process outlined by the Council of Carthage in how churches are to be reapportioned is designed to counter concerns that the Catholics just want to take Donatist money. Both Catholic and Donatist bishops are respected in the process, as well as the desires of the *plebs* of each community. It goes out of its way to erode divisions between the two factions; instead of defining preference in terms of orthodoxy, it does so in terms of time spent in office and geographical proximity to the neighborhood in question. For a material/pragmatic concern, the Catholics have provided a material/pragmatic solution.

For Donatist reservations about the clergy, in addition to scriptural argumentation, Augustine does two things: he acknowledges that penance must be paid, and he uses historical *exempla*. By acknowledging penance, Augustine provides a mechanism by which the Donatists can legitimately make the transition over to the Catholic side. Donatist identity is formed by rigorist tendencies, and simply switching over and acknowledging that they were part of a “false church” without paying any price would be contradictory to how they conceive of themselves. Of course, penance does not need to guarantee clerical office, only personal salvation; but by extending penance to cover clerical office, Augustine only proposes a modification of degree, not of kind. Augustine backs this up by pointing out that the Donatists had made use of this logic themselves with the Maximianists, and that the Luciferians (a group generally considered unorthodox for their rigorism) took the position that the current Donatist concern reflects. These two concerns, I suggest, Augustine has dealt with in a way that works towards accommodation.

Augustine’s attitude towards Caecilian has the potential to work towards accommodation but requires modification. On the one hand, Augustine develops a line of argumentation where Caecilian’s status is irrelevant to the status of the church. This takes the Donatist concern – that Caecilian’s status *is* relevant to the status of the church – seriously in that it provides ex-

Donatists the intellectual reasons to justify Caecilian's irrelevance. However, Augustine's tone works against accommodation. While he claims that he does not know if Caecilian was ordained by *traditores*, he continually points out that Catholic councils have found no wrong-doing and dismisses Donatist charges against Caecilian as biased because they are his "enemies." Talking points of this nature are unhelpful towards accommodation because they both dismiss the validity of Donatist concerns *and* serve to reinforce the factional divide that reconciliation is supposed to erode.

Augustine's attitude towards Donatist martyrdom is markedly unhelpful for progress towards accommodation. Augustine's tactic is to deny the validity of Donatist martyrs because of the reason why they died. While this is understandable from the Catholic perspective – if the Donatist martyrs were really martyrs, then the Roman state operating on the side of the Catholics really was a prosecutor – it is a denial of a core aspect of Donatist identity.<sup>683</sup> Not only are the martyrs an important fixture of Donatist historical memory, the celebrations serve an important sociological function of identity formation and reinforcement. If the Catholic strategy -- exemplified by the conciliar decrees against "false martyrs" and Augustine's arguments that Donatist martyrs are, by definition, false – is to eradicate these Donatist institutions, then a replacement institution is required to take its place.

Finally, Augustine's answer to Donatist concerns about state coercion completely misses the validity of their concerns. Donatist identity is largely built upon painting the state as a persecuting force. This conception of the state was alive and well even a few years after Augustine wrote his letter to Boniface.<sup>684</sup> Augustine's argument that the state is analogous to a father beating his child to teach them manners does nothing to address their conception of the

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<sup>683</sup> Shaw 2011, 146-194.

<sup>684</sup> Consider Emeritus' contention that the Donatists were overcome by power: *c. Emer.* 3.

state, but merely asserts that they should now accept the state as a benevolent force. Contained within Augustine's retort is a sign of what the Donatists have signaled they require for unification: a sign from God that this is the correct move. They want miracles, not soldiers, to show them the way. This may explain why so many of our North African texts about Stephen are centered around the miracles he performs.

Stephen is useful for the two failures to understand Donatist concerns: state coercion and Donatist martyrs. In the 420s, the Catholic bishops work to advertise and promote the miracles. As we have seen, an anonymous presbyter composed a *libellus miraculorum* dedicated to Stephen's miracles in and around Uzalis. Augustine includes many of Stephen's miracles in book 22 of the *City of God*. Contained within his corpus of sermons are reports of Stephen's miracles happening at the same time Augustine was preaching. If, as many scholars have noted, Augustine was skeptical about miracles before the arrival of Stephen's relics, once they arrive Augustine becomes a fervent advocate of their existence.<sup>685</sup>

Labadie has suggested that Augustine's turn towards the promotion of miracles stems from a pastoral need to replace Donatist martyrs (whom Augustine claims are false martyrs) with Stephen.<sup>686</sup> His logic goes that by promoting so many different kinds of miracles, Augustine proves the superiority of Stephen to the Donatist martyrs and so induces Donatists to abandon their old martyrs for this new one. I do not agree with Labadie's logic here. Just because Stephen exhibits more or better miracles than the traditional Donatist martyrs does not mean that

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<sup>685</sup> For a review of this skepticism, see van Bavel 1995. Van Bavel argues that Augustine is convinced of the reality of miracles only after seeing Stephen's first hand. In contrast, I see it far more likely that Augustine recognized the pastoral advantages to promoting Stephen's miracles, as explored in this chapter. See also de Nie 2011, 225-365.

<sup>686</sup> Labadie 2021, 393. For a discussion of Augustine's distinction between true martyrs and false martyrs, see Ployd 2018 and Den Boeft 1989.

Donatists would be likely to abandon their own martyrs. Rather, we would expect the Donatists to incorporate veneration for Stephen into their own practice in addition to their own martyrs.

The promotion of miracles does not primarily serve to compete with Donatist martyrs, I suggest. Rather, it serves to answer Donatist concerns about being coerced into unifying with the Catholics. As noted above, Donatists wanted some sort of divine sign to signal that unity with the Catholics was the correct course of action, rather than be forced by the state. Augustine himself recognizes that miracles serve to point men's attention towards the "precious death of his saints."<sup>687</sup> Miracles performed in shrines established and controlled by Catholic bishops would signal to hesitant Donatists that God's favor is with the Catholic church and that they should submit to unification. Donatists who choose to comply with reunification can claim to do so because of divine intervention, not that of the state.

The presence of Stephen's relics provides a unique opportunity for Catholics and Donatists, in the process of reconciliation, to establish practices and shared stories together. This is not to say that Stephen is the only martyr that Donatists and Catholics share in common, but this is the first martyr whose relics have arrived in Africa during the Donatist/Catholic reconciliation process. The contemporaneous nature of the miracles being promoted only serves to strengthen the identity reformation process. While Donatists may continue to respect and venerate their old martyrs, no matter their official status, they will also be bombarded with stories of how Stephen led to the conversion of the Jews in Minorca, healed people in shrines, excised demons, etc.<sup>688</sup> These stories, and Donatist reactions to the stories, would be mirrored by the Catholics also hearing them. These stories, combined with the establishment of *memoriae*

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<sup>687</sup> Aug. *Serm.* 286. Compare this to the more ambiguous attitude Augustine takes towards miracles in the anti-Donatist *Tract. In Ioh.* 13.17 where both good and bad people perform miracles.

<sup>688</sup> For more how each narrative concerning a martyr can be deployed and reused, using Stephen as the prime example, see Grig 2004, 94-103.

to the martyr, lead to the institution of a cult of Stephen that can have both Catholic and Donatist buy-in. The political science of reconciliation has stressed the importance of cross-factional institutions to promote understanding and peace among previously conflicting factions; the cult of St. Stephen could serve that same purpose in Catholic/Donatist reconciliation.

Finally, Stephen's cult promotes the mechanism of penance. To be more precise, it promotes the possibility of someone becoming a leader within the church even if they previously acted against it. We had seen before that one of the Donatist concerns is that if they admit that they had acted against the church during the schism, they should not be capable of maintaining clerical office. A predominate feature of preaching about Stephen is his role in Saul's conversion to Paul. Sault transformed from an active persecutor of the church into its foremost evangelist and apostle, thanks to Stephen's prayer.<sup>689</sup>

Some of Stephen's contemporary miracles play on this theme. Augustine has a *libellus miraculorum* read out to his congregation, detailing the story of a man named Paul from Cappadocia. Paul came from a troubled family; his brother beat his mother, and the rest of the family did nothing to stop it. His mother had had enough and called for God to punish her children (the language used implies the use of magic and the influence of demons).<sup>690</sup> Realizing what she had done, she killed herself (a mortal sin in Augustine's estimation, at least). Yet thanks to the intervention of Stephen at Hippo, Paul and his sister Palladia were both healed. While this is not the same thing as penance leading to the ability to continue in clerical office, this story does reinforce the notion that Stephen can heal those who had previously engaged in terrible behavior but thenceforth displayed contrition.

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<sup>689</sup> This is the theme of Aug. *Serm.* 317, preached during the arrival of Stephen's relics at Hippo.

<sup>690</sup> Aug. *Serm.* 322.

In terms of the reconciliation process in the decade after the conference of Carthage, the Catholic bishops showed competence in dealing with the pragmatic, day-to-day operations of unification. Their process of territorial redistribution appears fair to bishops on both sides, as well as their communities. In addition, Augustine stresses in his sermons that Catholics should avoid conflict with Donatists, and instead treat them with respect.<sup>691</sup> But when it comes to the philosophical/emotional dimensions of reconciliation, the Catholics have been remarkably less successful. The presence of Stephen's relics in Africa allowed them to move past old anti-Donatist talking points and construct new discourses on the presence and efficacy of miracles in a manner that addresses Donatist concerns on multiple fronts. In this way, we can see how the miracle stories centered around Stephen offer a pastoral benefit to the Catholic bishops. Thus, we should conceive of the cult of Stephen not as a blunt instrument to persuade Donatists to become Catholics, but rather as one tool, among many, intended to ease tensions between these two factions and push the reconciliation process along.

### Stephen and the Island of Minorca

The *Epistula Severi* is perhaps the most well known text associated with the relics of Stephen. After they had been deposited on the island by Orosius, the Christian population of Jamona marched over to Magona and demand that the island's Jewish population join the church. While the text's authenticity had been contested for many years,<sup>692</sup> the discovery of the Divjak letters put the question to rest. Two additional letters from Consentius had been found, one of which explicitly mentions that Severus of Minorca wrote a letter about an event that occurred on

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<sup>691</sup> Aug. *Serm.* 357.4; 358.6.

<sup>692</sup> Most notably by Blumenkrantz, who saw the text as a seventh-century forgery because, to him, it better reflected the concerns of the Visigothic period rather than the Late Roman. See Snyder 1996, 19-44 and Bradbury 1996, 9-15 for clear elucidations of the arguments surrounding the text's authenticity.

the island concerning the Jews (borrowing "a few words and phrases" from Consentius).<sup>693</sup> With the question of authenticity laid to rest, scholars have moved on to debating about how best to approach the text.

Most scholars approach the text as a document that informs us about a specific event: the mass conversion of 540 Jews on the island of Minorca. Peter Brown, borrowing from Mary Douglas, looks at how the presence of Stephen allows the Christian population to replace the "unclean" power of the Jews with the "clean power" of Stephen.<sup>694</sup> Brown's focus is on the unity of the island following the event, leading him to downplay the violence leading up to the conversion. Carlo Ginzburg forcefully argued against him, deeming the event a *pogrom* in line with rising anti-Jewish sentiment in the rest of the empire.<sup>695</sup> Ginzburg's presentation of the text has become a highly influential one.<sup>696</sup> This sort of historical examination of the letter has been buttressed by scholars recognizing that the social description of the Jewish community in the text matches onto evidence we find elsewhere.<sup>697</sup> To many, this means that the text must reflect some sort of real event, no matter how rhetorically shaped by Severus.

Other scholars have tried to move the conversation on how we approach the text. Snyder has argued that, instead of viewing the text as a piece of anti-Jewish polemic, certain rhetorical features suggest that the text was crafted as a judicial defense against charges of improper behavior and illegality.<sup>698</sup> Ross Kraemer has examined how Severus uses gender to paint

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<sup>693</sup> For more discussion of Consentius' involvement with the crafting of the letter, see Wankenne and Hambenne 1987 and Fontaine 1991.

<sup>694</sup> Brown 2015, 103-5.

<sup>695</sup> Ginzburg 1992. Brown later admitted his focus on unity, driven by his anthropological readings, and endorsed Ginzburg's view: Brown 2015, xxv.

<sup>696</sup> See Snyder 1996, Gaddis 2005, Shaw 2011, and Leonard 2017.

<sup>697</sup> Most significantly, the title *pater pateron* is found in inscriptions in Italy, but there are other similarities. See Kraemer 2020 and Panzram 2013.

<sup>698</sup> Snyder 1996.

Judaism as a deviation from the natural order of things: Jewish men are emasculated, only to return to masculinity upon joining the church, while Jewish women maintain masculine traits until they join.<sup>699</sup> Pearsall has written about how the *Epistula Severi* "promotes a totalizing discourse for an imperial, Christian identity that seeks to erase Jewish history from its past."<sup>700</sup>

The advantage of these changes in approach is that it frees us from being bogged down in discussions about the historicity of the described events. Now we are free to ask what the *Epistula Severi* does as a text, rather than how it reveals or hides reality on the ground. Paula Fredriksen and Ross Kraemer have noted how the *Epistula Severi* fits into the discourse surrounding coercion.<sup>701</sup> To Augustine, coercion is an antidote meant for heretics and schismatics, but he never extends his theory of coercion to apply to the Jews. The effect of Severus' text, Fredriksen argues, is to show that coercion can be applied to Jews.

In this section, I follow Fredriksen and Kraemer's approach. I interrogate how Severus constructs his narrative to explore the various reactions of the Jewish population of Minorca towards the Christian push for conversion. Severus employs a number of literary devices commonly found in Greco-Roman historiography to explore the ramifications of violence on the Jewish community and how the diversity of reactions ultimately leads to unity. The verisimilitude of the text should be approached as a rhetorical device, rather than evidence for its historicity.<sup>702</sup> Rather than being an *apologia* for Severus' actions, I propose that the effect of the

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<sup>699</sup> Kraemer 2009; see also Kraemer 2020, 43-79.

<sup>700</sup> Pearsall 2018, 70.

<sup>701</sup> Fredriksen 2008, Kraemer 2020, 59-64.

<sup>702</sup> For this I am drawing from Clark's suggestions about the *realia* present in hagiographical texts, borrowing from Barthes' examination of the "reality effect." See Clark 1998, 19-20. Here I do not mean to wholly negate the possibility that Severus' text is based in some sort of reality, only to state that the social details he includes about the Jewish community have a rhetorical and literary purpose all on their own, over and above what they can tell historians about social history.

*Epistula Severi* is to explore the complexities of coercive action and to argue that this messiness is part of God's will when he instigates coercive action.

It has long been noted that, while the *Epistula Severi* is included in modern collections of texts centered around Stephen and has been described as a hagiographical text about Stephen,<sup>703</sup> Stephen himself plays a relatively minor role. The arrival of Stephen's relics on the island is presented as the point at which the Christian population became incensed and sought to force the Jews to join the church. There are only two other mentions of Stephen. The church outside of Magona where his relics are buried is the site at which Severus receives the Jews into the church.<sup>704</sup> There is an apparition of a jug, with the height of a man, in the sky, for which various explanations are offered. One explanation posits that this apparition is Stephen, but it is by no means a definitive answer.<sup>705</sup> While the text is replete with miracle stories, they are all presented as performed by God or Christ, rather than Stephen.

We should note that, when Severus wrote his text, the concept of a collection of miracles performed by Stephen did not yet exist. Severus wrote before the *de miraculis Sancti Stephani* and before Augustine's collection in the *de civitate Dei*. The only other text written about Stephen's relics is the *revelatio Sancti Stephani*, which also does not attribute miracles to Stephen himself. Rather than expect Severus to tell us about all of the miracles Stephen performed, we should ask how Stephen's presence contributes to Severus' narrative purpose.

Severus is certainly not ignorant of the difficulties Jews would face when they have to decide whether or not to join the church. He includes within his narrative an episode between two Jews, who had fled the city after the burning of the synagogue. Meletius was Theodorus'

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<sup>703</sup> *Mirac Steph.* 1.2.36-45 sees the text as centered around Stephen.

<sup>704</sup> Sev. Minor.20.4.

<sup>705</sup> Sev. Minor.20.12.

brother, and Innocentius was a landowner who had fled Spain in the wake of barbarian invasion. Both were hiding out in the countryside when, according to Severus' narrative, they began discussing Christianity. Meletius is presented with a problem: the words "Christ, in your name" keep popping into his head.<sup>706</sup> Innocentius recognizes the thought as coming from God, but bids Meletius to dismiss the thought. Meletius is unable to do so, and Meletius states that this phrase remains in his head all the more. Innocentius gives a long speech that lays bare some of the difficulties that he is feeling.

The Christian throng bore witness, and I heard it with my own ears, that your brother, Theodorus, who is greater than you in learning, honour and years, converted to faith in Christ. Isn't it likely that you too, constrained by the example of your own blood brother, will desert the Jewish religion? Why then should we waste time any longer in this horrible solitude? How long will we be able to struggle on, overwhelmed by a lack of provisions, especially since those two young men whom we sent back are delayed and this place to which we have come is completely unknown to our servants? For what reward, moreover, are we exposing ourselves to the punishment of so painful a death? Why should we waste away from hunger, be parched with thirst, stiffen with cold, and last of all, be terrified by the dreadful silence of this vast emptiness, which we are already suffering? Are we fleeing the fetters of brigands? the swords of barbarians? Do the Christians, whom we saw weeping for our sakes, do so a merciful people desire our blood? Let us recall, I beg of you, any whom they ever harmed, any whom they so much as dealt a verbal blow. Let us return to those blameless people, whom we perceive to be in no way our enemies, and let God's will be done.<sup>707</sup>

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<sup>706</sup> Sev. Minor.18.6.

<sup>707</sup> Sev. Minor.18.12-15. *Fratrem tuum, Theodorum, doctrina, honore, aetate maiorem ad fidem Christi conversum his auribus audientibus plebs Christiana testata est. Poteritne fieri ut non etiam tu germani constrictus exemplo religionem Iudaicam deseras? Quid ergo in hac terribili solitudine diutius tempus terimus? Quamdiu etiam inopia victus laborare poterimus? Praesertim cum et illi duo iuvenes quos remisimus moram faciant, et famulis nostris locus hic in quem devenimus penitus ignotus sit. Quo autem fructu poenam nobis tam laboriosae mortis inferimus? Quid causae est ut fame tabescamus, arescamus siti, obrigescamus algore, et postremo, quod iam patimur, vastae huius solitudinis horribili terreamur silentio? Numquid latronum vincula, numquid barbarorum gladios fugimus? Numquid sanguinem nostrum plebs tam misericors quam pro nobis flere conspeximus concupiscit? Recordemur, obsecro, quem umquam laeserit, cui nostrorum verbo saltem irrogarit iniuriam, et revertamur ad innoxios, quos in nullo sensimus inimicos, et quod Deo placuerit fiat.* All quotations are translated by Bradbury 1996.

We can identify three salient features in this speech. The first is that credit for Meletius' own decision to join the church is given to the fact that Theodorus promised to join (although in reality he has not yet). Theodorus, both in his role as leader of the community and as Meletius' blood brother, holds a large amount of influence over Meletius. With that in mind, Innocentius asks what the point of hiding out is. They're starving in the wilderness, and for what? From a pragmatic standpoint, Innocentius wants to join the church and get it over with. As a recent refugee from Spain himself<sup>708</sup>, his comparisons with brigands or "the swords of barbarians" feels especially poignant. Unlike brigands and barbarians, Christians are concerned for their well-being. Thus, for entirely pragmatic reasons, Innocentius tells Meletius that they should join. To these words, Meletius responds:

Brother Innocentius, you are learned not only in Latin literature, but in Greek literature as well, and you meditate constantly on the Law, but I think you have forgotten what the Lord says through the prophet Ezekiel: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" [Ezek. 18:20]. Now, if you have read this, why do you suppose that I can be drawn to faith in Christ by the example of my brother Theodorus? Just as he has his own soul, so too does he have his own sin, a sin that will not harm me if I do not abandon the Lord God of my fathers. Moreover, I call to witness Him who led our fathers out of the land of Egypt that I wish to emigrate, alone, to any land whatsoever by whatever voyage possible, if only winter storms did not hinder me. Neither does love of property nor the warmth of my personal attachments hold me back, the loss of which is easy for me, provided only that I am not compelled to deny the God of my fathers. But you offer the useless advice that we should return to the city. I am amazed that you, though a very wise man, do not in your mind foresee what you should judge will happen to us if Theodorus, the pillar of our synagogue, in whom we place all our trust, has been coerced into apostasy. Consequently, this is the safer plan, that we go instead to my farm and not expose ourselves further to the eyes of the Christians. We can hide out there for a while until, at an appropriate moment, we can emigrate abroad, since hatred against our religion has increased to such an extent among all people on this island that whoever does not abandon his

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<sup>708</sup> Sev. Minor.18.4. *Innocentius qui Hispaniarum cladem nuper fugiens*

fatherland will be unable to retain his fathers' faith. Why then don't we accept a voluntary exile, since the facts indicate that we are going to be driven into exile by the hatred of the citizens even if we're unwilling?<sup>709</sup>

This speech is remarkable because, if divorced from any other context, we could easily imagine that this was a speech a Christian would give about a pagan persecution. It begins with a common Christian rhetorical trope: the charge that an educated man is ignorant of a simple dictum of Scripture, in this case "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Meletius rejects the imputation that just because his brother would be an apostate, even under compulsion (*apostare compulsus est*), that means that he would too. Instead, Meletius offers a vision of a type of Jewish martyrdom that, while it does not ascend to the heights of Christian martyrs who die for their faith, does stress that Meletius would be bereft of his material goods, his homeland, and even his family if or when he leaves Minorca for the sake of religious freedom. While there is no doubt that Severus wishes them both to convert (which they do, after this speech is given, as if by sudden revelation),<sup>710</sup> we cannot deny that Severus gives a sympathetic portrayal of Meletius. While of the wrong religion, he is loyal to his faith and knowledgeable about the Scriptures, and resistant to conversion on the merits of pragmatic considerations. One rhetorical effect of the episode is to stress the miraculous nature of the conversion immediately after the

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<sup>709</sup> Sev. Minor.18.15-20. *Ego te, inquit, Innocenti frater, qui non solum Latinis verum etiam Graecis litteris eruditus es et legem iugiter meditaris, oblitum reor quod per Ezechielem prophetam Dominus ait, "Anima quae peccaverit ipsa morietur." Si enim legisti hoc, cur me fratris meir, Theodori, exemplo adtrahi posse ad fidem Christi aestimas? Habet ille ut animam suam ita etiam et peccatum suum, quod quidem mihi, Si Dominum Deum patrum meorum non reliquero, non nocebit. Testor autem illum, qui eduxit patres nostros de terra Aegypti, mem si hiemis inclementia non obsesset, abrepto qualicumque navigio ad quaslibet terras solum velle migrare. Nec me possessionum amor nec affectuum caritas detinet, quorum facilis mihi iactura est, tantum ne Deum patrum nostrorum negare compellar. Quod autem consilio inutili ad civitatem remeandum decernis, miror te prudentissimum virum non animo praevidere quid de nobis futurum censeas, si Theodoros columna synagogae nostrae, in quo omnem fiduciam reponebamus, apostatare compulsus est. Hoc ergo sanius est, ut eamus potius ad agrum meum nec nos ultro Christianorum oculis ingeramus. Possumus autem illic interim delitescere, donec oportuno tempore ad peregrina emigremus, quoniam quidem in hac insula ita apud cunctos odium nostrae religionis increvit, ut, qui patriam non reliquerit, fidem patrum tenere non possit. Cur itaque non voluntarium suscipiamus exilium ad quod, sicut res indicat, odiis civium etiam si nolumus extrudendi sumus.*

<sup>710</sup> Sev. Minor.18.21-22.

speech. But the speech itself explores one way a Jewish person, resistant to joining the Church, would think about his predicament, expressed in ways meant to be sympathetic to those familiar with the contours of Christian martyr narratives. This is very similar to how Greco-Roman historians, such as Tacitus and Sallust, use speeches to explore the sympathetic features of otherwise villainous characters, such as Calgacus or Catiline.<sup>711</sup> In this way, the *Epistula Severi* is multi-layered. On top of a strain of anti-Jewish rhetoric and exultation in their coerced conversion, the letter gives the reader a sympathetic portrayal of some of their leading members. The reader is not given the impression that the decision to join the church happened instantly or painlessly. Rather, the text calls attention to the fact that different individuals responded differently for different reasons, including resistance.

Not only does Severus look at the different reasons why someone may convert or may not convert with these two speeches, he also includes a number of mini episodes that show the wide variety of reasons why a Jew might join the church. The only instant, miraculous conversion is that of Reuben, who joins the church immediately after the burning of the synagogue.<sup>712</sup> As Severus himself points out, the name Reuben is noteworthy, since it is the name of Israel's (Jacob's) first-born.<sup>713</sup> As E.D. Hunt emphasizes, "early-fifth century Minorca has become entangled with the world of Genesis."<sup>714</sup>

Reuben is instrumental in acquiring Theodorus' membership, but he does so in the pragmatic vein that we also saw with Innocentius. Reuben makes this argument: "If you truly wish to be safe and honoured and wealthy, believe in Christ, just as I too have believed. Right now you are standing, and I am seated with bishops; if you should believe, you will be seated,

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<sup>711</sup> Tac. Agr. 29-32; Sall. Catil. 20.2-20.17. Cf. Marincola 2007, Adler 2011

<sup>712</sup> Sev. Minor.15.1.

<sup>713</sup> Gen 35:23.

<sup>714</sup> Hunt 1982, 113.

and I will be standing before you."<sup>715</sup> This line of argument completely ignores doctrinal or theological points, likely because Theodorus is explicitly shown to be rejecting Christian argument in the lines above.<sup>716</sup> Rather, Reuben focuses on Theodorus' desire to remain a safe man, a wealthy man, and a man in charge of his community. Theodorus reinforces that *this* is the line of argument that works for a man like him when he replies "Accept this promise, but allow me first to address my people, so that I may reap a better reward for my conversion by the conversion of others as well."<sup>717</sup>

Much as with Innocentius, Theodorus' conversion is driven by pragmatic factors, not intellectual or spiritual ones; but unlike with Innocentius, who was rebuked by Meletius, Theodorus is cheered for converting at all, no matter the reason. The Christian population is flexible with the timing of the public conversion when Theodorus submits that he wants to wait to tell his wife. Severus presents this as a matter of course, a pragmatic decision:

He believed, for what seemed to him justifiable reasons, that the vows of all the Jews should be postponed, saying that first he wanted to bring his wife here, whom he had left of the island of Majorca. His concern was that she might, if she learned that her husband had converted without her agreement, remain firm in her faithlessness, as usually happens. Further, she might become confused in her judgement and, at the instigation of her mother in particular, who was still alive, abandon both the marriage and her husband's religion.<sup>718</sup>

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<sup>715</sup> Sev. Minor.16.14-15. *Si vis certe et securus et honoratus et dives esse, in Christum crede, sicut et ego credidi. Modo tu stas et ego cum episcopis sedeo. Si credideris, tu sedebis et ego ante te stabo.*

<sup>716</sup> Epist. Sev. 16.3.

<sup>717</sup> Ibid. *Tenete, inquit, promissionem hanc, sed permittite mihi ut prius alloquar plebem meam, ut maiorem conversionis meae etiam ex reliquis possim habere mercedem.*

<sup>718</sup> Sev. Minor.21.2. *qui cum iustis, quantum ipsi videbatur, allegationibus cunctorum vota crederet differenda, dicens matronam prius suam, quam in Maioricensi reliquisset insula, huc se velle deducere, ne forte, si absque consensu suo virum suum conversum fuisse agnovisset, sicut solet, pertinax perfidiae esset, et persuasione matris praecipue suae, quae adhuc seupererat, consiliis dementata et a coniugio et a religione discederet.*

While the Christian population was amenable, the Jews demanded that Theodorus join the church right there and then.<sup>719</sup> Ross Kraemer, in her article on gender in the *Epistula Severi*, uses this episode to show how the conversion of the Jewish population to Christianity re-masculinizes the Jews by reasserting their control over a woman's unfeminine obstinacy.<sup>720</sup> She is right to do so, but this episode also highlights how considerations of familial relationships impact decisions to join the church. Whether Theodorus is stalling for time or this is a real concern is irrelevant; the text itself calls the reader to consider the reasons why Theodorus would want to delay to bring his wife, and then consider the reaction of the Jewish crowd who forced Theodorus to convert immediately.

In addition to Theodorus, Severus calls attention to two leaders of the Jewish community: Galilaeus and Caecilianus. Galilaeus gives a simple, pragmatic reason for joining the church: "For on my estate I have Christian partners by whose hatred I may be killed if I wish to persevere in Judaism. Therefore, I will heed the danger to my life and will set out right now for the church to escape the death being prepared for me."<sup>721</sup> The narrator notes that this statement is true, although only in reference to the end of days.<sup>722</sup> Nevertheless, the reader's attention is called to a powerful motivator for changing religious allegiances: the wish to avoid being killed by people who hate you for persisting in a different religion.

Caecilianus, a leading member of the Jewish population and honored among the island's population in general, affirmed "that Galilaeus spoke the truth and that he himself had a similar

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<sup>719</sup> Sev. Minor.21.3.

<sup>720</sup> Kraemer 2009, 653-655.

<sup>721</sup> Sev. Minor.19.4-5. *In possessione siquidem mea Christianos consortes habeo, quorum odiis, si in Iudaismo perseverare voluero, forsitan perimendus sum. Ego igitur vitae meae periculo consulens, ad ecclesiam iam nunc pergam, ut necem quae mihi praeparatur effugiam.*

<sup>722</sup> Sev. Minor.19.5.

motive and feared the same fate."<sup>723</sup> To this, he added these words: the Christians "certainly could never vanquish, with their countless citations from the Scriptures, not only you, brother Theodorus, who are thought to be more learned than the others, but everyone else as well, if they were not pursuing the truth, which cannot be defeated."<sup>724</sup> This might strike the attentive reader as odd, since the text is explicit in the fact that scriptural argumentation did *not* conquer Theodorus. Theodorus is twice presented as debating with Christians and holding his own in the argument, if not winning outright.<sup>725</sup> Thus, this statement should be interpreted in one of two ways (or both together). One way to read this would be that Caecilianus sees the conversion of Theodorus, for pragmatic reasons, as evidence for the power of Christian arguments because the "truth" found a way to overcome even Theodorus' learning. The other way would be that the Jewish population simply *assumes* that Theodorus was won over by Scriptural argumentation even if we, the reader, know that was not. In either case, this is the only statement within the text assigning the cause for joining the church to be superiority in Scriptural argumentation, although it is backed up by a concern for Caecilianus' own life.

Through the individuals and speeches that Severus provides in his narrative, Severus explores for the reader the various reactions people in the community undergo. Some go through a miraculous conversion, like Reuben or, in the aftermath, Innocentius and Meletius. Others, like Theodorus and Innocentius before their official conversion, are moved by more pragmatic concerns for their own economic and social well being. Galilaeus is concerned with his bodily well being, concerns echoed by Caecilianus. Meletius resists calls to join the church, painting

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<sup>723</sup> Sev. Minor.19.6. *Caecilianus vera Galilaeum dicere seque similem causam habere et similia formidare adtestabatur.*

<sup>724</sup> Sev. Minor.19.9. *qui numquam utique innumerabilibus scripturarum testimoniis non solum te, frater Theodore, qui peritior reliquis videris, sed etiam cunctos convincerent, nisi veritatem quae vinci non potest sectarentur.*

<sup>725</sup> Sev. Minor.7.2 and 16.3.

himself as a Jewish martyr for resisting the Christian population until God steps in and forces his conversion anyway. Above all, though, Severus presents the Jewish population of the island as elite-driven. The focus is on the upper crust of the community, the opinion leaders who guide the rest of their people to making one decision or another. Severus focuses his attention on the elite because, in his religious sociology, converting the elite will force the rest of the community who rely on their leaders for religious, economic, and social support to follow.

The question remains, of course: would God approve of the coercive acts of the Christians? Severus appears aware of the charges too violent a portrayal could bring, since he is at pains to minimize the appearance of violent conflict and stresses a peaceful process in which only property, not humans, are damaged. To buttress this point, Severus includes a number of miracle narratives that would suggest to the reader that Christ not only embraces the attempt of religious coercion, but shares the same sociological understanding of how coercion works.

The first miracle that Severus mentions is the arrival of Stephen's relics. Severus writes

At about the same period when I, although unworthy, assumed the title of episcopal office, a certain priest, conspicuous for his sanctity, came from Jerusalem and sojourned for a brief time in Magona. After he was unable to cross over to Spain, as he wished to do, he decided to go back to Africa again. Doubtless at the inspiration of the martyr himself, he placed in the church of Magona some relics of Stephen the martyr, which recently had come to light and which he had intended to transport to Spain. When this was done, straight away the fire of His love was kindled, which the Lord 'came to cast upon the earth' [Luke 12:49] and which He wishes to blaze forth. Immediately our complacency heated up, and, as it is written, our hearts were 'burning by the way' [Luke 24:32]. At one moment, zeal for the faith would fire our hearts; at another moment, the hope of saving a multitude would spur us on.<sup>726</sup>

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<sup>726</sup> Sev. Minor.4. *Nameque diebus paene isdem, quibus ego tanti sacerdotii nomen, licet indignus, adeptus sum, presbyter quidam sanctitate praecipuus ab Hierosolyima veniens, Magonae non longo tempore immoratus est. Qui postquam transvehi ad Hispanias, sicut desiderabat, nequivit, remeare denuo ad Africam statuit. Hic beati martyris Stephani reliquias, quae nuper revelatae sunt, cum ad Hispanias portare constituisset, ipso sine dubio martyre inspirante, in memorati oppidi ecclesia collocavit. Quo facto, protinus ille, quem Dominus 'venit mittere in*

Severus paints the decision to leave the relics in Magona as inspired by Stephen, *ipso sine dubio martyre inspirante*. Immediately following the deposition, a zeal for the faith overtook the population of Jamona (*quo facto protinus ille ... ignus accensus est*). While not explicitly described as a miracle, the passage posits the agency of both Stephen and God in riling the people up, thus granting divine approval for whatever actions the Christian population of Jamona take against the Jewish population of Magona.<sup>727</sup> The Christian population explicitly prays to Stephen for aid in their first confrontation with Theodorus, where both sides agreed that they would have a debate.<sup>728</sup>

The debate proved fruitless, however. Severus points out that Theodorus was too skillful in his interpretation of Scripture that he even cooled the flames of some of the Christian's zeal.<sup>729</sup> However, the reader is not to be concerned with this momentary setback. Severus provides the reader with three prophetic dreams. Both a Christian virgin named Theodora and Severus himself received a dream in which a noble widow, symbolizing the Synagogue, begged Severus to sow all of her fields.<sup>730</sup> Theodorus himself received a dream where he was blocked from entering his synagogue by twelve individuals, who warned him of a lion. Fearing the lion, Theodorus ran first to a Jew named Reuben, and then to his married kinswoman who comforted him. Severus flags the married kinswoman as the church, and tells us that he will cover why Reuben was in the dream "in its proper place" -- Reuben was the first Jew to join the church.<sup>731</sup>

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*terram' et quem valde ardere cupit, caritatis eius ignis accensus est. Statim siquidem tepor noster incaluit et factum est cor nostrum, sicut scriptum est, 'ardens in via.' Nunc enim iam illud fidei amburebat zelus, nunc spes salvandae multitudinis erigebat.*

<sup>727</sup> See footnote 573 for a discussion of chronology. For this reading, however, the delay between the arrival of the relics and the actions described in the letter is irrelevant, because we are focused on the literary presentation of the events contained in the letter. The letter itself draws a strong correlation between the arrival and increase of religious polarization.

<sup>728</sup> Sev. Minor.6.4.

<sup>729</sup> Sev. Minor.7.2.

<sup>730</sup> Sev. Minor.10.

<sup>731</sup> Theodorus' dream: Sev. Minor.11. Reuben's conversion: Sev. Minor.15.

These dream narratives call to mind prophetic dreams in the early Roman historians, where prophecies are presented to the reader as a sign for what will -- and should -- occur.<sup>732</sup> These narratives guide the reader into believing that whatever events occur in the text, they have been pre-ordained and approved by the divine.

The rest of the text serves as the fulfillment of the prophetic dreams. The Christians and Jews enter into a violent conflict whereafter the synagogue is burned down. Severus explicitly states that the Christian's behavior, although provoked by a Jewish woman in the beginning, is endorsed and guided by God:

At this point, that terrible Lion took away for a short while the mildness from his lambs. While I protested in vain, they all snatched up stones, and neglecting their shepherd's warning, since they were united in a plan suggested more by zeal for Christ than by anger, they decided that the wolves had to be attacked with horns, although no one could doubt that this was done with the approval of Him who alone is the true and good shepherd.<sup>733</sup>

The Christian population entered into violence without Severus' direction or permission; in fact, they ignored his calls for peace. However, Severus immediately pivots and claims that the Christian mob was in the right, and he was in the wrong, because the Christian mob was following the *verus et bonus pastor* -- Jesus Christ. The *leo terribilis*, who played such a prominent role in Theodorus' dream, is placed in the nominative case: he is given agency over the entire episode by removing the "mildness" from the Christian mob. Not only is this a literary miracle because God intervenes into the events portrayed, but it also serves as a fulfillment of Theodorus' dream.

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<sup>732</sup> See Pelling 1997.

<sup>733</sup> Sev. Minor.13.5-6. *Hic agnis suis leo ille terribilis mansuetudinem paululum abstulit. Omnes siquidem frustra reclamantibus nobis saxa corripunt, et pastoris commonitione posthabita, cum unum consilium cunctis zelus potius Christi quam ira suggereret, lupos cornibus impetendos censuerunt, quamvis hoc illius qui solus verus et bonus pastor est nutu factum esse nulli dubium sit.*

After the burning of the synagogue, the elite of the Jewish population join the church. Reuben immediately so, Theodorus after a few days, and Meletius and Innocentius convert while out in the wilderness. All of these are described as miracles.<sup>734</sup> As if to confirm the divine inspiration of these conversions, a *prodigium* appeared in the sky above the church where the relics of Stephen laid in repose after a number of Jews were received into the church there.<sup>735</sup> Severus himself seems unsure as to the ultimate nature of the prodigy. A mysterious ball of light is said to have appeared in the sky, in the size of a man and the shape of a jug called an *orca*.<sup>736</sup> Severus suggests it was either an angel, Stephen himself, or something else.<sup>737</sup> On the same day, a very fine hail had fallen on the island, and the Jews found that it tasted like honey; Severus draws the parallel to manna from the book of Exodus.<sup>738</sup> As more and more Jews began to convert, the weather changed to inform the island's inhabitants that people had joined the church: before Jews would join, rain would fall.<sup>739</sup>

Miracles are weaved into the entirety of Severus' letter. They serve the purpose of instigating the conflict between Christians and Jews, causing the conversion of several opinion-leaders amidst the Jews, and recognizing when conversion actually occurred. As a literary conceit, this suggests that Severus' understanding of how communities react to religious coercion has approval from the divine. At every step of the process, the divine is involved, alongside indications that the Jews of Magona are not necessarily converting for theological or spiritual reasons, but are doing so out of concern for their own safety and economic status. Thus, in the

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<sup>734</sup> Reuben: Sev. Minor.15. Theodorus promises to convert in Sev. Minor.16 and does so in Sev. Minor.21. Meletius and Innocentius: Sev. Minor.18.21-22.

<sup>735</sup> Sev. Minor.20.3-4.

<sup>736</sup> Sev. Minor.20.6.

<sup>737</sup> Sev. Minor.20.12.

<sup>738</sup> Sev. Minor.20.14-21.

<sup>739</sup> Sev. Minor.25.

*Epistula Severi*, a type of political realism and theological idealism are married into one unified account.

Fredriksen and Kramer are right, I think, to place the letter in dialogue with Augustine's theory of religious coercion. Fredriksen notes that Severus' exhortation to bishops to convert the Jews stands as proof that "Augustine's own theological rationale in defense of religious coercion ... could easily have been extended to embrace Jews as well."<sup>740</sup> Despite this, Augustine never adopts a positive stance towards coercing Jews to convert, maintaining that the Jews constitute a separate, special group that should not be coerced, unlike heretics and pagans.<sup>741</sup> Kraemer suggests that the composition of the *Letter* is a form of religious violence itself, by subsuming the voices of the Jews and presenting them to the outside world as part of the community headed by Severus himself.<sup>742</sup> By writing this letter and sending it to the bishops of the world, Severus offers an account of how bishops can increase their own power by using coercion to force other populations under their control.

I suggest that Severus makes a unique contribution to the late antique discourse on religious coercion. Augustine, in his writings on the matter, focused on the role the imperial government played in enforcing laws and, thereby, coercing wayward Christians back into the Catholic fold.<sup>743</sup> Whenever individuals took the matter in their own hands, Augustine would either decry them as lawless (the Circumcellions) or distance himself from them (the Catholic lay groups that would fight against the Donatists).<sup>744</sup> In Severus' account, however, all action was done by the Christian mob outside of his control. The actions that he did take, such as debating

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<sup>740</sup> Fredriksen 2008, 362.

<sup>741</sup> Fredriksen 2008, 363.

<sup>742</sup> Kraemer 2020, 59-64.

<sup>743</sup> See Aug. *epist.* 93, 173, and 185 for his own writing. Brown 1964 is the classic overview of his attitude, but should be supplemented with Gaddis 2005, 131-150 and Van Nuffelen 2020, 266-285.

<sup>744</sup> For example, see Aug. *epist.* 88.9 and Aug. *c. Cresc.* 3.46.50-51.

with the leader of the synagogue, did not lead to any conversion; it was only the violence the Christians committed. We should note that those who were converted were often either state officials (Theodorus as *defensor*, Caecilianus was formerly a *defensor*), or related to former government (Artemisia was the daughter of Litorius, a former governor of the island).

Not only is the coercion in the *Epistula Severi* successful, it is met with divine approval as evidenced by the miracles Severus weaves throughout the narrative. In the logic of the text, the arrival of Stephen's relics provides Christians the ability to take on the power of the state. While Stephen does not act on his own very much within the text, it is his arrival that triggers the zeal of the Christian mob and moves everything forward. It is at the church where his relics are buried that the conversions happen, and that visible miracles take place.

Viewing the letter from this angle, as a contribution to the discourse surrounding religious coercion, we can see how the model contained within would appeal to communities with limited to no access to state power. While the letter itself deals with Jews, there is no reason why its model cannot be translated to describe other religious groups. The letter, in the abstract, provides a narrative that describes how a Christian community can force an otherwise closely linked, if more powerful, group to change their religious allegiances. One does this, Severus suggests, by embracing the *permixtum* nature of the church, and using threats and acts of violence to intimidate opinion leaders. In order to know that it is divinely sanctioned, rather than simply an act of brute force, the Christian community needs signs from the heavens. This is a role that the relics of Stephen served in the *Epistula Severi*, and could serve again in Spain.

## Conclusion

As we have explored in this chapter, the texts that Stephen and his relics feature in are centered around the concept of unity. However, in each case, the process of unity is different. In

Avitus' letter to Balchonius, Stephen's role as patron will help the Bragan church deal with its earthly woes. The *Revelatio Sancti Stephani* presents Stephens' *inventio* as a divinely inspired event that brings the whole church of Jerusalem together. The miracle collections from North Africa present Stephen as performing acts of healing, and we have analyzed how these miracle collections can help the Catholic bishops work towards reconciliation with the Donatist faction. Finally, the presence of Stephen's relics is used as a justification by Severus of Minorca to defend his view of the validity of religious coercion. What remains is to speculate how these differing views of how Stephen forges unity could play out in Spain.

First, we should acknowledge that Stephen's relics could serve to ease the fears of the Bragans by offering a fresh solution to their problems. Prudentius' poetry presents martyrs as patrons of their communities, such as Eulalia.<sup>745</sup> Robert Wiśniewski has collected all of the evidence for relics offering comfort to the citizens of their cities while under attack.<sup>746</sup> While there does not appear to be an immediate need for that in 416, in the years following Galicia does see its share of violence as the Vandals are beaten back by other barbarian warbands and, finally, the Romans. However, I wish to suggest that this is not the only use of Stephen's relics.

As we explored in Chapter 1, there are two main challenges facing the Bragan church. The first is its relationship vis-a-vis pro-Priscillianist communities. At the Council of Toledo in 400, Braga was confirmed to be run by an anti-Priscillianist bishop. At the same council, it was confirmed that while some other bishops had become anti-Priscillianist, more others maintained their pro-Priscillianist stance. Thus, at the time of the Council of Toledo, we can conclude that Galicia can be seen as divided between two different communities of bishops. However, as we move into the 420s, we must note that the precise nature of this ecclesiological cleavage is

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<sup>745</sup> See footnote 49.

<sup>746</sup> Wiśniewski 2019, 48-69.

difficult to ascertain. While there are two communities of bishops in 400, by 420 the only evidence we have is Consentius' letter to Augustine.<sup>747</sup> In this letter, the pro-Priscillianists are depicted as hidden amongst the orthodox, rather than standing as an independent community. This picture is used again in Turibibus' letter.<sup>748</sup> Of course, Consentius' letter is meant to serve his own anti-Priscillianist agenda, and we cannot take his letter as straightforward evidence of how the pro-Priscillianists are organized, as Virginia Burrus has shown; nor can we use Turibibus as an independent witness, as he is heavily indebted to the anti-Priscillianist literary tradition.<sup>749</sup>

Still, with this caveat in mind, we can broadly speak of two communities (however separated or mixed): one that thinks that Priscillian was a heretic, and one that thinks Priscillian was a martyr persecuted by the bishops. In that sense, we can compare this divide to the Donatist/Catholic schism in North Africa, a comparison that Consentius made in his letter to Augustine.<sup>750</sup> Just as in our analysis above, the presence of Stephen's relics could be capitalized upon by the Galician bishops to establish new points of contact with the pro-Priscillianist community. While they may disagree over Priscillian's status as a martyr, there is no reason to suspect either side to doubt Stephen's status as one, since he is found in Scripture. This would create a new institution, in the form of *martyria* to Stephen and celebrations of his Feast Day, that could help bridge the interpersonal divide in the two communities. However, we should note one important difference between the Pro/Anti-Priscillianist divide and the Catholic/Donatist divide. The Donatists were compelled to unify with the Catholics, and

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<sup>747</sup> Aug. *epist.* 11\*.

<sup>748</sup> Turibibus, *Turrib. Epist.*

<sup>749</sup> Burrus 1995, 115-122.

<sup>750</sup> Aug. *epist.* 11\*.26.

Stephen's presence could provide enough reasons for them to adjust themselves to the new order. There is no such coercion that we can identify in the Pro/Anti-Priscillianist divide.

In the absence of the state as an ally, the Galician bishops could choose to follow Severus of Minorca's example. While we do not know if the events he describes on Minorca actually happened, he does provide a model for the Galician bishops to follow. The Galician bishops could use the arrival of Stephen's relics as a focusing event that changes the intensity of any anti-Priscillianist preaching, and then use that preaching to mobilize their congregations into action. However, as consistently bears repeating, we have no evidence that this actually occurred; it is only a possibility presented by the *Epistula Severi*.

The other challenge the Galician bishops face is that they are only partially accepted by the other Spanish anti-Priscillianist bishops. While some maintain communion with them at the behest of the Council of Toledo, we know that others refused to hold communion with the Galicians because they were previously seen as heretics.<sup>751</sup> In Chapter 1, I explored how Orosius' activity outside of Spain could be seen as a status-enhancing strategy. Stephen's relics could fit into that broader strategy. Orosius advertises a relationship with Augustine and with Jerome in his literary works, a strategy meant to enhance his own status by showing his connection to higher status individuals. Orosius' status building activities is centered around enhancing his own status as an individual; the church in Braga only benefits from that insofar as Orosius as an individual is associated with the church in Braga.

Stephen's relics offer the same status enhancement as connections with higher status individuals. This is because of the fact that they are also present in Minorca, in North Africa, and in Jerusalem (and later, in Constantinople, although this is outside the scope of this study). The

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<sup>751</sup> Innocent I, *Ep.3.2* (Innocentius papa *epist. pontif.* 287.2.)

shared possession of Stephen's relics gives the Galician bishops an opportunity to exploit the connection in their self presentation to other Spanish bishops. The relics also possess an advantage: their status-enhancing abilities transcend the life and reputation of any one individual, since the creation of institutions around the relics outlast the life of any one individual. In the short term, the presence of Stephen's relics could allow the Galician bishops to stress their connections to other anti-heretical writers, such as Augustine, Consentius, and Jerome. In a world where they are denied communion because their orthodox *bona fides* is under doubt, this would serve to counter anti-Priscillianist fears. In the long term, the Galician bishops would be able to change how they use the relics to answer new challenges and concerns. As our case studies above have demonstrated, how bishops use Stephen differ wildly depending on the local conditions and goals of the bishop, and the Galician bishops could take advantage of that as the need arose.

It is an unfortunate reality that we cannot probe deeper into these possibilities. The evidence to do so simply does not exist. However, this does not make our speculation a fruitless exercise. This chapter serves as a contribution to our understanding of how bishops and writers construed meaning out of Stephen's relics. It also serves to examine how these constructed meanings relate to the ecclesiological situation each bishop faced. While Stephen himself is associated with ecclesiological unity, how that unity is achieved differs depending on the location and circumstance. While most scholars take Avitus' lead and see the relics of Stephen as only providing comfort to a people suffering under barbarian occupation, this chapter shows that while Stephen's relics could fill that role, the Galician bishops could use the relics to improve their own ecclesiological status *in tandem* with encouraging the veneration of Stephen amongst their own congregations.

# Conclusion

## Orosius

In this dissertation, I have deliberately ignored Orosius as a writer of history and, instead, focused on his actions in the ecclesiastical controversies of his day. By doing so, I have laid out the underlying logic behind them. This has led me to draw conclusions that further develop the scholarship on Orosius.

In my introduction, I made the argument that Orosius must be understood in a Spanish context. Most scholars treat Orosius as if he is an isolated figure, attempting to become a hanger-on of Augustine and Jerome. While scholarship acknowledges that he comes from Spain, and some even argue that Orosius traveled to Africa to ask Augustine "pious questions" rooted in the controversies in Spain, once Orosius leaves Spain he is never again treated as a Spanish actor. As such, no biography of Orosius includes the type of information that I have provided. However, the Spanish context provides a crucial lens to view Orosius' later actions.

The first chapter examines Orosius' journey to Africa in the context of the Priscillianist controversy. First, it establishes the political geography of the Spanish church in the wake of the Council of Toledo: the province of Galicia is isolated because of its past association with the pro-Priscillianist position. I also depicted how the Spanish bishops took two radically different stances in managing difference over time: in the 380s, the anti-Priscillianists worked to maximize difference, while in the years leading up to 400 they worked to minimize it. The result is that Orosius had to choose which tactic he would use as he entered the conflict.

Scholars have mostly analyzed the *Commonitorium* as a source of information on the Priscillianist controversy and on the Origenist controversy in Spain. Orosius is said to have

traveled to Africa in order to get Augustine to refute their heresy. However, a deeper look reveals this to be an unsatisfying conclusion. The depictions of Priscillian and the Origenists are purely literary constructions with little to no verifiable relation to reality. Instead of asking what we can learn from the *Commonitorium*, I ask what the composition of the text does for Orosius' personal status. The composition of the *Commonitorium*, as well as Augustine's reply, serves to advertise Orosius' connection with a high-status figure.

I then connect the composition of the *Commonitorium* back to Spanish ecclesiastical politics. I contend that the effect of Orosius' extralocal status-seeking activities is to raise the status of the See of Braga, as well. Through the actions of Orosius abroad, the church at Braga can point at their newfound connection with Augustine, a figure of high enough status that the opposing side of the conflict would ask him to lend his weight to their side a few short years afterward. In this way, the *Commonitorium* should not be seen as a document meant to refute the heretics, but as a way to prove to the other Spanish churches that the Galician bishops are, in fact, orthodox.

The second chapter looks at Orosius' anti-Pelagian activity in Jerusalem. Scholarship on this episode depicts Orosius as a zealous firebrand who unsuccessfully sought to assert Augustine's authority in a place he had none. Instead, I argue that we should view Orosius' actions in the context of how he shapes discourse on the issue of original sin, rather than his immediate success or failure in Jerusalem. The end result is that, while Pelagius was acquitted at Diospolis, Augustine's ideas were the standard by which he was judged. In other words, Orosius successfully set the agenda of the Council of Diospolis with the result that they conceived of Augustine's thought as orthodox, which would impact the discourse surrounding the issue in the years to come.

Yet, we should not view this as evidence that Orosius was merely Augustine's lackey. Augustine sent Orosius to study the soul at the feet of Jerome, and we have no evidence that he sent Orosius there to be an active combatant. Instead, Orosius showed an entrepreneurial spirit. He worked to set the conditions that would allow Pelagius to be tried at the Council of Diospolis by using a combination of Augustinian theology and Hieronymian invective. Orosius serves as an ally to the two more well-known players in the game, not as a subordinate. Through his actions, Orosius moves the discourse surrounding original sin to one much closer to the vision of human nature present in authors like Pacian. Thus, while no direct link can be drawn between Orosius and Pacian, we can say that Orosius was an independent actor in this controversy that bore similarities to the debate already taking place in Spain about human nature and the place of sin in the church.

Finally, the third chapter takes a different approach than the previous two. We possess no evidence whatsoever for the relics of Stephen in Spain until the seventh century. As such, Orosius' mission to bring them back to Braga in the early years of the fifth century remains unclear -- we have no idea if they ever arrived, or for what purpose they were deployed. The third chapter is an exercise in informed speculation. I look at three examples that prominently feature the relics of Stephen: their discovery, their use in Africa in the context of the Donatist controversy, and their presence on the island of Minorca. Not so coincidentally, these are all examples that involve Orosius to some extent: he is the one who received the relics from Avitus of Braga, and he is the one who brought the relics to Africa and Minorca on the way back home.

These examples demonstrate that the relics of Stephen were used as a tool to manage difference in church communities. The reaction to the discovery of the relics produced texts that stressed the power of the martyr to solve problems and produce unity. The relics were used in the

Donatist controversy to promote the reunification of two polarized factions after decades of schism. Instead of using the relics as a demonstration of Catholic superiority, as has been maintained, I argue that the relics were used to promote talking points that were more targeted towards Donatist concerns with reunification. Finally, the relics are depicted by Severus of Minorca as inspiring a "nonviolent" coercion of the Jews on the island, winding up with the mass conversion of the Jewish population. I argue that the *Letter of Severus* itself engages in the late antique debate on forced conversion, and the relics are an important piece of its narrative.

These three examples show demonstrate how actors could deploy the relics as a means to manage difference. Given the division present in the Spanish church at Orosius' time, it is likely that the relics would have been deployed to address these differences. The church in Braga in particular has a number of targets: recalcitrant pro-Priscillianists, stubborn orthodox bishops who refuse to accept them, and even the Germanic tribes who settled there and could, at times, be a ponderous to deal with. While we cannot say that they *were* used to manage these problems, their potential to be used in this way has been firmly established.

In this summary, I have concentrated on my conclusions. Orosius should no longer be treated in isolation of the Spanish context from which he comes, and he should no longer be considered subordinate to figures like Augustine and Jerome. That is the contribution I wish to make to Orosian studies. However, what has so far gone undiscussed is the method that I used to arrive at these conclusions: the incorporation of modern political science into my analysis of ecclesiastical politics. As such, this is what the remainder of the conclusion will focus on.

I will present a model of political conflict that has been adapted from the scholarship on agenda-setting in American politics. I have changed it to fit Late Antique ecclesiastical politics when appropriate. This model exhibits a new way forward for scholars of late antiquity. By

sketching this model, I provide a new (to historians of Late Antiquity) vocabulary that allows for more analytical precision. In this vein, my dissertation does not simply contribute to Orosian studies, but it makes a methodological contribution to the wider field of Late Antique history.

### A Model of Political Conflict

A political conflict should be understood as a struggle "between two or more identifiable groups over procedural or substantive matters relating to the distribution of position or resources."<sup>752</sup> A group can be defined as "any plurality of individuals banding together formally or informally, temporarily or relatively permanently, to promote or protest a shared perception of mutual interest."<sup>753</sup> In late antique politics, this often looks like a loose faction of bishops joining together to push forth their mutual ideas of orthodoxy.

A conflict has five key dimensions: scope, visibility, intensity, direction, and termination.<sup>754</sup> Scope should be understood as how widespread the conflict is and how many people participate. Conflicts tend to begin with a small scope, limited in geographic range and involving a small amount of people. The scope can be expanded as a result of a deliberate political strategy<sup>755</sup> or as a result of sudden enthusiasm caused by some triggering or focusing event.<sup>756</sup>

Visibility refers to how aware of the conflict the public is. Conflicts with a small scope tend to be less visible, since fewer people know of the conflict. One may think of how the

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<sup>752</sup> Definition adapted from the definition of "issue" given by Cobb and Elder 1972, 82.

<sup>753</sup> Cobb and Elder 1972, 38, note 10. This is based on the definition of "interest group" found in Truman 1951, 33. Truman defines interest group as "any group that, on the basis of one or more shared attitudes, makes certain claims upon other groups in the society for the establishment, maintenance, or enhancement of forms of behavior that are implied by the shared attitudes."

<sup>754</sup> These five properties are found by combining the insights of Adamany 1972, 1331 and Cobb and Elder 1972, 43–44; 53. Cobb and Elder draw their insights for the importance of how a conflict should end from Coser 1967, 43. For a similar analysis on the construction of a conflict, through the lens of comparative lobbying, see Mahoney 2008, 42.

<sup>755</sup> Schattschneider 1960, 1–19.

<sup>756</sup> Downs 1972, 39.

conflict between Arius and Alexander of Alexandria began as a small, localized conflict. As the visibility of a conflict increases, the potential for its scope to expand increases. Extralocal actors, seeing the localized conflict, may be asked to join as a political strategy or else seek to join for their own advantage.

Intensity should be understood as how committed the groups are to mutually incompatible positions. "Operationally, intensity will roughly correspond to the resources the contending parties are willing to commit to the conflict relative to their total capability. All conflicts have a cost dimension, and the more vital the objects of a conflict are to a group (or are perceived to be), the more of the group's resources it will be willing to commit to the conflict. Intensity, then, is a function of both the degree of commitment of the contending parties and the degree to which their respective commitments are mutually incompatible."<sup>757</sup> The higher the intensity, the more likely the visibility of the conflict will increase. Conflicts with high intensity should be viewed as highly polarized conflicts.<sup>758</sup> One may think of the Luciferian's intensity in their identification with the Nicene Creed, or the Donatist's identification with their status as persecuted Christians (or martyrs).

The direction of a conflict is defined as the way people are divided into opposing groups. The direction of a conflict is often determined by how the alternatives of the conflict are defined. "Direction is determined by the visibility and intensity of conflicts. It is also determined by scope, since the line of conflict will be drawn by those who participate. New participants, with different priorities about the most important directions of conflict, can change the direction. Conversely, the direction of conflict has a bearing on its scope, because a division about issues which are irrelevant to numbers of people may well cause them simply to ignore the fight

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<sup>757</sup> Cobb and Elder 1972, 43.

<sup>758</sup> For more on polarization generally, see Campbell 2016.

altogether."<sup>759</sup> This insight is essential for my analysis of the Priscillianist controversy in Chapter One.

The termination of a conflict is the goal of each group in the conflict. These goals vary based on the situation. Having one's theological ideas deemed "orthodox" by a church council, or having one's enemy declared a "heretic," represents a short-term conflict. A longer-term conflict can be characterized by immediate goals and the ultimate goal.<sup>760</sup> A given conflict may, therefore, have an immediate termination goal but that conflict may only play into a larger, longer-term conflict. Orosius' immediate goal was to secure Pelagius' condemnation at the Synod of Diospolis, a goal at which he was unsuccessful. However, he was successful in setting the terms of the Pelagian controversy around Augustine's ideas, which eventually led to Augustine's (and Orosius') ultimate victory.

Political conflicts are about issues. While in common parlance and in some political science literature, "conflict" and "issue" become conflated, we should understand an "issue" to be a constituent part of a conflict. In ecclesiastical politics we can see how there is a conflict *between* the Donatists and African Catholics on the *issues* of rebaptism or church ownership. There is a pre-existing conflict between two political parties, and the issues are the vehicle through which they carry out their conflict. Borrowing from Cobb and Elder, there are five key characteristics of an issue: "(1) the degree of specificity, (2) the scope of social significance, (3) the extent of temporal relevance, (4) the degree of complexity, and (5) the degree of categorical precedence."<sup>761</sup>

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<sup>759</sup> Adamany 1972, 1331.

<sup>760</sup> Alternatively, we can understand a longer-term conflict as consisting of numerous microconflicts.

<sup>761</sup> Cobb and Elder 1972, 97. Cobb and Elder have constructed this list from a variety of sources, but claim the most inspiration from Parsons and Shils 1951, 76–91.

The degree of specificity "refers to how abstractly or concretely an issue will be defined."<sup>762</sup> There are varying levels of degrees of ambiguity presented to a public. "There is a tremendous difference between a group that attempts to remove 'obscene literature' from local bookstores and a similar group in another city that defines the issue as a list of specific items that should be impounded by the local police department."<sup>763</sup> Generally speaking, the more ambiguously an issue is presented, the wider the potential scope of the conflict. Outside actors will bring their own perceptions and needs to a conflict. The more ambiguous the issue, the more likely outside actors will find it relevant.

Social significance refers to the degree to which the issue "is peculiar to the immediate disputants or has more general significance."<sup>764</sup> Generally speaking, the larger the social significance of an issue, the wider the potential scope. One dimension of political activity is to persuade a given public why the issue at hand has social significance for that public.

The third characteristic is temporal relevance. This should be understood as whether the given issue matters for the short term or has longer-term ramifications. "Issues that are going to have implications above and beyond the resolution of the particular issue at one point in time and one level in government are temporally relevant."<sup>765</sup>

The degree of complexity refers to "how an issue will be delineated along a continuum from the highly complex and technical to the simple and easily understood."<sup>766</sup> Generally speaking, the lower the complexity, the wider the possible scope. However, using technical language to describe an issue can convince an interested public that the speaker has the relevant

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<sup>762</sup> Cobb and Elder 1972, 97.

<sup>763</sup> Cobb and Elder 1972, 97.

<sup>764</sup> Cobb and Elder 1972, 97.

<sup>765</sup> Cobb and Elder 1972, 98.

<sup>766</sup> Cobb and Elder 1972, 98-99.

competencies to make a decision about the issue. This is important if the speaker is attempting to present him/herself as an authority on the issue. The appearance of possessing the capability of providing a reasoned elaboration on an issue is an important dimension of political authority.<sup>767</sup> A balancing act must be drawn between presenting oneself as too technical and not technical enough. Bishops need to have enough theological expertise in order to present themselves as an authority on the issues of the day. At the same time, demonstrating that knowledge too much can open them to accusations of being given too much to philosophy.

Categorical precedence "indicates the extent to which an issue is a routine matter having more or less clear precedents (and consequently probable procedures for its resolution) or, conversely, the extent to which it is extraordinary."<sup>768</sup> Issues with a high amount of categorical precedence would appear to have pre-determined parameters and solutions. Issues with a low amount of categorical precedence must have their parameters, solutions, and dimensions defined within the conflict itself. "Often one side will treat an issue conventionally, according to set guidelines, while the other side may want it to be treated as unique without a consideration of precedents."<sup>769</sup> For instance, if someone is labeled a specific type of heretic (Manichaeism, Arianism, etc.) then the bishops labeling them as such may fall back to what has historically been ruled for those groups, while the creation of a new category (Priscillianism, Pelagianism) may require more innovation.

Conflicts are not synonymous with issues, but issues make a large part of what defines a conflict. Conflicts between groups can contain only one issue, or they can contain multiple. Political strategy is often dependent upon how participants in political conflict manipulate the

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<sup>767</sup> Friedrich 1972, 45–56.

<sup>768</sup> Cobb and Elder 1972, 100.

<sup>769</sup> Cobb and Elder 1972, 101.

issues. The work of E.E. Schattschneider provides the foundation to understanding two political strategies in particular: widening the scope of a conflict and changing the direction of a conflict.

## Political Strategies

### Widening the Scope

In Schattschneider's conception of political conflict, the "tremendous contagiousness of conflict" is key to understand how politics plays out.<sup>770</sup> Every conflict consists of two parts: the combatants at the center, and the audience watching them. The audience plays the deciding role in the outcome of the conflict. The audience is a pool of potential participants, who can join one side or the other (or remain uninvolved). As the scope of the conflict expands, more people will join the conflict and change the balance of power. Their decision to join one side or the other fundamentally changes how the conflict plays out, thus determining the outcome. As a result, managing the spread of conflict is an important political strategy.

In a given conflict, the side with the most power has a vested interest in preventing its spread. They attempt to "localize" the conflict, because, as the conflict spreads, the balance of power can shift.<sup>771</sup> On the other hand, the side with the least power has a vested interest in "socializing" the conflict. By widening the scope of the conflict, they will attract members of the audience to join their side of conflict. We can see Orosius attempt to deploy this strategy when he seeks to bring Innocent I into his conflict with Pelagius.

Conflict is most easily controlled in its beginning stages. Those who feel that they are unlikely to succeed tend to not fight in the first place. "In this situation, repression may assume the guise of a false unanimity."<sup>772</sup> If the scope of the conflict remains small, the conflict has a

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<sup>770</sup> Schattschneider 1960, 2.

<sup>771</sup> Schattschneider uses "localize" in this way in Schattschneider 1960, 10.

<sup>772</sup> Schattschneider 1960, 8.

low level of visibility to the wider public. Because visibility is low, those who would join a conflict on a given side are prevented from doing so by a lack of recognition.

For the expansion of conflict to be a viable political strategy, it must spread to relevant publics and to the appropriate venue. Cobb and Elder have pointed out that there are only certain subsets of the population to which a given issue will be salient. They divide their conception of "the public" into two broad categories: specific publics and mass publics.<sup>773</sup> This does not fit precisely onto the Late Antique religious landscape, so we will modify their terms.

Broadly speaking, we can divide the types of people involved in ecclesiastical conflicts into two groups: Elites and Attentive Public. Elites can be defined as those who are actively involved in the conflicts and have an impact on how it is carried out. Most commonly, bishops are the main movers and shakers, but this group can also involve lower clergy (like Orosius), educated laypeople (like Pelagius and Consentius), or government officials (emperors like Constantine or Maximus, or the various governors appealed to during the Priscillianist controversy).

In any ecclesiastical conflict there are two types of elites: Core Elites and Extralocal Elites. Conflicts begin with a core group of actors that define the terms of the conflict, which I call the Core Elites. If the conflict fails to remain localized and is instead socialized, a common strategy is to invite elites from outside territories; hence, Extralocal Elites. Extralocal Elites can shift the terms of the conflict by further refining it with public debate, apply diplomatic pressure to a given side, or (in some cases) deploy state resources to attempt to bring the conflict to a close.

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<sup>773</sup> Cobb and Elder 1972, 104–8.

Broader than the elites are the public at large. Modern political science discusses the concept of "mass publics" to indicate the large number of the voting public who can be mobilized in political conflicts. In ecclesiastical politics, however, the concept of a mass public is not useful. The technology and education level required to mobilize mass groups of people across the entire Empire, or even a province of the Empire, simply did not exist. That said, elites did mobilize specific publics at strategic instances. Arius and Augustine both composed hymns and psalms meant for popular consumption.<sup>774</sup> Priscillian moved to intervene directly with Hydatius' parishioners at the beginning of the Priscillianist conflict.

As important to the audience for a given conflict (the *who*) is the venue in which a conflict is played out (the *where*). So-called "venue-shopping" is a core concept of the study of agenda setting, first explored by Baumgartner and Jones.<sup>775</sup> Venues are different locations where a group can pursue their conflicts. In modern American politics, groups can choose between, *inter alia*, congressional committees, state government organizations, judicial courts, private businesses, or the mass media as the venue through which to carry out their conflict. In ecclesiastical politics, we see individuals working at individuals sees (such as Priscillian's attempt to intervene at Hydatius' church), at regional or ecumenical church councils, at the courts of various government officials, or at the court of public opinion through their publication of pamphlets. Finding the correct venue is an integral part of finding political success.<sup>776</sup>

Participants in political conflict change how the issue is framed ("image manipulation") in order to demonstrate how a given venue is appropriate for the issue, or to better take advantage of the chosen venue. An issue argued in court will rely on an image change that

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<sup>774</sup> Shaw 2011, 475-483; Galvão-Sobrinho 2013, 55-59.

<sup>775</sup> Baumgartner and Jones 1993.

<sup>776</sup> Baumgartner and Jones 1993, 36.

focuses on its legal aspects, while the same issue discussed on the evening news might focus on moral aspects in an attempt to sway mass publics. While considering how a political conflict carries out, it is important to note how the choice of venue determines how an issue is presented. At the same time, certain issues play better in different venues. A group will attempt to choose a venue that best suits the issue, as well as change the framing of the issue to best suit the venue. In Chapter One, we saw how Hydatius and Ithacius deemed Priscillian a "Manichaeon" when talking to other bishops but called him a "magician" when at Maximus' court. The venue changes the image of the issue, but the image of the issue also helps determine the venue.

A group may find failure in one venue, yet success in another. For example, Hydatius failed to secure a condemnation of Priscillian at the Council of Saragossa, but Ithacius succeeded in getting Maximus to punish Priscillian. Baumgartner and Jones present this as a rational process, dictated by the needs of political strategy. Venues are chosen based on the degree to which they will help the given group achieve victory in their conflict. However, Sarah Pralle has complicated this picture.<sup>777</sup> She points out that the choice of venue can be determined by the advocacy group's personal preference of venue, knowledge of how to use that venue, the limitations of resources, imperfect knowledge as to what the correct venue would be, institutional goals beyond the immediate conflict, and ideological beliefs about the relevancy of a given venue.

Expanding the scope of a conflict is a key political strategy. When analyzing how a conflict is expanded, we must analyze *by whom, to whom, and in what venue*. Each of these factors has an impact on how the conflict shifts, morphs, and is resolved by shaping how the issue of a conflict is framed.

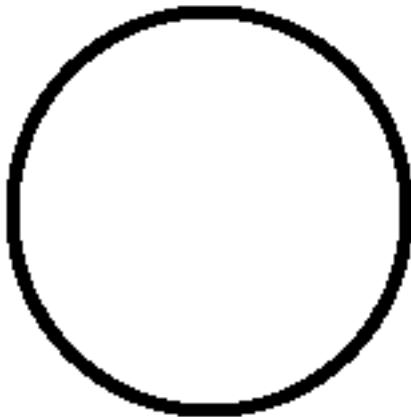
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<sup>777</sup> Pralle 2003.

### Changing the Direction of Conflict

Different venues change the image of a given issue, because the way an issue is presented will be appropriate or successful in one venue, but not appropriate or successful in another. This phenomenon also highlights the importance of problem definition. Participants in a conflict will attempt to change how an issue is presented to the public (or publics) in order to appeal to a wider set of people.<sup>778</sup> "As political discourse, the function of problem definition is at once to explain, to describe, to recommend, and, above all, to persuade."<sup>779</sup>

How problem definition shapes political conflict is best described with visual aids. Let an empty circle<sup>780</sup> represent what Schattschneider calls "the political universe,"<sup>781</sup> meaning the collective mass of politically involved individuals. I opt instead for the term "relevant public." With no conflict on the agenda, the relevant public has not yet been divided.



Let line AB represent one potential line of cleavage, and let line CD represent a different line of cleavage. By "line of cleavage," I mean "the way in which people are divided into

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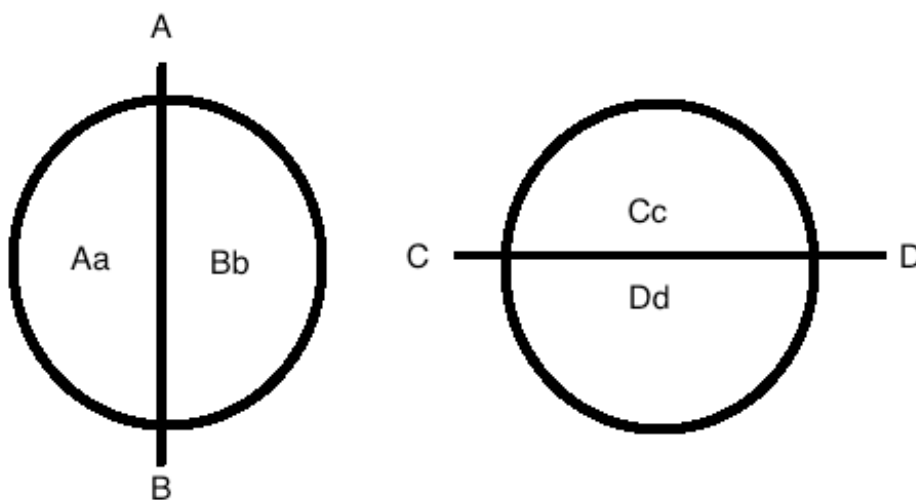
<sup>778</sup> For the classic treatment of problem definition and how political parties can use it as a political strategy, see Schattschneider 1960, 60-75. See Rochefort 2016 for an up to date overview of the literature.

<sup>779</sup> Rochefort and Cobb 1994, 15.

<sup>780</sup> Diagrams are drawn by me, but are based on those present in Schattschneider 1960, Chapter 4.

<sup>781</sup> Schattschneider 1960, 60.

factions, parties, groups, classes, etc."<sup>782</sup> Each line of cleavage represents a conflict that splits the relevant public into two sides.

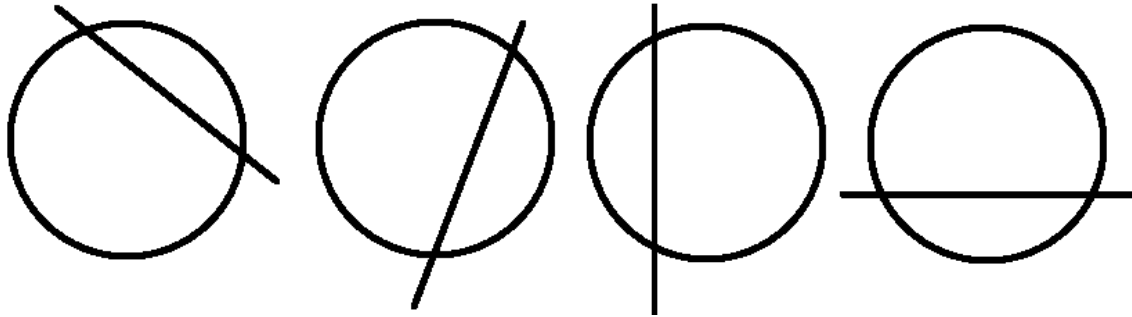


Lines AB and CD represent political conflicts that divide the same political community in different ways. In the first diagram above, the conflict AB divides the relevant public into two sides: Aa and Bb. In the second diagram, the conflict CD divides the relevant public into two sides: Cc and Dd. The same individuals are present, yet the different conflicts produce different sides. Approximately half of Aa is present in Cc, as well as half of Bb. In other words, individuals who would be political enemies in conflict AB can become political allies in conflict CD, and political allies in AB can become political enemies in conflict CD.

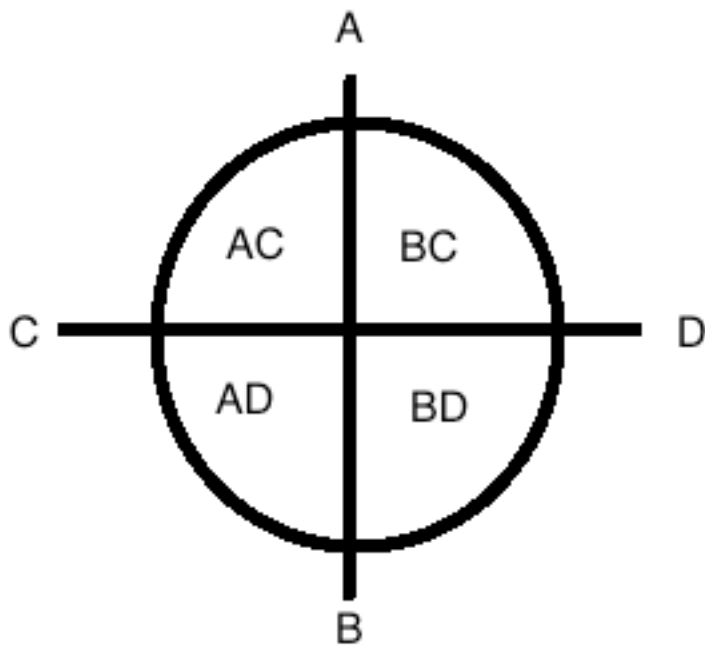
The above diagrams present conflicts in which the political universe is divided evenly. However, conflicts rarely divide the participants directly in half, and this is easy to visualize. Below are some examples.

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<sup>782</sup> Schattschneider 1960, 60.



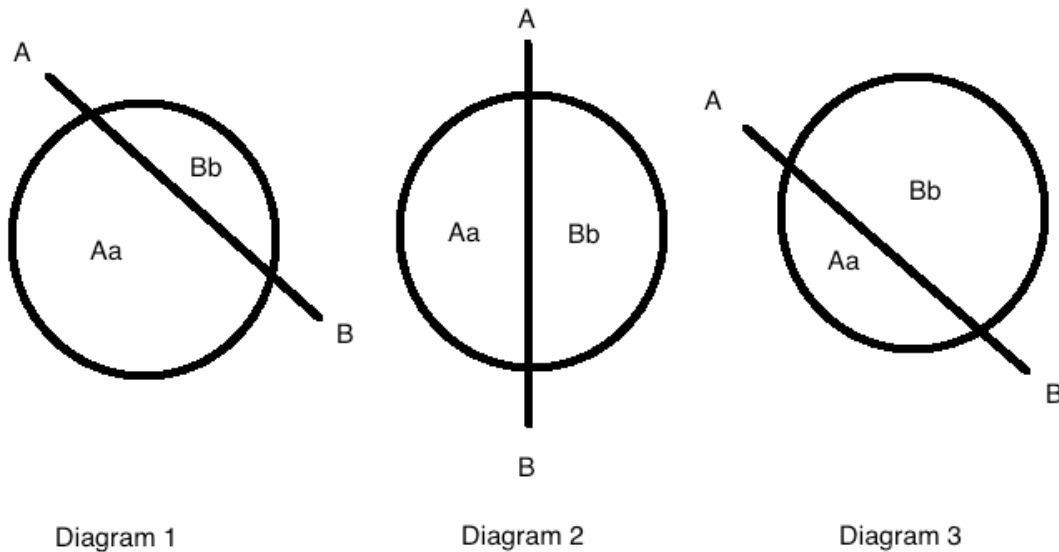
However, it must be remembered that each circle represents the same public. The same people are being divided into different sides by different conflicts. These representations assume that only one conflict is dominant at any given time. However, consider the next diagram.



In this diagram, conflicts AB and CD have divided the same relevant public. Instead of two sides, the political universe is divided into four: AC, AD, BC, and BD. AC is the faction that supports side Aa in the AB conflict, and the side Cc in the CD conflict. AD supports side Aa in the AB conflict, and side Dd in the CD conflict. BC is the faction that supports side Bb in

the AB conflict, and side Cc in the CD conflict. BD is the faction that supports Bb in the AB conflict and Dd in the CD conflict.

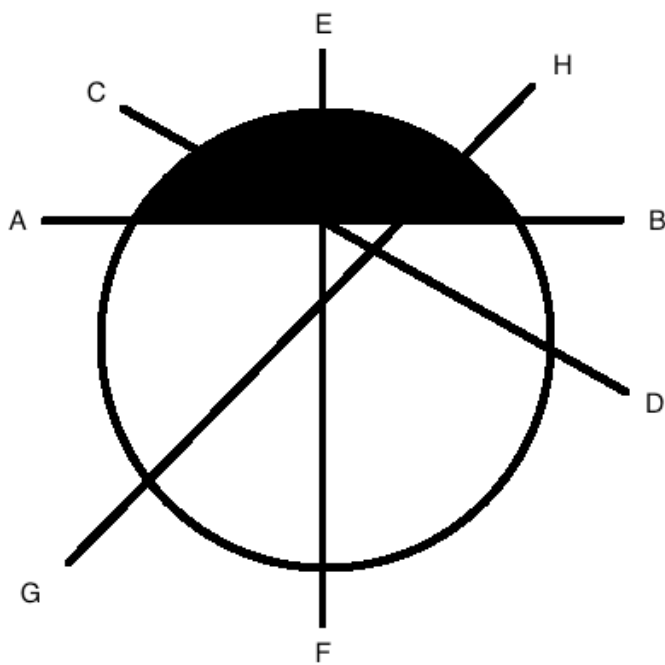
The above diagrams show two things. The first is that each conflict divides the political community in different ways. The goal of each side is to capture the largest "piece of the pie." Thus, for side Aa, diagram 1 (an advantageous division) is more desirable than diagram 2 (a stalemate) or diagram 3 (a disadvantageous division).



The second is that as more conflicts are dominant, the more fragmented the relevant public becomes. In a public where both conflicts AB and CD are dominant, it becomes more difficult for the entirety of Aa to consolidate because they are internally divided on conflict CD. The public is too divided for any side of the dominant conflicts to achieve victory. "The development of one conflict may inhibit the development of another because a radical shift of alignment becomes possible only at the cost of a change in the relations and priorities of all the

contestants."<sup>783</sup> Consequently, there is an incentive for political leaders to downplay some conflicts and promote others.

Schattschneider asserts that "the reduction of the number of conflicts is an essential part of politics. Politics deals with the domination and subordination of conflicts."<sup>784</sup> Political actors use conflict to their advantage by deciding which conflicts to promote and which to subordinate. If they are on the side of a conflict with less power, they can change the issue in order to change the allocation of power. In the diagram below, line AB represents the original conflict, between two sides, represented by the colors white and black. The other lines, CD, EF, and HG represent different ways the conflict can be changed in order to produce a new allocation of power.



In this situation, the side represented by the color white in conflict AB has the incentive to keep the frame of the conflict the same because they have a larger allocation of power. The

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<sup>783</sup> Schattschneider 1960, 63.

<sup>784</sup> Schattschneider 1960, 64.

side represented by the color black, however, would desire to change the frame of the conflict to change the allocation of power.

A given potential conflict becomes dominant, becoming more salient. Social significance and temporal relevancy determine if the issue will be a significant factor in making a conflict dominant. One political strategy is to define a given conflict in terms that correspond to those more pressing priorities, thus appealing to more people. As Schattschneider argues,

The definition of alternatives is the supreme instrument of power; the antagonists can rarely agree on what the issues are because power is involved in the definition. He who determines what politics is about runs the country, because the definition of the alternatives is the choice of conflicts, and the choice of conflicts allocates power.<sup>785</sup>

By the "definition of alternatives," Schattschneider means defining how a conflict is framed. This is called issue redefinition. In Chapter One, I argued that the *innascibilis* definition of Priscillian's heresy arose from precisely this strategy. So long as the conflict was defined as one where Priscillian was a magician and a Manichaean, no conflict resolution could be found. Redefining the issue to one concerning more precise theological matters allowed the conflict to find a different termination.

### Applying the Model

The model of political conflict presented above was built on the work of political scientists who observed recent United States political history. While not exclusively focused on Congress, these scholars examined the behavior of politicians, interacting with American governmental institutions or the mass media, in order to pass legislative or political agendas. Recent work has been done using the models and insights of public policy agenda setting to understand the European Union and the member states thereof.<sup>786</sup> However, this only shows that

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<sup>785</sup> Schattschneider 1960, 66.

<sup>786</sup> Baumgartner, Jones, and Wilkerson 2011. See also Zhu 2008 who credits Rochefort and Cobb's concept of problem definition as a successful strategy in contemporary Chinese politics on page 326.

the insights gleaned from public policy agenda setting is applicable to other modern democratic republics.

The difference between modern democratic politics and late antique religious controversies is compounded by the fact that public policy agenda setting is almost exclusively squared on the interaction between politicians and governmental institutions. While the imperial government may play a role in late antique religious controversies, it is not always the case.<sup>787</sup> While modern politicians use the mass media in order to curry public opinion, no such institution exists in Late Antiquity. Therefore, if we are to apply these modern models to late antique ecclesiastical controversies, we must take care that we do not force modern assumptions as to how politics work beyond what the ancient evidence can provide.

The model presented above defines political conflict as struggle "between two or more identifiable groups over procedural or substantive matters relating to the distribution of position or resources." This definition fits late antique ecclesiastical conflicts. While we should not consider ecclesiastical politics to be party politics, as T.D. Barnes has described them,<sup>788</sup> bishops and priests did enter into coalition in order to promote shared ecclesiastical goals.<sup>789</sup> In some cases they were even more centrally organized, as the letters from the African bishops to the bishop of Rome can show.<sup>790</sup> As Galvão-Sobrinho has argued, a bishop's ability to convince his parish that he is teaching correct doctrine is essential for maintaining his position.<sup>791</sup> After Constantine began to give imperial favor to the church, fighting to maintain one's position as bishop was also a fight over resources from the imperial government.

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<sup>787</sup> See, for instance, Drake 2000.

<sup>788</sup> See, for instance, the language used in Barnes 1993, 72, 122, and 147.

<sup>789</sup> See, famously Clark 1982 for a description on how the two factions around Jerome and Rufinus coalesced. More recently, see Galvão-Sobrinho 2013, 125–52 on how bishops banded together during the Arian controversy.

<sup>790</sup> *Aug. epist.*. 175 and 176.

<sup>791</sup> Galvão-Sobrinho 2013, 15–30.

A major distinction to be drawn between how modern political science deals with conflict expansion to the public and how it works in the late antique world concerns the public's role in conflict termination. In modern democracies, the voting public can end a conflict by delivering a verdict by means of voting. Outside of very specific instances in ecclesiastical politics, attentive publics in Late Antiquity have no such power. Instead, attentive publics are deployed by elites as pressure groups.<sup>792</sup> Mass movement tends to attempt to force one set of elites to stop fighting, though more often their deployment serves merely to impact the discourse of the debate at hand. Ultimately, termination in ecclesiastical politics comes from consensus among the warring elites (whether consensus is achieved by free will or by effective coercion), not from the votes of the people.

The description of political conflict described above is useful for the study of late antique ecclesiastical politics because it focuses on the discourse of the conflict itself. Far too often, what we possess are theological tracts or treatises without the context we would have in modern political analysis. We have no idea, for example, how people received and responded to Orosius' *Liber Apologeticus*; we only know that he composed it. The model of political conflict presented here allows us to read these textual products, analyze their rhetorical strategies, and place them back into the political context whence they were created.

This focus on discourse also opens up the potential to borrow insights from certain subsets of International Relations scholarship, despite the fact that we are not dealing with states. Comparisons may be drawn between the concept of a bishop and the concept of a state -- both represent sovereign entities who must deal with both domestic/parish-level concerns and international/extralocal concerns. Both exist in a pseudo-anarchic system where interactions

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<sup>792</sup> Galvão-Sobrinho 2013, 47–65; Oliveira 2012

with other sovereign units are governed by rules that are themselves created and maintained by the participants themselves.

More important than these comparisons, however, is the tendency for scholars of International Relations to treat states as if they were people themselves.<sup>793</sup> Scholars of status-seeking, for instance, drawn on Social Identity Theory to analyze state behavior.<sup>794</sup> SIT was, of course, originally devised to understand individual behaviors vis-a-vis their social groups, but it is equally applicable to corporate persons like states. The International Relations scholars take these insights into individual behavior and examine their implications for political systems in which Realpolitik take more of a decisive role than in normal everyday behavior. For this reason, status-seeking scholarship has been very helpful in examining Orosius' behavior in Chapter One. The work on international mediation and conflict resolution has been equally essential in exploring the processes of discourse in Chapters One and Three.

Of course, no model is without limitations. This model's largest weakness is that it elides the role of personal charisma in forming political coalitions. Individuals are on a given side because they agree with the side that best fits their priorities. While this model does allow us to recognize why actors will strategically change discourse over the course of a conflict, it does not explain why a minority group will hold on to their beliefs even in the face of overwhelming opposition. It is the task of the historian to recognize these shortcomings and compensate for them in his analysis of ecclesiastical politics, even while taking advantage of the benefits this model affords.

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<sup>793</sup> Most explicitly in Wendt 1999. This decision is not without controversy, of course: see Wight 2004 and Wendt 2004.

<sup>794</sup> E.g. Larson and Schevchenko 2010.

### Benefits of using Political science

Very few scholars have used insights from political science itself in order to examine the construction of doctrine. For example, H.A. Drake utilizes Schattschneider to explain Constantine's attitudes towards Christian bishops, but does not engage with the ongoing developments in the political science literature.<sup>795</sup> This is not to say that late antique historians are unsophisticated when it comes to their study of ecclesiastical politics. In addition to the work already cited, both Neil McLynn and Michael Williams have deftly presented the political purposes underlying Ambrose's actions as bishop.<sup>796</sup> However, late antique historians prefer to borrow from models offered by sociology and anthropology, rather than from political science.

The advantage of political science is that it offers ancient historians powerful analytical tools that allow them to best understand the twists and turns of political conflict. Recent trends in the study of ecclesiastical politics look at how bishops use texts to bolster and support their claims to authority.<sup>797</sup> These insights into the rhetorical construction of polemical texts are essential. Political science offers us the tools to take these insights and use them to put the polemical texts back into the political context in which they belong. In so doing, historians will open the door to new possibilities in scholarship.

For example, the reconciliation process between Donatists and Catholics in post-411 North Africa is largely an opaque one. In Chapter Three, I have shown how the introduction of the relics of Stephen to the religious landscape of North Africa was used as a way to promote reconciliation. This facet of Stephen's cult had been invisible to us because we had ignored the role discourse plays in structuring political conflicts themselves. As a result, political science

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<sup>795</sup> Drake 2000.

<sup>796</sup> McLynn 1994; Williams 2017.

<sup>797</sup> For example, Whelan 2017; Barry 2019; Flower 2019;

allows us to think about Donatist-Catholic reconciliation as a long, drawn out process that has left its mark on African Christian discourse in the years after 411, rather than a singular moment that, if it ever happened, has long since disappeared from the historical record.

This realization helps us build upon more recent scholarship. For instance, Jesse Hoover has recently suggested that Augustine was subconsciously influenced by Donatist theology when he used the story of Cain and Abel in the *City of God*.<sup>798</sup> Donatist exegesis of the story had portrayed Cain as the progenitor of the earthly, and therefore sinful, City of Man; this same exegesis appears in Book X of the City of God, even though Augustine had never before used the story in this way. Since Augustine has explicitly borrowed from Donatist authors like Tyconius, Hoover argues that Augustine unwittingly borrowed from Donatist traditions.

Focusing on the Donatist-Catholic reconciliation process, however, allows us to think of a different reason for the story's presence in the *City of God*. While Augustine was a mortal human and, therefore, vulnerable to unconscious borrowings, we should keep in mind that Augustine was intimately familiar with Donatist discourse on account of his years of partisan debate. It is more likely than not that Augustine was familiar with the Donatist interpretation of the story and chose to deploy it in the *City of God*. I would suggest that Augustine deliberately chose to do so in order to reduce the theological differences between Catholic and Donatist factions. This makes sense in the context of the *City of God* itself, which presents a dichotomy between Christians and Pagans. Any Donatist member of the reading public would know that such a strict distinction does not reflect reality on the ground, yet seeing a familiar

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<sup>798</sup> Hoover 2021.

scriptural interpretation would promote a sense of familiarity with the man who made his career arguing against the Donatists.

Finally, the existence of this dissertation is proof that political science can allow us to understand the importance of minor political actors in ecclesiastical politics. Scholarship has been blind to Orosius' agency and activity in the ecclesiastical conflicts of his day because he had been overshadowed by Augustine and Jerome. At best, one might borrow from network theory and posit Orosius as a strong tie between the nodes of Augustine and Jerome.<sup>799</sup> While network theory is helpful in recognizing who is present during a conflict and in describing their relationship with more prominent players, it has little explanatory power when looking at the tactics or impact these weak ties actually have.

As we've seen through this examination of Orosius' political activity, he was much more important than scholarship has thought. Through his composition of the *Commonitorium*, Orosius helped to connect the precariously isolated Bragan church with the wider orthodox Christian world. His actions in Jerusalem set the terms for the Pelagian controversy for the years following, a feat that Augustine himself could not accomplish. By bringing the relics of Stephen to North Africa, he helped to jumpstart the Donatist-Catholic reconciliation process, and by bringing them to Minorca, Orosius indirectly contributed to the composition of a new text in the debate concerning religious conversion. At first reading of our sources, Orosius' importance in all these events is nearly invisible. It is only with the tools provided by political science that we can see it.

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<sup>799</sup> Clark 1982, 235.

# Appendix 1-- Timeline

Year	Orosius' Life	Ecclesiastical/Cultural History	Roman Political History
325		Council of Nicea	
343		Council of Serdica	
350			Overthrow of Constans at the hands of Magnentius
351		First Sirmian Creed	
353		Council of Arles	Defeat of Magnentius at the hands of Constantius II
355		Council of Milan	
357		Second Sirmian Creed ("Sirmian Framework")	
359		Council of Ariminum	
360		Council of Constantinople; Council of Paris	
362		Council of Alexandria	Ascension of Theodosius I
367		Death of Hilary of Poitiers	
370/371		Death of Lucifer of Cagliari	
379			
380		Council of Saragossa	Usurpation of Magnus Maximus
383			
384/5		Siricius' Response to Himerius of Taragona	
386		Execution of Priscillian	Defeat of Magnus Maximus
388			
397		Shortly before this date, a delegation of anti-Priscillianists and pro-Priscillianists travel to Milan. Gregory of Elvira might still be alive at this time, but died shortly before or after.	
400		Council of Toledo	
403		Letter sent to Innocent by Hilarius (?)	Invasion of Spain by Germanic Tribes
409			Sack of Rome
410			A living peace established in Spain; Germanic tribes are not dislodged.
411	Orosius arrives in North Africa; composes the <i>Commonitorium</i>	Conference of Carthage	
414-415	Orosius leaves for Jerusalem; writes the <i>Liber Apologeticus</i> after the Conference of Jerusalem		
415	Orosius returns to North Africa, carrying news of the events in Jerusalem	Conference of Jerusalem (July); Synod of Diospolis (December); Discovery of the Relics of Stephen the Protomartyr	

416		The African bishops send letters to Innocent protesting Pelagius' acquittal at Diospolis	
418	Terminus post quem for Orosius' <i>Histories of the World Against the Pagans</i> ; Orosius disappears from the stage of history		
420		Augustine's correspondence with Consentius about Priscillianism	
445		Anti-Priscillianist activity in Galicia by Turibius and co.	

## Appendix 2-- Dramatis Personae

When more precise dates are known they are given, but often I have had to provide only the century that they were active or the small amount of years that we can track their activity.

Alaric (c. 370 - 411) -- A Goth who, most famously, sacked the city of Rome in 410. His invasion caused an exodus of refugees that would contribute to the beginning of the debates surrounding grace in the 410s.

Ambrose (c. 340-397) -- Bishop of Milan from 374 to his death. He was heavily involved in the distribution of saint relics as well as the Priscillianist controversy until his death.

Ambrosiaster (Fourth Century) -- The name modern scholars give to an anonymous Roman presbyter who wrote commentaries on the Pauline corpus in the latter half of the fourth century.

Anastasius of Rome: Bishop of Rome from 399 to 401. Condemned the teachings of Origen during First Origenist Controversy.

Augustine (c. 354-430) -- Bishop of Hippo whose extensive corpus of writings contributes heavily to the formation of Christian theology and to historian's knowledge of Late Antiquity. Most famous for his conflicts with the Donatists and Pelagius.

Aurelius (died 430) -- The primate of the African Bishops and an ally of Augustine.

Aviti -- These two Aviti are mentioned by Orosius in his *Commonitorium* and nothing more is known about them. One went to Jerusalem and acquired the works of Origen, while one went to Rome and acquired the works of Victorinus, in order to argue against Priscillian.

Avitus of Braga (Early Fifth Century) -- A presbyter of Braga. He was a correspondent of Jerome's and an ally of Orosius' during his time in Jerusalem. Entrusted Orosius with the relics of Stephen in 416.

Balconius (Fifth Century) -- Bishop of Braga. He was the recipient of Avitus' letter explaining why he was sending the relics of Stephen to Braga in 416. He was also the recipient of an antipriscillianist *regula fidei* in 447.

Caelestius (Early Fifth Century) -- A layman who wrote against the idea of original sin. He attempted to be ordained a presbyter in Africa in 411, but was rejected. He was later ordained a presbyter in Ephesus.

Consentius (Early Fifth Century) -- A layman from Minorca who was a correspondent of Augustine. He was an anti-Priscillianist and also undertook an anti-Pelagian work, though without actually reading Pelagius.

Ctesiphon (Early Fifth Century) -- A correspondent of Jerome's. Jerome's letter to him is one of Jerome's anti-Pelagian writings.

Cyprian (c. 210 - 258) -- Bishop of Carthage who had a tremendous influence on the development of African Christian theology.

Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376-444) -- Bishop of Alexandria who sent the minutes of the synod of Diospolis to Augustine.

Damasus (c. 305-384) -- Bishop of Rome from 366 until 384. He was a patron of Jerome during his time in Rome, and was a participant in the Priscillianist controversy.

Demetrius (Early Fifth Century) -- A member of the *gens* Anicia, she was the recipient of a number of exhortations to ascetic conduct by Augustine, Jerome, and Pelagius.

Dictinius (Fourth and Early Fifth Century) -- a bishop in Spain who was a Priscillianist, but denounced Priscillian at the Council of Toledo. Author of the *Libra*.

Diocletian (c. 244-311) -- Roman emperor from 284 to 305. Among other things, he oversaw the administrative restructuring of Spain and legislated against the Manichaeans.

Domnus (Early Fifth Century) -- A former *dux* who was one of Orosius' allies during his conflict with John in Jerusalem.

Evodius (Early Fifth Century) -- Friend of Augustine and bishop of Uzalis. Author of the *de miraculis Sancti Stephani* and an anti-Manichaean tract.

Fronto (Early Fifth Century) -- An ascetic layman whose anti-priscillianist deeds were reported to Augustine by Consentius.

Gratian (359-383) -- Emperor of the West during the early years of the Priscillianist controversy. He is killed and replaced by Magnus Maximus in 383.

Gregory of Elvira (died at the end of the Fourth Century) -- A rigorist Spanish bishop who was held as a hero by other presbyters sympathetic to him and Lucifer of Cagliari.

Hedibia (Late Fourth Century)-- one of Jerome's correspondents who asked him a variety of questions on the Letter to the Romans.

Herenias (400) -- A bishop in Galicia whose priests cried out that Priscillian was a martyr during the Council of Toledo.

Heros (Early Fifth Century)-- Bishop of Arles from 408 to 412, he would be an anti-Pelagian partisan in Jerusalem in 415.

Hilary of Syracuse (Early Fifth Century) -- A bishop and correspondent of Augustine who asked him a myriad of questions related to the writings of Caelestius.

Hydatius of Chaves (Chronicler, Fifth Century) -- The bishop of Chaves who participated in anti-Manichean and Priscillianist activity; his Chronicle is also an essential source for late antique Spanish history.

Hydatius of Mérida (Fourth Century) -- Bishop of Mérida and one of Priscillian's principal accusers.

Hyginus of Cordoba (Fourth Century) -- One of Priscillian's earliest detractors, although he would later become one of his allies.

Innocent I -- Bishop of Rome ca. 401 to 417. His letters provides us with some information about Spanish ecclesiastical politics, and he was a participant in Augustine's conflict with Caelestius and Pelagius.

Ithacius of Ossunaba (Fourth Century) -- One of Priscillian's key detractors. He was later deposed from his see for corrupt behavior.

Jerome (c. 347-420) -- A presbyter residing in Bethlehem, Jerome wrote a myriad of scriptural commentaries and theological treatises. He is well known for his vitriolic tone towards his adversaries, including Pelagius.

John Chrysostom (c. 347 - 407) -- priest in Antioch (386-397) and bishop of Constantinople after that. He was well known for his preaching and for his attacks on the empress Eudoxia, which contributed to his downfall. His preaching provides evidence for how bishops discussed and used relics of the martyrs.

John of Jerusalem -- Bishop of Jerusalem from 387 to 417. He was an opponent of Jerome's during the Origenist Controversy, and would later become an ally of Pelagius.

John of Spain (Early Fifth Century) -- Spanish bishop that refused to obey the decisions of the Council of Toledo even though his representative at the council agreed.

Lazarus -- Bishop of Aix from 409-412, he would become an anti-Pelagian partisan in 415.

Leo of Rome -- Bishop of Rome from 440-461. Among other things, he produced anti-Priscillianist works that were sent to Spain in 445.

Magnus Maximus -- A Spaniard who would usurp the Western throne from 383-388. He executed Priscillian. Defeated by Theodosius I in 388.

Marcellinus (Early Fifth Century) -- A Roman official in North Africa sent in 411 to settle the Donatist Controversy. He became an associate of Augustine's and spurred many of his early anti-Caelestinian writings.

Marius Victorinus -- A theologian in Rome whose writings one of the Aviti had found to write against Priscillianist theology.

Martin of Tours (c. 316-397) -- Bishop of Tours from 371-397, he was celebrated by his biographer Sulpicius Severus. He attempted to keep Priscillian from being executed, but failed.

Maternus

Origen (c. 184- 253) -- A theologian of tremendous renown, his writings would come under fire in the late 4th century as potentially heretical in its more speculative aspects.

Orosius (visible 414-418) -- A presbyter from Galicia, probably Braga, Orosius traveled from Spain to North Africa to Palestine and back to North Africa, involving himself in conflicts against Priscillianists, Pelagius, and pagans.

Pacian of Barcelona (Fourth Century) -- Bishop of Barcelona who wrote extensively on issues of penance and baptism.

Palatinus (early Fifth Century)-- A deacon who brought news from Jerome to Augustine about Pelagius and what happened in Jerusalem.

Passerius (Early Fifth Century)-- A priest in Jerusalem who was one of Orosius' allies in his conflict with Pelagius.

Patruinus of Mérida (400 CE) -- Bishop of Mérida during the Council of Toledo.

Paul and Eutropius (Early Fifth Century) -- Two bishops who asked Augustine to respond to Caelestius' *definitiones*. They were potentially the same Paul and Eutropius who Orosius claims asked Augustine to write against Spanish heresies.

Paulinus of Milan (Early Fifth Century) -- A deacon of Milan who accused Caelestius of teaching heresy in 411.

Paulinus of Nola (c. 354-431) -- A Gallic nobleman who renounced all of his wealth and became an ascetic. Ordained a presbyter in Barcelona, he moved to Nola and cultivated the cult of Felix.

Pelagius (active 390-418) -- An ascetic layman, probably from Britain, Pelagius taught that man's nature was not corrupted from Adam's original sin and was able to avoid sin. He was initially popular in Rome, but fled to Africa and then to Jerusalem after the sack of Rome in 410.

Phoebadius of Agen (Fourth Century) -- A Gallic bishop who wrote against the Council of Ariminum and was active in the Council of Saragossa.

Potamius of Lisbon (Fourth Century) -- Spanish bishop who was originally anti-homoian, but (possibly because of bribes) became a lead author of the Sirmian Framework.

Priscillian (Died in 386)-- A layman who was later ordained the bishop of Ávila, Priscillian appears to have preached a form of asceticism. He was labeled a Manichaean and a magician by his enemies and was executed by Maximus.

Prudentius (Late Fourth to Early Fifth Centuries) -- A Spanish poet whose poem *Peristephanon* is of essential importance to understanding the veneration of the martyrs in Spain.

Severus of Minorca (Early Fifth Century)-- Bishop of Minorca who composed a letter, sent to other bishops, claiming that the relics of Stephen helped him to convert the island's Jewish population.

Simplicianus (Bishop of Milan 387-401) -- Bishop of Milan after Ambrose's passing.

Simplicianus was a correspondent with Augustine and a key figure in the Priscillianist controversy.

Siricius -- Bishop of Rome from 384-399. As bishop he helped to negotiate the terms of the Council of Toledo, along with Ambrose.

Sulpicius Severus (Early Fifth Century) -- An ascetic and a writer of history, his *Chronicle* is a key source for our understanding of the Priscillianist controversy.

Symphosius (Fourth to Fifth Centuries)-- A bishop (of unknown see) who was one of Priscillian's earliest allies. He later denounced Priscillian at the Council of Toledo in 400.

Turibius of Astorga (Fifth Century) -- Bishop of Astorga, he sent anti-priscillianist works to Leo and asked for his intervention.

Zosimus (c. 417-418) -- He was a participant in Augustine's conflict with Caelestius and Pelagius after Innocent died. He composed the *Tractoria*, which is now lost, that condemned Caelestius and Pelagius as heretics.

# Appendix 3 -- Synod of Diospolis

Charges Ascribed to Pelagius and Caelestius

Colors:

Blue indicates that Caelestius and Pelagius received identical or near identical charges.

Green indicates statements of approbation from the Council.

Red indicates statements of condemnation from the Council.

Numbering According to Wermelinger	Objection	Pelagius' Response	Council's Response
D 1	Pelagius wrote "It is not possible to be without sin unless one possesses knowledge of the law."	"I did indeed say that, but not as they understand it. I did not say, that it is not possible to sin who has knowledge of the law, but that one is helped through the knowledge of the law to not sin, as it is written: "He gives the law to them as a help" (Is 8:20 LXX)	These things are not alien from the church, those things which are said by Pelagius.
D 2	In the same book, Pelagius wrote "Everyone is ruled by their own will."	And I said this on account of Free Will, to which God is a helper when it chooses good things; but man sinning himself is at fault as it were of free will."	Nor is this alien to the doctrine of the church.
D 3	Pelagius wrote, "On the day of judgment, there must be no sparing for the sinners and unjust, but they must be burned by eternal fires."	But when Pelagius responded that he spoke in accordance with the Gospel, where it says about sinners: "These will go into eternal supplication, but the just will go into eternal life," (Mt 25:46), in no way could the Gospel and Lordly statement	Therefore this synod said that this was not alien from the Church.

		displease the Christian judges... To which Pelagius added "And if anyone believes differently, he is an Origenist," which the judges accepted, because the Church really does detest that view in Origen.	
D 4	Pelagius wrote that "evil does not even come into consideration."	We did not place this sentence in this way, but we said that a Christian ought to be diligent that he consider no evil.	Which statement, as is appropriate, the bishops approved.
D 5	Pelagius wrote "the kingdom of heaven is also promised in the Old Testament."	It is possible to prove this even through the scriptures; but heretics deny this to injure the Old Testament. But I spoke following the authority of the Scriptures, as it is written in the Prophet Daniel: "And the saints will receive the kingdom of the Most High." (Dan. 7:18)	Nor was this alien from the ecclesiastic faith.
D 6	He wrote, "It is possible for man, if he wills, to be without sin."		
D 7	In a letter to a widow, he wrote "Let piety find in your presence, what it has found nowhere else. Let Justice, a traveler everywhere, find a seat in you; let truth, which now no one knows, become a domestic servant and		

	a friend to you; and let the law of God, which is contemned by nearly every human being, only be honored by you."		
D 8	In the same letter, he wrote "O how happy and blessed you would be, if Justice, which can only be believed to be in Heaven, would be found only with you on earth."		
D 9	In another book, but to the same recipient, he wrote: "That man raises his hand worthily to the lord, that man pours out his prayer in good conscience, who is able to say 'You know, Lord, how holy and innocent and clean of every annoyance, iniquity, and crime these hands are, which I extend to you, You know in what manner the lips are free of every lie, with which I offer to you my prayer, so that you may pity me.'"	"We certainly said that man can be without sin and to follow the mandates of God, if he wishes; for God gave this possibility to him. But we did not say that anyone is found who never sinned from infancy to old age, but rather we say that one who has been turned from sin is able to be without sin with their own labor and with the grace of God, but he is not unchangeable back to his previous state in the future. But the rest of those things which lie under it, we never said in our books nor did we ever say it." After being questioned by the council, he answers: "I anathematize those who say these things	First the council asks him if he anathematizes the teachings in the works he claims not to have written: "But since you deny that you have written such things, do you anathematize those which hold thusly?" After his answer: "Now that Pelagius has anathematized in his own voice the stupid saying that was inserted, responding correctly that man can be without sin with the help of God and with his grace, let him respond to the other <i>captiula</i> ." [Council condemns the teachings that Pelagius claims is not his, namely that the worthy man is sinless/approves of

		as stupid people, not as heretics, because this is not a matter of dogma."	his comments on man's ability to strive towards sinlessness.]
D 19	Pelagius said that "the church here is without stain and wrinkle."	"This was written by us, but in such a way that the church is purged of every stain and wrinkle by washing, as the Lord so wants it to remain."	This is pleasing to us.

Caelestius

Number According to Wermelinger	Charge	Pelagius' Response to Charge	Synod's Response to Charge
D 10	Adam was made mortal, who would have died whether he had sinned or not.		
D 11	That the sin of Adam only wounded himself and not the human race.		
D 12	That the law thus sends people to the Kingdom in the same way the Gospel does.		
D 13	That before the coming of Christ, there were humans without sin.		
D 14	That infants who had been recently born were in that same state which Adam was before his prevarication.		
D 15	That the entirety of the human race would die not because of the death or prevarication of Adam, nor would the entirety of the human		

	race resurge through the resurrection of Christ.		
D 16	That man is able to be without sin, if he wishes.		
D 17	Infants, even if they have not been baptized, have eternal life.		
D 18	If wealthy persons who have been baptized do not renounce all their possessions, they have no merit, even if they seem to do something good, and they cannot possess the kingdom of heaven.	To D 10-18: "It was said earlier that it is certainly possible for man to be without sin; but about that statement, that there were men without sin before the coming of the Lord, we also say, since before the coming of Christ there were certainly men living holily and justly, according to the tradition of the Holy Scriptures. But the rest, even according to the testimony of those men, were not said by me, for which I should not have to give satisfaction; but for the purpose of satisfying the holy synod I anathematize those who hold thusly or who ever held thusly.	To these charges read allowed, Pelagius gave satisfaction sufficiently and correctly. Pelagius, being present, anathematized those which were not his.  [Council condemns the teachings that Pelagius claims is not his, namely, Caelestius' statements D 10, D 11, D 12, D14, D 15, D17, and D 18/approves of his agreement with D 13 and D 16.]
D 20	That we do more than is ordered in the Law and in the Gospel.	They read this as if it were ours, but it was said by us according to the apostle about virginity, about which Paul said : I do not have precepts of	This the Church holds.

		the Lord" (1 Cor 7:25)	
D 21	That the grace of God and his help is not given for singular acts, but rather is in Free Will or in the law and doctrine.		
D 22	That the grace of God is given according to our merits, because if he gave that to sinners, it would seem to be unequal ... Hence, the grace of God lies in my will, whether I was worthy or unworthy. For if we do everything according to grace, when we are conquered by sin, we are not the ones who are conquered, but the grace of God, which wishes to help us in every way but is not able.		
D 23	If it is the grace of God, when we overcome sin, therefore the grace of god is at fault, when we are conquered by sin, since he either could not or would not protect us completely.	Let those who say whether that these are Caelestius' statements see whether they are or not; but I never held them, but I anathematize those who do.	The holy church receives you condemning these disapproved words  [The bishops approve of Pelagius' statement, but condemn the doctrines present in D 21, D 22, and D23]
D 24	Every single human is able to have all the virtues and graces and bear the diversity of graces, as the apostle teaches.	This was said by us, but they understand it badly and unlearnedly. For we do not bear the diversity of the graces, but we say	Your views on the gift of the graces found in the holy apostle are reasonable and in accord with the mind of the Church.

		that God gave to him who was worthy to accept it all of the graces, just as he gave to Paul the apostle.	
D 25	That they cannot be called the sons of God, unless they have become completely without sin.		
D 26	Forgetfulness and ignorance are not included under sin, since they do not come about according to the will, but according to necessity.		
D 27	Free choice does not exist, if one needs the help of God, because each person as in his own will the power to do or not to do anything.		
D 28	Our victory comes not from the help of God, but from free choice.... Our is the victory, because we have by our own will taken up arms; so too, it is ours, on the other hand, when we are defeated, because we have refused to arm ourselves with our own will.		
D 29	Pardon is not given to penitents in accord with God's grace and mercy, but in accord with their merit and labor, since they were worthy of mercy	The bishops express their disapproval of these extracts from Caelestius, and ask Pelagius for his opinion. He responds: Again, I	"What response does the monk Pelagius here present make to these propositions that have been read? For the holy synod and the holy Catholic

	because of their penance.	respond that according to their own testimony, these are not my statements. As I said, I should have to give satisfaction for them. Those words which were mine, I confessed, and affirmed that they were correct; those which I did not say were mind, according to the judgement of the holy church I disapprove of, saying "anathema" to every statement contravening and contradicting the holy church.	Church of God reject them." ... "Since we are satisfied with the replies of the monk Pelagius here present, who has agreed with sound doctrine and has rejected and condemned teachings contrary to the faith of the Church, we acknowledge that he is in communion with the Catholic Church."
Charge Number (Pelagius)	Charge	Charge Number (Caelestius)	Charge
D 2	In the same book, Pelagius wrote "Everyone is ruled by their own will."	D 28	Our victory comes not from the help of God, but from free choice.... Our is the victory, because we have by our own will taken up arms; so too, it is ours, on the other hand, when we are defeated, because we have refused to arm ourselves with our own will.
D 5	Pelagius wrote "the kingdom of heaven is also promised in the Old Testament."	D 13	That the law thus sends people to the Kingdom in the same way the Gospel does.
D 6	He wrote, "It is possible for man, if he wills, to be without sin."	D 16	That man is able to be without sin, if he wishes.

D 9	<p>In another book, but to the same recipient, he wrote: "That man raises his hand worthily to the lord, that man pours out his prayer in good conscience, who is able to say 'You know, Lord, how holy and innocent and clean of every annoyance, iniquity, and crime these hands are, which I extend to you, You know in what manner the lips are free of every lie, with which I offer to you my prayer, so that you may pity me.'"</p>	D 25	<p>That they cannot be called the sons of God, unless they have become completely without sin.</p>
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# Bibliography

## Abbreviations

BA = *Bibliothèque augustinienne*

CC = *Corpus Christianorum*

CCL = *Corpus Christianorum Latinorum*

CCSL = *Corpus Christianorum Scriptorum Latinorum*

CSEL = *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*

PL = *Patrologia Latina*

SC = *Sources chrétiennes*

## Primary Texts

Author	Work	Abbreviation	Critical Edition
Ambrose of Milan	Epistulae	epist.	CSEL 82, Vols 1-3
Ambrosiaster	Commentary on Romans	in Rom.	CSEL 81
Ammianus Marcellinus	de rebus gestis	Amm.	Rolfe 1952 (Loeb)
Athanasius	de Fuga	Fug.	Kirchenväter-Kommission der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.) (1951) <i>Athanasius Werke: II/I</i> (ed. H.-G. Opitz): <i>De Decretis, De Sententia Dionysii, Apologia de fuga sua, Apologia contra Arianos, Epistula encyclica, De Morte Arij, Historia Arianorum, De Synodis, Apologia ad Constantium</i> . Berlin.
Athanasius	de Synodis	Syn.	Kirchenväter-Kommission der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.) (1951) <i>Athanasius Werke: II/I</i> (ed. H.-G. Opitz): <i>De Decretis, De Sententia Dionysii, Apologia de fuga sua, Apologia contra Arianos, Epistula encyclica, De Morte Arij, Historia Arianorum, De Synodis, Apologia ad Constantium</i> . Berlin.
Athanasius	Historia Arianorum	H. Ar.	Kirchenväter-Kommission der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.) (1951) <i>Athanasius Werke: II/I</i> (ed. H.-G. Opitz): <i>De Decretis, De Sententia Dionysii, Apologia de fuga sua, Apologia contra Arianos, Epistula</i>

Author	Work	Abbreviation	Critical Edition
			<i>encyclica, De Morte Arii, Historia Arianorum, De Synodis, Apologia ad Constantium</i> . Berlin.
Augustine of Hippo	Ad Orosium ("Contra priscillianistas")	c. Priscill.	Aurelii Augustini Liber ad Orosium contra Priscillianistas et Origenistas, Sermo adversus Iudaeos, Liber de haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum, ed. J. L. BazantHegemark, diss. Vienna, 1969.
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Augustine of Hippo	contra Emeritum	c. Emer.	PL 43
Augustine of Hippo	contra Julianum	c. Iulian.	PL 44
Augustine of Hippo	contra Mendacium	c. mend.	CSEL 41
Augustine of Hippo	de diversis questionibus ad Simplicianum	quaest. Simpl.	BA 10
Augustine of Hippo	de haeresibus	haer.	CCL 46
Augustine of Hippo	De Natura et Gratia	nat. et grat.	CSEL 42
Augustine of Hippo	De peccatorum meritis et remissione	pecc. mer.	PL 44
Augustine of Hippo	de perfectione iustitiae hominis	perf. iust.	CSEL 42
Augustine of Hippo	de spiritu et littera	spir. et litt.	PL 44
Augustine of Hippo	Epistulae	epist.	(Divjak letters) CSEL 88/ (Normal) CCSL 31
Augustine of Hippo	On the Council of Diospolis	gest. Pelag.	CSEL 42
Augustine of Hippo	On the grace of Christ and original sin		CSEL 42
Augustine of Hippo	retractiones	retract.	BA 12
Augustine of Hippo	Sermons	serm.	CC 41; Dolbeau 1996.
Augustine of Hippo	Tractates in Iohannem	in Ioh.	BA 71-74
Avitus of Braga	Epistula ad Balchonium	Ad palc.	Vanderlinden, S. "Revelatio Sancti Stephani (BHG 7850-6)." <i>Revue des études byzantines</i> 4, no. 1 (1946): 178-217.
Braulio of Saragossa	Epistulae	epist.	CCSL 114

Author	Work	Abbreviation	Critical Edition
Cicero	Letters to his Friends	fam.	Cicero, Marcus Tullius. <i>Cicero--Letters to Friends</i> . Edited and translated by D. R. Shackleton Bailey. Vol. 1–3. 3 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001.
Cyprian	Epistulae	epist.	CCSL 3B, 3C
Epiphanius	Panarion	Haer.	Bergermann, Marc, Christian-Friedrich Collatz, Christoph Marksches, and Karl Holl, eds. <i>Epiphanius: Ancoratus Und Panarion Haer. 1-33</i> . Vol. 10. Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller Der Ersten Jahrhunderte. Neue Folge. Berlin ; Boston (Mass.): De Gruyter, 2013.
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Filastrius of Brescia	de Haeresibus	Filastr.	Banterle, Gabriele, ed. <i>Scrittori Dell'area Santambrosiana: Complementi All'edizione Di Tutte Le Opere Di Sant'Ambrogio, 2: San Filastrio Di Brescia, Delle Varie Eresie. San Gaudenzio Di Brescia, Trattati</i> . Translated by Gabriele Banterle.

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			Milano: Bibl. Ambrosiana, 1991.
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Gregory of Elvira	de fide orthodoxa	fid.	Brumbach, Richard Arwell. "De Fide Orthodoxa and Gregory of Elvira's Trinitarian Vision.," 2014.
Gregory of Elvira	Tractates	in cant.	Pascual Torró, Joaquín, ed. <i>Comentario al Cantar de los cantares y otros tratados exegéticos</i> . Fuentes patristicas 13. Madrid: Ciudad Nueva, 2000.
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Homer	Odyssey	Ody.	West, M. L, ed. <i>Odyssea</i> . Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017.
Hydatius	Chronicles	Hyd. Chron.	Edited and Translated by R.W. Burgess, in <i>The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.
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Jerome of Stridon	Chronicle	chron.	Helm, Rudolfus, ed. <i>Werke, VII: Die Chronik Des Hieronymus. Hieronymi Chronicon</i> . Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller Der Ersten

Author	Work	Abbreviation	Critical Edition
			Jahrhunderte. Berlin: Akad.-Verl., 1956.
Jerome of Stridon	de viribus illustribus	vir. III.	Barthold, Claudia, ed. <i>De Viris Illustribus = Berühmte Männer</i> . Mülheim/Mosel: Carthusianus Verl., 2010.
Jerome of Stridon	In Jeremiah	in Ier.	CCL 74
Leo the Great	Epistula	epist.	Vollmann, Benedikt. <i>Studien zum Priszillianismus: die Forschung, die Quellen, der Fünfzehnte Brief Papst Leos des Grossen</i> . Erzabtei St. Ottilien: Eos Verlag, 1965.
Marius Mercator	Commentary	Cael.	Konoppa, Claudia, ed. <i>Die Werke Des Marius Mercator: Übersetzung Und Kommentierung Seiner Schriften / [von] Claudia Konoppa</i> . Vol. 800. Europäische Hochschulschriften. Reihe 23, Theologie. Bern ; Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2005.
Maximus Augustus	Epistula ad Siricium Papam	Avell.	CSEL 35
Maximus Augustus	Epistula Valentiniano augusto	Avell.	CSEL 35
Orosius	Commonitorium	Comm	CCSL 49
Orosius	Liber Apologeticus	Apol.	CSEL 5
Orosius	Historiae	Hist.	Arnaud-Lindet, Marie-Pierre, ed. <i>Histoires: contre les païens</i> . 3 vols. Les belles lettres. Paris: Belles Lettres, 1990.
Pacian	Letters	epist.	Granado Bellido, Carmelo, ed. <i>Pacien de Barcelone: écrits. Sources Chrétiennes 410</i> . Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1995.

Author	Work	Abbreviation	Critical Edition
Pacian	On Penitents	paraen.	Granado Bellido, Carmelo, ed. <i>Pacien de Barcelone: écrits. Sources Chrésiennes 410</i> . Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1995.
Palladius	Historia Lausiaca	H. Laus.	Butler, Cuthbert, ed. <i>The Lausiaca History of Palladius: A Critical Discussion Together with Notes on Early Egyptian Monachism</i> . Hildesheim: Gg Olms, 1967.
Paulinus of Milan	Life of Ambrose	vita Ambr.	Pellegrino, Michele, ed. <i>Vita di S. Ambrogio. Verba Seniorum</i> . Roma: Editrice Studium, 1961.
Pelagius	Commentary on Romans	in Rom.	Hermann Josef Frede, in <i>Ein neuer Paulustext und Kommentar</i> . 2 vols. Freiburg: Herder, 1973-4.
Pelagius	Epistle to Demetrias	Epist. Ad Demtr.	PL 30
Philostorgius	Ecclesiastical History	HE	Bleckmann, Bruno, and Markus Stein, eds. <i>Philostorgios Kirchengeschichte. Kleine und fragmentarische Historiker der Spätantike 7</i> . Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2015.
Phoebadius of Agens	Liber contra Arianos	c. Arian.	CCSL 64
Priscillian	Tractates	tract.	Conti, Marco., ed. <i>Priscillian of Avila: The Complete Works</i> . Oxford Early Christian Texts. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
Procopius	Historia Arcana	Arc.	Haury, Jacob, ed. <i>Opera omnia</i> . Vol. 3. 4 vols. Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana.

Author	Work	Abbreviation	Critical Edition
			Monachii: K.G. Saur, 2001.
Prosper	Chronicles	chron.	Theodor Mommsen, in vol. 1 of <i>Chronica Minora, saec. IV. V. VI. VII.</i> MGH: Auctores Antiquissimi, vol. 9. Berlin: Weidmann, 1892.
Prudentius	Cathemerinon	cath.	CCSL 126
Prudentius	Peristephanon	perist.	CCSL 126
Ptolemy	Almaghest	Alm.	Heiberg, J. L., ed. <i>Claudii Ptolemaei opera quae exstant omnia.</i> Cambridge Library Collection. Cambridge: Cambridge Univeristy Press, 1903.
Rufinus of Aquileia	Ecclesiastical History	hist.	Schwartz, Eduard, and Theodor Mommsen, eds. <i>Eusebius: Werke II/2, Die Kirchengeschichte.</i> Vol. 2. 9 vols. Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1956.
Rufinus the Syrian	Liber de Fide	de Fid.	Miller, Mary William. <i>Rufini Presbyteri Liber de Fide: A Critical Text and Translation with Introduction and Commentary.</i> Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1964.
Sallust	Bellum Catilinae	Catil.	Reynolds, L.D., ed. <i>C. Sallusti Crispi Catalina; Iugurtha; Historiarum fragmenta selecta; Appendix Sallustiana.</i> Oxford Classical Texts. Oxonii: E Typographeo Clarendoniano, 1991.

Author	Work	Abbreviation	Critical Edition
Severus of Minorca	Epistula	Sev. Minor.	Bradbury, Scott., ed. <i>Letter on the Conversion of the Jews</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
Siricius	Epistula 1	Epist. Pontiff. 255-263	Zechiel-Eckes, Klaus, ed. <i>Die erste Dekretale: der Brief Papst Siricius' an Bischof Himerius von Tarragona vom Jahr 385 (JK 255)</i> . Studien und Texte / Monumenta Germaniae Historica 55. Hannover: Hahn, 2013.
Socrates Scholasticus	Ecclesiastical History	HE	Hansen, Günther Christian, ed. <i>Sokrates Kirchengeschichte</i> . Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995.
Sozomen	Ecclesiastical History	HE	Bidez, Joseph, and Günther Christian Hansen, eds. <i>Kirchengeschichte. 2</i> . Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995.
Sulpicius Severus	Chronicles	chron.	SC 441
Sulpicius Severus	Dialogue	dial.	CSEL I
Tacitus	Agricola	Agr.	Winterbottom, Michael, and R. M Ogilvie, eds. <i>Opera minora</i> . Oxford Classical Texts. Oxonii: E Typographeo Clarendoniano, 1975.
Theodoret	Ecclesiastical History	HE	Parmentier, Léon, and Günther Christian Hansen, eds. <i>Kirchengeschichte</i> . Die Griechischen Christlichen

Author	Work	Abbreviation	Critical Edition
			Schriftsteller. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1998.
Turibibus of Astorga	Epistle to Idacium and Ceponius	Turrib. Epist.	PL 54
Zosimus	Histories	hist.	Paschoud, François, ed. <i>Histoire nouvelle</i> . Nouv. éd. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2000.
Zosimus of Rome	Cum adversus	Avell.	CSEL 35
Zosimus of Rome	Magnum pondus	Avell.	CSEL 35
Zosimus of Rome	posteaquam a nobis	Avell.	CSEL 35
	Codex Sangallensis		Morin, G. "Pages inédites de deux Pseudo-Jérômes des environs de l'an 400. I. Deux lettres mystiques d'une ascète cspagnole. II. Portion inédite de l'apotcryphe hiéronymien de septem ordinibus Ecclesiac." <i>Revue Bénédictine</i> 40 (January 1928): 289–318.
	Codex Theodosianus	c. Th.	Mommsen and Meyer 1905
	Council of Saragossa	n/a	Martínez and Díez 1963
	Council of Toledo	n/a	Martínez and Díez 1963
	de miraculis Sancti Stephani	Mirac. Steph.	Meyers, Jean. <i>Les miracles de saint Étienne: recherches sur le recueil pseudo-augustinien (BHL 7860-7861), avec édition critique, traduction et commentaire: études du Groupe de recherches sur l'Afrique antique</i> . Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006.
	<i>Lex Dei sive Mosaicarum et Romanorum legum collatio</i>		Hyamson, Moses, ed. <i>Mosaicarum et Romanarum Legum Collatio: With Introduction, Facsimile</i>

Author	Work	Abbreviation	Critical Edition
			<i>and Transcription of the Berlin Codex, Translation, Notes and Appendices.</i> London: Oxford University Press, 1913.
	<i>P. Rylands Greek 469</i>		Aland, Kurt, ed. <i>Repertorium der griechischen christlichen Papyri.</i> Vol. 42. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1976.
	Priscillianist Professions	Exemplar.	Chadwick, Henry. <i>Priscillian of Avila: The Occult and the Charismatic in the Early Church.</i> Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976.
	Reg. Eccl. Carth. Excerpta.	Reg. Eccl. Carth.	CCSL 149
	Revelatio Sancti Stephani	Lucian epist. Rec. A	Vanderlinden, S. "Revelatio Sancti Stephani (BHG 7850-6)." <i>Revue des études byzantines</i> 4, no. 1 (1946): 178–217.

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