History and Community in the Works of Salvian of Marseille

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis explores the themes of history and community in *Ad ecclesiam* and *De gubernatione dei* by Salvian of Marseille (c. 400-c. 470). It seeks to show how Salvian's ideas about community determine his severe criticisms of the contemporary church and of late-Roman society, and to explore the nature, sources and implications of his portrayal of historical events as manifestations of divine judgement.

An introductory chapter on the issues surrounding Salvian's representation of historical reality is followed by a survey of the historical background of his life and aspects of the literary context of his works, paying particular attention to the pseudonymity of *Ad ecclesiam*.

The remainder of the thesis is a detailed examination of *Ad ecclesiam* and *De gubernatione dei*. In the case of the former, this focusses particularly on the theme of community, especially as it relates to Salvian's attitude towards wealth, inheritance and the family. In the case of *De gubernatione dei*, the theme of community is treated in relation to Salvian's ideas about the church and Christian community, and to his criticisms of injustice in contemporary secular society. The theme of history is pursued in relation to his claims that contemporary political and military events should be seen as punishments inflicted by God, as well as the relationship of his theories about judgement to his ideas about community, and the biblical sources of his ideas about divine justice. The thesis attempts to illuminate the religious roots of his social ideas, and to demonstrate the coherence of his social criticism with his beliefs about the nature of the church and about theodicy.

Appendices deal with textual issues in *Ad ecclesiam* and with the date of *De gubernatione dei*.

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'The Uses of Decay: History in Salvian's *De Gubernatione Dei*', *Augustinian Studies* 30:2 (1999), 115-30, also published in *History, Apocalypse and the Secular Imagination: New Essays on Augustine's City of God*, ed. M. Vessey, K. Pollmann & A. Fitzgerald (Bowling Green, Ohio, 1999), 115-30.

'The Barbarians in Salvian's *De Gubernatione Dei*', in *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity*, ed. S. Mitchell & G. Greatrex (London, 2000), 103-15.

'The Pseudonymity of Salvian's *Timotheus ad Ecclesiam*', *Studia Patristica* 38 (Leuven 2001), 423-28.

Abbreviations

In references and footnotes, *Ad ecclesiam* and *De gubernatione dei* are abbreviated to *E* and *G*.

CAH[2]	*Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd edition
CHR	*Catholic Historical Review*
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DACL	*Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (Paris 1924-53)
HThR	*Harvard Theological Review*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JThS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
MEFR	*Mélanges de l'École Française à Rome*
MGH. AA	Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiquissimi
NRTh	*Nouvelle revue théologique*
PL	Patrologia Latina
RBen	*Revue Bénédictine*
RBPH	*Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*
REA	*Revue des études anciennes*
RecTh	*Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*
SC	Sources chrétiennes
SCH	*Studies in Church History*
TAPA	*Transactions of the American Philological Association*
Thiel	A. Thiel (ed.), *Epistolae romanorum pontificum genuinae* (Braunsberg 1867)
VChr	*Vigiliae Christianae*
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

Reference Summary of *Ad ecclesiam*

Book 1

1-10 Depiction of church given up to sin and avarice.

11-22 Correct love of one's children: not to give them material possessions but to instill fear of God

23-30 Source and purpose of earthly wealth: all wealth is held by men from God for a short time and should be used to honour him

31-36 Good or bad use of wealth determines one's fate after death

37-54 But good use of wealth may be the *ultimum remedium* of sins.

Book 2

1-13 Not only sinners but *sancti* are in debt to God.

14-24 The limits on what they may possess are laid down in the Bible.

25-41 Admonitions to different groups of *sancti*

- 25-27 Widows
- 28-9 Celibate couples
- 30-36 Virgins
- 37-41 Clerics

42-3 Devoting oneself to religion increases one's duty to God.

44-52 *Religiosi* must give up their property not only because it is demanded of them, but because it corresponds to *ratio* and *salubritas*.

53-9 Therefore those who do not practice charity do not really believe. They doubt the coming benefits.

60-65 The claims of age, sickness or sex cannot permit wealth, only sufficiency.

66-73 So in their own interest they should great rid of their property, at least at death.

Book 3

1 The third book is directed jointly to *amatrices mundi* and *religiosi*.

2-5 Reiteration of need for charity, at death if not before.

6-56 Leaving property to one's children.

- 6-17 Whether it is permissible to leave property to one's children. Property should never be left to other heirs.
- 18-21 It is right to leave property to the needy or religious, but in fact religious children are treated worse.
- 22-39 Ways in which *religiosi* are discriminated against in the distribution of family property
- 40-44 Salvian's demands supported by example of early Christians
- 45-56 The well-being of their heirs will be no comfort to the rich when they are in hell.

57-95 The leaving of property to distant or spurious relatives.

- 57-68 Such conduct is madness, and evidence that those who behave in such a way do not believe in resurrection and judgement.
- 69-75 The Bible makes clear that the way one disposes of one's property determine's one's fate after death.
- 76-87 Therefore the rich man who does not give away his wealth, shows himself to be an unbeliever.
- 87-95 People are encouraged in this behaviour by a crowd of hypocritical heirs, who feign affection while hoping for them to die as quickly as possible.

Book 4

1-15 The fact that one has lived a good life does not excuse the wrong disposal of property at death, nor it permissible to claim that property is left to heirs out of love for them rather than contempt for God. To prefer another is inherently contemptuous of God.

16-23 Generosity is required of people because they are in debt for the benefits they receive from God. God requires giving not for himself but for the beneficiaries, the poor.

24-27 By their behaviour many *religiosi* show that they do not believe generosity to the poor will be rewarded.

28-36 Professing religion does not free one from the duty to charity, it increases it. Without charity the virtues of a religious person are valueless.

37-9 Those who do not do what Salvian demands show that they despise and disbelieve in Christ.

40-46 The actions of true saints support Salvian's demands. They give up their property before embarking on religious life. The mere status of *religiosus* is no security.

47-50 Salvian's demands may be heard but will obtain the greatest rewards. The real hardness is not in the law but in men's hearts

Reference Summary of *De gubernatione dei*

Book 1

1-26 God governs the world: proof by argument.
- 1 Opening proposition: people believe that God does not care about human actions, and neither protects the good nor punishes the wicked.
- 2-6 Classical authors agree that God governs the world.
- 7-16 Certain forms of suffering are actually beneficial.
- 17-26 God did not create the world and then abandon it; judgement is not deferred until after death.

27-60 Proof by means of biblical *exempla*
- 27-39 From Adam to Sodom and Gomorrah
- 39-60 The Israelites in the desert

Book 2

1-28 Proof by means of biblical *testimonia*
- 1-12 Proof of God's presence
- 13-28 Proof that God exercises judgement and does so in this world.

Book 3

1-8 Introduction. The nature of true faith and membership of the church.

9-49 Ubiquity of sin within the church.

50-60 Concluding passage, with first attack on possessors of secular power.

Book 4

1-10 Introduction. The *nomen Christianum*. Further discussion of what constitutes true faith.

11-33 Attack on *nobiles*
- 11-13 Hypocrisy of *nobiles* who punish their slaves for sins they commit themselves
- 14-16 Slaves who steal, run away, lie or are greedy for food are driven to such actions by oppression
- 17-19 The actions of the *nobiles* are just as bad and have no such excuse. Therefore in judging slaves they condemn themselves
- 20-21 Sins of *nobiles* illustrated: abuse of power in public administration
- 23-29 Sins of *nobiles* within the household, chiefly concubinage
- 30-31 Further abuses of public office
- 32-33 Contempt of *nobiles* for those of their own number who adopt a religious life

34-54 Renewed discussion of the wickedness of doubting God's government

45-95 Comparison between Romans and pagan barbarians. The former know God's will but ignore it; the latter commit sinful acts because they know no better.

Book 5

1-4 Introduction.

5-14 Heretical barbarians. In spite of their Christianity they do not know the Law because their text of the Bible is corrupt.

15-61 Community among the barbarians compared with mutual exploitation among the Romans.

- 15-37 Taxation and flight. The Bacaudae.
- 38-45 Landowners and *patrocinium*.
- 46-50 Roman defeats are a punishment for such behaviour.
- 51-61 Denunciation of a corrupt churchman.

Book 6

1-9 Introduction. It is pointless to denounce the sins of an individual when corruption is almost universal.

10-34 The games, theatre, and other spectacles as a symbol of the corruption of Christian society.

35-89 The punishment inflicted on the Romans.

- 35-61 God has brought *spectacula* to an end by means of the barbarian conquests.
- 62-65 The Romans are corrupted equally by prosperity and adversity.
- 66-71 People did not respond when they saw other provinces being conquered.
- 71-89 The perverse response of the people of Trier to their sack by barbarians.

90-99 Conclusion on Roman depravity

Book 7

1-6 Introduction. Failure of the Romans to understand and respond to God's punishment.

7-25 Punishment of Aquitaine by the Goths.

26-33 Punishment of Spain by the Vandals.

34-49 The superior merits of the barbarians are shown by their consistent victories over the Romans in battle.

50-108 Punishment of Africa by the Vandals.

- 50-56 The Vandals were caused to migrate from Germany to Africa by God, in order to punish the lands which they passed through.
- 56-83 Denunciation of sin in Africa, especially sexual corruption in Carthage.
- 84-108 The virtue of the Vandals
  - 84-90 They never indulged in luxury or sexual vice.
  - 91-93 Hypocrisy of Roman law.
  - 94-100 The Vandals, on the other hand, order their laws in accordance with God's
  - 101-6 Superiority of Vandal morals to those of Socrates or Cato the Younger.
  - 107-8 The Romans are only purified when they come under barbarian rule.

Book 8

1-8 Introduction. Reiteration of the wickedness of denying God's government.

9-25 Further denunciation of Carthaginians.

- 9-14 For continuing to take part in the pagan rites of Caelestis.
- 15-25 For oppressing monks.

1) Introduction:
Salvian and the Representation of Historical Reality

Salvian lived through most of the fifth century A.D. and his literary output was considerable. His literary career probably lasted for most of his adult life. Of all his output, only two full-length works and a small group of letters survive. Not only have most of Salvian's works been lost, but the two surviving treatises, *Ad ecclesiam* and *De gubernatione dei*,[1] were composed within a few years of each other in the late 430s and early 440s, and thus represent only a very brief period in a long career.

The title of this thesis is *History and Community in the Works of Salvian of Marseille*. A number of ancillary issues have inevitably required discussion, chiefly relating to Salvian's life, and the dating and other circumstances surrounding the composition of his works; these are discussed in Chapter 2 and in the appendices. In the main part of the thesis, I have attempted to keep fairly strictly to discussion of the development of the themes of community and history in *Ad ecclesiam* and *De gubernatione dei*. To anyone familiar with Salvian's works, of course, it will be apparent that this is not such a great restriction. In effect, 'history' and 'community' sum up the entire subject matter of *De gubernatione dei*; this is true in a more limited sense in the case of *Ad ecclesiam*. Though most of the presuppositions underlying the two works are the same, *Ad ecclesiam* has a much more clearly defined purpose than *De gubernatione dei*, being a direct appeal to its audience to adopt a certain course of action (the renunciation of wealth), and Salvian devotes much of his argument to showing that this course is necessary and advantageous. *De gubernatione dei*, while its implication is that people must adopt the way of life which Salvian advocates,

[1] I cite Salvian's writings from the edition of G. Lagarrigue: *Salvien de Marseille, Œuvres*, vol. 1 (SC 176; Paris 1971); vol. 2 (SC 220; Paris 1975).

is structured as a work of exposition rather than direct admonition. In my discussion of *Ad ecclesiam* I have therefore concentrated on the themes which it shares with *De gubernatione dei* and have not attempted to be exhaustive in discussion of the arguments used by Salvian to convince his audience that giving away their property serves their true interests, or of all the sometimes technical issues relating to property and inheritance which he discusses.

Another restriction should be stated here, this time in my discussion of *De gubernatione dei*. This thesis is a study of Salvian as a writer and thinker; it does not attempt to be a study of land-ownership, taxation, rural patronage, the position of *curiales*, or the rebellion of the Bacaudae. Salvian's depiction of these social issues is discussed as it relates to his own ideas, but the discussion is about Salvian's treatment; I have not sought to reach new conclusions about the issues themselves. This can be defended on the basis that this is a study of Salvian, not of late-Roman social history, but there is a more fundamental justification. One of the conclusions I have reached in pursuing research on Salvian is that it is necessary to elucidate the way in which he employs factual, or apparently factual, information, before one can even think of utilising his statements as a description of actual fifth-century conditions.

This caveat introduces a theme which it is useful to discuss in some detail, since it forms the main difference between the approach which I take to Salvian, and that adopted in most previous scholarly treatments of his work. When one talks about history in the works of Salvian, the obvious reference is to Salvian's own interpretation of history, and his use of contemporary events as elements in his arguments about morality and religion. This is the sense in which 'history' is employed in the title of this thesis. But history in Salvian can also be taken to mean something else, namely the way in which Salvian chooses to use and present information about the contemporary world—the way in which he represents

historical reality, and the status of the large amount of apparently factual information which his works contain. The significance of this issue for understanding Salvian will be apparent to anyone familiar with the treatment of his works in past scholarly literature. The most striking characteristic of many discussions is their extremely polemical tone; polemic which is not primarily between scholars over differing interpretations of Salvian's works, but against, or in defence of, Salvian himself. There can be few, if any, ancient writers who have inspired such hostility in some of their modern readers.[2] It is not hard to see why Salvian's works have aroused controversy. In *De gubernatione dei* he deals with social and national conflict, issues central to the bitterest conflicts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and which have aroused corresponding passions to which scholars are not immune. For those with a high degree of ideological investment in a particular image of late-antique history, Salvian's work can be inflammatory if he confirms it, and even more so if he appears to contradict it.

Salvian's depiction of social conflict has always had a central place in accounts of the later Roman empire by Marxists, and more generally by those who wish to stress the oppressive side of late-antique society.[3] However, it is the overlap between Salvian's portrayal of his society and some of the national conflicts of the modern world which has most embittered discussion of his work. In the nineteenth century Salvian's claims about the virtue of 'Germanic' peoples such as the Goths and the Vandals were taken up with enthusiasm by German nationalist historians, who were happy to treat his statements as a simple reflection of reality. He was praised for his perception in having described these

[2] See, for example, Courcelle 1964 or Blänsdorf 1990.

[3] Examples are innumerable, but see for example Ste. Croix 1981, 481, typical in its rejection of any doubts about the accuracy of Salvian's portrayal, and the commendation of Salvian by Stein 1959, 344: 'la source la plus révélatrice sur la situation intérieure de l'Empire d'Occident, la seule qui nous laisse voir directement toute la misère du temps dans sa réalité atroce'.

'facts', to which other Roman authors were supposedly blinded by prejudice. This view appears in studies of Salvian, including some of high quality,[4] as well as general works on the period, and continued to appear until at least the nineteen-sixties, although in post-war work it seems only to have been put forward by scholars who reached maturity before 1945.[5] Some subsequent German works take a hostile line towards Salvian on this issue.[6]

In France, on the other hand, scholarship was affected by the strongly anti-German trend in French thought after 1870, which was enhanced by the two World Wars. Some French historians show intense hostility towards Salvian. The scholar of late-Latin literature, Pierre Courcelle, claimed that he was a traitor, a willing collaborator with the destroyers of Roman civilisation, who deliberately portrayed a false image of the Goths and Vandals in order to encourage his contemporaries to submit to their rule.[7] Typically, apart from

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[4] Zschimmer 1875, 55-60, 89; Schaefer 1930, 103.

[5] Such claims can be found in their strongest form in a 1948 monograph by Joseph Anton Fischer on patristic responses to the invasions (a work which is still sometimes cited on the subject). Fischer attributes Salvian's portrayal of the barbarians to his 'unreserved love of truth' ('vorbehaltlose Wahrheitsliebe', p. 193). The terms in which Fischer thought can be judged from expressions like 'unverdorbene Kraft der jungen Germanenvölker' (172), 'Ahnung von einer besseren Zukunft unter germanische Führung' (195), 'reinende Kraft des Völkerwanderungssturms' (216). Similar, if more restrained, statements can be found as late as Vogt 1967, in which Salvian is praised for perceiving 'what was new and important for the future in the rise of the Germanic peoples' (239), who 'offered a fresh source of moral energy to the Roman world' (242). It is fair to point out that, at least in the nineteenth century, claims about the supposed superiority of Germanic peoples were by no means made only by Germans: see, for example, Charles Kingsley's 1864 work, *The Roman and the Teuton*, which also uses Salvian in this manner.

[6] Blänsdorf 1990 is extremely hostile to Salvian, on the grounds of the supposed dishonesty of his portrayal of the Vandals, though he avoids linking this to earlier controversies. Badewien 1980, 127-38, is also critical (see below, p. 12, n. 4). At least one other work by a German scholar (Sterzl 1950) apparently takes a hostile line on the issue. (Sterzl's work has not been accessible to me, so I can only report this on the basis of references by other writers).

[7] Courcelle 1964 (the first edition appeared in 1948), 146-55: 'Il est inquiétant de voir un Romain faire, en Provence, un tel panégyrique des Barbares, alors que les Goths portent leur effort contre Arles. Il semble désireux de seconder leur politique. Peut-être a-t-il subi des influences germaniques dans sa jeunesse, puisqu'il est originaire de Germanie romaine. Il ne se contente pas, selon la tradition des *Chants Sibyllins*, de lancer contre Rome des imprécations oratoires; il participe activement, par sa propagande, à détruire son empire et sa culture; il prépare les esprits à accepter ou même à appeler de leurs voeux la domination des royaumes germaniques' (155). Courcelle rarely mentions Salvian in any of his works without adding a hostile remark, sometimes quite gratuitously (see for example Courcelle 1948, 220). Other examples of such attitudes are Lot 1947, 532; Loyen 1963, 441-3. This attitude approaches self-parody in Leclercq 1932 (col. 2229): 'Sous prétexte de faire l'apologie de la Providence, qui n'en a pas besoin, Salvien se révèle un esprit biscornu, tel que nous avons connu un pareil de nos jours, le comte de Gobineau. L'un et l'autre ont obtenu leurs lettres de grande naturalisation de l'Allemagne savante.'

condemning him for 'defeatism' and lack of concern for the preservation of Rome's superior civilization,[8] those who take this point of view accuse Salvian, in similar terms to Courcelle, of deliberate mendacity in his representation of the barbarians, of whitewashing their cruelty and destructiveness—in short their barbarism.[9] A particular target in this respect is his portrayal of the Vandals in Book 7 of *De gubernatione dei*.[10] This condemnatory attitude was by no means universal, even among French speaking scholars in periods like the mid-twentieth century.[11] Courcelle's hostility to Salvian, in particular, was so obviously excessive that it provoked a string of articles taking issue with his remarks and defending Salvian against his accusations,[12] while even authors who tended to agree with him felt the need to distance themselves from the unacceptable features of his critique.[13]

The distorting effect of nationalist ideology on the study of Salvian can be illustrated by a concrete instance, whose pervasive influence is still apparent. This is the practice of referring to Salvian's portrayal of the barbarians as his portrayal of the *Germans*, as though

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[8] This element in criticism of Salvian certainly owes something to the much older and more wide ranging tradition, going back to Gibbon and beyond, of hostility towards asceticism, and to Christianity in general, for supposedly undermining the vigour of the Roman empire.

[9] 'Barbarian' is an ideological term, and I have become progressively more uncomfortable using it. Unfortunately there is no other way of referring collectively to the Goths, Vandals, Huns, etc., without resorting to cumbersome circumlocutions (nor is there any real alternative when discussing Salvian's constant references to *barbari.*) The literature under discussion shows precisely the dangers which result from unreflectingly using the term, which automatically attributes an array of presumed negative characteristics to those to whom it is applied. For some pertinent comments on this issue see Goffart 1989a; Whittaker 1994, 132; Amory 1997, 1-6; Woolf 1998, 4-5.

[10] Condemnation of Salvian's portrayal of the Vandals is not confined to works that fit into the mould of nationalist controversy. There is an alternative tradition which condemns him for praising heretics who persecuted Catholics (see e.g. Alfonsi 1974). This seems to lie behind the attack on Salvian by Blänsdorf, and it is an additional weapon in the armoury of those, like Courcelle, who condemn him on patriotic grounds.

[11] Thouvenot 1920 is a positive assessment of Salvian by a French scholar from the inter-war period.

[12] Barmann 1963; Lebeau 1963; Badot 1976; Hamman 1977. With the partial exception of Lebeau, these limit themselves to pointing out the anachronistic tone and general unfairness of Courcelle's position, and giving a sympathetic exposition of Salvian's main ideas, rather than attempting a more ambitious critique.

[13] Paschoud 1967, 310 (cf. 297-302); Lagarrigue 1975, 41: 'Le lecteur ne perdra rien, pensons-nous, à négliger certaines appréciations trop indignées de divers auteurs'.

there were no distinction between the implications of the two terms.[14] Yet not only does Salvian never refer in his surviving works to 'Germans', there is nothing in his text to suggest that he even entertained a concept that could accurately be represented by the term.[15] In the realm of politics and nationality, Salvian makes only one significant distinction: between *Romani* and *barbari*. There are different subgroups of *barbari*—he refers to Goths, Vandals, Alans, Huns, Franks, Gepids, Saxons, Alamanni, Scythians, and Moors—just as there are subdivisions of *Romani*, such as *Galli, Hispani, Itali*, *Afri*, and *Aquitani*. Salvian attributes various characteristics to individual barbarian *gentes*, just as he does to the inhabitants of certain parts of the Roman empire, but there is not even the shadow of a hint that he regarded those *gentes* whom modern scholars deem to be 'Germanic' as sharing any characteristics which differentiated them from non-Germanic *gentes*. The *only* distinction between barbarian groups which is meaningful to Salvian is the religious distinction between pagans and Christians. In *De gubernatione dei* there are two subsets within the set of *barbari*: pagans and Christians. Within the Christian set there are two subsets, Goths and Vandals. Within the pagan set there are many subsets, implicitly far more than those named by Salvian, since it includes all barbarian *gentes* who are not Christians. The only distinction that appears in his text is the religious one. In Salvian's argument there is no meaningful difference between the Franks and the Moors. They are both simply pagan barbarians. Similarly, there is nothing to suggest that he saw the Franks as having anything in common with the Goths and Vandals which was not shared by the Moors. All have a common identity as *barbari*. Within this, the only distinction is between pagans and Christians. If Salvian was

[14] Most of the historians cited here do so freely, making blanket use of expressions such as 'die Germanendarstellung Salvians' (Badewien 1980, 135). Though this is obviously difficult to quantify, the only works discussed here in which the practice is rigorously avoided seem to be Teillet 1984 and Maas 1992.

[15] He never uses the collective noun *Germani*. His only reference to *Germania* is to the Roman province of Germania Prima (*G* 7.50).

aware of the supposed shared linguistic and ethnographic characteristics of the 'Germans', he clearly regarded them as utterly insignificant.[16] He believed that the Romans were being punished by *barbari*, not by Germans.

Overtly nationalistic treatments of Salvian have not appeared in the last thirty years or so. That such interpretations were due to the anachronistic importing into late antiquity of the national antagonisms of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries now seems obvious. The assumption that there is some kind of direct continuity between the Goths or the Vandals and modern Germans would now be almost universally regarded as a piece of nationalist myth-making. A whole generation of research on the history of late antiquity makes it impossible to see the various conflicts between Romans and barbarian peoples as a simple struggle between good and evil (whichever side is supposed to have represented those qualities). More fundamentally, over the same period, a vastly more sophisticated and sympathetic approach to late-antique religious literature, and late-antique religion in general, has become established which makes it seem absurd to try to reduce a work like *De gubernatione dei* to a mere piece of political propaganda. When Courcelle put forward such an explanation, it was typical of the then dominant trend in the historical discussion of religious texts and religious phenomena, which was to explain them as being largely a reflection of secular concerns. For Courcelle, notwithstanding his great erudition in late-antique literature, it apparently seemed natural to interpret the religious content of *De gubernatione dei* as being merely a mask for Salvian's real purpose, a secular one.[17] Thus,

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[16] There is of course, once the evidence ceases to be viewed through nationalist spectacles, little to suggest that the Germanic peoples themselves had any particular sense of common identity in this period. See Goffart, 1989a.

[17] It should be stressed that this approach was general, not simply an aberration by Courcelle. Christian Courtois, whose attitude towards the barbarians was almost the diametrical opposite of Courcelle's, produced an similarly reductive reading of Victor of Vita (Courtois 1954); the approach underlies W. H. C. Frend's study of the Donatist schism (Frend 1952), on which see the comments of Tilley 1997, 11-12.

implicitly, Courcelle is endorsing an approach to religious literature based on the assumption that secular issues such as political loyalty and national (or social) conflict are the real, pressing, ones, just as they would seem in modern secular society, while religious ideas are by comparison unreal, so that their expression can be assumed to be, if not a mere facade, then at best a means of expressing these other concerns.[18]

It is important to stress the central point here, since apart from the general methodological issues, it has direct significance for the interpretation of Salvian's works.[19] In the modern, post-Enlightenment world, most people see religion and phenomena such as national conflict or the pursuit of economic self-interest as belonging to different orders of reality. Certain schools of historical interpretation, most obviously Marxism, make this a central element in their explanatory armoury. Because the religious realm has historically been invested with prestige and respectability, but is deemed by the historian to be unreal compared to, for example, motives of economic self-interest or political ambition, then if someone gives a religious explanation for their actions, or, as Salvian does, demands that others should take a certain course of action on religious grounds, this will be explained as a rationalisation, or even a deliberate subterfuge, concealing their real, more concrete, motivation. Wider religious phenomena will be interpreted as expressions of social discontent, or of national feeling.[20] The point at issue is that this approach, at least as it has been practised in many studies of late-antique history, relies on an implicit assumption that people in the period under discussion placed a value on religious considerations, and attributed a qualitative difference to the religious and the secular, which was much the same

[18] A memorably crude statement of this attitude can be found in Thompson 1952, 86: 'Salvian does not shrink from wrapping up his arguments in religious language'.

[19] See especially my discussion of *G* Book 6 (Chapter 6 below).

[20] For a classic attack on this approach, written when its influence was at its height, see Jones 1959.

as that in the modern, secularised world. I would contend that when applied to a late-antique ascetic writer such as Salvian, such assumptions are totally misleading.[21]

In my view, *Ad ecclesiam* and *De gubernatione dei* are only comprehensible on the basis that Salvian made no distinction between the reality of religion, of Christianity as he understood it, and that of the concrete world of experience. This is the theoretical position that underlies the specifics of Salvian's polemic in both books. Aside from its concerns about the Christian treatment of property, much of *Ad ecclesiam* can be read as an attempt by Salvian to transmit to his audience his own sense of reality. He wishes them to re-evaluate their conceptions of what is and is not real, so that other-worldly considerations such as the prospect of judgement after death become more important to them than worldly considerations such as economic security or the well-being of their family. Similarly, I would argue that in *De gubernatione dei* Salvian makes no qualitative distinction between the use of divine action as an explanation for historical events, and secular social or political causes. This is not to suggest that Salvian's precise beliefs on these issues were universally shared. There is little doubt that, as he himself repeatedly claims, he was part of a small and unrepresentative minority. One can generalise that when the precepts of an other-worldly religion conflict with the ordinary desires and pressures of the material world and of society, then for most people, most of the time, the world will prevail. This will be true even when that religion holds an unchallenged monopoly. A very substantial part of the moral and homiletic literature of ancient and medieval Christianity is, in effect, a commentary on this fact. But many people in this period clearly did interpret the world in the same way that

[21] This is not, of course, to imply that religion did not frequently provide a vehicle for self-interest, ambition, or the will to power, simply that, if a person's religious beliefs are as real to them as their beliefs about the physical world or human society, the directions in which such motives will lead them are likely to be very different from those they would follow if they believe that, ultimately, the religious world is different from 'the real world'.

Salvian did, as is evident not only from their writings, but from the entire phenomenon of Christian asceticism.

We see therefore, two approaches to the more problematic aspects of Salvian's representation of reality, one which simply treats it as factual, and the other as a device employed by him for more or less cynical reasons. The former requires less discussion, since it is inherently a simple position, and its untenability hardly requires demonstration: leaving aside methodological questions about the representation of reality, much of Salvian's portrayal of the barbarians simply lacks all credibility. In any case, the kind of secularising interpretation of religious literature discussed above now has little currency among researchers on late antiquity, but it cannot be dismissed as no longer relevant, since it continues to influence many treatments of Salvian, even when the authors of those treatments are attempting to put forward new interpretations. Salvian's representation of reality does, after all, require discussion, when the treatment of the barbarians is so central to *De gubernatione dei*, yet so much of it is, when judged as evidence of the real historical situation, completely worthless (especially since Salvian's assertions about other aspects of contemporary life, such as social conditions in Gaul, generally continue to be accepted as reliable).

The flaw in the older literature on Salvian is not that it focusses on this issue, but that it reduces it to two excessively crude alternatives: either Salvian is simply telling the truth, or he is deliberately lying. In the first instance everything he says can be accepted more or less at its face value, in the second he can be showered with moralistic abuse for 'misrepresenting' reality. Presented in such stark terms, the choice seems as simplistic as it actually is, but the difficulty in escaping from the dichotomy in practice is apparent from some of the more recent work which has attempted to do so, even though all acknowledge

the primacy of religion in Salvian's thought.[22] Although the conclusions of the various authors differ in detail, all adopt basically the same strategy in dealing with the issue, which is to try to marginalise Salvian's discussion of the barbarians, by claiming that the theme was a minor issue for him, one in which he had little interest compared to others he discusses, and in which his claims are not determined by serious thought on his part, but are simply clichés drawn from the literary tradition of using the image of the virtuous barbarian as a counterpoint to attacks on the vices of the Romans.[23] In the weaker statement of this position made by Cleland and Badewien, Salvian is employing a cliché which he may in a sense have believed in, but which he had not really thought about. In the much stronger version put forward by Teillet, the passages praising the barbarians are merely a rhetorical exercise which Salvian himself did not take seriously.[24]

It is evident that Cleland, Badewien and Teillet argue as they do because, to a large extent, they remain constrained by the older agenda of nationalistic controversy. Their approach continues to be dictated by a wish to refute the kind of accusations made by Courcelle,[25] or to reject German chauvinist appropriations of Salvian.[26] If this had not been

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[22] Cleland 1970; Badewien 1980, 127-38; Teillet 1984, 161-83.

[23] E.g, Teillet 1984, 164: 'les Goths ne font qu'illustrer, dans cette œuvre, le type du Barbare naturellement vertueux, qu'il convient d'opposer au Romain corrompu'.

[24] 'Un brillant paradoxe, fort éloignée de la pensée véritable de notre auteur ... Il prétend démontrer une vérité insoutenable et à laquelle lui-même ne croit pas.' (Teillet 1984, 174-5).

[25] This is avowedly so in the case of Cleland and Teillet. Both respond to the charge that Salvian was 'unpatriotic', not by questioning the value of this as a criterion for judging a late-antique writer, but simply by trying to show that the charge is unfounded. Cleland, although his starting point seems to me misguided ('Can Salvian's account be explained without invoking deliberate propaganda for the enemy?', Cleland 1970, 270), confines himself to pointing out something of the religious reasoning that influences Salvian's portrayal, and to arguing that the barbarians play a subsidiary role in an argument focussed on the Romans. Teillet goes much further in arguing that Salvian was 'really' a patriot; her strategy is essentially to claim that his positive comments about the Roman empire represent his 'true' feelings, while trying to explain away everything that gives a contradictory impression. Her argument displays great intellectual and rhetorical energy, but it rather too frequently resembles someone arguing a difficult case in a debating society rather than pursuing a scholarly enquiry.

[26] This is so in the case of Badewien, who takes up a stance of anguished disapproval ('In der Tat is es erstaunlich, daß der Priester mit keinem Wort die Grausamkeit der Barbaren anklagt', 135), together with repeated stress on the point that Salvian's text does not constitute reliable evidence about the character of the 'Germans'.

the case, their interpretation of Salvian might have raised fewer problems. The most obvious of these is that to claim that the barbarians are a marginal, purely rhetorical, device simply does not do justice to the extent and nature of the attention which Salvian pays to them. He indisputably uses them as a foil for the sins of the Romans, especially in Book 5, when he counterpoints oppression and exploitation within the empire with freedom and justice among the barbarians, and in Book 7, much of which is devoted to praise of the sexual virtue of the Goths and Vandals as compared to the dissoluteness of the Roman inhabitants of Aquitaine, Spain, and Africa. But the barbarians cannot be treated as *merely* a foil when so much of Salvian's discussion focusses on them, rather than on the Romans. Whenever Salvian makes a comparison between barbarians and Romans, except to some extent in Book 5, he devotes as much space, and usually gives as much rhetorical emphasis, to praise of the barbarians as to condemnation of the Romans. As the text stands, his account in Book 7 of the moral and military triumph of the Vandals is the emotional climax of the entire work.[27] His interpretation of the conquests of the Goths and Vandals shows that he attached the deepest significance to these as part of God's plan for the world. In particular, attempts to diminish the significance of the barbarians completely neglect the way in which he incorporates them into a view of the church and the empire, and their relations with outsiders, which he derives from the Bible, and in the light of which he interprets contemporary events.[28] This makes his treatment of the barbarians totally different from the classical portrayal of the virtuous barbarian, as exemplified by Tacitus' *Germania* (a work which was almost certainly unknown to Salvian, although his education would have made him familiar with the literary

[27] Book 8 in its present state is little more than an anticlimactic appendix to Book 7; however, the book is incomplete, and we do not know how much has been lost.

[28] See discussion in, especially, Chapter 4 (Section 2) and Chapter 6 below.

tradition of which it formed a part).[29] Failure to pay sufficient attention to this aspect of Salvian's thought is at the root of many of the misunderstandings which have been perpetrated over the years.[30]

It is the justification put forward by those who try to play down the portrayal of the barbarians which is significant from a methodological point of view. All those who argue that the barbarians were not really important to Salvian justify this on the basis of his failure to give—and his apparent lack of concern to give—detailed factual information about them.[31] The most carefully argued presentation of this case is Badewien's.[32] He begins by contrasting Salvian's claims about barbarian virtue with his 'graphic' (*anschaulich*) eyewitness account of the destruction of Trier (*G* 6.82-9), and the suffering of members of Salvian's own family under barbarian rule (*Ep.* 1.5-6), claiming that the latter contain more 'reality'.[33] It is the contrast between the two aspects of Salvian's portrayal which, Badewien argues, show that portrayal of the barbarians is artificial; in one part of his text Salvian reports accurately, in another he puts forward a piece of convenient rhetoric, and the two do not connect; Salvian makes various negative comments about barbarians, or particular *gentes* (*G* 4.67-8, 82; 7.64), but these are formulaic and are not supported by detailed exposition,

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[29] Salvian and Tacitus are often paired in this context; indeed, there is an entire article comparing them (Weiss 1995), but there is no evidence in Salvian's text that he was familiar with the *Germania*, nor is the idea likely, given that Tacitus was a fairly obscure author in late antiquity, and that his shorter works, in particular, appear to have been virtually unknown. The only late-antique author who shows any knowledge of the *Germania* is Cassiodorus (Haverfield 1916, 199).

[30] Most of those whose opinions I have discussed ignore it altogether. Teillet 1984, 167, 176 n.90, is a partial exception.

[31] '[Salvian] does not know very much about the barbarians but is interested only in the Romans' (Cleland 1970, 271); 'Salvian weiß wenig von den Barbaren ... Vor allem benutzt er die Germanen als rhetorisch wirkungsvollen Kontrast' (Badewien 1980, 135); 'Qu'apprenons-nous sur les Goths, dans le *De gubernatione Dei*? en réalité, bien peu de choses, hormis quelques lieux communs' (Teillet 1984, 175; cf. also 166, 171). Salvian's lack of real knowledge about the barbarians is emphasized by others, such as Paschoud 1967, 297.

[32] Badewien 1980, 133-38.

[33] 'Diese ... beleuchten blitzlichtartig eine ganz andere Seite des „göttlichen Gerichts", die mehr Realitätsgehalt hat als die stereotype Lobrede über die Barbaren.' (Badewien 1980, 134).

as his complaints about the Romans are, while he reports the destruction and suffering caused by the invasions, but allows this to remain separate from characterisation of the barbarians.[34] Badewien concludes that the passages of realistic observation in Salvian's portrayal of the Romans show that this element within *De gubernatione dei* was the one which really interested him, while the absence of such passages from the portrayal of the barbarians shows that this element is essentially rhetorical, and subservient to the former.[35] Though they differ in points of detail, Badewien's main contention, the equation between the absence of realistic observation of the barbarians on Salvian's part with lack of genuine interest in them, is also that of Cleland and Teillet.[36]

I do not disagree by any means with all the observations made by Badewien in the course of his argument. It seems to me unchallengeable that Salvian selects and presents material about the barbarians according to his preconceived ideas about the world and the historical situation.[37] It is the conclusions Badewien draws from this which I believe are mistaken. The idea that the degree to which Salvian provides realistic detail about a subject (that is, of course, detail which satisfies *our* criteria for being realistic, such as his 'eyewitness report' from Trier) can be used as a criterion for judging the extent of his own interest in a topic seems to me misguided. In effect, Badewien's critique of Salvian draws a distinction between passages which to the modern historian's eye appear to be based on observation or reliable information, and those which appear to be determined by the author's

[34] It is evident from the tone of Badewien's discussion that he sees this as evidence of a moral failure on Salvian's part.

[35] 'Indem Salvian darauf verzichtet, seine Darstellung der Barbaren zu einem Ganzen zusammenzufügen, zeigt er sehr deutlich, wie wenig Interesse er ihnen im Grunde entgegenbringt. Seine Ausführungen über sie sind nur Nebenprodukt, notwendiges Material zur Erreichung seines eigentlichen Ziels.' (Badewien 1980, 135).

[36] Teillet makes more of the absence from *G* of ethnographic information about the Goths and other barbarian peoples (see especially Teillet 1984, 171, adducing the fact that Salvian makes little distinction between the Goths and the Vandals as evidence of his lack of interest).

[37] Badewien 1980, 135.

ideological beliefs, and privileges the former. While this distinction may be valid in determining which passages can be utilised by the modern historian interested in information about fifth-century Gaul or about the barbarians, it does not seem to me a legitimate criterion for judging either the factual status or the importance of a passage for Salvian himself.

At a relatively simple level, Salvian makes some statements about the barbarians which appear to be no more than clichés, but this cannot be taken to indicate that he did not fully accept the truthfulness of such characterisations.[38] When he refers to the *foetor* of barbarians (*G* 5.21) or alludes to the *efferos mores Maurorum* (*G* 4.82) he is drawing on imagery which was a shared part of Roman culture, part of everyone's common knowledge about barbarians, or, to use more academic terminology, of the cultural construction of the barbarian. Much more important in interpreting Salvian's text, however, is its religious content, and in particular the influence on it of the Bible. Few works on Salvian even acknowledge, let alone discuss, the relationship between his portrayal of the barbarians and his interpretation of the Bible. Yet most of the passages in *De gubernatione dei* which discuss the barbarians at any length are linked by Salvian directly to the Bible. The treatment of pagan barbarians in Book 4 is put forward in tandem with an interpretation of the concept of law in Paul's epistles. The portrayal of the barbarian invasions in Books 6 and 7 is illustrated by Salvian at every stage with references to the prophets and to other parts of the Old Testament, in which Salvian draws parallels between contemporary events and the Exodus or the history of the ancient Jewish kingdoms. For Salvian, as for any late-antique Christian writer, when he interprets phenomena in the light of his ideas about God or his interpretation of the Bible, his conclusions are—to him—knowledge. They constitute facts, and are just as 'real' as information obtained by empirical observation. Seen from this

[38] As suggested especially by Teillet, who interprets such instances as mere deference on Salvian's part to a tradition of formulaic rhetorical composition.

perspective, the fact that much of the content of his portrayal of the Goths and Vandals is derived from his religious beliefs rather than empirical reporting is precisely the measure of the significance which they held in his eyes.

Such observations are not new in the study of early Christian literature.[39] The sort of presuppositions which underlie attempts to devalue the 'non-factual' elements of Salvian's representation of the world have been brought into question by Elizabeth Clark.[40] Basing her argument on a discussion by Roland Barthes of the way in which realistic detail in modern narrative (fictional or historical) creates a 'reality effect' which appears to validate the reality of the text as a representation of the external world, but in fact is purely literary,[41] she notes that the details in the biographies of female ascetics which appear to attest their historicity, 'are precisely what literary theorist Roland Barthes had named "the effect of the real" (or "the reality effect") ... What was the function of such detail? ... To make the reader believe the truth of the illusion being constructed'. As she concludes, 'the very details that social historians argue give veracity to a text are here repositioned as a creative artist's attempt to create an illusory reality in the reader's imagination'.[42] One can apply these observations,

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[39] See especially Cameron 1991 on the way in which Christianity came to provide 'plots' (p. 13) by which people interpreted the world and regulated their lives. Cameron's main discussion of the role of narrative in this process (89-119) concentrates on narratives of individual, exemplary lives, for which the Gospels provided the model, rather than narratives interpreting large scale political events. The biblical model for the latter is to be found in the historical narratives of the Old Testament, and in the prophets. On the use of Old Testament narratives to create a sense of identity by some late-antique Christians, see Tilley 1997.

[40] Clark 1998, especially 418-20. Clark's focus is on biographical narrative, but her observations can be applied to all genres which achieve the effect of reality through the use of realistic detail.

[41] Barthes 1986. Barthes claims that the representation of reality in classical literature, or at least in historiography, did *not* employ the reality effect in this way, primarily because of the tendency of ancient historians to generalise rather than to seek factual details of the kind valued by modern historians (47). There is an element of truth in this (*contra* Badewien, I would see Salvian's account of the sack of Trier as such a generalising portrayal), but Barthes' claim of a total divergence between ancient and modern texts in this area is exaggerated, and does not invalidate the application of his ideas to ancient texts.

[42] Clark 1998, 420. Clark points out, in my view rightly, that this observation renders highly questionable the standard practice of using such realistic details to retrieve historical information about, for example, land ownership or senatorial incomes, while discounting those elements that today seem implausible, such as the supernatural (418-9).

mutatis mutandis, to Salvian, and doing so short-circuits any attempt distinguish between the value of different elements in his portrayal of the world simply on the basis of their plausibility to the modern historian. From this point of view, in other words, when Badewien argues that Salvian's claims about the sack of Trier possess a *Realitätsgehalt* lacking in his claims about barbarian virtue,[43] all he proves is that Salvian put more effort into creating a 'reality effect' in this part of his text.

The only discussion of Salvian's representation of the barbarians which takes account of these issues is a paper by Michael Maas.[44] Although I disagree with several points of detail in this essay, it seems to me to be a true milestone in the field since it is the first piece of published work which genuinely escapes from the old controversies and recognises that there are more illuminating ways of discussing Salvian's portrayal of reality than awarding it marks according to the degree to which it matches the historian's interpretation of 'the facts'.[45] Maas observes that 'Salvian's very utilization of clichés about barbarians ... must be accepted as a valid statement of the limits of his social imagination', and that 'ancient ethnographic observation does not gain more legitimacy when it takes the form of a superficially more "objective" description in a historical narrative than in a pointedly manipulative sermon'.[46] Maas's question, 'What could have been more "real" for him than to show them as instruments of God's will?',[47] can be taken as the starting point of my own discussion.

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[43] Above, n. 32.

[44] Maas 1992.

[45] At the time of writing, it still appears to be the only one.

[46] Maas 1992, 280. Cf. also 283: 'We may ask if Salvian would have appeared to be more interested in them if he had described their dietary laws or kinship structure or recorded their poetry? We must understand the ways of showing interest available to him and not overestimate the value of more formal, ethnographic description.'

[47] Maas 1992, 283.

Having said all this, I should add that I would not wish to adopt the thoroughgoing post-modernist position that there is no distinction even in principle between fact and representation. However, in practice—in any given text—there may well be no criteria for determining the historicity of apparently factual data once realism *per se* has been discounted. Such criteria can be found, but they generally require the historian to pay more attention to the text as a literary construction than has usually been the case in traditional practice. For example, given that factual details will normally be included in a text to further a particular literary purpose, it is unlikely that an author would damage this purpose by making claims that he knew would be disbelieved by his audience. This places some, if not always very much, control over the kind of assertions that an author could make, especially if, like Salvian, he was generally writing about public events.[48] He was required to be plausible. Thus, in my view, when Salvian writes about social phenomena of which his audience would have had direct experience, for example taxation, his account has at least a prima facie claim to credibility, in general if not always in detail. His assertions about distant regions such as North Africa, of which neither he nor his audience would have had personal experience, have no such claim. He could repeat hearsay, use literary sources written long before his own time, or simply invent, without damaging his own credibility.[49]

In the treatment of Salvian which is presented here, I have therefore attempted to keep to certain principles. The most basic is simply to start from the presumption that Salvian meant what he said. All his arguments, and all the claims which he makes, are intended to be taken seriously and to convince his audience. There are inconsistencies in

[48] Rather than the private lives of individuals, as in the texts discussed by Clark.

[49] *Pace* several distinguished historians of late-antique Africa (Clover 1978, 7; Lepelley 1979, 33; 1981, 24-5; Ennabli 1997, 46), this is as true of his assertions about the wealth and amenities of Carthage (*G* 7.67-8) as of those about the Carthaginians' propensity for sexual indulgence.

Salvian's ideas, and sometimes he says things for local effect which contradict arguments made elsewhere. He is sometimes disingenuous; as will be argued in Chapter 4, when he refers to his purpose in writing *De gubernatione dei*, he persistently misrepresents the nature of his own central argument. However, all these inconsistencies are demonstrable from the text. It is another thing altogether to claim that major portions of his works were not intended to be taken seriously, or to argue that those parts of his works which seem more real and immediate to us, judging by *our* criteria, therefore mattered more to Salvian than those parts which we deem to be formulaic or purely rhetorical. I believe that the only criterion which can be used to judge the importance of a subject to Salvian is the nature of its treatment in his text.

While it is essential to begin by accepting that Salvian believed in the ideas which he put forward in his works, it is also necessary to recognise that he is making a case. No ancient author sought to propagate his beliefs simply by laying them artlessly before the world. The manner in which Salvian constructed his arguments, and, to some extent, the content of the arguments themselves, must have been determined by rhetorical considerations. So much must be true of any writer, and it is only necessary to state it here because of the chronic confusion that has been caused in work on Salvian by attempts to distinguish between the 'sincere' and 'rhetorical' elements in his works. Inevitably the need to present a convincing case within the literary conventions of his time will have caused him, sometimes and to some extent, to tailor the content of his arguments to the presentation, rather than vice versa. This does not mean that it is permissible to pick out passages where one believes this has happened, and then discount them as merely rhetorical. One has to start from the central arguments of *De gubernatione dei*, which can be shown to continue and develop throughout the text, and proceed from these to the subsidiary arguments which

Salvian uses to support them and to the examples which he uses to instantiate his arguments. In these latter cases it is much more likely that Salvian would have resorted to devising ad hoc arguments for immediate rhetorical effect. However, this must be shown by reference to their context and the larger structure of the work.

I emphasize the need to proceed from the general to the particular in Salvian's writing, because I believe this is the only way to avoid serious misinterpretation. There are cases in which scholars have picked out individual passages in which Salvian expresses opinions apparently at odds with his ideas in general, and claimed that it is these passages, not his wider arguments, which actually represent his true thoughts.[50] This is unacceptable as an interpretative strategy. This point follows directly from Salvian's style of argument. He is not writing in order to prove a point to a neutral audience. The rhetorical presupposition of both *Ad ecclesiam* and *De gubernatione dei* is that the reader shares the opinions—and shares the complacency—which Salvian is attacking. His whole style of argument is built around the need to shake his audience. This is what gives it its particular quality. His argumentation therefore makes constant use of paradoxes, intended to shock or perplex, of rhetorical concessions, made solely to be withdrawn again, of ridicule, sarcasm and satirical exaggeration. These characteristics mean that if passages from Salvian's works are treated in isolation the risk of misinterpretation is great.[51] Finally, I attempt at all times to do justice to the extent to which Salvian's arguments are based on the Bible. When all the various anachronistic biases which have influenced previous studies have been discounted, I believe this to be the most serious, and almost universal, failing in earlier work.

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[50] This is usually done because the opinion in the atypical passages seems more acceptable than that expressed elsewhere (as by Teillet, whose entire interpretative strategy is based on this procedure). For further examples, see the discussion of Salvian's 'concessions' on inheritance (*E* 3.6-9), below p. 100, and on the operation of divine judgement (*G* 3.6), below p. 154.

[51] This often occurs when historians using Salvian as a source for a particular topic examine the relevant passages in isolation.

This work is written from a position sympathetic to Salvian, not in the sense that I agree with much of his view of the world, but that I believe that his views were defensible and rational in the historical circumstances of his time and the religious and cultural context within which he worked. The moralising condemnations of Salvian by modern historians seem to me absurd, but I have tried to make sure that I do not fall into the opposite error of writing an apologetic account of his works, especially one which tries to save him from himself by minimizing or explaining away the elements which seem problematic or embarrassing to modern readers. At the very least, I hope that this study helps to free Salvian's writings from the stale and anachronistic controversies of the past.

2) Placing Salvian

1) The pseudonymity of *Ad ecclesiam*

The Problem

About the year 440, Salvian addressed a letter to Salonius, the recently consecrated bishop of Geneva. Salvian and Salonius had both belonged to the monastic community at Lérins, and Salvian may still have been there when he wrote. Salvian had joined the community as an adult, after having married and had a family; Salonius had been brought there as a child by his father Eucherius, himself both a bishop and an author, and Salvian had been one of those responsible for educating him.[1] Now, however, the younger man had risen as a bishop to a position of higher authority in the church than Salvian, who was only a presbyter and therefore addressed him with a mixture of friendship and deference.[2] He had another reason to take care over the tone in which he addressed Salonius. He was writing to explain himself.

It seemed that Salonius was concerned to discover why 'books recently written to the church by a certain man of our time' were issued under the name Timotheus, and that he believed that unless the author explained why he had used this name, the books would be regarded as part of the Apocrypha (1).[3] Salvian refers to the author merely as 'a certain man'[4], but appears to know his motives intimately. The author, he states, feels that there is no profit in knowing the identity of a writer, only in reading his work (3-4), but since he can deny Salonius nothing, he will answer three questions: why the work is addressed to the

[1] For the biographical details in this paragraph, see Section 2 of this chapter.

[2] *Domino ac beatissimo discipulo, patri, filio: per institutionem discipulo, per amorem filio, per honorem patri* (*Ep*. 9.1).

[3] All subsequent text references in this section are to *Ep.* 9.

[4] *Quodam huius temporis homine* (*Ep.* 9.1).

church, why the author used a false name, and why he chose the name Timotheus (5). After answering the first question with a description of how the author was driven to write by his anger at the spread of avarice within the church (6-12), Salvian turns to the second, claiming that the author kept his name secret in obedience to God's command to avoid earthly glory, and desired that his work should be more pleasing to God through the shunning of public fame (13-14). In addition the author views himself as humble and worthless. Believing that others must think of him as he thinks of himself, he put a false name to his writings so that the inadequacy of the author should not detract from his *salubria scripta*, for people's judgement has become so corrupt that books are valued not for their contents but according to the *dignitas* of their author (14-16). In answer to the third question, Salvian states that the author chose to write under the name Timotheus because he was frightened to perpetrate even a trivial lie by putting a name on his work that might genuinely mislead people. He therefore decided to follow the example of Luke, who began each of his works by saying that he was writing to Theophilus.[5] By doing so he appeared to write to a man, but was actually addressing the love of God, thinking it suitable that his works should be directed to that which had impelled him to write (17-18). Since *his* work was written to honour God, the author adopted the name Timotheus, because the name means God's honour, just as Theophilus means love of God.

> Itaque cum legis Timotheum ad ecclesiam scripsisse, hoc intellegere debes pro honore dei ad ecclesiam scriptum esse, immo potius ipsum honorem dei scripta misisse. (19)

Salvian then concludes the letter, assuring Salonius that he now has what he had demanded.

The work to which Salvian refers is that which is known today as *Ad ecclesiam*. Salvian's name does not appear in the text of *Ad ecclesiam*, nor in his extant writings does

[5] Luke 1:3, Acts 1:1.

he admit explicitly that he was the author. The work is constructed formally as a letter addressed to the church by the Timothy who is mentioned in the New Testament, and who was the addressee of two epistles in the Pauline corpus.[6] No name appears in the text of *Ad ecclesiam* except Timotheus. As presented in all modern editions, the work simply begins with the words *Timotheus, minimus servorum dei, ecclesiae catholicae toto orbi diffusae*, with nothing to indicate the true identity of the author. When Salvian quotes from it in his later work *De gubernatione dei*, he refers to its author, as he did to Salonius, merely as 'a certain man'.[7]

There is no question that Salvian was the author of *Ad ecclesiam*. Internal evidence would be more than sufficient to prove it, but we also have the statement of a contemporary writer, Gennadius, that Salvian had written four books *Adversum avaritiam*, which must refer to *Ad ecclesiam*.[8] The most important piece of evidence, however, is the ambiguous letter to Salonius. This is printed in modern editions as the last of Salvian's nine extant letters.

As an explanation of Salvian's decision to use a pseudonym, *Ep.* 9 has some puzzling features. His use of the name Timothy is palpably a reference to the Pauline epistles. Yet in *Ep.* 9 he says nothing about this, giving only a recondite explanation based on the name's etymology. He further explains his choice of pseudonym by claiming to be terrified of perpetrating deceit, yet treats with apparent unconcern the suggestion that his work might be regarded as an attempt to usurp the authority of a biblical figure. And if Salvian really wished that his identity should be known only to God, why did he allow a text that subverted this desire to appear among his works?

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[6] These letters are themselves now generally agreed to be pseudepigraphical compositions dating from much later than the time of Paul, though Salvian would not have been aware of this.

[7] See n. 13 below.

[8] *De viris illustribus* 68.

The problems raised by *Ep*. 9 are evident from its treatment by modern scholars.[9] While none is prepared to accept Salvian's explanation entirely at its face value, they all have difficulty accounting for its contradictions or providing convincing alternatives. Wilhelm Zschimmer, the author of the first modern study of Salvian, suggested that he wished to circulate his provocative ideas anonymously, in order to gauge reaction to them before he risked doing so under his own name. Hubert Fischer, the author of the only full-length study devoted to *Ad ecclesiam*, takes Salvian's description of himself as *humilis* and *exiguus* (14-16) as a factual statement of his social position, and on this basis concludes that he wished to conceal his identity because his humble origins would have made it impossible for him to influence his putative audience of high aristocrats.[10] While Zschimmer's explanation is difficult to disprove, Fischer's is undermined by its failure to recognise the literary character of Salvian's expressions of humility. Admittedly, these are not purely formulaic: the reference to people's obsession with *dignitas* does appear to refer to social status and implies that he lacks it. Yet the evidence about Salvian (such as it is) suggests that he was of upper class origin. In view of the aggressive criticism of contemporary values which characterises the rest of Salvian's works, it is possible that Salvian is deliberately turning a conventional statement of humility into an attack on a society which ignores the truth when it comes from a humble source. If Salvian's statement has any real reference to his own social status, the explanation is probably to be sought not in any unusually humble background, but in his complaint that those of noble origin who convert to religion are deprived of their status (*G* 4.32-3).

An article by Norbert Brox devoted specifically to the pseudonymity of *Ad ecclesiam*

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[9] Zschimmer 1875, 67-8; Haefner 1934; Lagarrigue 1971, 43-4; Fischer 1976, 102-4; Brox 1975, 101-4; 1986.

[10] Fischer 1976, 104.

takes the more promising course of attempting to place Salvian's professions of humility in the wider context of ascetic literature. Brox sees Salvian's use of a pseudonym as part of a tradition among ascetics that statements about oneself should be made in the anonymous third person as a means of avoiding pride. This is mentioned by Cassian as a circumstance in which it is justified not to tell the truth.[11] The intention was to relate God's gifts in one's life, which could benefit others, but to avoid praising oneself. Brox traces this back to Paul's account of being taken up to the third heaven, and cites parallels from literature closer in time to Salvian.[12] There are places in Salvian's work where he seems to follow such a tradition. He quotes himself twice in his extant works, but introduces the quotations as those of an anonymous author,[13] and the practice occurs in other authors in his milieu.[14] Another possible instance of the same phenomenon is an anecdote which appears in *De gubernatione dei*, about an ascetic whose physical weakness was thought by an ignorant interlocutor to be evidence that he was not cared for by God.[15]

In spite of this, however, Brox's examples are only somewhat obliquely relevant to the issue of Salvian's pseudonymity. Issuing a literary work under a pseudonym is not the same as referring to oneself anonymously in a narrative. The majority of the works in which Brox identifies this topos were in fact published under the authors' real names. In addition, while the passage from Cassian may have been a direct influence on Salvian, Brox's other examples are all taken from Greek authors, of whose works Salvian would have had little or

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[11] *Collatio* 17.24.

[12] Brox 1986, 59-63, referring to 2 Cor. 12:1-5 (the latter used as justification by Cassian in the passage cited above).

[13] *Non imprudenter quidam ... dixit* (*G* 1.16, quoting *Ep.* 5.4); *sicut ait quidam in scriptis suis* (*G* 4.1, quoting *E* 2.37). Noted by Brox 1986, 58.

[14] For example Faustus of Riez, *Ep.* 3 (CSEL 21, p. 171).

[15] *Dixit quidam ... cuidam sancto viro secundam veritatis regulam sentienti ... Quare ergo, inquam, tu ipse infirmus es?* (*G* 1.13).

no knowledge.[16] There is, however, a pseudonymous work by an author very close to Salvian: the *Commonitorium* of Vincentius, written under the pseudonym Peregrinus. This work is contemporary with *Ad ecclesiam,* its author was another member of the community at Lérins and, like Salvian, had helped to educate Salonius.[17] Not only is there every reason to believe that Vincentius and Salvian had the same purpose in mind when using pseudonyms, but there is evidence which suggests that Salvian adopted a pseudonym in direct imitation of Vincentius.

Georges Lagarrigue, in the introduction to his edition of *Ad ecclesiam*, attributes Salvian's pseudonym to the fact that 1 Timothy contains a well-known discussion of wealth, and that Timothy had been put in a position of authority in the church by Paul.[18] These suggestions are convincing, but are not sufficient in themselves to explain Salvian's pseudonymity. They share the weaknesses of other accounts: an underestimation of the element of literary artifice in Salvian's use of a pseudonym. All published explanations start from the assumption that Salvian genuinely wanted to conceal his identity; that, as he suggests in *Ep.* 9, his desire—albeit frustrated in practice—was that nobody who read *Ad ecclesiam* should know that he was the author. But there is evidence that undermines this assumption.

[16] Palladius, Diadochus of Photike and the *Historia monachorum in Aegypto.* The last was available in Latin translation, though there is no evidence that Salvian knew it.

[17] The *Commonitorium* has seldom been discussed in relation to the pseudonymity of *Ad ecclesiam*. The very brief discussion of *Ad ecclesiam* in Speyer 1971, 31, points out the relevance of Vincentius, and even suggests that he and Salvian discussed their choice of pseudonyms, but without any further discussion.

[18] Lagarrigue 1971, 44.

The relationship of Ep. 9 to Ad ecclesiam

Modern accounts treat *Ep.* 9 as the result of the following events: Salvian wrote *Ad ecclesiam* and circulated it under the name Timotheus, hoping to keep his authorship secret; subsequently Salonius realised that he was the author and asked him to explain himself, forcing him to divulge his reasons.[19] This narrative is based on Salvian's own words, though it should be noted that, interpreted strictly, these are less straightforward than such summaries suggest.[20] Such a narrative necessarily assumes that *Ep.* 9 and *Ad ecclesiam* are independent texts, composed separately and at different times.

Anyone reading Salvian's works in a modern printed edition would, at first sight, see no reason to dispute this. *Ep.* 9 is printed and numbered as part of Salvian's collection of letters, separately from *Ad ecclesiam*. But if one looks at the evidence for the manuscript tradition of Salvian's works, a different situation emerges. *Ep.* 9 is not preserved with Salvian's other letters, but in some of the manuscripts of *Ad ecclesiam*, where it stands in the position of a preface. At least four of the five authorities for the text of *Ad ecclesiam* derive from a manuscript in which *Ep.* 9 stood in this position.[21] No one who has written about the pseudonymity issue or the text of Salvian seems to have asked how it came to be there. If one dismisses the tradition of regarding *Ep.* 9 as a later composition, the manuscript evidence surely points to only one conclusion: *'Ep.* 9' is not a separate composition at all, but was part of *Ad ecclesiam* from the very beginning. It was used by Salvian to introduce the work just

[19] 'When Bishop Salonius got this tract into his hands he seems quickly to have guessed who wrote it, and forthwith sent a letter of protest' (Haefner 1934, 9-10); 'Er veröffentlichte diese Kritik unter eine Maske und nannte der Verfasser als Timotheus. Der Verdacht gegen den tatsächlichen Autor verdichtete sich aber bald, und der Bischof Salonius stellte Salvian zur Rede' (Brox 1975, 102).

[20] *Quaeris a me, o mi Saloni, caritas mea, cur libellis nuper a quodam huius temporis homine ad ecclesiam factis Timothei nomen inscriptum sit. Addis praeterea quod nisi rationem vocabuli evidenter expressero, dum nominantur Timothei, in apocryfa sint fortasse reputandi* (*Ep.* 9.1)

[21] See Appendix 1 for detailed discussion of the textual issues raised here.

as he would introduce *De gubernatione dei* with a preface addressed to Salonius. It is simply the preface to *Ad ecclesiam*.

Not only the manuscripts, but the early printed editions of Salvian's works place *Ep.* 9 at the beginning of *Ad ecclesiam*.[22] It was only Baluze in the 1660s who transferred it to Salvian's letters and gave it its current numbering, solely on the basis of its epistolary form.[23] Baluze's remained the standard edition of Salvian for the next two hundred years (it was the one reprinted by Migne), and his decisions about the text seem to have become conventional. At any rate, when Halm and Pauly produced the MGH and CSEL editions in the late nineteenth century they retained Baluze's placing of *Ep.* 9, without remarking on it either in the apparatus or in the articles which both published on their textual researches.[24] The combined effect of Salvian's own remarks in the text of *Ep.*9, and of its conventional placing among his letters, seems to have been sufficient to obscure the significance of its position in the manuscripts.

If *Ep.* 9 is actually the preface to *Ad ecclesiam*, then from the moment it was written, the text would have been introduced by a tacit admission that Salvian was the author. This implies that *Ep.* 9 is not an explanation for a failed attempt to conceal authorial identity, but that its purposes are literary. The most obvious function which it performs, when seen from this perspective, is to demonstrate Salvian's awareness of the tensions between his insignificance as an individual and the stance which he adopts in *Ad ecclesiam* as the maker of highly authoritative judgements on the condition of the church. This was a serious

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[22] Sichardus 1528 (*editio princeps* of *E* and *Ep.* 9); Pithou 1580 (*editio princeps* of the remaining letters); Rittershausen 1611. I have not seen the edition of Macherentini (1609).

[23] *Porro cum ea hactenus edita fuerit in fronte librorum adversus Avaritiam vice praefationis, nos eam ad librum epistolarum censentes pertinere debere, ab eo loco illam amovimus et inter epistolas reposuimus*, Baluze 1669, 414 (the same note can be found at PL 53, 169d).

[24] Halm 1876; Pauly 1881.

problem for any ascetic, indeed any Christian thinker, yet it is striking how Salvian deals with it in an almost playful manner. This can be seen by examining the way in which *Ep.* 9 invites differing interpretations from different audiences. As Mark Vessey says in his discussion of the pseudonymity of Vincentius' *Commonitorium*, 'the readership of works like the *Tractatus Peregrini* was liable to be divided into two constituencies: on the one hand a coterie of those who appreciated the device of pseudonymity but could see through it to identify the author, and on the other, a larger (?) group to whom the real author remained unknown'.[25] The *Commonitorium* was pseudonymous in a more unambiguous sense than *Ad ecclesiam*. It contains no equivalent of *Ep.* 9 to subvert the author's concealment of his name. Indeed, the identity of 'Peregrinus' would be unknown if it had not been revealed by Gennadius in his *De viris illustribus*.[26] The addition of *Ep.* 9 makes the relationship of *Ad ecclesiam* to its audience somewhat more complex. One can perhaps imagine an inner coterie, within the religious and literary circles of southern Gaul, from whom Salvian probably never expected or desired to conceal his identity, and towards whom his purpose in using a pseudonym was not to remain unknown but, through his choice of pseudonym and his explanation of it, to give a message about his religious and literary purposes. Then there is the wider audience which would know *Ad ecclesiam* only as a text. The effect of *Ep.* 9 is to split this audience into two classes: the more sophisticated readers who could see the admission of authorship behind Salvian's account of *ille auctor*, and the remainder, for whom the work would seem genuinely pseudonymous.

The epistolary form was common for prefaces in late antiquity.[27] *Ep.* 9 is not a typical

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[25] Vessey 1994, 550. He notes, 'The Lerinese monks evidently took an ascetic delight in these tricks of imperfectly concealed authorship.'

[26] *Vir. Ill.* 64.

[27] Janson 1964, 106-12.

example, however. Salvian appears to be deliberately subverting the conventions of the preface in order to mislead the uninformed reader. The most obvious instances of this, of course, are his refusal to name himself as author, together with the opening, with its implication that *Ep.* 9 was only written when the rest of *Ad ecclesiam* was already in circulation. There are other features that make *Ep.* 9 an unusual preface, notably its sheer length: 191 lines of Latin in Lagarrigue's edition, compared with 40 lines for the more conventional preface to *De gubernatione dei*. It almost constitutes a short treatise in its own right, and indeed its contents make an important contribution to Salvian's portrayal of the church. However, all of this is constructed formally as an explanation of the author's motives in writing, a theme which was conventional for a preface.

Many features of *Ep.* 9, particularly Salvian's puzzling silences, such as his failure to refer overtly to his Pauline model, become comprehensible if it is seen as being addressed to a small circle of cognoscenti, who would be flattered by being offered a puzzle that they, but not outsiders, were able to decode. For those outside this group it still gave an edifying lesson in humility, as well as providing an introduction to the arguments that would be used in the main text. Salvian's claim to be motivated by humility in suppressing his name is complicated by such an interpretation, but not ruled out by it. Simply to use a pseudonym and to reveal his authorship in such an ambiguous manner was to make an ostentatious, but not necessarily insincere, gesture of indifference towards his ultimate reputation. In the long run, at least, this proved justified. In the manuscript tradition *Ad ecclesiam* is treated simply as the work of an author called Timotheus. Two manuscripts refer to him as *Timotheus episcopus*, as if the scribes were trying to construct an identity for the author that was

otherwise lacking.[28] The obvious use of a pseudonym also, as Salvian himself states (3-4), implies the primacy of the message over the messenger. This idea was probably the one that primarily lay behind his use of Timothy as a pseudonym, as I will argue below.

Of course, it is impossible to prove that *Ep.* 9 was not an independent composition that somehow found its way into the manuscript tradition of *Ad ecclesiam*, but the only reason to believe that this was the case would be if one refused to accept that Salvian, with his self-proclaimed fear of telling even a trivial lie, could have written a preface which gave a false account of the circumstances of its own composition. This seems naive. There are parallel cases in which Christian writers used prefaces to assert their humility by means of a fictive desire for anonymity. A striking instance is the preface to the *Vita Martini* of Sulpicius Severus, which is also in epistolary form. Sulpicius begins by claiming that he does not wish the work to be published at all, then declares that he knows the addressee will publish it anyway, and finally insists that, if it is published, it should at least be anonymous. Sulpicius' attempt to evade responsibility for releasing a work in his own name is transparent.[29] The chief impression one receives from a comparison of Salvian's preface with that of Sulpicius is of the greater sophistication of *Ep.* 9 as a text, with its simultaneous concealment and revelation of the author's identity.

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[28] This confusion is particularly striking in the *editio princeps*. In the table of contents and the preface *E* is ascribed to Timotheus, whom the editor Sichardus describes as *Timotheum episcopum ... elegantem sane, & totius vetustatis pereruditum*, while *Ep.* 9 is described as *Salviani Episcopi Massiliensis in librum Timothei ad Salonium Episcopum praefatio.* The editor of the next edition, Pithou, still expressed doubts as to whether Salvian was the author (Pithou 1580, note to p. 91 in the list of *Variae lectiones*).

[29] Sulpicius claims in one of his letters (*Ep.* 3.1-2) that other works by him have been published without his consent. Another author who asserts a fictive desire for the work to remain unpublished (though with no reference to pseudonymity) is Jerome, in the preface to his translation of the book of Ezra.

Timotheus minimus servorum dei

That Salvian wished the name *Timotheus* to evoke the Pauline epistles to Timothy is surely self-evident.[30] His use of the name would alone have been sufficient to do so, but he also uses opening and closing formulas based on those in Paul's epistles,[31] as well as the Pauline self-description *minimus servorum dei*. Lagarrigue suggests two reasons why Salvian should have wished to link his own text to the epistle: a wish to write in the persona of someone who was appointed to a position of authority in the church by one of the apostles, and the fact that the correct use of wealth is a prominent theme in 1 Timothy.[32] I believe that both suggestions are correct, but invite closer examination.

Salvian is sparing in his references to 1 Timothy.[33] The most striking echo of the epistle is a long passage (2.25-41) in which Salvian successively addresses different categories of religious (widows, celibate married couples, virgins, clerics), and which has every appearance of being modelled on the instructions that Paul gives Timothy to pass on to different groups within the church.[34] He quotes from 1 Timothy five times in *Ad ecclesiam*, but never in such a way as to suggest that it was a text with particular

[30] Yet it has been doubted by Brox 1975, 101, and Fischer 1976, 102, on the grounds that Salvian does not state such an intention. Brox even criticizes Lagarrigue's suggestion that Salvian had aspects of 1 Timothy in mind when he wrote, on the grounds that it has no support in the text, a position which is surely untenable if one pays attention to the whole text of *E*, not just *Ep*. 9. It is unclear from Brox's later article on the subject (Brox 1986) whether he continued to hold this somewhat literalistic view.

[31] *Timotheus, minimus servorum dei, ecclesiae catholicae toto orbe diffusae. Gratia tibi et pax a deo patre nostro et Christo Iesu domino nostro* (1.1). *Gratia domini nostri Iesu Christi cum spiritu tuo* (4.50).

[32] Lagarrigue 1971, 44. The former explanation is also put forward by Nouailhat 1988, 274: 'C'est pour se parer de cette autorité et mieux défendre cette cause que Salvien prend le pseudonyme de Timothée'.

[33] There are no direct references to 2 Timothy in *E*.

[34] 1 Tim. 3:1-7 (bishops), 8-13 (deacons); 5:3-16 (widows), 17-20 (elders). However, Salvian only makes one direct reference to the epistle, when he argues that 'pleasure' in 1 Tim. 5:6 actually denotes wealth (2.25).

significance. His favourite citations come from other books of the Bible.[35] 1 Timothy contains two very well-known passages about wealth; one contains the famous statement that the love of money is the root of all evil, and warns that those who want to be rich fall into temptation.[36] The other calls on the rich to trust in God rather than their wealth, and to be generous and 'rich in good works'.[37] While *Ad ecclesiam* could certainly be interpreted as an extended commentary on these two passages, in many ways 1 Timothy appears a strikingly unsuitable text to act as inspiration for Salvian's work.

The essential characteristic of 1 Timothy, as of the pastoral epistles in general, is a concern to integrate Christianity with existing social practices, especially those relating to the family and household. It presents Christianity in terms of traditional morality. Thus, as regards wealth, it denounces excessive attachment to money and advocates generosity in charitable giving, but makes no demand for the total renunciation of property. Salvian's demands have more in common with the more radical passages of the Gospels than with the pastoral epistles, whose tendency is precisely to water down such passages. However, the very moderation of tone in 1 Timothy compared to *Ad ecclesiam* gives a clue as to Salvian's possible intentions. It was possible for 1 Timothy to be cited polemically in order to undermine the apparently more radical demands of other passages in the New Testament, such as the injunction to sell all one has and give it to the poor.[38] It had been used in just such a manner in a celebrated letter by Augustine. About 414 Augustine received a letter from a

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[35] Salvian quotes 1 Tim. 6:8-10 twice (1.12, 2.61); and 4:8, 5:5 and 6:17-19 once each (1.12, 2.25, 1.29 respectively). Compare this with Matt. 6:19 ('Do not store up for yourselves treasure on earth.'), 19:21 ('If you would be perfect, sell what you have and give to the poor'), 25:41 ('Go to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.') and Gal. 6:3 ('If a man thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.'), each cited three or four times.

[36] 1 Tim. 6:9-10.

[37] 1 Tim. 6:17-19.

[38] Matt. 19:21, Mk 10:21, Lk 18:22.

Sicilian named Hilarius, which asked for advice on assertions being made by local Pelagians, one of which was that no rich man could be saved unless he gave up all his wealth.[39] In his reply Augustine cites 1 Timothy to demonstrate that Paul did not condemn the possession of wealth in itself, and argues that since there cannot be contradictions within scripture, this must mean that the more demanding injunctions in the Gospels were not meant to apply universally.[40]

It is not clear whether Salvian was familiar with this passage of Augustine,[41] but Augustine's letter shows the way in which 1 Timothy could be used to undermine radical demands, and it can reasonably be assumed that it was used for this purpose by others. When Salvian invokes 1 Timothy so prominently in a text which demands precisely such radical renunciation, he is implying that such exegeses are illegitimate. In effect, while Augustine asserts that Matthew 19:21 ('If you would be perfect, sell what you have and give to the poor') should be read in the light of 1 Timothy, Salvian implies that 1 Timothy should be read in the light of Matthew 19:21. Augustine and Salvian both start from the same assumption about the indivisibility of scripture; for Salvian, who believed that the demands of the gospels were incumbent on all Christians, this meant that 1 Timothy, however it might be (mis)interpreted by others, was really a radical document fully in tune with his own demands. He never argues this explicitly in *Ad ecclesiam*, but by annexing the figure of Timothy to his own arguments in such a prominent way, he made a formal argument on the point almost superfluous.

In 1 Timothy, the passages dealing with wealth are only part of a series of

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[39] [Augustine], *Ep.* 156.

[40] Augustine, *Ep.* 157.26ff.

[41] We know that it began to be circulated widely soon after it was written, since it was given by Augustine to Orosius to use as propaganda against the Pelagians (Orosius, *Liber apologeticus* 3).

admonitions about correct behaviour for Christians which are passed on to Timothy by Paul so that Timothy in turn will instruct the church which has been placed under his supervision. Timothy therefore provided a model for the loyal reception and transmission of teaching; his relationship with Paul is used by Augustine as a paradigm of that between the Christian teacher and pupil.[42] In Salvian's use of his name, this role as the bearer of apostolic teaching is certainly as important as the relevance of 1 Timothy to his message concerning wealth. Salvian himself notes that the use of a pseudonym directs attention to the message of a text, and away from fruitless concentration on the identity of the author (*Ep.* 9.3-4). By using a pseudonym, Salvian depersonalises his message and makes it universal; he invites the reader to regard it not as the message of a particular individual to the church of a particular time and place, but as an impersonal admonition to the *ecclesiae catholicae toto orbe diffusae*. Similar reasoning can be seen behind the use of the pseudonym Peregrinus by Salvian's Lérins associate Vincentius in his *Commonitorium*, which attempts to show how tradition should be used to distinguish between legitimate doctrinal developments and heresies: to Vincentius '[the value] of a literary work derives from the tradition which it reports rather than from any personal contribution by the (pseudo-)author'.[43]

All this is highly relevant to Salvian's stance in *Ad ecclesiam*. Both Salvian and Vincentius stress the contrast between the tradition handed down by the church of previous times and an illegitimate *novitas*. For Vincentius this is doctrinal innovation, while for Salvian it is defection from the moral standards of the church, but in each case their concern is to preserve the inheritance of the past from corruption. Whose name could be used as a pseudonym more appropriately than the man whom Paul had chosen to pass his teaching on

[42] *De doctrina christiana* 4.90-1.

[43] Vessey 1994, 552; see 547-61 for wider discussion.

uncorrupted to the churches under his authority, and to struggle against those who would destroy it from within by spreading false doctrines? Both epistles to Timothy are filled with admonitions to maintain without alteration the doctrine handed on by Paul, and to preach it continually, even to hostile and unresponsive audiences.[44] It is important to note that Timothy is not an independent authority, but merely the channel by which Paul's message is transmitted to others. This is precisely the stance taken by Salvian, as in his claim not just to write for the sake of God's honour, but merely to be reproducing what God's honour has sent to him (*Ep.* 9.19).

Salvian's authorial self-presentation is always as the vehicle for the biblical message. Again and again, he disclaims responsibility for his own arguments, insisting that he has no choice over what he says; he is simply passing on God's commands. *Non dico ego; dicat sermo ipse divinus ...* (1.17); *Ipsae hoc dei voces per linguas litterarum sacrarum iubent ...* (1.27); *Vere durum est, si aliquid non ex testimoniorum sacrorum auctoritate commonuit ...* (1.37); *Enuntiari aliter veritas non potest quam vis ipsa exigit veritatis* (4.47).[45] Such statements are often made when Salvian is introducing biblical citations to support his arguments. Sometimes the support that these offer appears partial at best, but, for Salvian, they establish that his arguments are not his own, but those of *sermo divinus.* Salvian therefore adopts a paradoxical stance by which he attempts to minimise to the greatest possible extent his own role as author, but by doing so to make the greatest possible claims for the authority of his writings. This position does not depend on the use of a pseudonym: his stance is the same in *De gubernatione dei*, written under his own name.[46] But the persona

[44] 1 Tim. 1:3, 1:18f., 3:14f., 4:6, 4:11-16, 6:11-14, 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:13f., 2:2, 3:14, 4:1-5.

[45] See 2.15 and 4.37 for similar claims made at greater length. On this characteristic of Salvian's writing, see Vessey 1988, 100f.

[46] Cf. in particular *G* 3.1-6 (on which see below pp. 150-52).

of *Timotheus* makes his stance more vivid, by providing a personification of the role that he wishes to adopt, that of one who receives and transmits the commandments passed on by those with true authority. As Vincentius puts it in his own claim merely to be repeating authoritative traditions, *relatoris fide potius quam auctoris praesumptione*.[47]

Salvian and Vincentius therefore share a desire to minimise the significance of their authorship of their own texts, in order to imbue them with the authority of an impersonal tradition, or indeed, in Salvian's case, of scripture itself.[48] In this they may well have been influenced by the religious and literary culture of the southern-Gallic ascetic circles of which both were members. John Cassian, resident at Marseille from about 415 until his death in the mid 430s, represents himself in the *Collationes*, his monumental attempt to define the requirements of a successful ascetic life, as a mere reporter of the ideas of the Egyptian ascetics with whom he had spoken.[49] Later in the fifth century, Gennadius, in his catalogue of Christian writers, *De viris illustribus*, attempted to define a canon of acceptable authors, setting out the credentials of the orthodox and authoritative, and curtailing those of heretics and presumptuous laymen.[50] Gennadius established his own authority by presenting his work as a continuation of that of an illustrious predecessor, Jerome, and his work of the same name. The claim merely to be repeating the commands of the Bible and of Church Fathers recognised as authoritative was one that continued to be used to justify their pronouncements

[47] *Comm.* 1.

[48] Cf. Lagarrigue 1971, 36: 'Il veut que son traité acquière la valeur éternelle des exigences bibliques qu'il prétend expliquer'.

[49] Vessey 1994, 554, points out the relevance to Vincentius of Cassian's stance.

[50] Note Gennadius's dismissive notice of the lay writer Marius Victorius (*De vir. ill.* 61), with the comments of McLynn 1995, 485.

by later Christian writers, including Caesarius of Arles.[51]

Apart from the influences of his ascetic milieu, however, there is every likelihood that Salvian owed a direct debt to Vincentius. In the *Commonitorium*, Vincentius singles out the figure of Timothy for particular attention.[52] He comments on Paul's admonition *O Timothee, depositum custodi*, the deposit being true doctrine (1 Tim. 6:20), and then asks who fulfils the task of Timothy in the present day:[53]

> Quis est hodie Timotheus nisi vel generaliter universa ecclesia vel specialiter totum corpus praepositorum, qui integram divini cultus scientiam vel habere ipsi debent vel aliis infundere? ... Quid est depositum? Id est, quod tibi creditum est, non quod a te inventum; quod accepisti, non quod excogitisti ... in qua non auctor debes esse sed custos, non institutor sed sectator, non ducens sed sequens.

Finally, Vincentius addresses 'Timothy' in a striking passage in the second person (*O Timothee, o sacerdos, o tractator, o doctor*) and appeals to him to clarify doctrine without altering it, so that people may fully understand what before they venerated without understanding. Almost every phrase in this passage evokes some aspect of Salvian's stance in *Ad ecclesiam*. There are some differences between the Timothy of Vincentius and the Timothy of Salvian. While Vincentius addresses Timothy as an individual entrusted with preserving what has been handed down from the ancient church, he had begun by identifying the contemporary 'Timothy' as the whole church, or those who hold authority within it. The *depositum* which Vincentius wishes to be guarded is doctrine, while for Salvian it is morality. However, these divergences are outweighed by the identical portrayal in both texts of the qualities possessed by Timothy.

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[51] *Regula virginum* 63.1-2. On this see Leyser 2000, 99. Leyser shows how the attempts of authors to erase their own identity from their works was developed further by the authors of anonymous monastic rules in sixth-century Italy (101-17).

[52] *Comm.* 21-24.

[53] *Comm.* 21-22.

As a rule, it is unwise to assume that an ancient author is echoing another text, unless this can be demonstrated by the presence of direct textual borrowings. The particular circumstances of the milieu in which Salvian and Vincentius lived, however, give much stronger grounds than usual for assuming knowledge of—and desire to allude to—one writer's work by another. Both Salvian and Vincentius had been members of the monastic community at Lérins. At Lérins they had been jointly responsible for educating Salonius, the addressee of *Ep.* 9.[54] Vincentius wrote the *Commonitorium* in 434;[55] Salvian completed *Ad ecclesiam* a few years later, probably at the end of the 430s.[56] We do not know when (or in the case of Vincentius if) either man left Lérins. It is possible that both were at Lérins throughout the 430s, but even if Salvian had left the community by the time he wrote *Ad ecclesiam*, the evidence for continuing links between the Lerinians after leaving the island is sufficient to make it almost inconceivable that Salvian did not know the *Commonitorium*, and equally inconceivable that—within the Lerinian literary culture of mutual allusion and reference—his assumption of *Timotheus* as a pseudonym would not have been intended, and interpreted by others, as a response to the passage.[57] It should be noted that Salvian's opening, *Timotheus minimus servorum dei*, is an echo not only of Paul, but also of Vincentius.[58]

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[54] Eucherius, *Instructiones*, preface.

[55] Three years after the Council of Ephesus: *Comm.* 29.

[56] There is no evidence in the text of *E* to allow it to be dated (except for the fact that it is earlier than *G*). It can be dated only by reference to *Ep.* 9, which addresses Salonius as a bishop. Salonius is first attested as bishop of Geneva at the Council of Orange in 441 (Mathisen 1989, 109); as he was unusually young for a bishop even then (he was born c. 410), it is unlikely that he became a bishop much earlier. *Ep.* 9 could therefore be dated to c.441, but as long as it was assumed that *E* had circulated anonymously for an indefinite period before it was written, this could only be a fairly vague *terminus ante quem*. We can now be sure that *E* was issued no earlier than the very end of the 430s.

[57] For an example of references between texts by different authors from Lérins, see the allusions to Eucherius' *De laude eremi* in Hilary's *V. Hon.*, as discussed by Leyser 1999, 198. For more general discussion of the links between former members of Lérins, see Mathisen 1981; Mathisen 1989, 76-92.

[58] *Videtur mihi, minimo omnium servorum dei Peregrino* (*Comm.* 1).

I would suggest that Salvian's adoption of the pseudonym *Timotheus* for his tract against avarice was an attempt to claim for himself, in relation to the church's moral teaching, the role as guardian of the inheritance of the past that Vincentius had sketched for himself in relation to doctrine. Salvian's pseudonym would have been sufficient to convey the meaning and extent of his claim to those within the allusive literary circle of Lérins and perhaps more widely in Gaul; precisely to those, in fact, who would have been aware that Salvian was the author of *Ad ecclesiam*. Salvian's pseudonym would therefore have referred primarily to his self-appointed position as Timothy's successor in guarding the deposit of true Christianity, but it would have been given a polemical edge by the discussion of wealth in 1 Timothy, while the explanation given in *Ep*. 9 on the basis of the name's etymology should be regarded as a literary *jeu d'esprit*. While Salvian's use of a pseudonym may have been a gesture of indifference as to whether his identity was known to a readership from outside his own time and place, within the literary and religious circles of which he was part, it was far from being an attempt to remain unknown, but was a bold claim to authority as a Christian writer.

2) The Framework

Origins[1]

The journey which brought Salvian to his place in the literary circle of Lérins began in northern Gaul, along the Rhine. We know neither the precise date nor the place of his birth, but Salvian's own statements make it virtually certain that he came from the vicinity of Trier and Cologne, while nothing in the known chronology of his life requires us to place his birth earlier than the final years of the fourth century.

The two points around which the chronology of Salvian's life must be reconstructed are his membership of the ascetic community at Lérins under its founder, Honoratus,[2] and thus no later than 426,[3] and the statement by Gennadius in his catalogue of Christian writers, *De viris illustribus*, that when he wrote the entry on Salvian his subject was still alive *in senectute bona*.[4] There are strong grounds for believing that this was written in the late 460s.[5] Other events in Salvian's life (apart from the composition of his books, which are datable from internal evidence) can be dated approximately only by relating them to these two

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[1] Accounts of Salvian's life can be found in Zschimmer 1875, 5-16; Haemmerle 1893, 1-16; Schaefer 1930, 5-20; Pellegrino 1940a, 7-26; Ianelli 1948, 16-18; Lagarrigue 1971, 10-14; Pricoco 1976; Fischer 1976, 11-13; Badewien 1980, 14-18.

A long article has been published recently (Badot & De Decker 1998) discussing Salvian's life, and making numerous conjectures about the undocumented parts of it. Much of this article seems to me to be so dubiously grounded in the evidence that I have decided not to discuss its claims, except in Appendix 2 (on the date of *G*) where it is particularly relevant.

[2] Hilary, *Sermo de vita sancti Honorati* 19.2.

[3] I follow the conclusion of Mathisen 1989, 279-81, that Honoratus became bishop of Arles in late 426 (possibly early 427) and died in January 429. Dating of the tenure of Honoratus at Arles is not without its complexities, chiefly the question of whether he succeeded his well-attested predecessor Patroclus directly, or whether another bishop, named Euladius or Helladius, held the see briefly between them (on this see Chadwick 1945; Markus 1990, 177-9). Fortunately the period at issue is too brief to have any material bearing on the chronology of Salvian's life.

[4] *Vir. ill.* 68.

[5] The manuscripts of *De viris illustribus* contain entries which appear to date from as late as the 490s, but these have long been shown to be interpolations. Some of the genuine later chapters of *Vir. ill.* can be dated fairly securely, on the basis of internal chronological references, to the late 460s, and others to about a decade later (Feder 1933). Feder would date a whole block of entries (*Vir. Ill.* 68-83), which includes Salvian's, to 467/8 (op. cit. 230-1). Although I do not find every detail of Feder's argument convincing, I think he establishes his overall case.

points. Coming to a conclusion about Salvian's likely date of birth is therefore a matter of establishing a *terminus ante quem* which allows sufficient time to encompass the known events of his life before 426 without going so far back as to make him implausibly old at the time when Gennadius wrote.

Salvian grew up, married, had a child, and converted to asceticism before he joined the community at Lérins, as well as moving from northern to southern Gaul. At Lérins he became part of the inner circle of Honoratus.[6] He must consequently have lived there for some significant time before Honoratus left, but what does this imply? Possibly no more than a few months, though a period of at least a year or two is more likely. Similar uncertainties surround Salvian's married life. The sole evidence for this is a letter addressed by Salvian, in his own name and that of Palladia, his wife, and Auspiciola, his daughter, to Palladia's parents.[7] In it he states that when he wrote it was nearly seven years since his parents-in-law, offended by his conversion to asceticism, had broken off contact with him and his family.[8] The letter implies that Salvian, Palladia and Auspiciola were still living together, and contains no mention of Lérins or of involvement by Salvian in any ascetic community beyond his family. At first sight it would seem that this must have been written before Salvian moved to Lérins, a conclusion which (allowing for a period of married life before his conversion) would add nearly a decade to the span of adult life that must be taken into account before 426. But this is not necessarily so. Eucherius, another leading figure at Lérins, and his wife Galla, were the recipients of a letter from Paulinus of Nola, which states that they had settled on the island of Lero, while Honoratus lived on the neighbouring island of

[6] *V. Hon.* 19.2.

[7] *Ep.* 4.

[8] *Ep.* 4.5.

Lerinum.[9] All other sources, including those written by men who had been at Lérins themselves, talk only of one community, of which Eucherius, like Salvian, was a member. Paulinus' letter suggests a more complex situation, in which at least for a time, married ascetics lived on Lero alongside the coenobitic community on Lerinum, though the two settlements were evidently confounded in other literary references to the community.[10] If Salvian and Palladia lived alongside Eucherius and Galla on Lero, then there is no necessity for *Ep.* 4 to predate Salvian's arrival there. It could even date from later than 426. Without stretching the evidence, therefore, it is possible that Salvian arrived at Lérins as late as 424, was married as late as 422, and consequently may have been born as late as c. 405. Even allowing more space between events, there seems no reason to consider a date of birth earlier than about 395.[11] We may conclude that Salvian was born about 400, give or take about five years either way, and so was in his late sixties or early seventies when Gennadius described him as *in senectute bona*.

For Salvian's background, and the known events of his early life, we have the more direct evidence of his own writings. His origins in north-eastern Gaul are attested in two substantial passages. The most informative about his personal background is *Ep.* 1. This is written to members of a monastic community, almost certainly Lérins,[12] asking them to accept into the community a young relative of his from Cologne who had become a refugee following the capture of the city by the barbarians. He describes him thus:

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[9] Paulinus, *Ep.* 51.

[10] For further comment on Paulinus' letter and its implications, see below pp. 56-9.

[11] I am not persuaded by Pricoco's argument that Salvian must have been born no later than 390, because he could not otherwise have addressed Salonius (born c. 410) as *per amorem filio* in *Ep.* 9 (Pricoco 1976, 368).

[12] The letter lacks a superscription, so the identity of the monastery cannot be absolutely certain, but its implications about Salvian's relations with the monastery (he is no longer a member himself, but regards its members as his close friends) are consistent with his known relationship with Lérins, while there is no evidence that he had such a relationship with any other monastery.

> Agrippinae cum suis captus est, quondam inter suos non parvi nominis, familia non obscurus, domo non despicabilis, et de quo aliquid fortasse amplius dicerem, nisi propinquus meus esset. (*Ep.* 1.5)

The young man's widowed mother, however, had been reduced to a state of poverty in which she was only able to survive by hiring herself out to do menial work for the wives of the barbarians.[13] In other words Salvian was related to a family at Cologne which was 'of no small name', but which, reduced to destitution in its native city, presumably through expropriation by the barbarians, had no resources to which it could turn elsewhere.[14]

In Book 6 of *De gubernatione dei* Salvian describes being present at Trier and another city in the vicinity when they were sacked by the barbarians (6.72-89).[15] The passage does not contain any information about Salvian except his presence at the cities in question.[16] The combined evidence of the two passages shows that Salvian had been personally been present in Trier, while having family links with Cologne. Neither passage provides grounds for assigning one or other city as Salvian's own place of birth, though on balance Cologne is probably the stronger candidate simply because there are obvious reasons why a young man from Cologne would move to Trier, a larger and wealthier city, which do not apply vice versa. However, the evidence certainly establishes that Salvian came from the general area of the Rhine frontier.

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[13] *Mercennario opere victum quaeritans uxoribus barbarorum locaticias manus subdit* (*Ep.* 1.6).

[14] Salvian is quite clear that the woman was detained at Cologne by poverty (*nec residendi nec abeundi facultas suppetat*); there is no suggestion that she was prevented from leaving by the city's conquerors.

[15] The other city is described as *alia non longe sed prope eiusdem magnificentiae civitate* (6.77). In view of the family links to Cologne established by *Ep.* 1, this city must be the strongest candidate, though it could be another city in the area, such as Mainz (mentioned by Salvian in conjunction with Trier and Cologne at 6.39) or Metz.

[16] Salvian's use in this passage of the phrase *solo patrio* to refer to Gaul (*in solo patrio atque in civitatibus Gallicanis* - 6.72), has been taken as a direct statement that he was of Gallic birth (e.g. Fischer 1976, 11) However, as Salvian was writing in Gaul for a Gallic audience, it may press the meaning of *patrius* too far to treat it as having a specifically personal significance (the point is admittedly an academic one, since there is no reason to believe that Salvian was born anywhere other than Gaul).

Trier had, of course, been the seat of the western emperor for most of the fourth century, and that of the praetorian prefect of Gaul until about the time of Salvian's birth.[17] It will therefore have had a very large population of aristocrats and high officials, together with the services and amenities that they demanded.[18] In the opening decades of the fifth century, Trier must have been a city in fairly rapid decline. The officials who had lived there will have left with the prefecture, and one can assume that any remaining inhabitants who had the resources easily to move elsewhere will have done so following the dramatic deterioration in security which resulted from the barbarian invasion of 406 (as would those from Cologne and other cities in the area). To some extent this migration can be documented from inscriptions and from the biographies of individuals like Salvian.[19] It has been emphasized—in my view overemphasized—as a factor in the development of monastic centres in southern Gaul.[20] Although some who had few or no resources, like Salvian's anonymous kinsman, will also have moved away, many will clearly have had no choice but to stay put. Most obviously these will have been the landowners whose property was confined to their native locality, those characterized by Salvian at one point as *domi nobiles*.[21] In legal terms, these would have been the *curiales*, who were bound by law to serve on the councils of their cities and organize such activities as the collection of taxes. The circumstances of the Cologne family described by Salvian in *Ep.* 1 suggest strongly that

[17] I accept the arguments of Palanque 1973 and Wightman 1985, 217, that the withdrawal of the prefecture from Trier to Arles took place soon after the accession of Honorius in 395.

[18] On Trier in late antiquity see Gauthier 1980, 128-38; Heinen 1985, 366-84, and on the particular benefits that it would have enjoyed as an imperial capital, Ward-Perkins 1998, 386. Under Gratian, a law was passed granting preferential salaries to rhetors and Greek and Latin *grammatici* at Trier (*CTh* 13.3.11).

[19] Prinz 1965, 48; Matthews 1975, 326-7; Mathisen, 1993, 59. Protadius, a refugee from Trier is mentioned by Rutilius Namatianus (*De reditu suo* 1.542, 551-8).

[20] Chiefly by Prinz 1965, 47-58. On this issue see below, p. 61.

[21] *G* 6.72.

they belonged to this social level, and therefore that Salvian did too.

The only other evidence which can be brought to bear on Salvian's social background is the fact, evident from his writings, that he had received the kind of literary and rhetorical education which was available only to those whose families possessed fairly substantial wealth.[22] This does not, however, provide evidence about his origins within the spectrum of the propertied. It cannot inform us whether he came from a relatively poor curial background or the upper reaches of the senatorial aristocracy. There is no evidence to suggest that the latter was the case, however. Indirect as it is, the evidence we have all suggests that Salvian was of curial origin, though there is nothing that provides any basis to judge whether his family came from the wealthier or poorer ranks of the curial order.

Attempts have been made to draw inferences about Salvian's education and career before his religious conversion from instances in his text of technical language or apparent specialised knowledge. There are a numerous occasions in his works on which Salvian uses medical or legal vocabulary.[23] While nobody, to my knowledge, has ever claimed that Salvian was a doctor, the suggestion that his use of legal terms shows that he was trained as a lawyer has a very long history.[24] It has even been suggested that his whole outlook in *De gubernatione dei*, with its emphasis on God as judge, can be explained by the hypothesis that

[22] Classical citations in Salvian's works come from authors who would have been studied in the course of a standard literary education: Virgil, *Aeneid* 2.368f. (*G* 6.89); Cicero, *Brutus* 90 (*Ep.* 4.24; on this see Alfonsi 1968), *Philippic* 2.105 (*E* 4.33); Sallust, *Catilina* 1.1 (*G* praef.; see Janson 1964, 155-6); Livy 1.13 (*Ep.* 4.20); Juvenal, *Satire* 3.106f. (*E* 3.16); Terence, *Andria* 426-7 (*E* 3.12); Publilius Syrus, *Sententiae* 5.28 (*G* 1.47; on this and the previous reference, see Jürgens 1972, 81-2, 120); Pliny, *Panegyricus* 49 (*G* 5.60). The string of classical quotations at *G* 1.2-5 is borrowed from Lactantius, *Div. inst.* 1.5.17, 27. On the issue in general, see Opelt 1974. There is no evidence that Salvian had any knowledge of Greek.

[23] For Salvian's use of medical terms, see Zschimmer 1875, 11; Schmitz 1991.

[24] Zschimmer 1875, 12f.; Pellegrino 1940a, 17f. ('È naturale pensare che abbia, per un tempo che non è possibile precisare ... esercitato la professione forense.'); Badewien 1980, 15.

he had been trained as a lawyer.[25] To suggest, when dealing with a theologian writing within the tradition of Christian discussion of history and theodicy, that it is necessary to explain the importance of judgement in his thought by postulating that he was a lawyer is in my view facile.[26] The question can be decided only by reference to Salvian's use of legal terminology, and of technical (as opposed to general) legal concepts. The obvious point which must be remembered here is that a large part of Roman rhetorical training was based on the study of forensic oratory, and, in particular, the composition of mock courtroom speeches (*controversiae*). Any educated Roman would therefore have acquired a considerable knowledge of legal terminology and basic legal concepts. To build up a convincing case that an author had undergone specialised legal training, it would be necessary to show that his legal knowledge went beyond that which would be obtained in an ordinary literary education, that is, that the author not merely employs legal terms and alludes to legal concepts, but that he is genuinely well-informed about technical issues, or that he shows knowledge of issues which appeared in technical juristic literature but not in the quasi-legal references picked up in rhetorical training. There is nothing in Salvian's use of legal terminology which warrants such a conclusion.[27] His use of legal concepts and of terminology alike appear to be motivated by desire for literary effect.[28] In so far as he shows detailed knowledge of the law,

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[25] Badewien 1980, 15: 'die große Bedeutung juristischer Katagorien für seine Theologie und die stark juristisch geprägte Terminologie sprechen dafür'.

[26] The comments of T. D. Barnes about Tertullian can be applied directly to Salvian: 'The significance of Tertullian's religious attitudes should not be rendered trivial ... his legalistic approach to Christianity does not issue from academic expertise in jurisprudence. Religious attitudes so fundamental arise naturally out of the Christian predicament.' (Barnes 1971, 29).

[27] Legal terms used by Salvian are listed by Zschimmer 1875, 12, and Rochus 1934, 20-22.

[28] One might cite for example his use of *precarium* and *usufructio* as metaphors for the transient human possession of material goods (*E* 1.29), without clearly distinguishing the two (quite distinct) legal concepts, or his reference to the Twelve Tables (*G* 8.24). A particularly telling example is *G* 7.91, in which Salvian attacks the hypocrisy of judges and officials who are themselves worse criminals than those whom they punish. The use in this passage of dignified legal terms for crimes and criminals (*peculatio, sicarius, effractores, expoliatores*) rather than more colloquial alternatives, is surely not a sign of legal knowledge, but a stylistic choice made in order to heighten the ironic contrast between the position of those he denounces and their actual activities.

it relates to issues such as inheritance, knowledge of which must have been widespread among the property-owning population.[29] The contention that Salvian had received a legal training is therefore based on a misconception about the significance of the use of legal terms by a Latin writer.[30]

We know nothing about the individual members of the family which Salvian was born into;[31] thanks to *Ep.* 4, however, we have some knowledge of the one he married into. Salvian's wife, Palladia, was the daughter of Hypatius and Quieta; Salvian mentions that they had other children too, but we know nothing further about them (*Ep*. 4.14). At the time of the marriage the family were pagans (*Ep.* 4.6-7). Hypatius and Quieta had still been pagans at the time of Salvian's conversion to asceticism, and Salvian attributes their anger to this. They later became Christians, but did not therefore abandon their grudge against their son-in-law. The sort of conversion to asceticism on which he and Palladia had embarked could have inspired a whole series of grievances, arising from the loss of social status that would accompany such a conversion, and the disposal by the couple of their property, as well as the mere challenge to ordinary values presented by the rejection of secular society.[32]

We do not know whether Salvian's marriage took place before he moved to southern Gaul, though this is usually assumed. The assumption is probably correct, given that marriage in this period was normally a matter for families rather than individuals, and often

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[29] See in particular the discussion of inheritance practices in Book 3 of *E*.

[30] Salvian is by no means the only writer to have suffered from this misconception; a more celebrated instance is Tertullian. See Barnes 1971, 22-29, for the classic demolition of the once generally accepted idea that Tertullian was a jurist.

[31] Salvian's *Ep.* 5 is addressed to a woman named Cattura, whom he calls his *soror*. Contemporary usage, and the absence from the letter of any content implying a family relationship, suggest that he addressed her thus as a fellow Christian ascetic, not as a blood relative.

[32] The position of Auspiciola might also have been a matter of contention, if Salvian and Palladia intended that she should be brought up as an ascetic vowed to virginity, as Eucherius and Galla brought up their sons, and as other ascetics, including members of Jerome's circle and the author of the Pelagian letter 'Honorificentiae tuae', did their children (Jerome, *Ep.* 107.3; Anon., 'Honorificentiae tuae' 5.2).

took place when one or both of the partners were extremely young, so that it is easier to imagine it occurring within the social context in which Salvian was brought up. Salvian was a Christian when he married Palladia (*Ep.* 4.7). Marriages between pagans and Christians had been common in the fourth century,[33] and there is no reason to believe that such a marriage would have seemed unusual by the time when that of Salvian and Palladia took place (presumably in the second decade of the fifth century). The number of such marriages would have declined as the proportion of pagans at Salvian's social level declined—a decline of which the life stories of Palladia and her parents form part—but would not have been a social oddity. No other reference to Salvian's family has survived, so we do not know the outcome of the situation, or what eventually became of Palladia and Auspiciola.

The longest passage of personal reminiscence in Salvian's works describes his presence at Trier and a nearby city after they had been sacked by the barbarians, an event which must almost certainly have taken place before he moved to southern Gaul.[34] Salvian states that Trier had been sacked four times; the sack which he describes was the third, after which, he claims, the local nobles petitioned the emperors for games.[35] These sacks are poorly recorded, like most events in northern Gaul in the fifth century, and Salvian gives no direct indication of when they took place. Various suggestions about their dates have been made by modern scholars.[36] There is only one other contemporary source which mentions a sack of Trier during the period in question, the fifth-century historian Renatus Profuturus

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[33] The best known cases probably appear in the letters of Jerome, such as the pagan senator Publilius Caeonius Caecina Albinus, father of the Christian ascetic Laeta (Jerome, *Ep.* 107). For further examples see Chastagnol 1956, 247-51.

[34] The content of Salvian's account of the sack of Trier is discussed in Chapter 6.

[35] *G* 6.82-5. The full account of the sacks covers 6.72-89.

[36] The most important discussion is Anton 1984, 1-14; cf. also Ewig 1972; Demougeot 1980; Heinen 1985, 368-9; Heinen 2000. The fullest discussion in a work about Salvian remains Haemmerle 1893, 17-28.

Frigeridus, whose work is lost except for a few passages quoted by Gregory of Tours.[37] Luckily, his evidence, as far as it goes, is quite specific. He states that Trier was sacked by the Franks in 413, at the same time as the suppression of the usurpation of Jovinus.[38] There is no direct evidence about the first sack; a strong case has been made that it also took place during the period of the usurpations of Constantine III and Jovinus (410-13),[39] though it may have occurred in the aftermath of the invasion of Gaul by the Vandals, Alans and Sueves in 407.

The third sack, which is the one described in *De gubernatione dei*, is most plausibly linked with fighting between Romans and Franks which occurred between 420 and 422 and is mentioned in another fragment of Frigeridus quoted by Gregory in the same passage.[40] Such a date fits well into the known chronology of Salvian's life: late enough for him definitely to have reached adulthood, early enough to allow a long subsequent period at Lérins before the departure of Honoratus.[41]

It has been suggested that Salvian's own text makes it possible to date the third sack even more closely.[42] He states that the nobles directed their petition for games to the

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[37] Gregory, *Histories*, 2.9.

[38] *Treverorum civitas a Francis direpta incensaque est secunda inruptione*. The reference to a *secunda inruptio* appears to confirm that this was the second sack referred to by Salvian, but the Latin is not unambiguous, and could have a less specific meaning.

[39] Anton 1984, 5-7.

[40] Anton 1984, 6. The dates are established by the statements of Gregory and Frigeridus that the campaign took place when Asterius was Patrician and Castinus was *comes domesticorum*. It is presumed to have been successful since Castinus was promoted to *magister militum*, and in 422 was placed in command of the Roman campaign against the Vandals in Spain.

[41] It has proved more difficult to suggest a plausible date for the fourth sack, though this has relatively little significance for Salvian's biography. It has been suggested that it took place either during a further conflict between Romans and Franks in the late 420s, or at the hands of the Burgundians in the mid 430s (Anton 1984, 6). The conflict with the Franks is mentioned by Hydatius (*Chron*. 88) and Prosper (*Chron*. 1298), that with the Burgundians by Sidonius (*Carmen* 7.233-7).

[42] Originally by Haemmerle 1893, 22. The legitimacy of the inference is accepted, with some reservations by Ewig 1972, 65.

'emperors' (6.85).[43] The only period between 395 and the 460s when there was more than one legitimate emperor in the West was the brief joint reign of Honorius and Constantius, from February to September 421. Unfortunately the relationship between Salvian's language and the actual political situation is complicated by the conventions of late-Roman political terminology. In any kind of official context, it would have been normal to refer not to the individual emperor who held power in a particular part of the empire but to the entire imperial college, including the emperors of both East and West. Therefore an official request by the *curia* of Trier would almost certainly have been addressed to *emperors* in the plural even when there was only a single emperor in the West.[44] Salvian is writing his own account here, not specifically summarising what would have been said in the official request, so he would not necessarily have abided by this convention. However, Heinz Heinen has pointed out in a recent discussion of the issue that if Anton's dating scheme is correct there are plausible grounds for associating the games with Constantius even if the inference from Salvian's language is not accepted.[45] Heinen notes that the requested games cannot actually have taken place, since Salvian attacks only the request itself. He also argues that while it is possible in view of the circumstances that imperial assistance was requested for games of purely local significance, such as those which must have taken place in the traditional civic calendar, it is more likely to have been sought for festivities on an unusually large scale, which could not have been presented simply as an ad hoc response to the city's plight, but would have needed to be associated with a significant political or military event. While games might have been held to celebrate a successful end to Castinus' military campaigns

[43] *Imperatoribus*, also *principibus* (6.88).

[44] I owe this point originally to Neil McLynn, but it is discussed by Heinen 2000, 274. Heinen illustrates the point by citing attested petitions which were addressed to both eastern and western emperors, including one from 421 addressed to Honorius, Constantius, and Theodosius (*ILS* 809).

[45] Heinen 2000.

against the Franks, the most obvious event in the period would be the accession of Constantius. The new emperor's premature death would then provide an explanation for the fact that the games did not take place, without making it necessary to hypothesise either that the city's request was turned down, or that some unknown event intervened to prevent them.

In Books 7 and 8 of *De gubernatione dei*, Salvian pronounces with great confidence on life in Carthage before and after the Vandal conquest. In older works this passage was accepted unhesitatingly as evidence that Salvian had lived in North Africa,[46] and even in recent studies this is accepted as a possibility.[47] However, the language that he uses to describe Carthage is so vague, stylised, and lacking in any identifiable first-hand knowledge that it provides no grounds to believe that his account is based on experience.[48] His description of Carthage is an amplification of knowledge obtained from secondary sources.[49]

Salvian's accounts of the effects of barbarian attacks on his native region strongly suggest that the increasing insecurity there was a motivating factor in his move to southern Gaul, though others, such as the desire to make contact with people of a similar religious viewpoint, may have been in play as well. In any case, by the mid-420s he had moved to the south, and to the ascetic community of Lérins. The years he spent there were to be a decisive point in his life in his development as a writer.

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[46] Zschimmer 1875, 12; Schaefer 1930, 11-13.

[47] E.g. Badewien 1980, 15.

[48] Originally pointed out by Pellegrino 1940a, 18-19, and now demonstrated in detail by Blänsdorf 1990.

[49] See the discussion in Chapter 6, below pp. 265-8.

Lérins

The monastic community on Lérins, an island off the coast of Provence,[50] first appears in literary sources in the 420s, and seems almost immediately to have become one of the most powerful forces in the Gallic church.[51] A succession of former members became bishops in the fifth century: Honoratus and Hilary at Arles (followed later in the century by Caesarius), Eucherius at Lyon, Lupus at Troyes, Salonius at Geneva, Veranus at Vence, Maximus and Faustus at Riez. More striking than the number of bishops produced by the community is the literary stature of many of its members. At least five early members of the community wrote literary works that survive: Eucherius, Hilary, Faustus, Vincentius—and Salvian.

The closeness of Salvian's relations with those he came to know at Lérins is evident from his works. The prefaces to *Ad ecclesiam* and *De gubernatione dei* are addressed to Salonius, while two of Salvian's extant letters are addressed to Eucherius (*Epp.* 2, 8). There is every probability that another letter (*Ep.* 1) was addressed to the community at Lérins collectively. In addition, two other Lerinian authors, Eucherius and Hilary, mention Salvian in their own works. The reference by Hilary is in his *Sermo de vita sancti Honorati*, a life of Honoratus composed after Hilary had succeeded him as bishop of Arles. This work is constructed dramatically as a speech delivered on the first anniversary of Honoratus' death, thus probably in 430.[52] There is no reason to doubt that it was composed in this period, though of course the text as it stands may well be very different from any speech actually delivered by Hilary on that date.

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[50] The Lérins group consists of two islands which lie immediately off the coast at Cannes, Lerinum and Lero, today called St. Honorat and Ste. Marguerite. St. Honorat is smaller and further from the coast than its neighbour. See Pricoco 1978, 25-27.

[51] The standard modern history of Lérins is Pricoco 1978. The most illuminating recent discussions are Leyser 1999 and 2000.

[52] Valentin 1977, 22.

Hilary mentions Salvian in a passage describing the effect of Honoratus' goodness on those around him:[53]

> Didicerant omnes, ipso sibi compatiente, dolores illius suos computare, ut non immerito egregius et in Christo beatissimus vir Salvianus presbyter, carorum suorum unus, in scriptis suis dixerit quod, sicut caeli faciem pro sua sol aut obscuritate aut serenitate mutaret, ita congregatio illa caelum sitiens et caelestibus studiis mancipata ad ipso vel nubila vel serenitatem mentium quasi a peculiari in Christo sole susciperet, ipso quoque et adflicto adflicaretur et respirante revalesceret.

So by the early 430s, Hilary could quote an opinion of Salvian's not directly but by reference to his writings; this is about a decade before Salvian wrote his surviving treatises. It also shows that by then Salvian had become a priest. Hilary's description of Salvian, in relation to Honoratus, as *carorum suorum unus* implies that he was part of the central group within the community, close to its founder and leader. Further evidence for Salvian's central place in Lérins is provided by the preface to Book 1 of Eucherius' *Instructiones*, a basic exegetical work addressed to his son Salonius:[54]

> Dignum namque est quacumque cura mea ingenium tuum remunerari, qui vixdum decem natus annos eremum ingressus inter illas sanctorum manus non solum inbutus verum etiam enutritus es sub Honorato patre, illo, inquam, primo insularum postea etiam ecclesiarum magistro; cum te illic beatissimi Hilarii tunc insulani tironis sed iam nunc summi pontificis doctrina formaret per omnes spiritalium rerum disciplinas, ad hoc etiam te postea consummantibus sanctis viris Salviano atque Vincentio eloquentia pariter scientiaque praeeminentibus.

This passage is particularly valuable in identifying the personal links which bound Salvian to other leading figures at Lérins. It shows us something of the background which lies behind the dedication of two of his works to Salonius, as well as of his extant correspondence with Eucherius (*Epp.* 2, 8). It confirms the impression given by Hilary that he was a key member

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[53] *V. Hon.* 19.1-2.

[54] Book 1 consists of questions about the Bible (often very simple) with answers giving correct doctrine; Book 2 provides explanations of the names of people and places, Hebrew terms, and other difficult words.

of the group of talented and charismatic individuals who established the influence and image of Lérins.

As was noted in the previous section, it is possible that when Salvian moved to Lérins he was still living with his family, a possibility which we know existed, because of the attested case of Eucherius. We have one, indisputably contemporary, piece of evidence (Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* 51), which states that Eucherius and Galla were living together on one island while Honoratus presided over a monastic community on the other.[55] Paulinus' remarks, reflecting previous correspondence with Eucherius and Galla and the information provided by the three members of Honoratus' community who visited him, suggest two separate communities: his visitors appear well-informed about the couple's activities and state of well-being, but on the other hand admit that Eucherius and Galla had not written to Paulinus because they were unaware that a group from the other community was going to visit him (*Ep*. 51.2-3). The next piece of evidence, the preface, addressed to Honoratus and Eucherius, of Cassian's *Collationes* 11-17 (also written before Honoratus became a bishop), mentions only one community, that led by Honoratus. Cassian's joint dedication to Honoratus and Eucherius suggests that the two were closely associated, but he says nothing about Eucherius' role or position at Lérins, concentrating instead on his desire to visit the monasteries of Egypt. Every subsequent literary source—including those written by Eucherius himself—implies that Lérins consisted of a single, all-male community, of which Eucherius was a member. Galla never reappears after the letter of Paulinus.

In its early days, Lérins evidently possessed an element of diversity that the authors

[55] Paulinus' letter can only be dated very approximately, but it was written before 426, since Honoratus had not yet become bishop of Arles. Paulinus' statement that he had only recently learned of the existence of Lérins suggests a relatively early date. On the other hand, Eucherius and his family cannot have arrived at Lérins earlier than the period 415-20, since his son Salonius was about ten years old when they joined the community, but was still young enough to be educated by Hilary and Salvian, neither of whom can have been at Lérins before the early 420s. All this tends to suggest that the letter was written sometime in the years around 420. It would therefore predate the earliest extant work about Lérins, Eucherius' *De laude eremi* (written c. 428) by several years.

who described the community did not choose to record, and about which we possess a little information only because it happened to be mentioned in a text independent of the Lerinian literary tradition. The presence of ascetic couples there must have been a transient phenomenon, which did not fit into the image which early Lerinian authors wished to project, and was soon forgotten. In the end, for Eucherius and Galla, and for Salvian and Palladia if they too settled on Lero, there are only two possibilities: either they separated, whether deliberately or through some contingency, and the male partner simply joined the community on the other island, or the contacts between the two islands were so close that the male, if not the female, ascetics on Lero were regarded as effectively forming a single community with those on Lerinum, at least when the settlements at Lérins were considered in relation to the world outside.

Salvian's married status certainly cannot be used as a basis for arguing that he was not part of the community at Lérins at all, as some modern scholars have done, arguing that he merely got to know some members of the community while living nearby as an independent lay ascetic, or *conversus*.[56] Quite apart from the evidence discussed above, it remains entirely possible that he separated from Palladia before he moved to Lérins. The other objection made against Salvian's membership of the community is, if anything, even more tenuous. This is the fact that he is not mentioned in the lists of distinguished figures from Lérins which appear in works by Eucherius and Sidonius.[57] But since neither Eucherius nor Sidonius implies that his list is exhaustive, drawing conclusions from their omission of Salvian amounts to the purest argument from silence. There could be any number of reasons

[56] Chadwick 1955, 163; Lagarrigue 1971, 12-13; Fischer 1976, 11. Badewien 1980, 16, leaves the question open.

[57] Eucherius, *De laude eremi* 42 (Honoratus, Maximus, Lupus, Vincentius, Caprasius); Sidonius, *Carm.* 16.110ff. (Caprasius, Lupus, Honoratus, Maximus, Eucherius, Hilary).

why they failed to mention him, even if he was a full member of the community. It has been suggested that Sidonius omitted Salvian because he disapproved of Salvian's attitude to the barbarians.[58] Although I am sceptical about this suggestion, which belongs to the type of over-politicising view of Salvian discussed in the Introduction, it does serve to make the point that there could have been innumerable reasons for a fifth-century writer to choose whether or not to mention an individual in such a context.

Against objections of this kind must be set the evidence of the passages from Hilary and Eucherius: Hilary's attribution to Salvian of an intimate description of the emotional relationship between Honoratus and *congregatio illa*, Eucherius' description of the upbringing of Salonius, which on any natural reading implies that all stages, including that by Salvian and Vincentius, took place in the *eremum*, and that all his teachers belonged to *illas sanctorum manus*. These passages seem to me to show clearly that Hilary and Eucherius made no distinction between Salvian's status at Lérins and their own or that of the other individuals they mention.[59] Accounts which argue that Salvian was not a member of the community seem to me to miss the point of these passages, which is that even if he was a member of a more informal community of married *conversi* on one island at Lérins and not of the coenobitic community on the other, and even if within Lérins this community was regarded as being institutionally distinct, Salvian's *personal* intimacy with the most renowned ascetics at Lérins could hardly have been closer. It amounts to placing his formal institutional status (which is hypothetical in any case) above his attested personal intimacy

[58] Pricoco 1976, 353-5.

[59] Salvian's own writings, while they demonstrate that he was a close friend of Eucherius and Salonius, do not themselves attest to his presence at Lérins. (Except indirectly, insofar as the greeting to Salonius in *Ep.* 9 shows that he had been Salvian's pupil.) It is in this context that the loss of the heading to *Ep.* 1 is most frustrating. It is evident from the language of the letter that Salvian had been a member of the monastic community to which it is addressed (demonstrated in detail by Pellegrino 1940a, 22), but since the identification of that community as Lérins is itself a conjecture, the letter cannot be used as confirmatory evidence.

with the individuals in question.

The obscurity surrounding the status of married ascetics at Lérins is indicative of the fact that we have very little information of any kind about the internal workings of the community in the period when Salvian was there. Contemporary accounts are highly literary, and focussed on personalities, not on the details of the regime observed by the inhabitants. The nature of the monastic rule observed by the early community at Lérins, or even whether there was a formal rule at all, are questions which remain controversial.[60]

It is the informal, personal nature of the links which Salvian established at Lérins which should be emphasized. Most treatments of the history of Lérins concentrate on its institutional role and power or on investigating the social and geographical origins of its members.[61] As Conrad Leyser has put it, 'Modern scholars have sought to convert the succession of volatile panegyrics from Lerinians into solid evidence for "Lerinian monasticism" as a theological or institutional force in the late Roman West'.[62] In fact, with the exception of Caesarius of Arles, Lérins showed no particular intellectual distinction after the first generation, and it is hard to identify a common Lérins view which goes beyond a shared commitment to asceticism. There is certainly no evidence that either Salvian's social and political views or his ideas about divine justice reflect ideas held by others at Lérins. The work by another Lerinian which comes closest to *De gubernatione dei* in its subject matter, Eucherius' *De contemptu mundi*, puts forward totally different views about the condition and

[60] Two anonymous monastic rules, the *Rule of the Four Fathers*, and the *Second Rule of the Fathers* have been identified by Adalbert de Voguë as products of the early period at Lérins, but his arguments have been received with some scepticism by other scholars (see Leyser 2000, 41). Pricoco 1978, 77-91, argued that in its early years Lérins did not have a formal rule, but that its members modelled their way of life on that of the most authoritative members of the community, such as Honoratus.

[61] The portrayal of the 'Lérins faction' in Mathisen 1989 is an unusually thoroughgoing example of the former; for the latter see primarily Prinz 1965, 47-59; Heinzelmann 1976. Pricoco 1978 is more balanced; like most studies of Lérins it is primarily concerned with Lerinian literature (cf. also Nouailhat 1988).

[62] Leyser 1999, 189.

role of the Roman empire. What bound the early Lerinians together seems to have been the intense emotional and intellectual experience of living together in a community of unusually able and charismatic individuals, at a time when most of those whose biography is known were very young.

Apart from Salvian, four contemporary members of the Lérins community produced literary works which are extant: Eucherius, Hilary, Vincentius, and Faustus of Riez.[63] We also possess lives of a number of members of the group, of which the most important is Hilary's *Sermo de vita sancti Honorati*.[64] These men were linked strongly by friendship, and in some cases by family ties.[65] Honoratus was related to Hilary, and Lupus was the brother of Vincentius and, if the *Vita Lupi* is reliable, the brother-in-law of Hilary.[66] Salonius and Veranus, brought to the monastery in childhood, were educated by Salvian, Hilary and Vincentius.[67] Eucherius, Lupus and Salvian were married, and in the case of Salvian and Eucherius, had children, before adopting an ascetic life.

They had other things in common; they were all of privileged social background, though some care needs to be taken in defining exactly what this means. In the *Sermo de vita sancti Honorati*, Hilary says that Honoratus (and therefore by implication Hilary himself) was from a consular family, which would mean that they came from the very highest level

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[63] Salonius, the son of Eucherius and friend of Salvian, was long regarded as the author of two works of biblical interpretation, the *Expositiones mysticae in Parabolas Salamonis et in Ecclesiastem*, but these have been shown to date from the eighth century. See Flint 1970; Weiss 1970.

[64] The *Vita Hilarii* was probably composed towards the end of the fifth century, more than a generation after the death of its subject; the *vita* of Lupus of Troyes gives every appearance of being later still, and I am hesitant about using it, though the clear consensus is that its information is reliable (Ewig 1978; Mathisen 1979). This is an important issue, since the *Vita Lupi* is the only source for much of the biographical information about Lerinian figures.

[65] Biographical details can be found in Stroheker 1948, 141-227; Pricoco 1978, 40-59; Mathisen 1982.

[66] *Vita Lupi* 1.

[67] Hilary and Honoratus: *V. Hon.* 23, 36; *V. Hil.* 2. Lupus and Vincentius: Eucherius, *De laude eremi* 42.

of the senatorial aristocracy. However, there is no evidence that any other member of the group was part of the high aristocracy. Salvian's background has already been discussed. Besides direct statements like that of Hilary, we can infer that all the members of the group whose writings survive came from relatively affluent families because of the internal evidence of their works, which show the signs of a full rhetorical education, but, as has been observed, this need imply only membership of the curial class.[68]

Some of the well-known members of the monastery had moved from northern to southern Gaul. One of these, of course, was Salvian himself. Faustus came from Britain.[69] There is no direct evidence about the place of origin of Honoratus and Hilary, but a conjectural case has been made that they came from the north of Lugdunensis Prima.[70] However, Salvian is the only one whose move to the south can be plausibly linked to the barbarian invasions; for the others there is simply no evidence.

All the individuals under discussion were relatively young in the period when they were at Lérins together. In most of the cases where there is evidence they were in their twenties, or at most their thirties. This can be said with some confidence, even though in most cases we do not have exact dates of birth, or for their arrival at, or departure from the monastery. The only person for whom we possess reliable dates of birth and death is Hilary,

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[68] Prinz 1965, 47-59, followed to some extent by Heinzelmann 1976, habitually stretches the evidence on this point, presenting a literary education as if it provided decisive grounds for assigning somebody to the senatorial aristocracy.

[69] Sidonius *Ep.* 9.9.6, Avitus, *Ep.* 3.

[70] The only hint in the primary sources is the statement at *V. Hon.* 23 that Honoratus' visit to Hilary involved a long and burdensome journey. For Prinz 1965, 65, this is enough to prove that as both men were Gauls, and anywhere in the south would be close to Lérins, they must have come from the north. But the indeterminacy of Hilary's language (*tam longi itineris*) could easily encompass a site in southern Gaul more than a couple of days journey from Lérins. Mathisen builds up a somewhat stronger case based on Hilary's journeys to the north, recorded because of his links with Germanus of Auxerre and the Chelidonius affair at Besançon; his ties with his brother-in-law Lupus, who was born at Toul, owned property at Mâcon and Langres (these details depend on the reliability of the *Vita Lupi*), and became bishop of Troyes; and on the existence of other individuals of senatorial rank named Honoratus and Hilarius at Langres and Dijon (Mathisen 1979, 167-8).

who died on 5 May 449, aged forty-seven, so was born 401/402.[71] In the *Vita Honorati* (23-4) he describes how Honoratus visited him and won him over to asceticism when he was a young adult. It is not clear how long before Honoratus became bishop this was (Hilary's account of his accession comes in the very next chapter: *V. Hon.* 25), but Hilary cannot possibly have been more than twenty-four, and was probably younger; one may conjecture that he arrived at Lérins in the early 420s. For Honoratus himself it is necessary to work backwards from his episcopacy at Arles (426/7-429). According to the *Vita Honorati*,[72] the monastery was well-established by the time Hilary arrived there, and the reference to it by Paulinus of Nola, which must date from about the same time, appears to bear this out. How much time had elapsed since Honoratus first arrived is unknown. The usual date given for the foundation of Lérins is c. 410 or even earlier (Mathisen dates it c. 400/410),[73] and this is possible, but the sources do not contain anything to suggest that it existed earlier than the second decade of the century.[74] Pricoco, who favours a date in the first decade of the century for Honoratus' original settlement on Lérins, argues that he may have lived there alone, or with a very small group, for many years before a larger community grew up.[75] This is perfectly plausible, but simply redefines the beginning of the monastery: the evidence does not suggest that a community resembling that of the mid to late 420s existed before the previous decade. The evidence for Honoratus' life does not make such a conjecture necessary.

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[71] His age is given at *V. Hil.* 23; Leo *Ep.* 40 shows that he was dead by August; the church at Arles later celebrated his feast on May 5. See Mathisen 1989, 173.

[72] *V. Hon.* 15-20.

[73] Mathisen 1989, 76.

[74] Note that in *Ep.* 51.2 Paulinus says that he had only learned that Honoratus was living at Lérins a year earlier.

[75] Pricoco 1978, 40.

While no source tells us how long Honoratus was at Lérins, the *Sermo de vita sancti Honorati* contains nothing to suggest that when he settled there he was old, or even middle-aged. Hilary has Honoratus and his brother Venantius leaving their homeland while still in youth.[76] They travel to Greece, and Honoratus returns after the death of Venantius. The text gives no indication at all of how long they spent there; there is no implication that they stayed for many years. Then, after spending some time in Italy (again no indication of exactly how long), Honoratus settles at Lérins. It would be entirely consistent with the evidence to conjecture that Honoratus was no more than thirty when he settled at Lérins, and in his forties when he became bishop of Arles.[77]

Eucherius was probably about the same age as Honoratus. The main piece of evidence here is that his son Salonius was bishop of Geneva by the time of the Council of Orange in 441. It is unlikely that Salonius would have become a bishop at an age even younger than Hilary (twenty-seven or twenty-eight), so his birth date should probably be placed shortly before or after 410. A birth date sometime in the 380s or early 390s would then be appropriate for his father. Nothing in the other information we have about Eucherius contradicts this: the references to him by Paulinus and Cassian suggest a figure of comparable seniority to Honoratus, his episcopacy at Lyon began in the early 430s, and he died in 451/2.[78] The only individual at Lérins known by name who was older was Honoratus' mentor, Caprasius, about whom virtually nothing is known.[79]

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[76] They are afraid their departure will be ascribed to *iuvenali ausu*, and travel with the older Caprasius as a *custodem suae aetatis*, *V. Hon.* 12.

[77] Travels in Greece and Italy, *V. Hon.* 14-15; death of Honoratus, 29.

[78] I follow Mathisen 1989, 279-91. His method of dating bishops by collating the few known ordination and death dates with the subscriptions to the canons of church councils and to other documents (usually signed in order of seniority) is convincing. The evidence amassed by Mathisen (290) shows that the statement by *Chron. gall. 452*, 134, that Eucherius died in 449, must be mistaken.

[79] References to Caprasius: *V. Hon.*12 ; *De laude eremi* 42; *V. Hil.* 12.

Lupus, according to his *vita*, was at Lérins for one year and then became bishop of Troyes; two years later he paid a visit to Britain which is dated to 429. This would imply that he was a member of the community in 426/7.[80] I have indicated my doubts about the *Vita Lupi,* but we can accept that Lupus was at Lérins in the mid-420s.[81] Unless he became a bishop when he was very young indeed, he must have been slightly older than Hilary, but the difference in their ages cannot have been very great as Lupus lived until the 470s and so is unlikely to have been born much before the turn of the century.[82] Faustus was mature enough to became abbot of Lérins when Maximus was chosen as bishop of Riez in 433/4, and was still alive in the 480s. He was therefore presumably born in the first decade of the century. We may therefore conclude that when all these men were together as a group they were mostly in their twenties, with Honoratus and Eucherius probably in their thirties.[83] Mathisen has remarked on the 'combined familial-cultural atmosphere' at Lérins, exemplified by the education of Salonius and Veranus by Hilary, Salvian and Vincentius, an ethos which would only have been stronger if some members of the community remained with their wives.[84]

The time that the Lérins group spent together at the monastery clearly had an impact on the individuals concerned out of all proportion to its fairly brief duration. While the evidence provides some indications that members of the group came from similar geographical and social backgrounds, this is surely less significant than the intense interaction of the individuals within the group. The Lerinians resemble the groups of friends

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[80] *V. Lupi* 4.

[81] His presence at Lérins is attested by several sources, including the early *De laude eremi* (see n. 49 above).

[82] Length and timing of his stay at Lérins: *V. Lupi* 2-3; Sidonius *Ep.* 6.1.3 was written to him when he had been bishop for forty-five years, so c. 472.

[83] The youth of most Lerinians when they came to the monastery makes it improbable that any of them were motivated by the need to escape from the dangers of political life, as suggested by Mathisen 1989, 81-2.

[84] Mathisen 1989, 84.

whom Augustine describes several times in the *Confessions*. This dimension of their group, as a small community of friends, has been obscured in a great deal of modern literature, which tends to stress the institutional nature of 'Lerinian monasticism', as if it was this that was responsible for the achievements of the individuals, rather than they who created the reputation of the monastery. In addition, some modern historians are primarily concerned with using the known Lerinians as a foundation for speculation about largely hypothetical wider groups of which they are supposedly representative.[85] We should remain aware of how little we know about Lérins, and guard against attributing to the whole community the characteristics of its most celebrated members. We do not know the size of the community, nor whether the composition of the leading group was typical of the monastery as a whole. The sources portray the monks as very numerous.[86] However, we have no way of quantifying what their rhetoric actually means.[87] An additional reason for regarding the Lérins group of the 420s as unusual is the subsequent history of the community. Contrary to the rhetoric which surrounds it, after the 430s Lérins does not seem to have been particularly distinguished. It produced no more authors of note until Caesarius of Arles at the very end of the fifth century.[88] In a similar way, while the 'school of bishops' label is an exaggeration for most of the fifth century, it reflects the success in obtaining bishoprics of the small group about which we know, often at a very early age (Hilary aged twenty-seven or twenty-eight,

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[85] Prinz 1965 and Mathisen 1989 embody such an approach.

[86] *Ingenti fratrum coenobio praesidens* (Cassian, *Coll.* 11-17, praef.). *Omnes undique ad illum certatim confluebant.* (Hilary, *V. Hon.* 17.2).

[87] Fifteen named individuals are attested at Lérins in the 420s: Honoratus, Hilary, Eucherius, Galla, Salonius, Veranus, Maximus, Faustus, Vincentius, Lupus, Salvian, Caprasius, Gelasius, Augendus and Tigridius (the last three are the monks whose visit to Paulinus caused him to write *Ep.* 51). The precise status of some of these is uncertain, and a number of them (Honoratus, Hilary, Eucherius, Lupus, Maximus and Salvian) are known to have left the community fairly swiftly. Thereafter far fewer individuals are known.

[88] The only literary work produced by a member of Lérins between this generation and Caesarius was the extremely brief *Monita* of Porcarius (c. 490). Faustus, of course, continued to write at Lérins while he was abbot, but no *new* writer emerged.

Lupus and Salonius the same, or not much older).

Modern literature therefore tends to reflect the image propagated by the Lerinians themselves, which encourages the achievements of the individual members of the group to be seen as products of the place and of the community as an institution. Works such as *De laude eremi*, the *Sermo de vita sancti Honorati*, and the prefaces to Eucherius' biblical works are devoted to praising the monastery and its members. Such works passed on to other writers, like Sidonius or the author of the *Vita Hilarii*, the self-image of their authors. It is, of course, extremely unusual for such a body of literary works to be produced by different members or ex-members of a monastic community. There is nothing remotely comparable in early western monasticism. But the literature of Lérins is the product of a group of brilliant individuals reacting with each other; Lérins was important primarily because it provided the setting.

This group was conscious of itself as an elite, as shown by passages like Eucherius' celebration of Lérins in *De laude eremi* (Lérins 'both nourishes the most outstanding monks and provides the most sought after bishops'—this already in 428).[89] This was composed at the very end of their period together in the same monastery. Some had already left, and in the next few years the whole group broke up and dispersed across Gaul.[90] The date at which Salvian left Lérins is unknown. By about 430, when Hilary referred to him in the *Sermo de vita sancti Honorati* he already did so from his writings (however, Hilary was resident in Arles by this point). It seems likely that Salvian had left Lérins by the time he wrote *Ad ecclesiam* and *De gubernatione dei* in the period c. 438 to c. 445. However, his works attest

[89] *Et praestantissimos alat monachos et ambiendos proferat sacerdotes* (*De laude eremi* 42). Eucherius wrote *De laude eremi* while Honoratus was bishop of Arles (426/7-429). The only other known bishop from Lérins at that time is Lupus, assuming that the time scale in *V. Lupi* 2-3 is accurate. However, it is by no means inconceivable that Eucherius is referring to Honoratus alone.

[90] Exceptions are Faustus, who remained at Lérins as abbot until he became bishop of Riez in the mid 450s (Mathisen 1989, 290-91), and (probably) Vincentius, who is not known to have left Lérins.

to the continuing strength of the personal links which he formed there.

Salvian's letters

Some additional information, especially about Salvian's contacts, can be gained from his letters.[91] Eight of these survive (not counting '*Ep*. 9', in view of the conclusions reached in the first part of this chapter). Seven, preserved in a single manuscript, evidently form part of the book of letters which is mentioned by Gennadius in his list of Salvian's works. The manuscript collection is incomplete, with the first letter being truncated at the beginning and the last letter at the end; Salvian's original collection was probably considerably larger.[92] *Ep.* 1 is addressed to a monastic community, assumed to be Lérins, *Ep.* 4 to Salvian's parents-in-law, and *Ep*. 5 to a woman named Cattura, described by Salvian as his 'sister'.[93] Other letters are addressed to Salvian's colleague from Lérins, Eucherius (*Ep.* 2), chiding him for sending a greeting via a messenger rather than writing; and to a Bishop Agrycius, probably Agroecius of Sens,[94] whose links with the Lérins group are attested (*Ep.* 3).[95] The letter to Eucherius must date from the early 430s, since it describes Eucherius' appointment as bishop as a *novus honor*; that to Agroecius cannot be closely dated.[96] Two letters (neither of which can be dated) are addressed to figures who are otherwise unknown, Limenius (*Ep.* 6) and Aper and

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[91] On these see Opelt 1979.

[92] This fact is unfortunately obscured in published editions, since they do not print the letters in the manuscript order. The order was changed (for reasons unknown) by Pithou, who produced the *editio princeps* of the letters (1580), and it is Pithou's numbering which has been reproduced by every subsequent edition down to the present day (on the text of the letters, see Lagarrigue 1971, 21-8). The manuscript order of the letters is 1, 2, 6, 7, 4, 5, 3, with the last being incomplete.

[93] On these letters, see above pp. 43-6, 49-50

[94] Agroecius' *De orthographia* (Keil, *Grammatici Latini*, vol. 7, 113ff.) begins *Agroecius cum latine scribis, per diphthongon scribendum, non, ut quidam putant, per i Agricius*.

[95] *De orthographia* is dedicated to Eucherius.

[96] Agroecius wrote *De orthographia* before he became a bishop; its dedication to Eucherius means that it must date from before 451/2, but we do not know how long before. Agroecius may already have been a bishop in the 440s. The only reference to him by a third party is Sidonius, *Ep.* 7.5, inviting him to participate in the election of a bishop, which dates from 472. It is extremely unlikely that Salvian's letter is contemporary with that of Sidonius (as suggested by Opelt 1979, 164), since this would postdate Salvian's entry in *De viris illustribus*. Salvian's letter probably dates from sometime in the 440s or 450s.

Verus (*Ep.* 7). The former is addressed in very warm terms; Salvian's language suggests that he may be addressing him as a potential convert to Christianity. Aper and Verus are addressed humbly, even obsequiously—Salvian addresses them as *domini venerabiles*, although they were laymen. The nature of their relationship with Salvian is unclear, but Opelt has suggested that they had offered Salvian some form of patronage.[97] *Ep*. 8 does not form part of this manuscript. It is addressed to Eucherius, and survives in manuscripts of Eucherius' *Instructiones* and *Formula spiritalis intelligentiae* together with letters from Hilary of Arles and a priest named Rusticus.[98] All three letters praise Eucherius' works. Both the works by Eucherius and the letters must date from the mid-430s, since they were written before Salonius became a bishop.

[97] Opelt 1979, 173-4. She tentatively identifies Aper with a correspondent of Sidonius (*Epp.* 4.21, 5.14).

[98] On these letters, see now Vessey 2001. Cf. also Opelt 1979, 165.

Marseille

After his appearances in works by Hilary and Eucherius, we have no reference to Salvian by a third party until Gennadius wrote his entry in *De viris illustribus* in the late 460s. It is Gennadius who describes Salvian as *apud Massiliam presbyter*: the only piece of evidence which links him to Marseille. The city is never mentioned in his works, and no other source connects him with it.[99] We know nothing about the date at which Salvian moved to Marseille, nor the manner of his life in the city,[100] nor whether he lived elsewhere for any of the very long period between his last attestation at Lérins and the composition of *De viris illustribus*. We do know something of the history of Marseille itself in the period, which enables us to see what might have attracted someone like Salvian to the city. It should be stressed, though, that this information is purely contextual.[101]

Marseille begins to make an impression on ecclesiastical history during the long episcopate of Bishop Proculus.[102] In a letter from Jerome to a young Gallic ascetic named Rusticus, Proculus was one of two bishops in Gaul recommended as a possible instructor.[103] The power and resources which the church at Marseille already commanded at this period

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[99] Which therefore provides a very tenuous basis for the epithet 'of Marseille' which is customarily attached to his name. Cf. Loseby 1992a, 334, n. 1.

[100] In particular, there is no warrant for connecting Salvian to any supposed ecclesiastical group or faction in the city, nor with any monastic institution there, as is done particularly blatantly by Mathisen 1989, 122-3 ('At Marseilles, the powerful bishop Proculus had organized an influential monastery which predated that of Lérins and which housed Cassian and Salvian ... Salvian transferred from Lérins to the monastery of St. Victor'). The monastery of St. Victor, which existed in Marseille throughout the middle ages, is commonly identified with that which was founded in the city by Cassian (not Proculus); see e.g. Marrou 1966. However, Loseby 1992a, 138-42, casts severe doubt on this identification, in my view convincingly.

[101] On Marseille as a Christian centre, see Loseby 1992a, 96-167.

[102] Proculus is first attested attending the Council of Aquileia in 381; he is last attested by name in 417 (*Epistulae arelatenses* 4 and 6), though a reference to an unnamed bishop of Marseille in 426 (Pope Celestine, *Ep*. 4.10) is usually taken to apply to him. The (patchily recorded) succession of bishops for the remainder of Salvian's lifetime is Venerius, first attested 431, last attested 451; Eustasius, attested 463; Graecus, first attested 475.

[103] *Ep*. 125.20. Rusticus is probably the later bishop of Narbonne. In an inscription erected in 445, he is stated to have served as a monk and a presbyter of the church of Marseille with the then bishop of the city, Venerius (*CIL* 12.5336, on which see Marrou 1970).

are demonstrated by the baptistery, dating to about 400, which has the largest ground area of any known in the western empire, including that in the imperial residence of Milan.[104]

In about 416, John Cassian settled in Marseille, and lived there until his death in the mid-430s.[105] We do not know whether Salvian moved to Marseille before Cassian's death or whether there was any personal contact between them. It is possible merely to observe that the presence of such a figure would have been an attraction for an ascetic intellectual like Salvian, and that some of his friends from Lérins had attested contacts with Cassian. Gennadius lists other authors based in Marseille: Vincentius, author of a commentary on the psalms (81), the rhetor Victorinus (61), and the priest Musaeus (80).[106] Musaeus is a particularly intriguing figure, since he would presumably have been one of Salvian's colleagues; he produced a lectionary for the church at Marseille at the request of Bishop Venerius, as well as homilies and works on the sacraments. A writer who goes unmentioned in *De viris illustribus* is Paulinus of Pella, who wrote his *Eucharisticon* at Marseille in 459. This may well be because Paulinus did not fulfil the standards that Gennadius expected of a Christian writer: he is dismissive of laymen who wrote on religious subjects, such as Victorinus the rhetor, and Paulinus' poem embodies attitudes on a number of subjects which Gennadius, if to any extent he shared Salvian's views, would have found offensive.[107]

De viris illustribus normally lists an author's works with only the barest minimum of biographical facts, and Salvian's entry (68) follows that pattern:

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[104] Loseby 1992b, 167-8.

[105] Loseby 1992a, 133.

[106] Prosper of Aquitaine, who lived in Marseille in the late 420s and the beginning of the 430s, is also included in *De viris illustribus* (85) but it makes no reference to his time in Marseille, which may have ended before Salvian moved to the city.

[107] See Chapter 6 (below p. 257) for discussion of the parallels between Paulinus' biography and that of the Aquitanians denounced by Salvian in Book 7 of *G*.

> Salvianus apud Massiliam presbyter, humana et divina litteratura instructus et, ut absque invidia loquar, magister episcoporum, scripsit scholastico et aperto sermone multa, ex quibus ista legi: de virginitatis bono ad Marcellum presbyterum libros tres, adversum avaritiam libros quattuor, de praesenti iudicio libros quinque, et pro eorum praemio satisfactionis ad Salonium episcopum librum unum, et expositionis extremae partis libri Ecclesiastes ad Claudium episcopum Viennensem librum unum, epistularum librum unum, et in morem Graecorum de principio Genesis usque ad condicionem hominis conposuit versu quasi hexemeron librum unum, homilias episcopis factas multas, sacramentorum vero quantas nec recordor. Vivit usque hodie in senectute bona.

The most striking fact about Gennadius' summary of Salvian's literary output is the wide range of works which he produced, and the high proportion which has been lost. It is clear that by *De praesenti iudicio* and *Adversum avaritiam* Gennadius meant the works which we know as *De gubernatione dei* and *Ad ecclesiam.* Gennadius erroneously states that the former has five books.[108] It is possible that he knew a version which contained only Books 1 to 5, which might also explain the different title he uses, but this is a problematic hypothesis, since internal evidence shows that Books 6 to 8 were composed in the early 440s, so any variant which did not include them would have been a very early version, superceded decades before Gennadius wrote. There is not the slightest indication in the text of *De gubernatione dei* that the extant division into eight books is not original,[109] so it seems most likely that Gennadius simply made a mistake. To propose altering *De gubernatione dei* in order to make the number of books match Gennadius' statement—as has been done—seems remarkably obtuse.[110]

Some of the interests evident from Salvian's extant works can be seen in the lost works cited by Gennadius: a work with a title like *De virginitatis bono* would be a natural

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[108] The text could conceivably be corrupt, but when numbers are written out as words, as they are in Gennadius' text, corruption of *octo* to *quinque* is improbable.

[109] For a comprehensive demonstration, see Richter 1929.

[110] Haemmerle 1893, 13ff.

one for a writer in his ascetic and monastic milieu. The book of Ecclesiastes deals with the same broad theme—the relationship between God's judgement and the experience of suffering in the world—as *De gubernatione dei*. Salvian's output of sermons for bishops less articulate than himself is unsurprising in view of the rhetorical skill evident in his works. Undoubtedly this aspect of his career, and perhaps his general authority as a writer and thinker, lie behind Gennadius' description of him as *magister episcoporum*.[111] The meaning of Gennadius' statement that Salvian wrote one book addressed to Salonius *pro eorum praemio satisfactionis* is obscure, and the words as they stand may be corrupt. Claudius, the dedicatee of Salvian's commentary on Ecclesiastes, was bishop of Vienne in the early 440s.[112] Marcellus the presbyter, dedicatee of *De virginitatis bono*, is unknown.

Marseille in the mid fifth century was therefore the scene of considerable, and self-consciously Christian, literary activity. We can see from *De viris illustribus* the extent to which Gennadius used the opportunities provided by the city's communications to keep in touch with developments in the church all over the empire.[113] Marseille provided an environment which accorded with the scale and ambition of Salvian's thought and writing.

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[111] It has been argued that the epithet applies merely to Salvian's education of Salonius and Veranus (e.g. Chadwick 1955, 161), but if this were so there would be no reason for Gennadius' defensive *ut absque invidia loquar*.

[112] Mathisen 1989, 108-9. Claudius is attested as a participant at the Councils of Orange in 441 and Vaison in 442. The statement of Brakman 1924, 182, repeated by Lagarrigue 1971, 14, that no Claudius is attested as bishop of Vienne in this period, is an error.

[113] Gennadius was aided in this by the fact that, unlike Salvian, he knew Greek.

3) Community in *Ad Ecclesiam*

1) Introduction

The place of Ad ecclesiam among Salvian's works

Ad ecclesiam and *De gubernatione dei* were written within a few years of each other in the late 430s and early 440s. *Ad ecclesiam* contains no references to contemporary events which can be used to date it, but it is the earlier of the two works and is quoted by Salvian in *De gubernatione dei* (*G* 4.1). If *Ep*. 9 is the preface to *Ad ecclesiam* then the work must have been completed after Salonius became bishop of Geneva in the late 430s. *De gubernatione dei* was probably written about 443.[1] The gap between the composition of the two works may therefore be no more than two or three years, though it could be twice that.

My treatment of *Ad ecclesiam* will examine it primarily in relation to the aspects of Salvian's thought that are common to both his works.[2] There are few inconsistencies between the ideas presented in *Ad ecclesiam* and in *De gubernatione dei*. Salvian's presuppositions about morality and the nature of Christian society are the same in both: the main difference between the two works is one of scope. *Ad ecclesiam* is directed at a specific target: the possession of wealth and the practice of leaving wealth to privately chosen heirs rather than to the poor. Much of it is composed of arguments which try to overcome people's reluctance to give away their property by showing that doing so is to their ultimate advantage. *De gubernatione dei* is a more wide-ranging and discursive work, and contains much less direct exhortation. The one obvious significant difference between the two works is the absence

[1] See Appendix 2.

[2] Fischer 1976 provides a comprehensive study of *Ad ecclesiam*; see also Lagarrigue 1971, 29-43; Zschimmer 1875, 79-86 (a more perceptive treatment of Salvian than many far more recent studies). There is much less secondary literature on *E* than on *G*.

from *Ad ecclesiam* of the theme of divine judgement through historical events which is central to *De gubernatione dei*. Instead Salvian relies on the threat of post-mortem punishment, a theme which is insignificant in the later work.

Ad ecclesiam is addressed formally to the church, but Salvian does not try to sustain the idea that the church as an entity is the addressee, except at the opening of each book (1.1-7; 3.1; 4.1). Instead he addresses different sections of the Christian community.[3] Book 1 is addressed to those who lead a secular life; Books 2 and 4 to the various groups which Salvian calls *religiosi*.[4] Book 3, which deals with inheritance, is addressed to both groups. Salvian makes some effort to tailor the arguments in each book to the group to which it is addressed, but not very rigorously. The main argument addressed to *saeculares* in Book 1 is that dispersing their wealth in charity will help to atone for their sins. Salvian does not repeat the argument at length in subsequent books, but his remarks show that he sees it as applying to *religiosi* as well. Other arguments are addressed to both groups, particularly the claim that what one does with one's property is the decisive criterion of one's fate after death. In any case, *Ad ecclesiam* is a unified work, designed to be read as a whole. Salvian's division does not mean that he intended each book to be read by different people, it simply shows which arguments he considered appropriate for secular Christians, and which for *religiosi*. Salvian embarks on his address to *saeculares* only after an introductory passage which deals with more fundamental issues. Its subject matter is very similar to *Ep.* 9, which, as we have seen, should be regarded as the preface to the work. The opening of *Ad ecclesiam* therefore provides a useful opportunity to survey many of Salvian's key ideas.

[3] See p. iii above for a reference summary of *E*.

[4] Listed by him (*Ep.* 9.11; *E* 2.14) as penitents, *conversi* (those informally living a religious life), monks, married couples who have vowed celibacy, widows, consecrated virgins, deacons, priests and bishops.

Avarice and the corruption of Christianity

To a large extent, the arguments which Salvian puts forward in his works are built around three contrasts: a contrast between what Christians owe to God and what they actually do for him, a contrast between the way that their religion requires Christians to behave towards each other and the way they actually behave, and a contrast between the past, when Christians fulfilled their duties to God and each other, and the present. All three contrasts represent a falling away by the actual church, the first two from the duties which remain incumbent on it, the third from its own past condition. In *Ad ecclesiam* these oppositions gain a particular character from the way in which Salvian links them to the issue of the treatment of property.

The first lapse by the church is introduced in the preface, when Salvian explains to Salonius why he wrote the work (*Ep.* 9.6-12). He begins by drawing a contrast between the way of life required of Christians by God, and their actual behaviour, starting with a general attack on people's lack of attention to God's commandments (6-7), especially the admonition 'Whoever loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me'. Sins are not purged by penitence; those who are called penitents possess merely the name, without the virtues which it signifies (9). Salvian characterises God as treating Christians with the indulgence of a *piissimus et mollissimus pater* (8).

This short passage introduces two key features of Salvian's account of contemporary Christianity, which in fact are more prominent in *De gubernatione dei* than *Ad ecclesiam*. The first is the contrast between name and reality. Again and again, Salvian attacks the idea that to be a Christian it is necessary merely to call oneself a Christian. No one, he insists, can be a Christian unless they live what he deems to be a truly Christian life.[5] The reference to

[5] In *G* this argument is constantly put forward in relation to Christianity and membership of the church (see especially 4.1-9); in *E* Salvian uses it more frequently in relation to *religiosi*.

the attitude of God also introduces an aspect of Salvian's writing that attains its full significance in *De gubernatione dei*, in which Salvian frequently portrays God using the imagery of an ideal human father. He insists that God treats human beings far more kindly than they deserve, using the claim to highlight the wickedness of those who disobey God in spite of his kindness, as an argument against those who believe that God's punishments of human beings are unjust, and as a contrast with the selfishness and brutality of those who exercise power in the human world.[6] The prominence given by Salvian to the Gospel requirement to love God more than one's son and daughter introduces a theme—the tension between ideal Christian practice and accepted social values about the family—which is one of the main areas of Salvian's attention in *Ad ecclesiam*.

Salvian connects avarice with the general sinfulness of the Christian community by making a contrast between two methods by which people can atone for their sins. One, penance, is hard, entailing abasement and mortification,[7] but there is a second which is much easier: alms-giving. The attraction of alms-giving as an accessible way to atone for sin is a major theme in the argument which Salvian addresses to secular Christians, but in the immediate context he uses it as a sign of the depths to which the church has fallen, since people reject even this easy route, and do so not only when they appear prosperous or secure, but when adversity or ill-health ought to make it urgent for them to purge their sins. Instead they leave their property to heirs, even ones who are not related to them. All this shows that they do not truly believe in God (10). The claim that failure of Christians to obey God demonstrates fundamental lack of faith is introduced in a rather casual way, but will later be developed into a central part of Salvian's argument. His reasoning is simple: God has

[6] These claims about God later form the basis of much of the criticism in *G* of those who possess power in human society. The best treatment of this theme in Salvian's writings is Lof 1975.

[7] The latter not stated explicitly here, but mentioned later (e.g. 1.47).

prescribed a certain way of life for Christians, and warned that if they do not follow it they will be destroyed. Therefore if they do not act as God has commanded, the inference must be that they do not believe in God or his commandments. The failure of Christians to give alms therefore discloses decay eating away at the church. The extent of the rot is shown by the fact that the failure affects not only secular Christians, but *religiosi* of all kinds, right up to bishops. Even though many of them have no children or families, they leave their property to the worldly or the rich, who are not even related to them, rather than to the poor or the church (10-11). This portrayal of avarice as an affliction affecting the entire Christian community (*Ep.* 9.6-12) is put forward to explain why *Ad ecclesiam* is addressed to the church.

The opening of Book 1 (1.1-6) adds further dimensions to Salvian's view of the church.[8] Most Christians are avaricious (1.1), they prefer to possess earthly wealth rather than to obtain salvation (1.6). In a contemptuous simile, he likens them to hawkers selling destruction (1.6). Alongside such violent invective against the present state of the church, however, is a lament for its past perfection:

> Abiit quippe illa egregia ac supereminens dudum primitivae plebis beatitudo, qua omnes Christum agnoscentes caducas rerum mundialium facultates in sempiternas caelestium possessionum opes conferebant ... (1.2)
>
> Ubi enim est illa nunc eximiae formae tuae et totius corporis pulchritudo? (1.5)

The *beatitudo* and *pulchritudo* of the early church were made manifest in the apostolic community at Jerusalem.[9] All members of the community gave up their property to share with their fellows; the community was one in heart and soul (1.5) and its members gained eternal riches through earthly poverty (1.2). Once again, consideration of the many references to early Christianity throughout Salvian's works, shows that this evocation of the

[8] On this passage, see Leonardi 1977, 562-4.

[9] Acts 4:32-5.

perfection of the early church is more than a piece of vivid imagery. For Salvian these events are historical facts, and as such they refute in advance any claim that, by setting the standards that he does, he is making impossible demands. The story of the Jerusalem community both shows what God wants a Christian community to be like, and proves that such a community can be achieved. But now, Christians possess this only as something to be read about (*lectionem tantum*), not as a way of life (1.5). The perfect community of the early church has been driven out by avarice and all the other sins which go with it (1.3).

Salvian is specific about the reason for the church's moral decline. The growth in the number of its members has been accompanied by growth in vice. As the people of the faith have increased, faith itself has diminished, and the world has been filled with people who possess the name of religion, but not the reality: *multiplicatis enim fidei populis fides imminuta est* (1.3-4). The contrast between name and reality, the claim that most members of the church are not real Christians, is always a preoccupation for Salvian. Such a claim has implications which are much more far-reaching than simply that the majority of Christians are sinful. Salvian, in effect, is trying to restrict the definition of a Christian to those who are not only members of the church, but who attempt to carry out all the commandments of the Bible. The claim is another version of that made in the preface (*Ep.* 9.10) that failure to practise Christian morality is tantamount to disbelief in Christianity.[10] In the meantime, it should be noted that the basis of his idea is that the key to fulfilling God's commands is knowledge. If one knows what they are, one must fulfil them; he does not allow any further complexities. If Christians do not fulfil them, this may be because they do not understand what being a Christian entails, but if not due to ignorance, their failure can only be the result of disbelief in God, or at least in the seriousness of his commandments. Before he begins his

[10] On the issues raised by this attitude, see below, pp. 282-3

main argument Salvian sums up the idea of Christianity which has been conveyed in these introductory passages, stating that since everyone wishes to enjoy the same outcome, eternal life, it is just that in order to achieve it they should all be bound by the same law, and demonstrate their faith *re atque actu*. In those who do not do so, there is a stupid (*stultissimum*) contradiction between their wishes and their actions (1.10): a characterisation which arises naturally from Salvian's belief in an uncomplicated relationship between knowing the demands of Christianity and acting on them.

The opening of *Ad ecclesiam*—the preface (as I would argue) and the opening passage of Book 1—amounts therefore to a microcosm of Salvian's view of the world, and of the nature of Christian society and its failings. He then moves on to the arguments with which he attempts to break his audience's attachment to property, a field in which the conflict between social practice and some of the precepts of Christianity was at its starkest. At this point there is a qualitative change in his style. He largely ceases to argue in general terms about the condition of the church—though returning to this theme from time to time—and instead concentrates on trying to convince his audience that their existing values are mistaken, and, in particular, that it is to their advantage to follow the course of action which he advocates.

The ideas expressed in *Ep*. 9 and the opening of Book 1 about the nature of the church, Christian society and the requirements placed on the individual believer are typical of Salvian's general statements on these themes in *Ad ecclesiam* and *De gubernatione dei*; they can be accepted as representing Salvian's own basic presuppositions about these issues. An obvious requirement of any interpretation of the rest of *Ad ecclesiam* is to relate its arguments to these presuppositions. Do they reflect them consistently, or does Salvian put forward ad hoc arguments which are not necessarily compatible with them? Are Salvian's

arguments directed at convincing his audience that they should fully adopt a way of life reflecting his own presuppositions, or is his goal less ambitious: simply to persuade people to be more generous in giving alms? The latter question is more pertinent than it might appear. *Ad ecclesiam* has a reputation for ferocious extremism,[11] and it is certainly remarkable for the vehemence of its language and its use of threatening imagery. Looked at in detail, however, one of the striking characteristics of Salvian's argumentation is its thematic narrowness, even within the confines of his chosen theme. Many issues typically addressed in Christian works about wealth and property are ignored, even when they would appear to be suited to Salvian's ideas. In addition, even on some of the key themes of *Ad ecclesiam*, Salvian shows a tendency to equivocate about the practical implications of his demands which sometimes belies his apparently uncompromising rhetoric.

Salvian himself divides the arguments of *Ad ecclesiam* into three parts, dealing with the duties of secular Christians, with those of *religiosi*, and with the issue of inheritance. The division of the work into books is guided by this scheme, though his arguments overlap this division. This division is potentially significant, since the differences in Salvian's expectations between secular and religious Christians ought to indicate the nature of his views about Christian society as a whole; whether, for example, he wished to impose ascetic values on the society in general. Inheritance is the area of social practice with which Salvian is most concerned in *Ad ecclesiam*. The following discussion therefore follows Salvian's own thematic division.

[11] The comment of Robert Markus, 'His four books *To the Church* are perhaps the most withering attack in Christian literature on the possession of riches, far more savage in its uncompromising demands than any Christian attack on sexuality' (Markus 1990, 169) can stand for the consensus of modern scholars. Cf. also Paschoud 1967, 294.

2) Salvian's Repertoire of Arguments

Introduction

Salvian stands in a tradition of writing about wealth, of interpreting and reinterpreting biblical statements on the subject, which went back at least as far as Clement of Alexandria in the second century.[1] This had always been marked by a tension between radical appeals for renunciation and attempts to incorporate the possessors of wealth into the Christian community and to devise rules for the legitimate use of wealth. This tension is symbolised by the contrast between the unconditional demand in the Gospels to sell all one has and give it to the poor, and the more accommodating advice to the rich of 1 Timothy.[2] The more lenient attitude towards wealth was stated at an early stage in the development of Christian thought by Clement of Alexandria in the work generally known as *Quis dives salvetur?* The commandment to sell all one has is treated by Clement allegorically, as a command to strip the soul of its passions, rather than to give up one's material possessions, which, Clement says, would make it impossible to give alms. While condemning greed, he argues that there is nothing wrong with possessing wealth if it has been inherited, or acquired before one's conversion to Christianity.[3]

The opposite extreme is represented by a work written in Salvian's own time, the anonymous Pelagian tract *De divitiis*.[4] By the time this was written there was a long tradition of argument about wealth, and the author shows himself to be well aware of the positions

[1] There are lengthy references to Christian discussions of wealth in Fischer 1976, 26ff. I have also used Hengel 1975; Ste. Croix 1975; Countryman 1980. The theme of poverty and alms-giving has now been brilliantly treated by Brown 2002, but this appeared too recently for me to take account of it in my text.

[2] Matt. 19:21; Mk 10:21; Lk 18:22. 1 Tim. 6:17-19. On 1 Timothy, see Chapter 2, Section 1

[3] Allegory: 4-5, 12, 15, 21; alms: 13-14; tolerated wealth: 26. On Clement see Countryman 1980, 50-61.

[4] It is believed to date from the first decade of the fifth century.

likely to be taken up by his opponents. He vigorously attacks allegorical interpretations of the New Testament, especially of the injunction to sell all one has (including the very one put forward by Clement), as well as other casuistic attempts to explain away the literal meaning of scriptural texts.[5] Much of the work is devoted to arguing that the equal distribution of natural phenomena like the rain and sun, and of the benefits of Christianity, baptism and the forgiveness of sins, shows the natural state of material goods, which has been overthrown by extortion, robbery and the abuse of power.[6] In the rare case where the possessor has not used these methods himself, his riches are the fruit of such activities in earlier generations.[7] The author attributes the existence of poverty directly to the unequal distribution of wealth:

> Tolle divitem et pauperem non invenies. Nemo plus quam necessarium est possideat, et, quantum necessarium est, omnes habebunt. Pauci enim divites pauperum sunt causa multorum. (12.1)

Clement and the anonymous Pelagian represent two extremes. The views on wealth of most early Christian writers are not so easy to define, having in many cases to be inferred from scattered comments which are not always consistent with each other.[8] The great majority of authors accept rich Christians as part of the church, while admonishing them to adopt an attitude of detachment towards their possessions,[9] and, most importantly, to be

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[5] *De div.* 9-10, 18. The author makes some telling points, especially against theologians who, normally insisting that the Old Testament should be interpreted allegorically and the New Testament literally, do the opposite when discussing passages about wealth (18). Some of the arguments which he attacks, however, are so weak and strained that they give the impression of being devised by the author simply to be demolished.

[6] *De div.* 6-8, 12, 17. *Quae enim alia praecipue divitiarum origo est, quam iniquitas et rapina?* (7.2).

[7] *De div.* 7. This argument has a long history, going back at least to Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 4.30.

[8] Fischer 1976, 26-7, citing the 'contradictory' *Epp.* 120.1 and 71.4 of Jerome. (The inconsistencies between these letters are not, in fact, very great; the more severe tone of *Ep.* 120 is conditioned by the fact that it was a written to a correspondent who wished to be 'perfect'.)

[9] Countryman 1980, 61, on Clement. In the pre-Constantinian church, people's ties to their property caused concern because they might encourage lapsing during persecution. See Cyprian, *De lapsis* 11; cf. Augustine, *Civ.* 1.10, on property-owners during the sack of Rome.

generous givers of alms.[10] Though Salvian is usually regarded as being at the radical end of the spectrum, he does not portray wealth as inherently evil in the manner of the author of *De divitiis*; he makes no reference to the origins of inequality in wealth, as was done not only by the anonymous Pelagian, but by such a mainstream figure as Ambrose.[11] He continually calls on people to give away their wealth, but never demands its immediate, total renunciation. Much of *Ad ecclesiam* is addressed by Salvian to *religiosi*, persons who had taken religious vows of some kind, whether or not they held a formal religious status. That such people were required to live their lives according to the most exacting standards, in relation to their treatment of wealth and property just as in areas such as sexuality, was a proposition that would have uncontroversial in the church of Salvian's time. The test case as regards Salvian's radicalism is not, therefore, his demands on these groups, but his treatment of *saeculares* in Book 1 and of the theme of inheritance (the specific subject of Book 3, but a major theme in all four books). It is in these sections of *Ad ecclesiam* that Salvian is making demands that must, implicitly, prescribe values and behaviour binding on all Christians, and in which his values interact with those accepted in society as a whole, rather than among his fellow religious devotees.

[10] Ste. Croix 1975, 25; Fischer 1976, 25ff.; Countryman 1980, 118-9; Brown 2002.

[11] *De off.* 1.132.

Saeculares

After the introductory passage discussed above (1.1-10), Book 1 of *Ad ecclesiam* is addressed to *saeculares*, ordinary Christians in secular life. Salvian addresses four arguments towards them: that there is no reason for them to hand on material goods to their children because these are not true goods (11-23); that human beings have a duty to use material things for God's purposes because they have received them from God (24-30); that failing to use their property in this way will ensure certain damnation (31-36); but that, on the other hand, giving away one's property in charity provides a final remedy for sinners who have not repented until they are on their deathbeds (37-63). All of these arguments are repeated in subsequent books, although the argument about charity as a final remedy is never repeated at length.

The opening of Salvian's argument on inheritance (1.11-14), is startlingly provocative. Those who believe that they must hand property on to their children, he claims, believe that it is impossible for anyone to love their children without increasing their wealth, and therefore that the essence of love is avarice and cupidity. If this is so, then family love (*pietas*) is the source of the love of money, and therefore a cause of evil (12):

> Si tam pestilens est pietas ac tam nocens, nec amare expediat nec amari, quia nec parentes amorem debent adpetere sibi noxium nec desiderare filii parentibus offuturum. (1.13)

Having shocked his audience with this conclusion, Salvian dismisses it. How can Christians be forbidden to love their children when they are told to love their enemies? (1.15) Instead he argues that those whom he has attacked have a mistaken idea of what love requires. The truly loving father does not leave wealth to his sons but the *mandata dei* (1.17): 'faith, fear of God, modesty, piety, discipline' (1.20). By educating their children in their duty to God, parents will store up treasure in heaven for themselves, and give their children a good which

is eternal, not transient like material goods (1.20-22). He then withdraws further from his original position, claiming that he does not wish totally to exclude children from their paternal property (1.23). Inheritance is not discussed at length until Book 3, but Salvian's argumentation in this opening passage, with its combination of provocative rhetoric and ultimate ambiguity about precisely what is demanded in practice, is typical of the way in which he treats the theme of inheritance from parents to children.[12]

Salvian insists that wealth is given by God only for the purpose of being used for good works (*opus sanctum, opera bona*). Those who use it in this way make the wealth that they enjoy eternal instead of transitory (1.29-30). If used correctly, wealth therefore provides a great opportunity. However, keeping wealth to the point of death without using it for divine purposes is bad, and piling it up without so using it is much worse (1.31-3). In other words, wealth is given to human beings *only* to be used for good works. If it is used for this, it also purchases eternal life for its possessor; if not, it ensures damnation. The Bible shows that to retain wealth until one's death is sufficient to ensure damnation, even if one is not guilty of any other sin (1.34-36).

> Non dicit diviti: torquendus es quia homicida es, torquendus es quia fornicator, sed torquendus tantummodo quia dives, hoc est quia divitiis male uteris, quia datas tibi ad opus sanctum divitias non intellegis. (1.35)

Most of Salvian's arguments rest on the propositions put forward here. God allows human beings to possess wealth so that they should use it in 'good works'. Failing to use it in this way ensures damnation, regardless of all other aspects of the individual's life and behaviour. The essential action in anyone's life is therefore to ensure, at some point before they die, that their wealth is used for this purpose.

Book 1 ends with a more positive argument for those involved in the secular world.

[12] His attitude towards other forms of inheritance is unambiguously hostile.

Salvian argues that using one's wealth for religious ends provides those who have reached the point of death with a final remedy (*ultimum remedium*) for their sins (1.38).[13] He begins from a fundamental text in Christian discussion of alms, 'Just as water extinguishes fire, so alms extinguish sin'.[14] One of the advantages of this citation is that it enables Salvian to play on the idea of fire by portraying alms as a way of extinguishing the fires of hell evoked in the previous passage (1.39),[15] and then to assert his own generosity in trying to turn what might ensure damnation into a way of avoiding it (1.39-40).[16] He immediately qualifies this promise. No one, he warns, should believe that they can escape the consequences of a sinful life by the act of giving away their property, unless it is accompanied by repentance (1.40-44). Charity is not a remedy for those who have wilfully persisted in sin to the point of death, but for those who have slipped into it through temporary foolishness or weakness, and wish to demonstrate their recovery (1.43-4). For those who have allowed their sins to continue until they are dying, Salvian states that he can offer nothing more than the observation that for those who are really at the point of death, and so are not in a position to undertake any form of penance, alms-giving is the only course that offers even the possibility of atonement (1.47). They cannot be certain that giving up their wealth will be effective, but if they do not do so they have no hope at all (1.47-52). Dealing with those who might wonder whether it is really necessary to give up *all* their property, he declares sarcastically that they should not give it up if they have calculated all their sins and worked out that they are not sufficient for this to be necessary. But if they do not know how much is necessary, how can they limit

[13] On this theme, see Fischer 1976, 32; Nodes 1988.

[14] Sirach 3:33.

[15] The reference to fire in the original does not have this implication. Salvian was not alone in implying that it did, however: see, for example, Maximus of Turin, *Serm*. 22.

[16] *Ego ex his, quae dicit ille* [James 5:1ff.] *mortem aeternam omnibus facere, vitam opto perpetuam conparare* (1.40).

what they give? In fact one's sins are incommensurable, and even giving away everything cannot bring about their forgiveness, only demonstrate the desire of the dying sinner to obtain it (1.55-61).

This concludes Salvian's attempt to win over those whom he later calls 'lovers of the world' (3.1). At first sight, it does not contain very much to attract them to his point of view. He begins by arguing that people should not consider the material interests of their children in disposing of their property. This was an ideal of behaviour radically at odds with the actual values and practice of society. However, Salvian's only argument against these values is that true good is obtained from piety, not from material possessions. This was little more than a platitude—not even a specifically Christian one—which could be endorsed in principle by anyone without causing them to change their behaviour. Salvian's claims for deathbed charity as an *ultimum remedium* for sin appears to offer more of an incentive, but it is severely qualified. Salvian appears to be afraid of giving the impression that alms-giving is a guarantee of salvation, a way of purchasing, rather than earning it. Given the ubiquitous stress on alms-giving as a remedy for sin in Christian preaching and literature, this was inevitably a matter of concern for those who dealt with the issue.[17] All writers insisted that alms-giving was effective only if accompanied by genuine repentance; Salvian's stress on this is to be expected. However, the great emphasis that he places on the uncertain efficacy of even sincere deathbed repentance is surprising in a discourse which professes to win over its audience to precisely such a course of action.[18]

Salvian's argument in Book 1 (and throughout *Ad ecclesiam*) is filled with

[17] A generalization that holds good however much their views diverged on other matters: see, for example, Augustine, *Enchiridion* 70-77; Pelagius, *Vita Chr.* 12.

[18] For all its reservations, his stance is more liberal than that of at least one of his contemporaries, who denied that repentance in extremis could ever be effective (Faustus of Riez, *Ep.* 5). Faustus' opinion does not appear to have been representative, and it was later explicitly rejected by Avitus of Vienne, *Ep.* 4. For a full discussion of Gallic attitudes towards penitence in extremis, see Fischer 1976, 32; on penitence in general Beck 1950, 187-222.

admonitions for people to use their wealth for *opera bona*, *misericordia, officium dei, cultus dei* and similar terms,[19] and with warnings about the wickedness of keeping wealth.[20] These have not infrequently been interpreted as a demand that everyone should immediately give up everything they own, and for the total reshaping of society which this would imply,[21] but the strict implications of his demands do not amount to this. When one takes account of the numerous reservations which Salvian himself makes (usually without rhetorical emphasis), his failure to define the *sufficientia* to which he frequently alludes as the permissible amount of property for a Christian to possess, and his ultimate concession of the principle that parents may leave property to their children, *Ad ecclesiam* can be read as advocating little more than the conventional demand that its audience should give alms as generously as possible.[22]

Alms-giving has been described as the 'compromise' between the demands of parts of the New Testament, and the actual presence of wealthy people within the church, which allowed Christian communities to maintain themselves.[23] From early times authors use an array of arguments in favour of alms-giving, from which almost all of Salvian's are drawn. The foremost of these, which went back to the Old Testament and its Apocrypha,[24] are that

[19] 1.9, 23-5, 28-30, 33.

[20] 1.8, 1.32-3, 36.

[21] E.g. Paschoud 1967, 294-5: 'On reste étonné par la violence sans concessions de ce réquisitoire ... Il a une manière de raisonner dans l'abstrait et l'absolu, caractéristique du moine enfermé dans sa cellule et retranché de la masse des chrétiens laiques aux prises avec les exigences de siècle et exposés à d'inéviables compromissions. L'idéal communautaire qu'il prêche est réalisable dans de petits groupes d'enthousiastes pour un temps limité; lui voudrait l'imposer à tout le clergé, sinon à tout les fidèles.'

[22] Thus, *E* is compatible (as *De divitiis* is not) with the generalisation of Ste. Croix: 'All the orthodox writers seem to have no serious qualms in accepting that a Christian may own property under certain conditions ... that he ought not to possess a superfluity but only a sufficiency; and that what he does have he may use but must not abuse: he must hold it as a kind of trustee ... for the poor, to whom he must give charity.' (Ste. Croix 1975, 25). He notes that a sufficiency is hardly ever defined (28).

[23] Fischer 1976, 25; Hengel 1975, 58.

[24] Proverbs 19:17; Sirach 3:30.

alms-giving extinguishes sin,[25] and that it turns transient earthly goods into 'treasure in heaven'.[26] The former is the foundation of Salvian's argument in Book 1, where disposal of one's property in alms is presented as an *ultimum remedium*, and the latter is also prominent throughout *Ad ecclesiam.* Prototypes of Salvian's other arguments can also be found easily in the literature of earlier generations: the idea, for example, that property is not owned but held in trust, and so must be used for the benefit of the poor, is put forward by both Clement and Augustine.[27] The difference between Salvian's approach in *Ad ecclesiam* and that of more typical Christian writers is primarily one of tone, and of the type of argument which he uses to support his demands, rather than in the demands themselves.[28]

This can be illustrated by comparing Salvian's argument with that of Cyprian in his *De opera et eleemosynis*.[29] Much of this tract foreshadows *Ad ecclesiam* in attempting to resolve conflicts between the demand to give alms and people's perception of their own and their families' interests by providing positive incentives for charitable giving. Cyprian puts forward the following arguments, all used by Salvian: that it is necessary to carry out good works to demonstrate one's belief in God, that one should pass on piety to one's children rather than an inheritance of property, and that giving to the poor is equivalent to giving to

[25] From many examples: Cyprian, *De lapsis* 35; *De op.* 1-6; Ambrose, *De Helia et ieiunio* 76; *Ep.* 63.92. See Ste. Croix 1975, 27; Fischer 1976, 30.

[26] Clement, *Quis dives* 32; Tertullian, *Ad martyras* 2.6; Ambrose *In Luc.* 8.13.

[27] Clement, *Paedagogus* 3.6; Augustine *Ep.* 153.6, *Enarr. in Ps.* 147.12.

[28] The conventionality of *E*'s theme in Christian discourse makes it entirely unnecessary to suggest that the work is a response to worsening social conditions in the fifth century (as does Fischer 1976, 24, 28).

[29] It is not clear whether Salvian was familiar with *De opere et eleemosynis*. There is no evidence of direct textual influence, but Cyprian's works would have well-known and readily accessible to someone in his milieu. (Salvian demonstrably knew at least one work by Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum*, from which he borrowed the argument of *G* 3.28.)

Christ.[30] But while Salvian presents obtaining forgiveness through charity as a doubtfully efficacious method for those who are not in a position to do anything else, Cyprian begins by arguing that it is inevitable that Christians will commit sins after baptism, and acclaims alms-giving as the means of redeeming them.[31] While, like Salvian, Cyprian warns that nobody should put their children before God,[32] he does not just tell such people that they are misguided, but tries to defuse their worries, by insisting that if they give generously, God will look favourably on them and will protect their children's interests and safety.[33] Cyprian therefore engages with the reservations of his audience, and attempts to show that the course of action he advocates is not entirely at variance with their existing values and goals, in a far more direct manner than Salvian. To an extent, Salvian's advocacy of charity as an *ultimum remedium* represents the adoption of such a strategy, but even here his desire not to make concessions to his audience is apparent. The same desire may well lie behind his failure to turn his bald statements about the necessity to use wealth for 'good works' into an argument in favour of alms-giving in everyday life, the absence of which is perhaps the most unusual feature of his text. There are possible reasons for this stance (which will be discussed below), but nonetheless, Book 1 appears more successful as an exposition of the inadequacies which Salvian sees in the attitude of secular Christians than as a piece of persuasion to make them change their ways.

[30] Respectively 8, 16-20, 23. Cyprian also argues from the universality of gifts like the sun and rain (26) and insists that God will ensure that his followers have enough, regardless of how much they give (9-15). He resembles Salvian in paying minimal attention to those to whom the money is ultimately given. On Cyprian in general see Countryman 1980, 185-98.

[31] *De opera et eleemosynis* 2-4.

[32] Ibid. 16.

[33] Ibid. 9-11, 17-19.

Religiosi

Book 2 is addressed to clerics, monks, lay ascetics, virgins and widows: those whom Salvian calls *religiosi* or *sancti*.[34] Two main goals are evident in the arguments put forward in this book. The first is to demolish any idea that adopting a life of religious devotion exempts one from the need to use one's wealth in charity. In pursuit of this Salvian argues that *sancti* must give away their property to repay God for the benefits which they have received (2.3-13), that the necessity for them to do so is prescribed by the Bible (2.14-24), that by their adoption of a religious life they have already implicitly committed themselves to such a course of action (2.42-3), and that one's age, one's sex (for women), or the state of one's health, do not provide any justification for possessing wealth beyond what is strictly necessary for one's needs (2.60-65).

The attitude expressed here by Salvian to *religiosi* who keep their property is not a simple accusation of hypocrisy. He implies rather that they may be sincere, but that their possession of property prevents their religious devotion from being effective. The contrast he draws between them and those who live *non sanctitate tantum sed etiam paupertate* (2.13), and some of his statements in a subsequent address to different groups of *religiosi* (2.25-43), show that he does not necessarily dispute the sincerity of their desire to lead a religious life. But he implies that their actions are vitiated as religious acts if property is still held, to the point that such *religiosi* become no different from *saeculares*, their fate to be determined solely by how they dispose of their possessions.

Salvian's second tactic is to argue that retention of wealth cancels out all efforts to live a religious life, even if the criteria of such a life are fulfilled in all other respects. After a passage warning against any attempt to use the Old Testament to justify the possession of

[34] Fischer 1976, 86-7, surveys Salvian's usage of these terms, and concludes that he employs them interchangeably.

wealth (2.15-21), Salvian addresses in turn each of the different categories of religious (2.25-43: widows, celibate couples, virgins, and clerics. He builds his address to each group (except married couples) around a passage from the Bible (2.15). For widows, he cites the admonition from 1 Timothy that true widowhood consists of devotion of oneself and one's resources to God (2.25-7).[35] Celibate married couples will find that their renunciation has been useless if they leave their wealth to enrich a secular heir, rather than dispersing it in charity. This will cancel out everything they have achieved through their renunciation; they will seem to have owed their allegiance not to God, but to the one (a *saecularis*, a sinner) to whose benefit they have died (2.28-9). The passage addressed to virgins (2.30-36) is based around the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. Virgins who think it is sufficient to give only a little of their wealth should be warned by the example of the virgins in the parable whose lamps went out because they had too little oil (2.31). Salvian argues from this that it is not enough for religious people to limit themselves to a single expression of piety, such as virginity. If they do, their lamps will fail (2.34-5).

In the case of clerics (2.37-41), the emphasis is placed on their high status, and the duties which that status requires of them. As priests they are the teachers of the community, and their life should be perfect so that others can learn perfection from them. Salvian concludes this part of his argument by claiming that many of those who have professed religion radically misinterpret the nature of their profession. They believe that having made it, their debt to God is diminished or cancelled, when in fact it is increased (2.42). They owe more because by professing religion they have shown that they know the will of God. This deprives them of the excuse of ignorance, while their commitment to religion implies a promise to obey the will which they have shown that they know (2.43). This final point sums

[35] 1 Tim. 5:5-6. This does not mention property, and Salvian has to make a rather tenuous argument to connect it with the theme (the passage says that pleasure-loving widows are dead while they still live; Salvian argues that since wealth is the means of obtaining pleasures, this means that they should not possess wealth).

up the message that Salvian has addressed to all groups of *religiosi*. It is an extension of that which he addresses to Christians in general, especially in *De gubernatione dei.* In the case of ordinary Christians he struggles against the idea that it is sufficient simply to be a member of the church, without attempting to govern one's life according to the *mandata dei*; with *religiosi* he directs his argument at those who believe it is sufficient to follow one form of religious devotion (sexual renunciation in most of the cases cited here) without attempting to live in absolute obedience to Christian moral precepts in other fields.

In the latter part of the book (2.44-59), Salvian develops his argument about the consequences for the individual of their knowledge of God's will in a particularly aggressive way. He begins from the proposition that those who become *religiosi* must have a strong sense of the pettiness of their present lives compared to the eternal joy or punishment to come. Possession of wealth being a known route to damnation, those who practice it can therefore be inferred not really to believe in God, or at least not to take his commandments seriously. They are hypocrites dissimulating religion. This is a development of a point already emphasized in Book 1: the decisive nature of one's use of wealth in determining one's fate after death. It is extended further at the end of Book 2 (2.66-73), in an address to the rich (apparently the rich in general, not just *religiosi*), calling on them to give up their wealth in their own interest. Far from arguing that it is wrong for them to govern their lives by self-interest, Salvian treats this as entirely legitimate, but argues that they are mistaken in their judgement of what their interests are. They think they are serving their interests by building up wealth; Salvian tries to convey to them that if his premises are correct, then their very sense of their own interests should make them give it away.

Book 4 partially recapitulates the arguments of Book 2. Again much of the argumentation is directed at removing excuses for retaining wealth. Salvian repeats his

arguments about the debt which is owed to God (4.16-23), and the greater duty of charity owed by those who have devoted themselves to religion (4.28-36), while putting forward new arguments against claims that the previous acts of a person's life matter more than what they do with their property at death (4.2-11), or that people leave property because of their love for their heirs, not out of contempt for God (4.12-15). As in earlier books, passages are devoted to arguing that those who retain their property do not believe in God or in the reality of post mortem judgement (4.24-7, 37-9). Salvian ends the book by citing the actions of true *sancti*, who, far from clinging on to their property, give it away as the very first step of a religious life (4.40-46), and emphasizing again that the demands he makes are merely God's commandments (4.47-50).

Inheritance

On inheritance in general, Salvian takes up one position that is absolutely unequivocal: leaving property to heirs from outside one's family is unforgivable and results in certain damnation (3.9-17, 58-95). His discussion of this is lengthy, but the central point is made with complete clarity. This is not so with his comments on those who leave their property to their own children.

Salvian first treats the theme in Book 1 (1.11-23). He points out that one of the main defences of Christians who acquire wealth is that they are doing so for the sake of their children, and responds with a rhetorical shock tactic, claiming that if this is the case then the love between parents and children is evil and should be renounced (1.12-14).[36] After admitting that he does not, in fact, believe this (1.15-16), he argues that the true fault of parents is that they have a misguided idea of what parental love consists of: not passing on wealth which is not a true good, but bringing up their children to be pious and virtuous (1.16-22). So far, therefore, he appears to argue that parents should dispose of all their property, and not set aside any to make provision for their children. However, at the conclusion of this passage, Salvian declares that he does not wish to exclude children from their parents property, but that he will discuss this later (1.23). He then moves on to other topics, and the theme is not resumed until Book 3.

Salvian begins his argument here (3.6-9) by referring back to his discussion in Book 1, and then, once again, takes up an apparently uncompromising position, citing Jesus' words, 'Whoever loves their son and daughter more than me is not worthy of me',[37] and warning that leaving wealthy sons will be of no benefit to their father when he faces

[36] The passage gains its effect from the fact that Salvian puts it forward as if he was entirely serious, and not, as is often the case, with obvious exaggeration or sarcasm.

[37] Matt. 10:37, already used by Salvian at *Ep.* 9.6.

judgement (3.6). Salvian begins the passage that follows (3.7) by stating that it can be forgiven if parents leave some (*ex parte aliqua*) of their property to their children, as long as those children are *boni* and *sancti*. He then (apparently) makes the further concession that it is forgivable for them to do so even if their children are *mali* and *vitiosi*, saying that such parents have the 'appearance' of an excuse (*aliquam excusationis speciem*). This is followed by a passage in direct speech (almost invariably, in Salvian's writing, a sign that he is being sarcastic), purporting to be such a parent speaking in defence of his actions. The imaginary parent admits that his action contradicts *iustitia dei, sacra veritas, fides* and *devotio religionis*. However, he defends himself on the grounds that:

> Pietas vicit, vis sanguinis conpulit, natura ipsa quasi amoris manu in ius suum traxit ... subacti, fatemur, sumus iugo incarnatae necessitudinis et dedimus captivas manus vinculis caritatis; cessit sanguini fides et vicerunt devotionem religionis iura pietatis. (3.7)

At first sight this passage appears tortuous, but it becomes less so when the beginning is seen from the perspective of the end.[38] Salvian makes a series of ostensible concessions (couched in slippery and ambiguous language) only to throw them back on those who might have taken them seriously in a passage of sarcastic derision, which returns to the most rebarbative language of Book 1, implying that *pietas*, *amor* and *caritas* are the enemies of religious piety. This is confirmed when Salvian comments on the imaginary speech in his own voice:[39]

> Dici aliquid potest, tametsi salubriter dici non potest. Est umbra excusatiunculae non excusans, dans reo deprecatiunculae speciem, non reatus securitatem. Nequaquam enim id ulli spondeo quod possit cuiuslibet rei firmum habere subsidium qui aliquid plus amaverit quam deum ... Nemini enim dubium est totum id tenebras futurum homini, quidquid divinae praetulerit caritati. (3.8)

The passage has therefore come back to its beginning, 'Whoever loves their son and daughter more than me is not worthy of me', this time uttered emphatically and in Salvian's own

[38] For alternative commentary on this passage see Fischer 1976, 62, 66; Badewien 1980, 65, n. 68.

[39] Which remains sarcastic: note the diminutives *excusatiunculae, deprecatiunculae*.

voice. Having reached this conclusion, Salvian appears to reverse his position again, and renew the promise of a more unrestricted concession: *Sed esto, ut dixi, indulgeri parentibus possit naturae insalubriter indulgentibus* (3.9). However, this apparent concession is made only to stress the wickedness of those denounced in the argument which he begins in the very next sentence, and pursues in the succeeding chapters (3.9-17), in which he attacks people without children who leave their property to heirs chosen from outside their families. The implication is not that it is justified for people to leave property to their children, but simply that they have more claim to be forgiven because they are under more pressure, from nature and their own emotions, than those who freely choose to adopt an heir.

Salvian therefore seems to have adopted a starkly hostile position towards the transmission of property from parents to children. This appears to be confirmed when he subsequently insists on the conflict between the interests of the Christian who possesses property and those of their children.[40] Yet at this point he reasserts the more liberal position which he had adopted in 1.23 and flirted with in 3.6, and states that leaving property to one's children, and even to other relatives, *is* legitimate:

> Itaque optimum est ut unusquisque sibi consulat et animae ac saluti suae omnia derelinquat, sint quamvis interdum non filii tantum, quibus videtur naturaliter plus deberi, sed etiam pignora alia eius vel meriti vel condicionis ut eis ad inpertiendum quiddam ac largiendum iustitia ipsa ac dei cultus patrocinetur. (3.18)

Yet while in passages like this one, Salvian concedes that in certain circumstances inheritance from parents to children can be legitimate, this stance coexists with passages in which he continues to praise the total dispersion of property, regardless of children, as the most Christian treatment of wealth (e.g. 3.43), and to insist repeatedly that concern for the interests of one's children is a misguided attitude, which turns people away from what should

[40] *Facilius est hic deesse filiis quippiam quam parentibus in futuro, et multo levior praesens tenuitas quam aeterna paupertas* (3.17).

be the true object of their concern, their own souls. Later in Book 3, Salvian uses two exempla from the New Testament to reinforce the message that concern for their children is a trap which prevents parents from taking the actions necessary for their own salvation. The first, returning to a theme from the opening of Book 1, is that of the early days of the Church at Jerusalem, when thousands of people gave up their property (3.40-44).[41] Salvian points out that many of them must have had children. While the description of the Jerusalem community serves as an evocation of the perfection of the early Church, its role here, as Salvian states, is to show that if so many Christians were once able to give away their wealth, it is just as possible for those Salvian addresses. This message is reinforced by the second exemplum, the rich man in the parable, burning in hell,[42] who must have greatly enriched his heirs, but this was useless to him in his torment. Salvian draws out his account of the man's plight at great length (3.46-54), and with much lurid description of his torments.

One can ultimately derive some kind of conclusion from Salvian's statements. Most of them have the clear implication that parents should disperse their property in charity without undue regard to their children's material interests (3.7, cf. 3.45). On the other hand, he does appear to concede that it is legitimate for them to preserve a portion for children and other relatives (2.23; 3.18-19).[43] This should be done, however, on grounds analogous to those on which they would give charity in any circumstances, even to those unrelated to them, discriminating between the deserving and the undeserving, and it should not be excessive.[44] (Of course, he never defines how much he regards as sufficient and how much as excessive.) If one wishes to emphasize these concessions, Salvian can be portrayed as

[41] Acts 2:44 and 4:32-5.

[42] Luke 16:19-31.

[43] More questionably 3.7.

[44] For example, *quiddam de patrimonio* (3.17), *relicta inmoderate filiis facultas* (3.45).

relatively tolerant of the transmission of property within families. This seems to be the conclusion of Fischer, who highlights the exclusion of children from those to whom property may not be left at all (1.23) and the instruction to leave a share of property to relatives who are poor (3.17-21). He even interprets the concessions of 3.6 as amounting to full approval for the leaving of property to children (an interpretation which seems to me quite untenable).[45]

In spite of Salvian's concessions, the general implication of his rhetoric throughout *Ad ecclesiam* is that the amount of property left should be minimal, and that it is better to leave too little than too much. One of the reasons for Fischer's assessment of Salvian as relatively moderate is the observation that a stronger interpretation of his demands would have him advocating a degree of disinheritance which would have been legally invalid.[46] It is doubtful whether such considerations are relevant to a text like *Ad ecclesiam*, which is an attempt to change people's values and priorities, not a set of instructions. Salvian is trying to change his audience's way of thinking about inheritance, from the accepted idea that wealth should be passed on to the next generation of the family, and used for other purposes only in so far as this permits, to the view that it should be used for *opera sancta,* and that the material interests of family members should be taken into account only in so far as they can be reconciled with this. From this point of view, giving a clear definition of the amount of wealth that could legitimately be handed on was counter-productive. It would detract from the unrelenting tone that is itself an effective part of Salvian's argument, and by, allowing the audience to calculate what might be permissible, would reopen a route for the

[45] Fischer 1976, 62, 66.

[46] Fischer 1976, 62. Close relatives, especially children, of a testator could contest a will if they felt they had not received their fair share. In addition there were specific enactments relating to the Church, like *CTh* 16.2.27 (390), which prohibited a widow from leaving property to a church, a cleric or the poor, at the expense of her children. *CTh* 5.3.1 gave churches the right to inherit from an intestate bishop, priest or monk, but only if he had no widow or relatives. For discussion of legal regulations on inheritance, see Arjava 1996, 148-55.

complacency and self-justification which he is attacking.

For all their contradictions, Salvian's arguments are clear enough to show that they imply somewhat greater demands than those of most Christian writers, for whom the consensus, at least in the Latin world, seems to have been that the testator should leave an amount of property for alms equivalent to the share that would have been given to a son.[47]

Some of Salvian's arguments have an ascetic colouring, especially the insistence that children are better off receiving a pious and disciplined upbringing from their parents than material goods (1.11-22; 3.56). This principle served not only to convince others, but to defend the dispersal of family property by ascetics who had children themselves, which doubtless appeared unfair in the eyes of those, including (most?) Christians, whose values were more conventional.[48] We must presume that Salvian dispersed whatever property he had, and left only a moral inheritance to his daughter Auspiciola. The writer of the anonymous Pelagian letter 'Honorificentiae tuae'—almost certainly the author of *De divitiis*—puts forward arguments almost identical to Salvian in relation to his own daughter.[49]

The thrust of his attacks on inheritance is to undermine the claims of those he condemns to be good Christians, or Christians at all, even if they believe they are. This is a characteristic tactic in Salvian's rhetoric, and in *Ad ecclesiam* is especially prominent in passages addressed to *religiosi*. Salvian will pick on a form of behaviour which people believe is legitimate or has a legitimate excuse and will attack its claim to legitimacy. Having done so, he will claim that such behaviour 'really' shows that those who carry it out are not

[47] Jerome, *Ep.* 120.1; Augustine., *Enarr. in Ps.* 38.7, *Serm.* 86. Cf. Fischer 1976, 64-5; Lesne 1910, 28.

[48] See Prudentius, *Peristephanon* 2.73-80, where such sentiments are portrayed as fit for a pagan proconsul.

[49] 'Honorificentiae tuae', 5-6.

genuine Christians. The strength of this argument obviously varies greatly with its context, according to the form of behaviour which is being attacked. As part of Salvian's argument about inheritance, it coheres with his general unwillingness to permit his audience to take any comfort in customary secular attitudes towards it. It is probably this which is the reason for his lack of clarity about the extent to which it is permissible to leave property to one's family. The passages discussed above suggest that he was willing, or felt obliged, to tolerate a certain level of inheritance between parents and children. But his concessions slip out amid much rhetoric which gives the opposite impression.

3) *Saeculares* and *Sancti*

The assumption that a religious life entailed the renunciation of property can be found throughout the religious literature of the period. The most celebrated instances of renunciation were those of the very rich, like Paulinus of Nola or Melania the Younger. Paulinus' renunciation of his wealth is celebrated in a host of sources, and he is the only contemporary individual to be praised by Salvian himself (*G* 7.14). There are complexities in this pairing of renunciation with religion, however. We have seen that Salvian condemns the attachment to property of self-professed *religiosi* (2.23-41). In the case of groups like virgins, widows and celibate couples, we can see that they would often have been living within the secular world rather than in separate communities, and their reluctance to renounce their possessions would have been due to a simple desire for individual security. The issue became more complex and contentious when it involved clerics. As we have seen, Salvian believed that avarice in priests and bishops was particularly deplorable, as their status and duty of teaching imposed on them an even greater requirement of perfection than on others. However, property renunciation by priests and other clerics was by no means universal, and this fact underlies his denunciations.

Priests were legally obliged to give up most or all of their taxable property (i.e. land) on ordination, if they were to be free of taxation and curial duties.[1] It unclear how universally this was observed in practice, although it must have been generally obeyed by *curiales*, whose colleagues would have had a vested interest in ensuring that the law was obeyed. However, the fact that the church gained the right to inherit the estates of intestate clergy with no relations shows that clerics continued to hold property.[2] The *Statuta ecclesiae*

[1] *CTh* 12.1.49, 59, 99, 104, 115, 121, 123; 16.2.17, 19 (dating from 361-91). The frequent amnesties for past breaches in the laws show that they were laxly enforced (Jones 1964, 926).

[2] *CTh* 5.3.1 (434).

antiqua and the letters of Sidonius, both dating from about a generation after *Ad ecclesiam*, treat possession of land by clerics as routine.[3] Ascetically-inclined bishops, like Augustine or Hilary of Arles, might organise their clergy into a monastic community, but this was not the norm. In the West the usual practice seems to have been for priests to be paid from a share of the revenues of their church.[4] For clergy in city churches at least, this usually seems to have provided a comfortable income.[5] Priests and deacons were forbidden from spending time on other work, but this was permitted to clerics in minor orders.[6] It is clear that those who had no land might earn a living by pursuing part-time secular careers, even as businessmen. Some of Sidonius' letters mention a lector named Amantius who was also a *negotiator*. He traded (ironically enough) at Marseille, where he used deception to trick a wealthy widow into allowing him to marry her daughter.[7]

The proportions of church income reserved for bishops were high.[8] It was not intended that the money that passed through their hands should simply be appropriated for their own uses. By the division sanctioned by the council of Orléans, the money allocated to the bishop would have had to be used for all expenses of his church except maintaining the clergy. But the bishop was free to decide for himself how much he kept for his own use.

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[3] *Stat. ecc. ant.* 29, *Clericus victum et vestimentum sibi artificiolo vel agricultura absque officii sui dumtaxat detrimento praeparet*; Sidonius *Epp.* 5.1, 7.15. The former shows a deacon not merely seeking to inherit an estate from an intestate relative, but contemplating suing for it in a secular court, an act that would have horrified Augustine as much as Salvian (see e.g. *De doct.* 4.18.36). For all this see Harries 1994, 214-20.

[4] At Rome in the fifth century the clergy shared a quarter of the church's income (the rest going equally to the bishop, building maintenance, and charity): Gelasius, *Epp.* 14.27, 15.16. The earliest evidence from Gaul is from the first council of Orleans (511), 14, which gave the clergy half the income from offerings, with the other half, and all income from estates, was administered by the bishop. See Jones 1960, 346ff.; 1964, 902.

[5] Jones 1964, 907-8, sees this manifested in an increase in the number of references to simony from the mid-fifth century onwards.

[6] Second Council of Arles, 14; *Nov. Val.* 35 (452). The Council of Turin (461), 13, explicitly permitted clerics, presumably in minor orders, to support themselves through business by any means except usury; *Stat. ecc. ant.* 45 instructed clerics to practice a trade or to teach.

[7] Sidonius, *Epp.* 6.8; 7.2, 7, 10; 9.4 On Amantius, see Whittaker 1983, 169.

[8] See n. 4.

It should occasion no surprise that every single biography of a bishop from fifth-century Gaul portrays its subject as living a life of total austerity. At the other extreme, we have the vigorous attacks of Sulpicius Severus on the Gallic bishops of his time for their addiction to wealth and grandeur.[9]

This was clearly a matter on which ideal and reality differed considerably: from literature not written with the purpose of idealising the church we can see that many clerics owned property or were involved in secular business. In religious works with an ascetic bias, however, the renunciation of property is taken for granted. If a cleric is shown possessing property it is held to be a sign of his unworthiness, as in the portrayal by Sulpicius of Martin's enemy Brictius.[10] There is no reason to doubt that there were bishops and priests who deserved such strictures; but equally bishops could be thoroughly conscientious in carrying out their duties, but retain enough of their income to live in comfort, and be perceived by themselves and their congregations merely to be acting in accordance with their position. By Salvian's standards they were slaves to avarice.

Condemnation of property-owning clergy went back generations before Salvian. His assertion that avarice was rampant among priests and bishops was anticipated as early as Cyprian.[11] Jerome had satirised legacy and gift hunting clerics at Rome; the latter problem was perceived to be real enough for priests and monks to be banned from receiving legacies.[12] Salvian's insistence that clerics have a greater responsibility than any other group

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[9] Condemnation of avaricious bishops: *Chronicle* 1.23, 2.51. There is more criticism of bishops for pride and worldliness in *V. Mart.* 9; *Dial.* 1.2, 1.21, 1.24.

[10] Sulpicius, *Dial.* 3.15.

[11] Salvian, *Ep.* 9.11. Cyprian, *De lapsis* 6-7. In Cyprian's time there were no secular laws governing clerics. The involvement in business activities condemned by Cyprian may simply be a sign of the much greater necessity in the poorer and less secure church before Constantine for priests, and even bishops, to earn their living in the secular world.

[12] *Epp.* 52.5-6; 22.16. The laws forbidding clerics from receiving legacies from widows and deaconesses are *CTh* 16.2.20 (370), 27 (390).

to fulfil his precepts is consistent with his general ideas about moral hierarchy.[13] The same principle applies to his views of *religiosi* in general; by committing themselves to a life of religion they have professed themselves to know God's will and to be willing to follow it (2.42-3). Hence to fulfil their commitment they must carry out all Salvian's commands, or rather, as he presents it, God's commands.

Most of *Ad ecclesiam* is directed at *religiosi* and *sancti*: Salvian uses these words to designate not only priests and monks, but widows, consecrated virgins and couples vowed to celibacy (*Ep.* 9.11, *E* 2.14). He clearly means to include all those who have singled themselves out from the ordinary members of the church by the extent to which they wished to devote themselves to religious goals, probably by joining an organised group or taking a formal public vow. All his groups, with the partial exception of clerics, are defined by sexual renunciation.[14]

It is clear that the division of Christians into *saeculares* and *sancti* is fundamental in *Ad ecclesiam*. Fischer concludes his examination of the two classes with the judgement that Salvian shares the radical perspective of the author of *De divitii*s, and identifies the distinction between *saeculares* and *sancti* with that between sinners and what Fischer terms 'perfect Christians'.[15] This seems to me to partially oversimplify Salvian's usage. He certainly uses language that confounds the distinction between 'secular' and 'sinful'. The part of Book 1 addressed to those who arrive at their deathbed loaded with sins is said later

[13] Salvian's language at *Ep.* 9.11 and *E* 2.38-41 shows that he is thinking of the higher clerical ranks: *levitae* (deacons), *presbyteri*, *sacerdotes* and *episcopi*, which denote deacons, priests and bishops (at 2.39 he uses the vaguer term *clericos*).

[14] There is evidence from fifth-century Gaul for formal categories of *religiosi*. The Council of Orange (441), 26 (27), refers to an order of widows, joined by assuming a *vestis vidualis*; canon 27 (28) condemns *desertores professae castitatis*. Second Council of Arles, 25, excommunicates those who desert a *professio religionis.* Sidonius refers to three 'orders', of monks, clerics and penitents (*Ep.* 4.24.3). On *sancti* as a category, see Fischer 1976, 78ff.

[15] Fischer 1976, 88; 'vollkommene Christen'.

to be aimed specifically at *saeculares*, those who 'love the world' (3.1). At one point he brackets *mundiales* with pagans (4.2). The claim that the church has declined as it has grown is also an implicit condemnation (1.4). However, if there is a presumption that the secular are bad, there is not necessarily a corresponding assumption that the religious are good. While he puts forward the renunciation of all one's property, beyond an undefined *sufficientia*, as the qualification of living a religious life effectively, Salvian also insists that this qualification is not fulfilled by many of those who claim to live such a life. In effect, he wishes to make the renunciation of property as much part of the definition of the *religiosus* as celibacy.

Though the greatest duty of all rests on priests and bishops, the status of *religiosus* imposes on those who embrace it a greater commitment to *misericordia* than exists for secular Christians: *Professio itaque religionis non aufert debitum sed auget, quia adsumptio religiosi nominis sponsio est devotionis* (2.43). Salvian has argued that the duty to use one's wealth for *misericordia* is absolute even for those in the secular world. He therefore sees the obligations of the two classes of Christian as identical, but the *religiosi* as incurring greater guilt if they do not fulfil them, because of their pledge to religion and their greater knowledge of God's will. Yet, in spite of their knowledge, many fail to act as their profession demands. Salvian answers anticipated objections that *sancti* owe less to God than secular men because they are less sinful (2.9-12.), partly by arguing that they are indebted for benefits received, especially religious benefits (2.7, 2.24), but partly by insisting that nobody can measure the extent of his sins (2.12, 2.31-5), putting forward in almost identical terms an argument he has already used when addressing *peccatores* (1.55-63.). Salvian vigorously rejects the supposed objection that *sancti* are free of sin (2.1) but does not appear

to dispute that they are *less* sinful than secular Christians.[16]

As *Ad ecclesiam* progresses, however, there is a shift in Salvian's position. In much of Book 2, he portrays *religiosi* who ignore his demands as merely foolish and misguided, ignorant of their own obligations. This underlies not merely the arguments just described, but his comparison of virgins who do not give up their property with the foolish virgins of the Gospel (2.31-5.) and his guidance to celibate couples (2.28-9). After this, however, he shifts to the argument that, as the proofs of the deadliness of avarice are so obvious, those who ignore them cannot really be Christians at all: *Non licet ut eos nos deo fidem putemus adhibere, cum illi se rebus clament negare* (2.57). This claim dominates the second half of *Ad ecclesiam*. Those who retain their property and leave it to heirs are now portrayed as outright hypocrites (4.2), and denounced in some of the most aggressive language of the whole work:

> Non credis igitur, sicut iam diximus libro superiore, non credis, ac licet religionem vestibus simules, licet fidem cingulo adseras, licet sanctitatem pallio mentiaris, non credis omnino, non credis! Et hoc tam viris istius modi quam feminis dico, non credunt! Induat sibi quamvis quaelibet habitum sancti nominis et titulum sacrae religionis inscribat, si de substantia sua aliis magis quam sibi consulit, profecto non credit. (4.24)

Religiosi are accused as much as *saeculares* of the unforgivable sin of adopting heirs from outside their immediate family (3.57). There are therefore many who have professed religion but who have no more fulfilled this profession than their secular neighbours; they retain all their possessions till they die and can only save themselves by renouncing it in extremis (2.66).

Salvian's division of Christians into *saeculares* and *sancti* is therefore complicated by the fact that he uses *sancti* both as a religious and a functional category. In certain circumstances he uses *sancti* to denote anyone who has adopted a religious life, even if they

[16] The difference is *multum plane et paene inmensurabile* (2.11).

fail to live in the manner which he believes such a commitment implies, or even if they are complete hypocrites. But at the same time *sanctus* carries positive connotations, implying that those whom it is used of aspire to goodness, while *saecularis* carries the uncomplicatedly negative implication that those to whom it is applied are content to remain entangled in the sins and temptations of the *saeculum*. When Salvian wants to refer to people he judges holy (as at 4.41), the word that he uses is *sancti*, and it evidently does not occur to him that there is any need to clarify it by explaining that these *sancti* are different from the ones whom he attacks elsewhere in *Ad ecclesiam.* Salvian's language therefore suggests that he saw *sancti* as being truer, more genuine Christians than *saeculares*, but he does not state this conclusion directly, and it is not clear whether his usage represents a fully articulated belief about the character of the two types of Christians, or simply a prejudice whose implications he had not fully examined. It may well be the latter, not simply because of the inconsistencies in his usage in *Ad ecclesiam*, but because in *De gubernatione dei* these inconsistencies are resolved. In the later work, in which *sancti*, and the distinction between them and other Christians, is a much less significant issue than in *Ad ecclesiam*,[17] Salvian argues in a much clearer and more consistent fashion that there is a single standard of morality which applies equally to *religiosi* and to secular Christians, and which members of both groups are capable of fulfilling.[18]

[17] With the exception of a single passage attacking unworthy priests in a similar style to *E* (5.51-61) and Salvian's condemnation of the attitude of *nobiles* to those of their number who become ascetics (4.32-3), *sancti* are mentioned only in passing.

[18] See below, Chapter 5, Section 1.

4) The Christian Community and the Family

From the earliest times the free sharing of goods with others was advocated within Christian communities, and was used in apologetic writings to exemplify their unity and brotherhood. It was portrayed as a practical demonstration of emotional and spiritual unity. It clearly formed an important part of the self-perception of early Christian communities, and was one which they tried to present to outsiders. The most notable instance of this is the community described in Acts.[1] It has been shown how the stress there on 'one heart and soul' is related to the portrayal of idealised friendship in the Greek philosophic tradition.[2] In works like Tertullian's *Apologeticum*, addressed to those outside the church, this mutual aid within the community is contrasted with the mutual strife of pagan society.[3] It has been seen how the institution of alms-giving relaxed the tension between the condemnation of wealth in parts of the Bible and the presence of rich individuals in the church. While the conflicts caused by wealth within the church would often not have been resolved so easily, the position of pre-Constantinian Christian communities—a minority, alienated to a considerable extent from the society around them, under threat of persecution—put pressure on their members to stick together and gave them a strong sense of identity in contrast to the rest of society, thus helping to create an atmosphere in which these ideals could be put into practice.

We can see how these portrayals of past Christian communities influence Salvian's criticism of that of his own society. Accepting the truth of the portrayal of Christian communities in the New Testament and in early Christian literature,[4] he explains the gap

[1] Acts 2:44-5, 4.32-4. For references by other authors (among many): Cyprian, *De lapsis* 6, *De unit. ecc. cath.* 25f.; Jerome, *V. Malchi* 1; Cassian, *Coll.* 18.5; Maximus of Turin, *Sermones* 17, 103. Cf. Leyser 2000, 103: 'The image of the apostolic community, its members materially and spiritually transparent to each other, dominated the ascetic imagination in the fourth and fifth centuries.'

[2] Countryman 1980, 76-80; Cf. Ste. Croix 1975, 15; Fischer 1976, 27.

[3] *Apologeticum* 39.5-11.

[4] As noted most clearly by Olsen 1982, 9ff.

between this ideal and contemporary reality not by social change—the rise of Christianity to encompass the whole of society—but by moral decline.[5] Even in the earliest times, the social pressures to share wealth needed to be reinforced by exhortation: by the time *Ad ecclesiam* was written, these pressures had disappeared and only exhortation, of the kind purveyed by Salvian, was left.

The unique characteristic of *Ad ecclesiam* is the extent to which it concentrates not on the renunciation of property while one lives, but on how it is bequeathed when one dies.[6] Even Salvian's demands on *religiosi* finally concentrate on this (2.66). It is in his treatment of this subject that his demands appear most remote from the accepted practice of his society. As we seen, his view of the amount of property that could be left to children is obscure. When he turns aside from this issue, however his targets are denounced without reservation. One of these is discrimination by parents against children who have adopted a religious life. This takes two forms. One kind (3.21-27), is for parents simply to leave to religious children (indeed, children who have been vowed to religion by the parents themselves) a smaller share of the patrimony than is given to their siblings. A second type of discrimination is for parents to leave religious children a full share of property, but only in the form of a trust controlled by someone else, so that they enjoy the income, but are unable to disperse the capital (3.28-39). Salvian condemns this as an even worse injustice, which gives the children a false image of wealth while taking away from them any actual rights of possession.

That parents actually did behave in this way is shown by some of the works of Eutropius, a Gallic priest who probably lived somewhat earlier than Salvian.[7] Eutropius'

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[5] Salvian's use of Acts has already been discussed, but he would have been familiar with much of the other literature. His knowledge of Tertullian's *Apologeticum* is certain; see Waltzing 1920

[6] Fischer 1976, 57, 61.

[7] PL 30, 45-50 and 188-210 (among the letters of Jerome). See Fischer 1976, 51.

letters address Cerasia and her sister, who had been disinherited by their father when they dedicated themselves to a religious life. The letters counsel acceptance and advise against attempting to claim the inheritance by litigation. The *Vita* of Melania the Younger portrays a similar situation. Melania's father, her brother-in-law, and other relatives are accused of attempting to deprive her and her husband of their property, in order to prevent them disposing of it.[8] The reason for such actions is obvious: property was regarded as belonging to the family, to be handed on to its future members. In order to minimise the amount that could be dispersed by individuals the father of Eutropius' correspondents took the crude step of outright disinheritance. Salvian describes ways in which parents attempted to give ascetic children a share of property while limiting the extent to which they could dispose of it. The fact that this was apparently done even by parents who had themselves vowed their children to a religious life is a further piece of evidence of the gap between the ideas about piety held by ascetics like Salvian, and those of ordinary Christians. While Salvian portrays such parents as punishing their children for embracing religion, it is more likely that they simply believed that it was desirable for an individual to be devoted to religion, but at the same time continued to believe that it was desirable for the family to preserve its property. However, a law of Majorian, which accuses parents of seeking the ordination of children precisely in order to disinherit them, suggests that a more cynical motive may have operated in some cases.[9]

A striking argument that Salvian introduces late in Book 2, and develops through the remainder of *Ad ecclesiam*, appears more tenuously related to religious principle. He begins from the contention that, in view of the posthumous judgement, giving wealth away is an act

[8] *V. Mel.* 12.

[9] *Nov. Maj*. 11 (460). Such an action would have been motivated by desire to avoid division of the family's property.

of self-interest (2.66-73). The proposition in itself is not unfamiliar in Christian literature, and is often coupled with imagery that portrays the act of giving away wealth as using it to purchase salvation.[10] But Salvian comes to insist more and more strongly that property owners should not merely consult their own interests in disposing of their wealth, but ignore those of others. We have seen that he claims that the best inheritance that can be left to children is piety. But in the passages under discussion the presupposition is not, as this would demand, that children's real interests are served if they do not receive their parents' property; Salvian concedes, in effect, that children's interests *are* harmed if property is not left to them, but tells parents that they should not worry about this, but only about their own overriding interest in their fate after death. Salvian does not argue, like the anonymous Pelagian, that it shows more love if a child is not left property,[11] nor, like Cyprian, that God will protect the interests of children whose father gives away his wealth in alms.[12] He simply tells property owners that they should take account of no one's interests but their own. Their children are close to them, but not as close as their souls; children loved too much destroy their parents' salvation (3.45). *Inconsultus namque et stultus amor est alterius memor et sui inmemor* (3.44).[13] Salvian does not entirely forget the argument that moral qualities are a preferable inheritance to material goods, and restates it at 3.56. The insistence that it is an error to give primacy to the interests of one's family is clearly based on Salvian's ideas about community. But the stress on self-interest, and subordinating the interests of others to one's own, is not really compatible with these ideas, and appears to result more from the search

[10] This is particularly notable in the writings of Paulinus of Nola (Trout 1999, 133-45); an especially significant instance is *Ep.* 32.21-2, since this was known to Salvian (it is the letter from which he quotes at *G* 7.14). For another instance, see Sidonius, *Ep.* 4.24.7.

[11] 'Honorificentiae tuae' 6.2.

[12] *De op.* 19.

[13] This is also stated of children at 3.17, 38 and 51, and of others in general at 3.12, 3.95, 4.25.

for provocative rhetoric than from any religious principle.[14]

Such arguments serve a clear practical purpose in *Ad ecclesiam*—encouraging alms-giving—which should not be forgotten. However, in the background to his arguments there always lurks the image of an ideal Christian community, a vision based not merely on Acts but on the communities portrayed by authors like Tertullian,[15] and which provides the standard by which Salvian judges the real Christian society of his time.[16] It is this which underlies his portrayal of the church's moral decline (1.2-5). As has been shown, the unrestrained sharing of goods was a demonstration of unity and brotherhood within the community.[17] Two ideas derived from this image underlie Salvian's critique. The first is the belief that the ties that bind Christians to each other should be closer than any others, taking precedence over, if not completely obliterating, private, non-communal ties, chiefly those between parents and children, but also those with other relatives and with friends; any relationship, in fact, based on a bond other than shared faith. The second is a concept of Christian and secular society as being separate, and governed by different rules. According to this, Christian society, if it is not to betray its nature, must be a community of virtue, while the secular world is the domain of sin, corruption and oppression. The acceptance by Christians of secular values, and their participation in relationships, both personal and social, determined by these values is therefore *miserrima infidelitas et paganicae inreligiositatis error* (3.31).

Salvian was writing in a society which had become Christian, but his ideas are

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[14] Fischer 1976, 62, cites as a parallel Augustine, *Serm*. 9.12.20, but Augustine says merely that parents should not use the interests of their children as an excuse for their own avarice. Caesarius, *Ep.* 21.8 is closer to Salvian, and may have been influenced by him.

[15] Especially *Apologeticum* 39.5-11.

[16] See especially Olsen 1982.

[17] Above pp. 78-80

conditioned by literary portrayals from a time when the church comprised a minority forced into mutual dependence by the hostility of the external world, and which defined its values in opposition to that world. He writes as if Christians should live as a morally pure alternative society even when membership of the church had become almost coterminous with society. It is instructive to compare his attitudes with those of Augustine.[18] For Augustine, moral perfection of either an individual or a community was impossible in this world. The moral compromises of life in secular society were therefore unavoidable. They did not for this reason cease to be significant, but would be forgiven to baptised members of the church who sincerely repented, and recognised their own sinfulness. One of his best-known statements of this refers specifically to those who preserve their own possessions, and are less than unreserved in alms-giving, as a group who can expect forgiveness in this way.[19]

The contrasting attitude expressed by Salvian—and this remains true in *De gubernatione dei*—is that the demands of religion and secular society *as it exists* cannot be compatible: the only legitimate social practices are ones which correspond to those of the unified, communal life of a group of like-minded Christians. Salvian was not unique in this belief, of course. The dismissal of secular society is characteristic of the mass of ascetic literature from the period. It is not simply that the secular world was seen as the domain of evil people, but that it was felt that the pressures placed on the individual by the *saeculum* drove even the well-meaning into attitudes and practices that were alien to Christianity. In the *vitae* of ascetics, it is often the disposal of their property which marks the decisive step in their withdrawal from secular life.[20] However, they often have to struggle against the attempts of misguided parents to prevent them renouncing the world, even when those

[18] For full exposition of the relevant aspects of Augustine's thought, see Markus 1990, 45-57.

[19] *Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum* 3.5.14.

[20] *V. Hon.* 11; *V. Hil.* 6f. (cf. Eucherius., *De laude eremi* 3); *V. Germ.* 2; *V. Mel.* 15.

parents are Christians.[21] In these portrayals, if abandonment of property is the threshold of a religious life, the family represents the ties to the secular world which entangle the individual most tenaciously.[22] In all such literature, breaking with the family, both through the dispersal of property, and the renunciation of sexuality and procreation, represents the individual's withdrawal from the pressures and values of secular life. Salvian's attacks on the primacy of family bonds therefore represent his acceptance of ascetic presuppositions; his hostility to the family is hostility to the most powerful alternative to his own ideal community.

Augustine's contrasting attitude can be seen in action in his letter to a woman named Ecdicia, who had precipitated the break-up of her marriage by giving away her moveable wealth to a pair of wandering monks.[23] The letter, while conceding a complementary reference to her wish for *gloriosa paupertas*, condemns her action as irresponsible. Augustine insists not merely that Ecdicia should not have acted without the consent of her husband, but on the legitimacy of the husband's concerns about preserving family wealth to support their son's possible career, and on the necessity for families to make the most careful assessment of their own needs before they set aside anything for alms.[24] To care about such matters is precisely the attitude that *Ad ecclesiam* stigmatises as avarice, while Ecdicia's refusal to let family ties or secular notions of prudence influence her action is the attitude that Salvian recommends. The rules, and demands on the individual, which formed part of secular life—in other words the concept of responsibility used by Augustine—were what ascetics wished to break free from. This is how the adoption of the far greater demands on

[21] *V. Hon.* 6, 8; *V. Mel.* 6, 12.

[22] For a particular strong statement, see Sulpicius Severus, *Dial.* 1.22, in which a monk's desire to return to his wife and children is portrayed as a symptom of incipient demonic possession.

[23] *Ep.* 262. The marriage had already been strained when Ecdicia took a unilateral vow of celibacy.

[24] *Ep.* 262.7ff.

the individual of ascetic life can be portrayed as a liberation. The self-imposed burdens of the ascetic were far greater than those of anyone living a secular life, but they were conceived as being determined by individuals in their relationship with God, not imposed by society. For an ascetic like Cassian, the chief burden of secular life is the impossibility of total concentration on God in such an environment. For Salvian it is the pressure to give primacy to private, 'selfish' interests (those of oneself, one's family, or private circle) rather than to the community of Christians.

We can therefore see that, in the division between Augustinian tolerance for 'Christian mediocrity'[25] and ascetic rejection of it, Salvian is on the side of the ascetics. He differs from much ascetic literature, however, in the way in which his idealised image of Christian community does not so much imply withdrawal for the world as existence within it in a manner parallel to that of the early Christians among pagans. Literature that counsels the committed Christian to withdraw from the world implicitly dismisses society in general as irredeemable. In Cassian's works, the extent to which salvation is possible in the secular world is scarcely considered; it is simply held that secular society is not the place to live a Christian life.[26] Salvian's ideal is far more inclusive, based on the Acts community, which, for all its use by monastic writers, was not separated from the world, but created a community within it (the Christian groups portrayed in Paul's epistles are also relevant). Salvian is not trying to universalise *monastic* standards as such, therefore.[27] For example, there is not the slightest suggestion in *Ad ecclesiam* that he wished people to renounce marriage, merely to renounce the values that surrounded the family in the contemporary

[25] Markus 1990, 45.

[26] A significant text here is Cassian, *Coll.* 21, with its utterly negative picture of the secular world, and overt portrayal of those who live in it as religious failures, notwithstanding the fact that they may be saved (especially 21.6).

[27] This seems to me a key distinction between Salvian and Cassian (as pointed out by Leonardi 1977, 606), and I would disagree with the attempt by Markus 1990, 168, to minimize its significance.

secular world. His ideas about society, however ill-thought-out they may seem compared with those of Augustine, envisage that Christians could live within secular society, resisting its demands, not that the committed Christian should simply withdraw elsewhere. In *Ad ecclesiam* this vision is sketched out only in relation to the limited theme of wealth and charity. In *De gubernatione dei* it is extended to the whole of society.

4) *De gubernatione dei*: Foundations

1) Arguments for God's Judgement

Salvian's self-presentation

Any religion that claims that God is both all-powerful and absolutely just is presented with the problem of explaining the apparent lack of moral order in the world. In the western Roman empire in the fifth century this problem was particularly difficult to ignore, as the empire, which for generations Christians had believed was under God's protection, was progressively dismembered, and its inhabitants experienced invasion, insecurity, and violence at the hands of peoples who were either pagans or heretics. For pagans the troubles which afflicted the empire after the rise of Christianity were easily explicable, and appeared to justify their beliefs about the gods, but for Christians who reflected on them they must have been deeply troubling, calling into question the very idea of the providence and justice of God.

De gubernatione dei is only one of many attempts which were made at the time to explain this situation, though it is one of the most ambitious.[1] The opening sentence of Book 1 describes the beliefs against which the work is directed:

> Incuriosus a quibusdam et quasi neglegens humanorum actuum deus dicitur, utpote nec bonos custodiens nec coercens malos, et ideo in hoc saeculo bonos plerumque miseros, malos beatos esse. (1.1)

This is repeated several times in very similar words (1.6, 1.13, 2.1, 3.2, 4.54), but in the two latter instances Salvian adds the crucial detail that people question God's government not just because of the misfortunes of the good and the successes of the evil in general, but

[1] Probably second only to *De civitate dei*; other obvious examples are Orosius' *Historiae adversus paganos* and the *Carmen de providentia dei*.

because of the misfortunes of the Romans and the successes of the barbarians. At these points in *De gubernatione dei*, and other passages in which he condemns the wickedness of such an attitude (4.40-41, 4.53, 8.3-6), Salvian invariably claims that he is writing to refute those who deny God's government because a world in which the good suffer while the wicked prosper cannot be ruled by a just power.

In the overall architecture of *De gubernatione dei*, Books 1 and 2 contain arguments for the fundamental propositions that the world is governed by God, and that he is neither unjust nor negligent. In the subsequent books, however, with the exception of a very few passages, Salvian does not put forward arguments relating to this general principle. Instead he argues for a much more specific proposition: that the defeats suffered by the Roman empire were a punishment which God had inflicted on the Romans for their sins. The latter claim is not, by any standards, a necessary inference from the former, but it is characteristic of Salvian's style that he always argues as if it were, implying that to dispute his claims about the role of divine judgement in bringing about the victories of the barbarians is tantamount to casting doubt on the entire concept of divine government and divine justice. While at first sight, therefore, the arguments of Books 1 and 2 appear simply to set out the general principles on which those of the later books are based, their actual role is more complex. The abstract, philosophical arguments about divine government which Salvian puts forward in the first part of Book 1 (1.1-26) seem to me to be primarily rhetorical: that is to say that Salvian does not seriously engage with the points at issue, but uses them to present himself as the defender of a basic tenet of Christianity, and to dispose in a summary fashion of a number of possible objections to his ideas. His arguments for his own view are diverse and largely derivative, while those he uses against opposing views attempt to dismiss them through ridicule rather than engaging with them in a serious attempt at refutation. In both

cases he presents a number of disparate arguments in a relatively casual fashion.

The situation is very different, however, once Salvian, in the second half of Book 1 (1.27-60), begins to justify his ideas by direct reference to the Bible. Here both his direct argumentation and his imagery, unlike those of the earlier part of the book, foreshadow central points which he makes in the later books of *De gubernatione dei*. His portrayal in these chapters, based on incidents in the books of Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, of the relationship between God and the Israelites, is an exact—and acknowledged—model for his portrayal in later books of the relationship between God and the Christian Romans. These chapters, their message consolidated by further biblical examples in Book 2, form the real foundation for the arguments of Books 3 to 8.

Salvian claims that he wrote in response to a large number of Christians who complained that events showed that God did not govern the world. That such complaints were a real phenomenon can hardly be doubted. By the end of the fourth century, Christians had long come to regard the Roman Empire as under God's protection, and for many its well-being and predominance over its enemies would have formed an integral part of their idea of a divinely ordered world.[2] The increasingly severe military defeats which the empire suffered from 378 onwards posed a continuous and deepening challenge to such beliefs. It was possible to find explanations for some defeats which did not challenge this view of the world. Thus the battle of Adrianople could be explained as a punishment for the heretical beliefs of the emperor.[3] Such means of explaining away defeat became increasingly difficult to maintain as the fifth century progressed, and particularly so when invasions directly

[2] See for example Markus 1970, 45-71; of course this was not true of groups persecuted by the Roman state, such as the Donatists.

[3] Orosius, *Hist.* 7.33.15-19; Ambrose, *De fide* 2.139; *De spiritu sancto* praf. 17; Jerome, *Comm. in Soph.* 1.2.3 (Lenski 1997, 149-52).

affected people's lives, as they did in Gaul from 406 onwards.

Much of Augustine's writing on theodicy was produced in response the sack of Rome by the Goths in 410 and the reactions which it provoked. While partly directed against pagan claims that the event was a punishment for the abandonment of the old gods, Augustine also sought to explain it for the benefit of Christians. Before he embarked on *De civitate dei*, Augustine addressed a number of sermons about the sack of Rome to congregations in Hippo and Carthage, from which it is evident that the event caused at least some members of his congregation to entertain doubts similar to those alleged by Salvian.[4] In Gaul, the doubts about divine government aroused by the invasions were confronted by the anonymous author of the *Carmen de providentia dei*, who wrote about 417.[5] This poem begins with a striking address in direct speech (vv. 23-86), expressing very similar complaints to those mentioned by Salvian. The address focuses especially on the indiscriminate suffering which the invasions have brought to both guilty and innocent. The poet's response to such questioning, unlike Salvian's, is consolatory. He claims that God defers judgement until after death in order to give people as long as possible to reform (746ff.); certain sufferings must be shared by the just and the unjust, but God will often spare a multitude of sinners in the hope that the few innocents among them will bring about their conversion (815-23), and the virtuous who suffer may be made more holy through their trials (897-900).

Whether such complaints formed the actual motivation for Salvian to write *De gubernatione dei*, or whether the claim is a literary fiction adopted in order to provide an explanation grounded in pastoral reality for the treatment of a theme he wanted to tackle

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[4] *Sermons* 81, 105 (PL 38, 499-506, 618-25), 296 (*Miscellenea Augustiniana* 1, 401-12), *De excidio urbis* (CSEL 46, 243-62). On these see Bruyn 1993, especially 419-20.

[5] There are serious reservations about the traditional attribution to Prosper of Aquitaine (McHugh 1964, 18-24).

anyway, is unclear. It is evidently the case, however, that if the original impulse for *De gubernatione dei* came from the desire to address such concerns, it outgrew it on almost as great a scale as Augustine's *De civitate dei*. It is also the case that Salvian does not attempt to answer these complaints on their own terms, as is done by Augustine in his sermons and by the author of the *Carmen de providentia dei*; instead he systematically caricatures them. He claims that those who question divine justice believe that God neglects the world (1.4), share the vices of the Epicureans (1.5), believe that God is too lazy to govern the world (1.20), that he does not listen to prayers which deal with this life (1.22-3), and that he despises human affairs (1.26). Later, he alleges that they disbelieve in God's presence in order to feel more comfortable about their own sinfulness (2.17).

It is extremely unlikely that such attitudes were held by anybody in these terms, let alone that they were widespread among the Christians of southern Gaul. Salvian has instead assembled a hostile caricature, largely using stock attributes of impiety (like the accusation of Epicureanism).[6] In this context it is worth looking more closely at the opening sentence of Book 1 quoted above. It is presented as a simple generalization about the beliefs of Salvian's contemporaries, but in fact it is borrowed from the *De trinitate* of Hilary of Poitiers.[7] Its context in Hilary's work is a passage in which he describes his youthful disillusionment with pagan philosophical schools, in which it clearly refers to the Epicureans.[8] Salvian has therefore taken a reference to the beliefs of a group of pagan philosophers, universally regarded in late antiquity as wicked and impious, and applied it to

[6] Some of them, like the suggestion that people believe God is too lazy to govern the world (156-59), or that he has deliberately abandoned it (195-98), appear in the *Carmen de providentia dei*, in spite of the generally more sympathetic tone of that work.

[7] *De trinitate* 1.4: *Plerique vero deum quidem esse loquebantur, sed hunc eundem incuriosum rerum humanorum ac neglegentem pronuntiabant.*

[8] Meijering 1982, 27. On reminiscences of Hilary in Salvian, Pellegrino 1940b.

contemporary Christians. His apparently neutral statement that people believe God to be *incuriosus* and *quasi neglegens* is implicitly extremely hostile, though this would have been apparent only to a reader well-informed enough to spot the allusion.[9]

The reasons for Salvian's caricatured portrayal become apparent in later passages in which he refers to complaints that God is not interested in human events. Salvian's references to such complaints are always marked by hyperbole. They are described as blows hurled against God by 'the blasphemous hands of insane minds', more wicked than litigation, slander, theft, drunkenness, gluttony, falsehood, perjury, adultery or murder (4.40-41). Such complaining is a new sin, *paganica ac prodigiosa et in ecclesiis dei ante non visa* (4.53).[10] These comments must be seen in the light of the way in which Salvian portrays the attitudes of his audience throughout his works. He depicts them as complacent about their own virtue and piety, convinced that God will give them strength against their enemies as their due.[11] His whole indictment of the moral failure of Christian society is put forward to attack such an attitude. Among people who are thoroughly corrupt but regard themselves as good Christians, he portrays it as the ultimate, yet also absolutely fitting, sin that they should see their misfortunes not as the product of their own sinfulness, but as a manifestation of cruelty or negligence on the part of God, thus projecting their own vices onto him. It is in this that Salvian differs from the author of the *Carmen de providentia dei*, who rejects any questioning of God's judgement, but accepts the assumption that motivated it—that many of the victims of the invasions are innocent.[12] For Salvian this belief is a self-serving illusion,

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[9] As with allusions in *E* and *Ep.* 9, one wonders whether Salvian placed it in such a prominent position because he knew there were people in his immediate audience who would spot it.

[10] There is a similar outburst at 8.3-6.

[11] See especially 3.6 and 4.1. People's belief not only in their own virtue but in their entitlement to protection against external enemies is of course specific to *G*, with its greatly enlarged perspective compared to *E*.

[12] *Carmen de prov. dei,* 813-23, 839-47.

which must be shattered if people are to understand their true situation. It is therefore natural that he should give it a central place in his argument, and that his portrayal of it should be so hostile. He is not attempting to engage with it, but to portray it as a symptom of the corruption of the Christian community. In this it resembles many of the sins denounced in *De gubernatione dei*. The detailed argumentation of the first two books sets the scene for this denunciation.

Pagan authorities

In the opening chapters of Book 1 (1.1-26) Salvian uses three different approaches in his attempt to refute those who dispute the reality of God's government.[13] He begins (1.2-5) by using a series of quotations which he claims will show that the wisest pagans agreed that God governs the world, even though for Christians *sermo divinus* should be sufficient proof.[14] The passage that follows contains more references to pagan literature than any other in Salvian's works, with five quotations from Seneca, Virgil, and Cicero, as well as references to Pythagoras, Plato, the Stoics, and the Epicureans.[15] The quotations state in various ways that the world is always guided by God. While Salvian goes on to argue for this in his own voice, he does not refer back to these quotations. He takes from one of them the image of God as *gubernator*, which provides the title of his work, but this is his only significant debt to them.[16]

Salvian very rarely cites pagan authors as authorities, and his religious outlook would have precluded him from attributing independent authority to their opinions about God. This passage is unique, and its function is literary. In traditional apologetic, as in Salvian's main source for this passage, the *Divinae institutiones* of Lactantius, such references to pagan authorities served the purpose of demonstrating to an audience doubtful about Christianity

[13] Three groups of arguments: pagan authorities (1.2-5); arguments relating to suffering (1.6-17); arguments relating to post mortem judgement (1.17-26).

[14] Salvian claims several times in *G* that the Bible alone is sufficient to prove his case, and that his own arguments ought to be superfluous, but are made necessary by the impiety of his audience and their failure to accept the Bible as authoritative. See e.g. 3.1-6.

[15] All these references are taken from Christian sources. The quotations come from Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 1.5.17, 27 (quoting Cicero, *De natura deorum* 1.27, 2.77, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.6; Seneca, *Exhortationes* fr. 16; Virgil, *Georgics* 4.221f.), and the references to Plato and the Stoics from Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 47.6f. (Waltzing 1920, 40). Only the reference to the Epicureans has no obvious source. It may derive from the quoted reference in Hilary's *De trinitate*, but it could just as well come from Salvian's general knowledge.

[16] Salvian attributes the image to the Stoics. In his source (Tertullian, *Apol*. 47.7) it is attributed to the Platonists, and the Stoics are described as seeing God as outside the world and controlling it like a potter at the wheel. Salvian's attribution is actually more accurate than Tertullian's (described by Colish 1985, 15, as a 'striking misconception'), and the alteration may be deliberate (Waltzing 1920, 40).

that its tenets were in agreement with the views of the wisest pagan thinkers.[17] Lactantius states explicitly that he is arguing in a manner that pagans would accept.[18] Salvian seems to echo this when he explains that he uses such quotations because he is addressing Christians who are partly pagan, and therefore need to be convinced by pagan authorities (1.1). However, his implication—that there were Christians who would reject the Bible as evidence, but be won over by quotations from Virgil and Cicero—is clearly unreal. It is another caricature, impliying not merely that people who disagree with him are no better than pagans, but that they are foolish and misguided even by the standards of those whom pagans regarded as authoritative: how can Christians doubt a tenet of their faith which even so many pagans have been obliged to accept? Those who disagree can be dismissed as followers of 'Epicurean madness' (1.5). To some extent, therefore, Salvian is having it both ways—exploiting the opinions of famous pagans to add authority to his own work, while at the same time decrying the fact that he needs to make use of them as a sign of the corruption of his audience.

The link with the apologetic tradition which the quotations provide is relevant to the entire literary purpose of the opening chapters of Book 1. As I have noted, the arguments in these chapters and those developed by Salvian in Books 3 to 8 are really directed against different targets. One of reasons why it was useful to Salvian to obscure this fact is that by doing so he could strengthen his own rhetorical position and exaggerate the impiety of the opposing point of view, but the abstract argumentation with which *De gubernatione dei* opens also serves a purpose which is more purely literary. By portraying himself as the defender of the very principle of divine government, Salvian was taking on the mantle of an

[17] *Div. inst.* 1.5; cf. Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 19.

[18] *Div. inst.* 5.4.

entire literary tradition devoted to such themes, comprising works by Christian apologists such as Tertullian and Lactantius. By placing himself in this tradition, he enhanced the status of his own literary work, since it enabled him to give it a facade as a work dealing with profound, transcendent theological and philosophical questions, rather than, as Books 3 to 8 might appear on their own, a work limited in relevance to the particular circumstances of the contemporary West. The citing of classical authorities helped to establish Salvian's discussion as one which dealt with the same issues as those discussed in the quotations, and, implicitly, Salvian's own status towards that of the authors he cited. His use of them is a considered choice, which was appropriate to his literary ambitions.[19]

[19] Not mechanical adherence to convention, as claimed by Hagendahl 1947, 117.

The problem of suffering

Salvian's second group of arguments attempt to deal with the main cause of doubt about God's judgement: the observation that the good suffer while the evil prosper (1.6-17). In the later books of *De gubernatione dei*, Salvian confines his argument to answering this observation as it applies to the defeats inflicted by the barbarians on the Romans. Other forms of misfortune or suffering, such as disease, natural disaster, or the oppression of the weak by the strong, are never attributed to God's justice, or even discussed in relation to it. In most of *De gubernatione dei* the fates of individuals are not considered at all, only those of communities.[20] There is therefore a discrepancy between the actual content of Salvian's arguments and his authorial stance as the defender of God's government *in toto*. Salvian himself never acknowledges this inconsistency; in Book 1 he states that he is going to answer the charge that:

> ... bonos quippe esse in paupertate, malos in abundantia; bonos in infirmitate, malos in fortitudine; bonos semper in luctu, malos semper in gaudio; bonos in miseria et abiectione, malos in prosperitate et dignitate. (1.6)

He defines his subject matter in a similar manner later on (e.g. 3.2). By his unwillingness to acknowledge the way in which he restricts his argument, Salvian creates problems for himself, since it is much more difficult to explain the purpose of suffering in general than that of a particular set of historical circumstances. The strategy that he pursues is to argue vigorously for one particular objection to the opposing point of view, which does not actually refute it, but provides enough of a defence to justify his portrayal of himself as defender of the principle of God's government.[21]

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[20] This is true of Salvian's account of his own time; he does use examples of judgement on individuals taken from the Bible (6.1-3, 55; 7.81-2).

[21] The fact that Salvian returns in later books to the issue of the relationship between individual and community in relation to collective punishments suggests that he was uneasy about his success in meeting possible objections. Though he brings up this issue several times (3.57-9; 4.17; 6.1-9), he never deals with it decisively.

Salvian's argument is that it is an error to regard physical suffering as a misfortune. His arguments in favour of this position are largely based on Christian ascetic attitudes, though he makes use of arguments from pagan sources, such as the austerity of traditional Roman heroes and the Stoic idea that external circumstances are of no importance to the wise. In doing so he is once again arguing in a style reminiscent of Christian anti-pagan apologetic.

Salvian begins by asking those who say that the good suffer whether they are talking about true or false Christians. The sufferings of the latter should not be a cause of grief, as evil people are confirmed in their ways by success, and might be corrected by adversity (1.7). But, Salvian claims, there is even less reason to grieve for *sancti*. To regard them as unfortunate is based on a mistaken idea of happiness. They may experience poverty or weakness, but they do so by their own wish, and those who have what they wish for are happy by definition. Nobody is unhappy except in his own feelings, so *religiosi*, who welcome deprivation of things that others regard as good, cannot be other than happy (1.8). This argument, as stated so far, is neutral as to whether the things that make people happy are good or bad; Salvian now pushes it further, insisting that the *religiosi* do not merely have what they want, but that what they want is better than what others want: *adflictio infirmitatum ... intellegimus matrem esse virtutum*. Some people want evil things, and obtain them, but they are not truly happy because they want the wrong things. *Religiosi*, however, both have what they want, and want what is truly good (1.9).

This passage is important because it shows the Christian inspiration of Salvian's thought on this issue. When he states (1.9) that labour, hunger, poverty and weakness and are not oppressive to all those who experience them, but only to those who do so unwillingly, he is repeating a Stoic principle, and it may be that he took it from a Stoic source. But the

Stoics were not ascetics; their attitude was that virtue was the only good, and that other apparent goods should be matters of indifference. The argument made here by Salvian is that physical weakness is good in itself. In other words, Salvian's basic argument is not Stoic; it is dependent on Christian assumptions which Stoics would have rejected, but the Christian point of view has enough in common with Stoicism to enable Salvian to appropriate a Stoic argument to support his own position.[22]

After a digression about austere pagans (1.10-12, discussed below), Salvian argues in even stronger terms that physical weakness is good in itself (1.13-16). He responds to the question posed to 'a certain man who felt according to the rule of truth',[23] by someone who did not understand true good and evil: *Quare ergo tu ipse infirmus es?* (1.13). The answer is that the spirit can only be strong if the flesh is subjugated and weakened, a proposition which Salvian supports (1.14-16) by quoting both Paul and his own praise of bodily asceticism in *Ep*. 5, to Cattura. Salvian's answer expresses a particularly vehement view of the relationship between the body and the mind and soul. The body is the soul's enemy, and only through its subjugation can the soul flourish. *Exultat anima, laeta corpore affecto quasi adversario subiugato* (1.16), a line which he quotes from his own letter (*Ep.* 5.4). Salvian cites the authoritative figure of Paul to support his view of the body, appealing (somewhat tendentiously) to Paul's statements about himself and advice to others in order to show that

[22] Colish 1985, 109-14, argues, on the basis of the Stoic elements in his discussion of suffering, that Salvian was consciously writing under the influence of Stoic ideas, and wished to propagate them within Christian discourse. I believe this is a serious misreading of the passages in question, which results from looking at them out of the context of *G* as a whole. Her discussion might have been better founded had she pursued her acknowledgement that 'his access to Stoic theodicy may well have been mediated by apologists who had it on their agenda for rather different reasons' (114). The Stoic elements in *G* seem to me to be indebted entirely to the place that Stoicism had long assumed as part of the stock of received ideas, as described by Shaw 1985, 18: 'Its principal claims, even if not fully understood or comprehended ... formed a general background for all other philosophical claims'.

[23] Salvian himself? (See above, p. 26)

he is merely repeating the opinion of the Apostle (1.14-15).[24] He can therefore conclude that it is those who are apparently weak and suffering who are truly happy, and hence that their condition cannot be a sign of neglect by God:

> Sancti viri infirmiores se esse faciunt quia, si fortes fuerint, sancti esse vix possunt ... Si fortitudinem carnis apostolus metuit, quis rationabiliter fortis esse praesumit? Haec ergo ratio est qua homines Christo dediti et infirmi sunt et volunt esse. (1.14)

The way in which Salvian bases his argument on such Christian ascetic principles indicates that the significance of his use within it of exempla derived from pagan literature (1.10-12) is extremely limited. He alludes to a number of anecdotes about the austerity of heroic figures from the early Roman republic (Fabricius, Cincinnatus, and others), asking sarcastically whether they are to be pitied.[25] He then points out that there were Greek philosophers (the Stoics, though he does not name them) who claimed that the virtuous man could be happy even when being tortured, and did so without even the Roman motive of serving the state, but from *adsequendae gloriae aviditate* and desire for *praesenti tantum laude* (1.12). The Stoics therefore despised pain and death, but did so only out of desire for transient glory. Yet, Salvian points out, they are generally admired, and not regarded as unfortunate.[26] If this is so for them, how much more so should it be true of Christian *religiosi*, who will receive not merely present glory but future blessedness.[27]

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[24] He quotes two of Paul's most vehement statements against 'the flesh' (1 Cor. 9:27; Gal. 5:17), as well as recounting Paul's advice to Timothy about the latter's health (1 Tim. 5:23) in terms which, as Lagarrigue has shown, both exaggerate the weakness of Timothy's health and falsely suggest that Paul did not want him to recover (Lagarrigue 1975, 116).

[25] The seven exempla to which Salvian alludes appear in Valerius Maximus (2.9.4; 4.3-4). It is not clear whether he took them directly from Valerius or from Christian works which made use of them. Some of the exempla appeared in Tertullian, *Apol.* 6.2, which Salvian definitely knew, and some in Augustine, *Civ.* 5.18, which he may have known, but some do not appear in either.

[26] These references, especially the direct reference to the Stoics, are central to Colish's claim that Salvian was not just exploiting themes from Stoicism but consciously and approvingly aligning himself with it (Colish 1985, 114). However, she fails to notice the implication of 1.12 that the Stoics were motivated by vainglory.

[27] Salvian's argument here bears some resemblance to Augustine, *De civitate dei* 5.12-20.

The implication of the passage about virtuous pagans is the same as that in which Salvian quoted pagan literary authorities. It is borrowed in the same manner from apologetic addressed to pagan audiences. In works of anti-pagan apologetic, figures like those of the early Roman heroes were used to claim that Christians lived in a way which pagans themselves considered admirable. In Salvian's case, addressing a Christian audience whom he has characterised as semi-pagan, it repeats the point that they are not merely inadequate Christians, but even, in a sense, inadequate pagans. The classical exempla show that their judgement about the implications of physical suffering is misguided even by the standards which were regarded as canonical by pagans, and so undermine still further their reasons for doubting the justice of God's government.

Salvian's argument revolves around physical weakness resulting from nature or choice, but he was evidently aware that this did not cover every form of suffering or misfortune which could be used to challenge the idea of God's government, and before concluding he acknowledges the possibility of other things: captivity, torture or murder (1.17). His response is simply to claim that such events must occur according to God's benign purpose, because the victims are often those whom God loves, and for whom his concern cannot be disputed, like the prophets, the apostles, and the archetypal innocent victim of crime, Abel.[28] Having made this assertion, Salvian uses the issue of the suffering of the good as a bridge to his next topic, without enunciating a general conclusion.

[28] This point is reiterated in later passages (1.30; 3.6).

Judgement in the future?

After his attempt to show the error of believing that the existence of suffering is evidence against God's government, Salvian's new target (1.17-26) is a claim which represents not a challenge to the principle of a divinely ordered world, but an alternative way of reconciling that principle with the reality of suffering and injustice: the claim that judgement takes place only after death. Since apostles, prophets and others who are indisputably good have suffered, it might be suggested that God allows injustice go unpunished within the world because he intends to punish it in the next (1.17). Salvian concedes that a claim which recognises the future judgement might seem acceptable, but denies that it makes it permissible to believe that God does not impose justice within the world also:

> Ita [Christum] in futuro iudicaturum adfirmamus ut tamen semper etiam in hoc saeculo iudicasse doceamus. Dum enim semper gubernat deus, semper et iudicat, quia gubernatio ipsa iudicium est. (1.18)

Thus, according to Salvian, the judgement exercised by God in the present world and in the future are essentially the same, and simply carried out at different times. He does not put forward a systematic argument for this proposition; he simply plays on the semantic overlap between *gubernare* (to govern) and *iudicare* (to judge) to imply that believing that God governs the world entails accepting his claim that one's fate in the world is a manifestation of his judgement.

After making his claim about the identity of government and judgement, Salvian asks whether he should prove it by means of *ratio*, *exempla*, or *testimonia* (1.19). He uses this division to organise the remainder of Books 1 and 2, putting forward the remainder of his argument about post mortem judgement (1.19-26) as his proof from *ratio*, the biblical exposition which follows (1.27-60) as his proof through *exempla*, and using Book 2, also based on the Bible, to provide proof through *testimonia*.

Salvian's case based on *ratio* is diverse, with several different arguments in a short passage. First he presents the argument from design: the structure, magnificence and regularity of the natural world show that it has been made by a creative intelligence (1.19).[29] Then he asserts that the world must be governed by the providence and reason of the one who created it (1.19). Finally he uses an analogy from human society, in which nothing can continue unless it is ordered by someone's will (1.19-20). The argument from design appears in pagan works going back at least as far as Cicero, as well as in Christian apologetic.[30] Salvian's remarks about providence are reminiscent of the Stoic portrayal of God as an all-pervasive force in nature.[31] Once again, Salvian is exploiting an argument from another source by placing it in a context where it appears to support his claims, regardless of whether or not its implications are strictly compatible with them. The Stoic idea of an immanent, impersonal providence has hardly anything in common with the account of God's government in *De gubernatione dei*, which is highly personal and anthropomorphic. But it provides Salvian with a description of God's activity which forcefully conveys the universality and omnipotence of his government. (It is, of course, quite possible that he used it without being fully aware of the different implications which the Stoic view of providence had from his own.)

Salvian then imagines his opponent suggesting that after creating the world God left it to develop without intervening further (1.20).[32] He immediately caricatures this position

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[29] Salvian uses a similar argument from nature and human life at 4.41-45.

[30] Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.5.13-15; Seneca, *De providentia* 1.2-5. In Christian works: Min. Felix, *Octavius* 17.3-18.4; Lactantius, *Div. inst*. 1.2-3; *Epit. de div. inst.* 69.

[31] *Omniaque ita a providentia incolumitatem quasi corpus ab anima vitam trahant* (1.19). Salvian's source may have been *Div. inst.* 1.3.20-22.

[32] The suggestion evidently alludes to Epicurean ideas; it is probably based on the vulgarised image of Epicureanism common in late antiquity, rather than on direct knowledge.

by claiming that it implies that God is either weak or lazy,[33] and adds that if this is so then prayer and all other expressions of religion must be pointless, dismissing the whole idea as *stulta atque inanis* (1.21). He then imagines that his opponent will 'escape' (*confugere*) by asserting that God is supplicated not for the sake of obtaining benefits in this life, but to obtain mercy on the day of judgement. He responds by claiming that this is contradicted by the evidence of Paul, who instructed people to pray for benefits which they would receive in this world (1.22).[34] He goes on to argue that if divine judgement is reserved for the future, there is no point in praying for anything in this world, and the prayers made in all churches are valueless. Breaking into direct speech—almost always, in Salvian, a sign that he is caricaturing an opposing point of view—he imagines someone praying in a manner appropriate to such a situation:

> Domine, non prosperitatem vitae istius petimus, nec pro bonis praesentibus supplicamus. Scimus enim aures tuas his obsecrationibus clausas esse, et auditum te ad preces istiusmodi non habere, sed pro his tantummodo petimus quae sunt futura post mortem. (1.23)

But if God's ears are closed to requests about the present, they must also be to requests about the future; the alternative must be to believe that God closes his ears for requests about the present, and opens them again for those about the future (1.24). (The crudely anthropomorphic imagery is another sign of Salvian's sarcasm.) The idea, he concludes, is so stupid and frivolous that to entertain it is to risk insulting God (1.25), and therefore anyone who does not believe that God despises human affairs must accept his own assertions about the nature of God's judgement (1.26).[35]

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[33] *Laborem videlicet forte fugiens ... molestiam fatigationis evitans ... partem rerum reliquit, quia totum obire non possit.*

[34] 1 Tim. 2:1-2.

[35] This and similar passages (e.g. 2.25-8) invalidate the arguments of those (for example O'Donnell 1983) who have attempted to argue on the basis of other passages, such as 3.6, that Salvian's views on this issue did not really differ from those of Augustine.

From an intellectual point of view, Salvian's arguments from reason are not impressive. He does not engage at all with the serious case which had been made, especially by Augustine, against the idea that God consistently punishes sin in this world.[36] Instead he caricatures the idea by claiming that it entails absurd conclusions. This passage is an instance of the rhetorical strategy already noted, by which Salvian attempts to portray himself as the spokesman for basic Christian principles, and to represent anyone who disagrees with him as holding ideas which are antithetical to these principles, and probably ridiculous as well. Salvian, was not in the least unusual in trying to defeat his opponents by caricature rather than reasoned refutation. In antiquity such a style of argument was routine in polemical literature.[37] It is not therefore unnatural, or reprehensible, for Salvian to use such a strategy here, since he is concerned to construct an argument which is rhetorically effective, not one that gives a fair exposition to the opposing point of view.

Salvian's failure to engage with opposing arguments makes it impossible to tell whether he was attacking anyone specific. Thus, it is not clear, when he fails even to mention any of the arguments for future rather than present judgement put forward by Augustine in works like *De civitate dei*, whether this is deliberate or due to ignorance. Is he passing over Augustine's ideas in contemptuous silence, or had he simply never read *De civitate dei*? While his knowledge of Augustine remains obscure, it is still possible to come to some reasonably firm conclusions about Salvian's purposes in this passage. First of all, regardless of his knowledge of Augustine, it is hardly credible that Salvian was unaware of the serious arguments which could be made against his position. Apart from the fact that he was

[36] The most important expositions of Augustine's view are *Civ.* 1.8-9 and 20.1-3.

[37] 'The language used here and elsewhere about adversaries referred to in the third person, and the nature of the arguments advanced against their religious views and practices, suggest that ridicule, and the discrediting of such attitudes in others' eyes, rather than direct disputational refutation, is the work's principal aim in its apologetic parts.' O'Daly 1994, 978, describing not Salvian, but Augustine's argumentation in parts of *De civitate dei.*

generally well-read, the idea that it was possible to see the consistent operation of divine justice in human affairs had been opposed by John Cassian,[38] an author with whom he must almost certainly have been familiar.[39] Salvian gives no more acknowledgement to Cassian's arguments than to Augustine's. We may conclude that this lack of acknowledgement was a deliberate choice.

This discloses something about the audience which Salvian saw himself as addressing. It was obviously not one which held ideas like those of Augustine, and could only be won over by careful refutation of them. Had this been so, Salvian could certainly have produced much stronger arguments than he did (for example, by enlarging on his later portrayal of present judgements as signs of God's anger, which may cause people to be reformed before their destiny is fixed irrevocably by the judgement after death).[40] However, his argument implies an audience which either had no knowledge of the opposing arguments, or was inclined to agree with Salvian's hostile view of them. Both are likely to have been the case in the milieu of southern Gaul in the 440s. In addressing those who were not theologically informed, Salvian could afford to dismiss his opponents' views without serious consideration, because his own opinion was the one which fitted most naturally with the preconceptions of ordinary Christians. Alternative views were more difficult to grasp, and therefore easier to caricature.

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[38] *Collatio* 6. Cassian's position is similar to Augustine's: he argues that God does not reward or punish people in this world (6.2), but that some are punished in the world as examples (6.11). This instance shows that the issue was not one on which there was a simple division between Augustinians and non-Augustinians.

[39] See Chapter 2 above.

[40] In Books 6 and 7. See especially 7.54.

2) Rome and Israel

The remainder of Book 1 is devoted to Salvian's demonstration of God's government by means of *exempla* (1.27-60). Salvian's exempla are incidents in the Old Testament in which God exercised judgement, beginning with the expulsion of Adam from Paradise (1.27-8), and moving through the punishment of Cain (28-30), the flood (31-4), God's treatment of Abraham (35-6), the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (37-9), and the plagues of Egypt (40-41). The last third of the book is an account of God's assistance to the Israelites in the desert and his punishment of those who rebelled (42-60).[1] Salvian's retelling of the biblical examples has implications which are greater than would appear from his own claim merely to be using exempla to support an argument which he has already presented.

One passage which has resonances elsewhere in *De gubernatione dei* is his account of the killing of Abel (1.28-30), which forms part of his engagement with the problem of the misfortunes of the innocent. Another is his account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (1.37-39). This sees the first appearance of a theme that is to run through the whole work, that of divine patience. According to Salvian, God is not a rigorous judge who punishes every infringement of his law. In fact he delays punishment almost indefinitely, to allow sinners a chance to reform themselves.[2] When his judgement is imposed it is only because a people's sins have become so outrageous that they force him to inflict punishment even against his own desire (*pietas dei peccatorum clamoribus vincitur* - 1.37). This idea is subsequently developed when Salvian discusses why God sent a plague to punish the Israelites for the golden calf, thus destroying some of the guilty but not others (1.48; cf. also

[1] On this part of Book 1 see Lagarrigue 1975, 19-20.; Badewien 1980, 150.

[2] The idea had appeared briefly in *Ep.* 9.6.

1.58). Here he argues not only that punishment is delayed, but that the very punishment which eventually takes place is itself an act of mercy, since God's intention is to reform those who witness the punishment, not just to chastise its victims. This concept is one which has the greatest importance in Salvian's account of the fate of the Roman empire. He claims again and again that the Romans have been the beneficiaries of such patience, though he also claims that they have failed to utilise the opportunity which it has given them.[3] In particular, the entire final third of Book 6 (6.66-99), is a panorama of the punishments which have recently fallen on the Romans, and their failure to respond to them (especially 6.66-8, 75-6, 90). Essentially it restates the case made in this part of Book 1, except that it is illustrated by examples taken not from the Bible, but from contemporary Gaul, Spain and Africa. Salvian's portrayal of God's patience is one of the ways in which he draws direct parallels between the Christian Romans and the ancient Jews, both during the Exodus and in the later Jewish kingdoms.

These parallels are drawn explicitly and implicitly throughout *De gubernatione dei*, and are fundamental to Salvian's concept of judgement within the world. The extent to which this is this case only becomes apparent from considering Salvian's arguments at length. There are passages of explicit comparison in the remainder of Salvian's account of the Israelites (1.57, 59), but in the meantime the incidents which Salvian relates should be seen not merely as instances of God's judgement, but as instances of sin and punishment within a relationship between God and the people which owes him obedience, these being the Jews in the times Salvian is narrating, but in his own time the Christians. It is the account in Book 1 of the Exodus and the Israelites in the desert (1.40-59) which establishes this parallel. It therefore has an importance for the work as whole which is greater than that of Salvian's

[3] 3.42; 4.34-8; 5.46-50; 7.50-52.

other arguments in Books 1 and 2.

The beginning of Salvian's account, up to the crossing of the Red Sea (1.40-41), merely fulfils his promise to give examples of God's judgements. The true beginning of his portrayal of the Israelites as a historic pattern for his own time is his elaborate description of the benefits which they received in the desert (1.42-44). Someone, he imagines, might respond that God no longer offers people such benefits (1.45). He begins his reply by pointing out that it is meaningless for people to regard it as unfair for them not to receive manna, quails which fly into their hands or water which bursts from rocks, when they enjoy all the benefits of an agricultural society (1.45). God has not changed, only human circumstances. But apart from this, he claims, even if such things were offered to the people of his own day, they would reject them. They envy the blessing granted to the Hebrews because it is a human vice to prefer what others have to what one has oneself.[4] The Hebrews prove the point, for when they possessed these benefits, they were discontented, and longed for the luxurious foods of Egypt.[5] This allows him to generalise:

> Accedit quoque illud, quod generale ferme est omni homini, ut deo semper ingratus sit, insitoque hoc et quasi nativo malo se cuncti invicem vinciunt, ut beneficiis dei detrahant ne debitores se esse cognoscant. (1.47)

The theme of this passage is one that resonates through the whole work. The accusation that almost everyone is ungrateful to God for the benefits which he grants them is already prominent in *Ad ecclesiam*. It will be repeated frequently in his moral criticism in the later books of *De gubernatione dei*. One of Salvian's most frequently repeated claims is of the disproportionate scale of these benefits, which makes human ingratitude particularly wicked, beyond the measure of ingratitude in human life. This fact gives its true significance to the

[4] Salvian quotes a saying to this effect by Publilius Syrus (*Sententiae* 5.28). See Rochus 1930, 596.

[5] Used by Cassian as a pattern for monks who look back to their secular lives (*Col.* 7.5.7).

rapturous description of God's gifts to the Hebrews in the preceding passage (1.42-44). They received such benefits from God (1.46), yet still disdained them.

The most important element in this passage is the creation of another link between the Israelites and contemporary Christians. Both are ungrateful, both despise the benefits they enjoy and despise the things they do not have. After these statements about human ingratitude (1.45-47), the character of Salvian's narrative is correspondingly transformed. From being a story of God's generosity and his judgements against the Hebrews' enemies (1.40-44), it becomes one of disobedience by the Hebrews and God's judgements against them:

> Liberatus quondam de Pharaonis iugo populus Hebraeorum ad Sina montem praevaricatus est et statim a domino pro errore percussus. (1.48)

But why, Salvian asks, if the whole people sinned in this case (the golden calf), was only a part of the people punished? He presents it as proof that, as with Sodom, God's mercy has primacy over his justice.

> Quia pius scilicet dominus partem percussit sententiae suae gladio, ut partem corrigeret exemplo probaretque omnibus simul et coercendo censuram et indulgendo pietatem. Censura enim fuit quod castigavit, pietas quod pepercit. (1.48)

All deserve punishment, but most are spared so that they may be corrected by the example of the others. Those who are punished are punished deservedly, but their fate is also a sign which should cause the remainder to reform themselves. This idea is reiterated by Salvian in almost identical terms later in Book 1 (1.58), and is developed at length in his account of the barbarian invasions of his own time.

After making his claims about justice and mercy, Salvian relates a number of cases in which individuals among the Israelites sinned, and were immediately punished by God.[6]

[6] The man who gathered wood on the Sabbath (this example is also used by Salvian at 6.55); a blasphemer; Abiu and Nadab, who offered alien fire to the Lord; Miriam, who slandered Moses (1.49-54.).

He stresses the instantaneous nature of the punishments, their function as examples to others,[7] and the inexorability of God's judgement, such that it is enacted even against the wishes of the victim of the crime being punished (1.54).[8] The last chapters of the book, however, move from the actions of individuals to those of the Hebrews collectively (1.55-59). Salvian lists instance after instance in which the whole people rebelled, and the rebellion was punished with miraculous violence which was inflicted on a few but observed by all (1.55-6). Yet the rebellions continued. He comments:

> Sed cum haec tanta fierent, caelestis cura non profuit: adhibita est saepissime coercitio, sed emendatio non secuta. Sicut enim nos, cum flagellamur assidue, non corrigimur, ita et illi, cum caederentur saepissime, non emendabantur. (1.57)

The cycle of crime and exemplary punishment, punishment ignored and further crime is identical among the Israelites and the Christian Romans. In each case the people are sinful, rebellious and ungrateful towards God; God delays punishment even when it is deserved, because of his mercy and paternal love;[9] punishment is eventually inflicted on some members of the community and is a warning to the rest; the warning is ignored, people continue to sin, and they come to deserve further punishment. The Old Testament has therefore given Salvian a model of the relationship between a sinful people and God, which he applies to the Romans of his own time.

After his explicit comparison of the Romans and the Hebrews, Salvian explains that even when the entire people sinned, as the Hebrews did in the revolt of Korah, God refrained from destroying them all, because he wished, by punishing a few, to correct the remainder,

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[7] A particularly strong statement is 1.52, where he claims than even unintentional lapses can justly be punished with the greatest severity in order to act as a warning to others.

[8] This point is repeated in Book 2 (p. 147 below).

[9] This assertion owes more to Salvian's conception of God than to the Old Testament narrative, in which God is much less tolerant and the extra chances given to the Israelites owe more to persuasion by Moses than to God's inclination to mercy (cf. especially Numbers 14:11ff.).

thus exercising *indulgentia* as well as justice (1.58). But eventually his mercy was exhausted, and he determined that none of the rebellious host who had left Egypt should enter the promised land. So, eventually, *all* of those who had repeatedly sinned were destroyed, condemned to die in the wilderness. Again, the warning to the Romans is explicit:

> Quae res et timori et emendationi nostrae simul proficere deberet, scilicet ne qui illorum exemplo penitus non corrigimur, illorum fortasse exitu puniamur. (1.59)

Although Salvian has not yet discussed the sins of the Romans or the ways in which they are being punished, he implies that they are on a path to destruction, unless they heed the message from God that is to be found in their present punishments. Salvian ends his narrative at this point. There were plenty of subsequent instances of lapsing and punishment which he could have related, but is easy to see why he should not have done so. The fatal conclusion to the Exodus story provided the strongest possible warning that could be given, and it would only have been weakened by listing example after example from subsequent books of the Bible. Salvian does use such examples later in *De gubernatione dei*; the defeats by external enemies which were inflicted on the Jews provided too exact a parallel with contemporary events for him to ignore.[10] But the threat, not just of defeat but of total destruction, has been made, and is eventually repeated in direct relation to Salvian's own time (6.96-8). Its reality has been established by the narrative which he has given in Book 1.

The belief that Christians were the successors to the Jews as the people of God, was shared by Christian writers of all shades of opinion.[11] The simple use of the events narrated by Salvian as examples to be avoided was very widespread in Christian literature, going back

[10] For example 6.45, with its reference to Jeremiah 44:21

[11] See for example Simon 1964 or Lieu 1992 (though neither of these works discuss Salvian).

to Paul.[12] What makes Salvian unique is the determination with which he pursues the consequences which follow from the idea of the ancient Jews and the Christians as parallel peoples, the chief of which is that if the Christians anger God as the Jews did, they will be punished in an identical manner.[13] In the course of fulfilling his promise to prove God's judgement by means of *exempla*, Salvian has therefore outlined the model of the relationship between God and his people on earth which underlies the entire argument of *De gubernatione dei*.[14] It is this part of Book 1 which can most truly be called the foundation of the work.

[12] 1 Cor. 10:1-11.

[13] A somewhat different treatment of this aspect of the Old Testament can be found in a Gallic work slightly earlier than *G*, the *Chronicle* of Sulpicius Severus. Although Sulpicius is just as critical of his contemporaries as Salvian (on some issues, like the behaviour of leading bishops, his criticism is more explicit), he does not exploit the Old Testament depictions of communal sinfulness directly to support his social critique. Instead, the main characteristic of his account is hostility to the Jews. Their repeated lapses into sinfulness, and, in particular, their rejection of the authority of leaders chosen by God, are portrayed as proof of their irreparable corruption, justifications of their abandonment by God, and as a prefiguring of the ultimate sin of the crucifixion (Sulpicius, *Chronicle* 1.19ff., 26, 50ff.).

[14] Inexplicably, this fact has been virtually ignored in published studies of *G*. Badewien, whose book is generally the best treatment of Salvian, barely alludes to the second half of Book 1 (Badewien 1980, 150-51), and treats the Hebrews as a *positive* model, on the basis of the early part of Salvian's narrative, in which they receive benefits from God. He sums up the entire remainder of the book with the bald statement that '[Salvian] berichtet auch über den Widerstand Israels gegen Gott'. Cleland 1970, 273, notes (very briefly) that God's judgements against the Israelites parallel those against the Romans, but still treats Salvian's attitude towards them as positive. Inglebert 1996, 659, acknowledges the parallel hesitantly in a footnote.

3) Consolidation

Book 2 is the shortest of *De gubernatione dei*, and is used by Salvian to consolidate the claims made in Book 1 with further arguments about the nature of God, this time relying more overtly on the citation of scriptural authorities. Salvian declares that the book will demonstrate God's judgement by means of *testimonia* (2.1), that is by direct quotations from the Bible, rather than by reference to its narrative.[1] This does make a difference to the way in which the book is presented, though the arguments which he builds around his *testimonia* are of the same kind as those in the previous book. He promises (2.2) to use *testimonia* to demonstrate God's presence, his government and his judgement, beginning with God's *praesentia*, because this is necessary for *gubernatio* and *iudicium*. In the proof of God's presence (2.2-5), he cites a series of scriptural passages which attest God's watchfulness, his attentiveness to the prayers of the just, and his observation of the evil in order to destroy them. Moving on to proof of God's government, Salvian cites passages referring to God's power within the world, and his omnipresence (2.6-10). He rounds this off with another hostile assertion about his opponents' beliefs, which this time are held to imply that God ignores and neglects the world even if he is present in it (2.10). Not even the most evil person would want to be constantly in another person's presence solely in order to demonstrate callous indifference towards them, but, Salvian alleges, those who accept God's presence in the world but deny the Present Judgement attribute such an attitude to the Deity (2.11-12).

After this piece of invective, Salvian turns to the demonstration of God's judgement (2.13). For this he switches from using statements about God drawn from various parts of

[1] Lagarrigue 1975, 20.

the Bible, to using testimonies taken from a particular story, that of David (2.13-24).[2] God struck down Nabal, who had insulted David, and Absalom when he rebelled against his father (13-14). When David himself sinned by bringing about the death of Uriah, God punished him in turn, showing that there is no bias in his judgements (15-23).[3] In the course of his narration, Salvian repeats the point that when God wishes, he may inflict a punishment more severe than that desired by the victim, thus showing that he is concerned with the crime itself, not with satisfying human wishes (2.14),[4] but his main theme is that all the judgements of God which he describes were carried out immediately in this world, not delayed until after death, and that this constitutes God's permanent dispensation for the world (2.18, 24):

> Ecce quotiens testes sacri in persona unius hominis non respexisse tantummodo deum, verum etiam iudicasse docuerunt. Et cur haec omnia? Cur utique nisi ut intellegeremus eandem futuram semper in mundo censuram et coercitionem domini, quae fuisset? (2.24)

Finally, Salvian cites passages from the Psalms in which the psalmist appeals to God for immediate help or judgement against his enemies, stressing that the appeals are for help in the present world, not at a future judgement (2.25-8). Salvian concludes the book by claiming that his promise to prove the care, government and judgement of God by means of reason, *exempla* and *testimonia* has been fulfilled sufficiently, especially since the remaining books will continue to describe and refute the things said by his adversaries (2.28).

Although Book 2 introduces no new arguments, and in its brevity may appear as little more than an afterthought, it is important in strengthening Salvian's position. Its role in showing that the claims made in Book 1 are supported by direct biblical testimonies is

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[2] As told in 1 and 2 Samuel. Salvian returns to these incidents later (4.87-8). See p. 199.

[3] The punishments were the death of David's son by Uriah's wife (explicitly attested in Scripture), and the crimes of his sons Amnon and Absalom (not explicitly linked to Uriah's death in the Bible, though 2 Samuel 12:10 could reasonably be held to imply it).

[4] Above, p. 143.

important for Salvian, since his rhetorical stance depends so much on his claim to be the spokesman of biblical truths. The significance of the string of biblical citations of which the book largely consists lies in Salvian's positioning of himself in relation to them. The citations, as he stresses throughout the book, are the testimony of *sermo divinus*. By applying them to his own arguments he portrays himself as merely reproducing this testimony, while implying that those who may disagree, for example about whether judgement takes place in this world or is postponed till after death, are at odds not merely with him but with the Bible, with *sermo divinus* itself. Salvian begins the next book by reiterating, in stronger terms than ever, his claim to be merely reproducing biblical truth.[5] Book 2 plays an important part in establishing this position, and in consolidating Salvian's claims for the reality of divine judgement within the world, before he moves on, in the following books, to consider the nature of Christian society.

[5] 3.1-6, on which see the next section.

5) The Church: Law and Community

1) The Church as a Moral Community

Founding principles (3.1-8)

The criticisms of Christian society which Salvian puts forward in both *Ad ecclesiam* and *De gubernatione dei* emerge from his ideas about the nature of the church. He never gives a systematic account of these ideas; they are expressed in the course of his polemic. His ecclesiology must be inferred from the comments that he makes while attacking people's behaviour and attitudes; such an attack forms the main subject matter of Book 3. Salvian begins Book 3 by describing Books 1 and 2 as the foundations of his work. The building is unshakeable, because it has been built up and made solid by scripture itself in a double fashion, with the Bible not only providing the bricks and mortar but the hands which shaped them (3.1). This image puts into a figurative form Salvian's claim to authority: that he is not putting forward his own ideas but merely expounding the Bible, a theme familiar from *Ad ecclesiam*. It is important for the rather involved discussion which follows, in which Salvian places his arguments in the context of the gulf between God's will and the limited capacity of human beings to understand it.

This begins with a reiteration of the challenge put by Salvian's imagined opponent: why, if God governs the world, is the fate of the good worse than that of the evil? (3.2) This time it contains a new element, 'Why is the condition of *the barbarians* better than ours?' In spite of the fact that the next six books deal with this question, Salvian begins by claiming that he cannot answer it, and that it should not even by asked by true Christians. Whatever God does must be just. To prove the justice of the human condition it is therefore necessary to demonstrate merely that this condition exists through God's will, which he has already

done in the first two books (3.2). Salvian argues at some length (3.2-5) that the only evidence that is admissible in a discussion of God's government is the Bible. He claims that he therefore cannot answer the question put to him. As a human being, it is impossible for him to give reasons for God's actions, and to attempt to do so would be sacrilegious. All that matters is that if something is done by God, it is by definition just (*satis sit, pro universis rationibus, auctor deus*); no one can call one action by God just and another unjust, nor presume to explain why God causes events to happen as they do (3.3). Statements by human beings require confirmation by arguments or witnesses, but these can add nothing to what is attested by God himself. When we read in the Bible that God has done something, this alone is proof; God's word is its own witness (3.4).

These assertions seem to deny the legitimacy of any further discussion of the subject, yet Salvian appears to shift his position in the very next sentence, asserting that the very fact that the Bible is God's word compels him to argue further:

> Sed tamen cum per scripturas sacras scire nos quasi de arcano animi ac mentis suae quaedam voluerit deus noster, quia ipsum quodammodo scripturae sacrae oraculum dei mens est, quicquid vel agnosci per suos vel praedicari deus voluit non tacebo. (3.5)

At first sight Salvian's argumentation seems incoherent, first insisting that any human statement about God is superfluous because God expresses himself in the Bible, then using the status of the Bible to justify himself in arguing further. Salvian has been seen as taking up one position, then simply dropping it for another.[1] In fact his argument is more coherent than it appears, but its full import is only apparent when seen alongside the claims which he makes elsewhere about the relationship between his own work and the Bible.[2]

Salvian always insists that the ideas which he puts forward are simply those of the

[1] 'A statement more within the perspective of Augustinian agnosticism, quickly abandoned' (Markus 1990, 171, n.43). Similarly, O'Donnell 1983, 31.

[2] See pp. 33-41 above

Bible, and that, as he describes himself in this passage, he is no more than their preacher (3.5). Whenever he describes God's actions in the world, no matter how idiosyncratic his ideas seem, he always represents himself as simply telling his contemporaries what they should already know from the Bible. In the passage under discussion (3.1-5), Salvian is attempting, having put forward arguments about the nature of God, to protect them against potential challenge with the claim, made at the very beginning of *De gubernatione dei* (1.1), that the authority of the Bible should be sufficient to dismiss any objection (3.2-6). Trumping possible objectors to his arguments justifying apparent misfortune, Salvian asserts that human reason cannot know why God permits one person to suffer and another to prosper (3.3). That such events are both deliberate and just must be accepted on the authority of the Bible:

> Cum legimus quod regat cuncta quae fecit, hoc ipso adprobamus quod regit quia se regere testatur; cum legimus quod praesenti iudicio universa dispensat, hoc ipso evidens est quod iudicat quia se iudicare confirmat. Alia enim omnia, id est humana dicta, argumentis ac testibus egent; dei autem sermo ipse sibi testis est. (3.4)

The significance which he accords to the Bible cannot be overstated: it is nothing less than the mind of God (3.5). It contains all knowledge necessary to lead a Christian life (3.2). But moreover, by revealing this in the Bible, God *requires* that it be preached to his people.[3] The distinctions made by Salvian in the passage relate to his stance as one who is preaching what God has revealed. When he rejects the possibility of answering certain questions about God, he is rejecting the idea of giving an *extraneous* explanation of God's actions; one which attempts to provide explanations constructed independently of the Bible.

> Neque enim necesse est ut argumentis a me probetur quod hoc ipso, quia a deo dicitur, comprobatur. (3.4)

From Salvian's point of view, statements like this do not compromise his subsequent

[3] On the significance of Salvian's attitude towards the Bible, see Vessey 1988, 100f.

arguments because he denies that he is attempting to prove his points with arguments of his own; he insists that his arguments represent what is said by God.[4] When he disclaims *argumenta a me*, he does not, therefore, mean 'arguments put forward by me' (i.e. proclaiming or elucidating the Bible), but 'arguments *invented* by me' (independently of the Bible). From the point of view of the reader, Salvian's practice may seem difficult to reconcile with such a claim, but this is not necessarily relevant to Salvian's self-perception. All his comments suggest that he saw himself as proclaiming truths about his society which he found in the Bible, and his personal contribution as being not the invention of the ideas which he puts forward, but simply the courage to state unwelcome truths. This position is already well-established, and the argument at the beginning of Book 3 strengthens it by showing him as both an enemy of presumptuous human speculations about God, and as a dedicated preacher of the message which God requires people to hear. As a result he can make this statement of his own ignorance but not regard it as undermining the claims which he goes on to make about God, because to him these are merely repetitions or explanations of what is said in the Bible.

After making this point, Salvian returns to the main issue, people's belief that God does not govern the world (3.5-8). He begins by defining his audience, rejecting the idea of addressing pagans, because he claims that they would disdain the proof that he is going to offer. Instead he will address those 'of Christian name', 'because there is no one of Christian name who does not want to seem to himself to be a Christian' (3.5). Salvian thus acknowledges the importance of Christianity in the sense of identity even of those Christians whom he regards as inadequate. It is a necessary step in the argument. Salvian argues straightaway (3.6) that many Christians have a wholly erroneous idea of the balance between

[4] Cf. his later claim that he and Paul are saying the same things (4.78).

the duties imposed on them by their religion and the benefits that they can expect from God. It is this gulf between people's perception of their merits and their actual conduct which forms the subject matter of *De gubernatione dei* from this point on. Salvian wants to show people who think that they are good, or at least adequate, Christians, that they are mistaken. This argument would not work for people who simply did not care whether they were good Christians or not; so it is logical for Salvian to declare that his arguments are irrelevant to pagans.[5] But as long as he is addressing those who regard themselves as Christians, he claims that he can prove his case even to those of *impiae ac paganicae infidelitatis* (3.5).

What is the nature of the error that leads Christians to believe that God does not govern the world? They complain that Christians are less fortunate than others. They should know better than to do so, since they have been told by Paul himself that Christians are placed in the world to bear suffering and hardship,[6] but many people ignorantly believe that as a 'payment for faith' (*stipendia fidei*) Christians should be stronger than other peoples. Salvian declares that since they hold this opinion, he will acquiesce in it (3.6). This statement has been given a quite disproportionate significance in some studies of Salvian, where it has been treated as the key passage in the entire work, and held to show that succeeding arguments based on the assumption that Christians are judged according to their acts and punished by events within the world do not represent Salvian's own beliefs, but are merely a concession to the less sophisticated audience he was addressing.[7] In fact Salvian is always

[5] His position does not in any way constitute evidence about the strength or weakness of paganism in mid-fifth century Marseille (suggested by Paschoud 1967, 295).

[6] 1 Thess. 3:3.

[7] 'The long exposition that follows in books three and following is founded on this concession: *granted that* it is possible to add up services and rewards to strike a balance in theology. In other words, granted the Semipelagianism, or rather thinly-veiled Paganism, of Salvian's *audience*, it is still possible to vindicate the justice of God ... What is at stake is not Salvian's personal attitude but the attitude of his audience.' (O'Donnell 1983, 32; emphasis in original). In a similar vein: Badot 1976, 398-9; Badewien 1980, 22-3. It will be seen that this is an instance of the tendency, noted in the Introduction, for scholars to try to explain away aspects of Salvian's ideas that they find unpalatable. In O'Donnell's case, he is attempting to minimize the differences between Salvian's ideas and Augustine's.

ready to take a position for local effect which may not be consistent with his general ideas: one has to infer these from the arguments and positions that are repeated throughout his work, and these must be given priority over isolated, inconsistent passages, not vice versa. When Salvian makes this 'concession', he has already described the process of judgement within the world in relation to the Hebrews and applied it explicitly to the Romans, in passages which do not purport to be anything other than a direct expression of his own beliefs.[8] He has also insisted several times that God takes care of the just within the world.[9] Far from being the key to the whole work, the concession in 3.6 is made for local effect as a rhetorical move against Christians who misguidedly believe that God owes them a reward. Salvian agrees to the idea, so that, by giving the account of the true state of Christian society which follows, he can show that it is unjustified even on their own assumptions.[10] However, neither Salvian's account of the nature of true Christianity, nor that of its betrayal in real life, are dependent on the concession. Salvian's concession is simply part of a general rhetorical stance based on opposition to the belief which he attributes to the majority of Christians: that they fulfil God's commandments and that therefore God should protect them from temporal misfortune. Salvian argues against this in two ways. The first is that Christians have no right to expect to be protected from temporal misfortunes in any case. However, in Salvian's repertory this is always a minor argument, and it is overshadowed by the one developed from Book 3 onwards—that their behaviour falls so far short of what God requires that they force God to inflict temporal misfortune on them as a punishment.

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[8] See Chapter 4, Section 2.

[9] This is particularly so in his attack on the idea that judgement is deferred until after death (1.17-25), in which Salvian explicitly argues that one of the reasons for worshipping God is to obtain benefits in this life, and in which the statement *non prosperitatem in vitae istius petimus* is attributed sarcastically to those against whom he is arguing. The point is reiterated at length in Book 2, in which Salvian uses testimonies from the psalms to show that God cares for the just (2.3-4), going so far as to describe God's attitude to their prayers as *quasi oboedientia*, and stressing that the prayers are for benefits in this life, not the next (2.26-7).

[10] Thus far, O'Donnell is correct.

Having temporarily allowed that Christians may receive *stipendia fidei*, Salvian turns his attention to the faith for which people expect to receive such a reward:

> Qui enim tam magnam credulitatis et fidei mercedem in hoc saeculo esse volumus, qualis credulitas aut fides ipsa esse debeat considerare debemus. Quid est igitur credulitas vel fides? Opinor, fideliter hominem Christo credere, id est fidelem deo esse, hoc est fideliter dei mandata servare. (3.7)

Genuine faith can be manifested only by obedience to the *dei mandata*. He likens the Christian's duty of obedience to that owed by slaves to their masters.[11] As slaves are condemned if they fail to preserve things entrusted to them by a human master, so are Christians if they corrupt the goods entrusted to them by God (3.7). This characterisation of Christianity is fundamental to Salvian's whole understanding of the nature of the church. It has been implied before, but this is its most emphatic statement so far. It leads directly to the attack which follows on the morality of the majority of Christians; indeed, it is this definition of Christianity that Salvian uses to link his critique of Christian society with the argument about God's government of the world.

The goods entrusted by God which Christians must guard are the law, the prophets, the gospels, and the *apostolicae lectiones*; in other words the sources of the *mandata* which constitute Christianity. To these Salvian adds the sacraments of baptism and chrismation (3.8). These must all be preserved uncorrupt. Salvian places an unusual emphasis on chrismation, or anointing, which usually accompanied baptism.[12] He states that among the ancient Hebrews, the *peculiaris ac propria dei gens*, anointing was a sign that chosen men had been called by God to kingship; in the same way, all Christians are called to heaven, *cum post chrisma ecclesiasticum omnia dei mandata fecissent* (3.8).

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[11] Introducing a comparison that will be developed at much greater length. See below p. 173-8.

[12] Chrismation, anointing with oil, had become the customary conclusion to the baptism ceremony since the third century, and was seen as conferring entry to the Christian community. It was depicted rhetorically as equivalent to joining an army (Tertullian, *De praesc. haer.* 40) or a priesthood (Tertullian, *De res. carn.* 8, 26; *De baptismo* 7; Augustine, *Enarratio in psalm* 26.2.2). See Beck 1950, 180; Lampe 1951, 159, 179, 215-22; John 1993, 64-6.

This is very strong language, and revealing about Salvian's view of the condition of being a Christian. It is a state which cannot be purely nominal, but is rather an awesome vocation, comparable to kingship. It is entered by baptism and chrismation, but must be fulfilled by obedience to *omnia dei mandata*. The passage is thus loaded with suppositions which underlies Salvian's subsequent portrayal of church and society. God hands down to human beings his law, identified with the Bible. God's people, once the Hebrews, now the Christians, are those who are dedicated to obedience to this law. Subjection to the law is their very essence. Baptism is portrayed as an act of admission to this dedicated community, among whom those who persist in obedience will achieve the ultimate reward (3.8). These ideas about the nature of the church determine the criticisms which follow of the actual practice of Christians.

Salvian therefore uses the opening of Book 3 to give a fundamental description of his own status as a writer about the church, and a definitive statement about the nature of the church itself. The passage is entirely coherent with his previous statements on the same themes, but formulates as explicit principles ideas which have hitherto been implied or expressed in a fragmentary form. In particular, the significance of Salvian's definition of the duties of being a Christian (3.5-8) cannot be overstated. It is the foundation for his reasoning throughout the remaining books of *De gubernatione dei*.[13]

[13] Salvian's view of the significance of baptism has clear similarities to the view of baptism expressed by Pelagian writers, on which see Brown 1972, 193-203.

The indictment (3.9-49)

Having defined true Christianity as obedience to God's commandments, Salvian announces that he will examine the extent to which these are fulfilled (3.9). For the remainder of Book 3, Salvian lists commandment after commandment given by God to Christians but ignored by them in practice. He begins with further rhetorical concessions; he will leave aside the most exacting requirements of the Old and New Testaments, even the things which should not be neglected at all, and see who fulfils even a few easy commandments. There are some commandments, he states sarcastically—to take no thought for the morrow, to be content with a single tunic, sincerely to love one's enemies—which people cannot even tolerate, let alone obey, so he will ignore these too (3.10).

People's failure to take such commandments seriously means that they compound their sins by regarding themselves as *boni* and *sancti*. Yet the Bible makes clear that even to hate or to be angry with someone is worthy of damnation. As no one is immune from anger, so no one is immune from guilt (3.11-13). If in these instances people do not merely fail to do what is required, but actually do the opposite, when will they do the greater things that are also commanded: to renounce all they possess, to imitate Christ? (3.14-15) After a digression on past Christians who did do these things, Salvian turns to minor commandments, which all Christians should be able to obey at all times (3.22). Jesus ordered Christians to give up their goods rather than engage in litigation, but nobody does so. Nobody turns the other cheek, or in any way obeys the injunction to do to others what they would wish done to them (3.22-5). In fact they do the very opposite of these things, striving to cause the utmost harm to those with whom they are in dispute, and at all times thinking of themselves and not of others; more people perjure themselves than obey the commandment not to swear oaths at all (3.31); everybody indulges in cursing, envy, slander,

and complaining (3.31-6). It is therefore only just that God ignores the wishes of human beings, just as they ignore his commandments (3.41-43). Even churches are abused by those who plot new crimes in them even as they seek forgiveness for previous ones (3.46-49).

This is not a denunciation of randomly chosen failings. Its significance lies in the nature of the church as a community and the duty which binds it, as laid down at the beginning of the book. This is Salvian's indictment of the church as a collectivity.[14] He is not interested in condemning behaviour because it is wrong, but in demonstrating that the behaviour he condemns characterises the Christian community.[15] Hence his insistence on the ubiquity of the sins which he denounces.[16] He reinforces his claims about the illegitimacy of regarding any part of the law as dispensable by developing the analogy between the relationship of Christians to God, and that of slaves in human society to their masters (3.27-29, 43). This is introduced by the objection to Salvian's attack, which he imagines being made by his audience, that they should receive credit for fulfilling the lesser commandments, even if they do not fulfil the greater (3.27).[17] Salvian goes on to claim that in fact they do not fulfil even the minor commandments (3.30-39), but he also uses his analogy to put forward a more fundamental argument about the obligations placed on Christians by the divine law. Slaves are not permitted to obey some of their masters' commands and ignore others; any

[14] Note his use of phrases like *ecclesiasticos populos* (16), *ecclesiastica plebs* (46).

[15] Badewien 1980, 81-3.

[16] Explicit statements at 3.13-14, 19, 27, 31, 40-1, 43-5. Throughout the book Salvian normally makes his criticisms in the first person plural, implying membership of a community in which the sins he condemns are general.

[17] The distinction between *maiora* and *minora* is between those commandments which imply a complete transformation of life (those listed in 3.10), and those relating to universally accepted precepts of morality. This distinction is accepted by virtually all Christian writers, though they treat it in different ways: see Olsen 1982, 5-6. Badewien 1980, 67, draws attention to the analogous distinction made by Pelagius (*Ad Demetriadem* 9-10) between *mandata* and *consilia*. Pelagius draws a much clearer distinction than Salvian between the former as incumbent on all Christians and the latter only on those who wished to dedicate themselves to religion. However, *pace* Badewien, the *maiora* of Salvian and the *consilia* of Pelagius denote different concepts. Salvian means the more demanding precepts of the New Testament, while Pelagius is referring specifically to renunciation of things *permitted* by the Bible, such as marriage.

human master would regard such behaviour by his slaves as intolerable (3.27). If a slave uses his own judgement to decide which commands to obey, he is following his own will rather than his master's even when he does carry out his master's orders. But slaves and masters, though their legal condition is unequal, are equal in their nature as human beings. It must therefore be infinitely unjust for people to despise the commands of God, who is incomparable in nature, when they are outraged by similar behaviour from fellow human beings (3.28).[18] Later Salvian extends his condemnation, in line with the development of his argument in subsequent chapters; Christians are more rebellious against God than slaves are against their masters, because they do not merely fail to do what they are ordered, but strive with every effort to do the opposite (3.43).

The analogy between the relationship of Christians to God and slaves to their masters is not simply an ad hoc response to the demands of the argument; it becomes very important in succeeding books, where it forms an important aspect of Salvian's portrayal of God.[19] In this context it serves to reinforce his portrayal of the actual behaviour of Christians as a scandalous perversion of the nature of a community whose essence is obedience. Salvian's attack on his fellow Christians does not therefore consist of moral *criticism* as such, since he is not really concerned with evaluating people's behaviour or defining it as immoral. Presented as it is, in juxtaposition with divine commands and prohibitions, this is assumed to be self-evident. His purpose is simpler; to establish that disobedience towards God is universal. Throughout this section he introduces commandment after commandment with phrases like *salvator prohibet* or *deus iubet*, only leading to the response, *Quis faciat?*[20]

[18] This argument is put forward in almost identical terms in Cyprian, *Ad Demetrianum* 8, from which Salvian presumably borrowed it. The accusation of hypocrisy which it embodies is developed by Salvian in the attacks on the powerful which begin at the end of Book 3.

[19] See below p. 171ff.

[20] 3.10, 22, 43.

While Salvian keeps up this refrain through all the various sins which he describes, another offence apart from simple disobedience attracts his attention, the belief of his audience that, far from participating in a continual rebellion against God, they are living an acceptably Christian life. It is this belief, of course, that permits them to believe that their suffering is evidence of lack of care by God towards the world:

> Hoc enim ad crimina nostra addimus ut cum in omnibus rei simus etiam bonos nos et sanctos esse credamus, ac sic in nobis cumulentur iniquitatis offensae etiam praesumptione iustitiae. (3.12)

The claim that actions which most Christians regard as trivial lapses are crimes which God has said will be punished with destruction is reiterated several times in the course of Salvian's argument (e.g. 3.30, 32, 34), often reinforced by a biblical citation. It is therefore fitting that the culminating image in Salvian's attack is that of churches filled with a congregation of hypocrites, praying for forgiveness for past sins while they plan new ones, which they hurry off to commit as soon as the rites are concluded (3.46-9). The self-infatuation of those who do such things compounds their actual sins, and in Salvian's portrayal, puts the finishing touch to the image of a church whose members do not merely fail to act as they should, but whose conduct is a disfigured perversion of what is demanded by their status as Christians, a status they possess both as members of the church, and in their own estimation. By the time we arrive at this passage, Salvian has already stated his conclusion about the church:

> Ipsa ecclesia, quae in omnibus esse debet placatrix dei, quid est aliud quam exacerbatrix dei? Aut, praeter paucissimos quosdam qui mala fugiunt, quid est aliud paene omnis coetus Christianorum quam sentina vitiorum? (3.44)

The description of the church as a *sentina vitiorum* is one of Salvian's more celebrated phrases, but only in the context of his argument does it gain its full force as a description of a world turned upside down, in which good becomes evil, the *populus dei* becomes a sewer.

Salvian juxtaposes the corruption of the present church not only with an ideal

prescribed by God, but, as in *Ad ecclesiam*, with the church as it existed at an earlier period of its history, when its members had lived up to the standards which he advocates.[21] Salvian does not give an explanation for the decline of the church here, as he does in *Ad ecclesiam*,[22] but his references to the idea make it clear by their very casualness that he took its reality for granted.[23] The idea of a previous age of perfection in the church does not in itself betray any serious reflection on the nature of a Christian community in society. It is a natural extension of the use of the apostles and other individual figures as models of virtue. Salvian does this in Book 3, portraying Paul as a figure who should be imitated by all Christians, having himself imitated Christ (3.17-19, 26). However, the description of Paul develops into an account of the characteristics of the early Christian community which, while an idealisation, is more complex than a simple antithesis between apostolic times and the present. Salvian imagines someone objecting that it is no longer necessary for Christians to suffer as Paul did, because times have changed (3.20). This he concedes:

> Non enim sunt pagani principes, non tyranni persecutores, non sanguis sanctorum funditur nec fides suppliciis comprobatur ... Et ideo cum et principes Christiani sint et persecutio nulla sit et religio non inquietetur, qui ad probandam fidem experimentis durioribus non compellimur, inferioribus saltim officiis domino plus placere debemus. (3.20-21)

Times have indeed changed, but not in a way which favours Salvian's imagined opponent. Aside from the other benefits which God gives to the human race, he has now excused Christians from the testing through persecution which they endured in past. Since they are now required to show their faith only by the less demanding method of obeying God's commandments rather than shedding their blood, this does not alleviate their duty to do what

[21] On Salvian's portrayal of the early church, see Olsen 1982, 8-13.

[22] *E* 1.2-5; 3.10.

[23] *In hoc fides recidit ut...* (3.10); *ecclesiastica plebs redacta est ut...* (3.46).

is commanded, but enhances it.[24] Far from being an excuse for failing to carry out their duty, as Salvian imagines his audience objecting, the change in times since the age of Paul makes this failure even more culpable.

Salvian does not claim simply that more stringent demands were made on Christians in an earlier age, but that the Christians of those times fulfilled such demands. His wording shows that he is not thinking only of apostolic times, but of the subsequent history of Christian communities living within pagan society:

> Omittamus ergo illa quae beatissimus Paulus pertulit, immo quae in libris postea de religione conscriptis omnes admodum Christianos legimus pertulisse, qui ad caelestis regiae ianuam gradibus poenarum suarum ascendentes scalas sibi quodammodo de eculeis catastisque fecerunt. (3.22)

Thus, 'books written afterwards about religion' (i.e. after the time of Paul) show that the entire Christian community submitted to persecution and torture. This can only be a reference to post-biblical works of Christian literature such as those of Tertullian and Cyprian.[25] The age of the martyrs therefore offers a model not merely of individual heroism, but of an entire community which discharged its collective duty.[26] Once again, as with his use of the Jerusalem community in *Ad ecclesiam*, Salvian is using an image of the past church both as an example to show that what he advocates can be and has been achieved, and as a reproach to his audience for their own failure to achieve it. The image which earlier Christian writers had constructed of their own society has thus come to be accepted as historical fact by someone from a later period, and used as a mirror in which the apparent failings of his own time can be reflected.

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[24] This argument is sketched more briefly at *Ep.* 9.8.

[25] Salvian may have been influenced by other literature which conveyed such an image of the church, such as martyr acts, but there are no direct echoes of these in his text.

[26] Attempts to create contemporary parallels for martyrdom became centred around asceticism, where the image of the self-mortification of the ascetic as the contemporary equivalent to the martyr's suffering became something of a cliché. See e.g. Sulpicius, *Ep.* 2.9; Hilary, *V. Hon*. 37.3. (Ps)-Faustus, *Serm*. 10, is a relatively rare application of the idea to secular life.

The subject of Salvian's indictment in Book 3 is therefore the nature of the church, or more specifically the contrast between the nature of the church prescribed by God and the character of the church which actually exists. In the opening chapters of the book (3.1-8), Salvian explains the character of the church as an entity whose nature is constituted by obedience to God's commandments. He then goes on to show how the nature of the church is betrayed by its members from top to bottom (3.9-49). This is the reason why he focuses on the ubiquitous sins of everyday life; it is only by doing so that he can construct an indictment of the entire community. It is also precisely these sins which people are most likely to dismiss as too trivial to undermine their claim to be good Christians. According to Salvian's model, however, it is not the sin committed which matters so much as the act of disobedience. In a church whose essence is obedience to God, this universal disobedience constitutes an almost indescribable perversion of its true nature; a veritable 'trahison des Chrétiens', as one writer has described it.[27]

It is evident that Salvian's anger at Christian society is the result of a model of the church based on a duty to obey all commandments of the Gospels. Given this fundamental principle, there is no way in which he can come to terms with the phenomenon of sin within the Christian community. Augustine, faced with the same problem, came to envisage the church as a *corpus permixtum* in which good and bad Christians are inextricably bound together, but for Salvian it is precisely such a condition which is intolerable. His image is that of the community united in obedience to God, which he draws from the literary depictions of the pre-Constantinian church. Given that he sees this as the only legitimate model, Salvian has no device by which he can take into account the transformation of the church from such communities to the mass institution, embracing almost the whole of

[27] Nouailhat 1988, 275.

society, which existed in his own day.[28]

This general characterisation of Salvian's image of the church is one which remains true throughout the further developments of his argument in *De gubernatione dei*. However, the depiction of the Christian community in Book 3 does not complete his exploration of the nature of the church. Though he does not devote such sustained attention to the issue of collective Christian guilt again, he will add new elements to his indictment as his argument progresses in subsequent books.

[28] Cf. Badewien 1980, 67, who writes of Salvian's demand 'alle Mitglieder der Reichskirche den gleichen strengen Kriterien zu unterwerfen wie eine Bruderschaft'.

Opening attack on the possessors of secular power (3.50-60)

It is at the end of Book 3 that Salvian departs from criticism of the whole community and begins to single out the wealthy and powerful for special condemnation. Typically, he begins a new argument with an imagined objection: perhaps the vices which he has denounced in his attack on the church are practised only by *servi aut abiectissimi* but not by free men? Salvian replies that the lives of merchants, *curiales*, officials and all those in state service consist of nothing but crime (3.50).[29] It cannot be objected that their actions derive from their *professio*, for if people do evil it must harm God, especially when they are lesser people (*minores personae*), because these form the majority of the human race (3.51).[30]

Another objection follows: surely the *nobilitas* at least is free from such crimes? Salvian responds that even if they were, it would be too little to save the society around them, because its numbers are so few (3.52). Salvian's use of *nobilis* and its cognates is not limited by strict legal categories; he generally uses the term pragmatically to denote the upper classes in any given context.[31] Here it is used to contrast with the categories he has already mentioned, like *curiales*, so it must denote the senatorial aristocracy.[32] However, having made this statement, he acknowledges the ambiguity of *nobilitas*. He insists that biblical passages denouncing 'the rich' must apply to *nobiles*, because:

> Aut idem sunt nobiles qui et divites, aut si sunt divites praeter nobiles et ipsi tamen quasi nobiles, quia tanta est miseria huius temporis ut nullus habeatur magis nobilis quam qui est plurimum dives. (3.53)

Salvian seems to be concerned to ensure that his attacks on the possessors of social power are not restricted by formal definitions of status, while suggesting simultaneously that the

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[29] *Negotiantium.., curialium.., officialium.., omnium militantium*. The last could refer to soldiers or officials.

[30] It will be seen that the *minores personae* listed by Salvian are still possessors of considerable power.

[31] Harries 1981, 71-3.

[32] In his account of the sack of Trier (6.72, 85), Salvian refers to *curiales* as *nobiles*.

nobiles of his own time have declined from those of a previous period when nobility was determined by other qualities than mere wealth, presumably moral ones.[33] He is probably thinking of the poor *nobiles* of the Roman Republic, to whom he had referred in Book 1 (1.10-11).

Salvian's definition of the status of those he attacks remains vague throughout *De gubernatione dei*: his concern was not with any of the legally defined status groups of late Roman society, but simply with those who possessed power, whose legal status was bound to be relatively high, but who could come from groups like the *curiales* which were several stages removed from the top of the hierarchy of status that existed in the late-Roman world. Salvian attacks the rich in *De gubernatione dei*, but it is not the possession of wealth as such that concerns him, as it is in *Ad ecclesiam*, but the power that wealth gives over the lives of others. He deals with the exercise of power in two spheres: within the household, where the power exercised is essentially that over slaves, and within the community as a whole, where it impinges on everyone who is weaker than those who exercise it. Such social power may be exercised through the holding of civic or state offices, or it may be freelance activity like land-grabbing. Once again, Salvian is not too concerned about making distinctions; indeed one of the implications of his account is that 'official' power, held through public office, and 'private' power, exercised through sheer weight of wealth and *potentia*, are altogether too difficult to tell apart. Salvian's critique of social power is the part of his writings that has brought him most renown in the general historiography of the later Roman empire. In his own thought about power and authority, however, it is the household that is most important, and which serves as the model for both the legitimate and the illegitimate exercise of power.

When Salvian first raises the issue of the crimes of the rich, he claims that they believe they have the right to commit minor crimes *quasi privilegii*. Moreover, hardly any

[33] On the issue of the moral qualities attributed by Christian writers to *nobilitas*, see now Salzman 2001.

refrain from the greatest crimes of murder and fornication (3.55). Salvian does not immediately discuss the circumstances of these crimes, but when he returns to the issue in Book 4 it becomes clear that he sees the second charge, and at least partly the former, as relating to the treatment by the rich of their slaves. Having introduced the issue, Salvian leaves it aside for the time being, using the beginning of Book 4 to return to issues of ecclesiology.

2) Knowing the Law

Name and Action (4.1-9)

At the very end of Book 3 Salvian notes that, in view of their collective desertion from God's commandments, the name which Christians bear has lost its significance (*fit ut ... perdamus vim tanti nominis*, 3.59). Yet people still congratulate themselves on possessing the Christian name, not realising that because they are Christians their behaviour offends God all the more (3.60). This introduces the theme of the *nomen Christianum*, which Salvian uses repeatedly as an emblem of Christian self-deception, claiming that most of his contemporaries think that possession of the name is all they need to deserve God's favour, without considering the obligations which the name brings with it. The indictment of the church in Book 3 is already an implicit account of discord between name and reality, but this is the first time Salvian has defined the problem in such terms. He considers the theme further at the beginning of Book 4, using it both to draw a new parallel between the Romans and the Jews, and to further refine his description of the nature of true Christianity.

Salvian begins the book by responding to the belief which he attributed to his audience at the beginning of Book 3 (3.6): 'because we are more religious than other peoples, we ought to be stronger as well' (4.1). There are no more professions of ignorance or reservations about the legitimacy of the proposition (cf. 3.2-4). It is answered in its own terms, according to the definition of Christian faith which he had given earlier (3.7):

> Nam cum, ut diximus, hoc sit hominis Christiani fides, fideliter Christum credere, et hoc sit Christum fideliter credere, Christi mandata servare, fit absque dubio ut nec fidem habeat qui infidelis est, nec Christum credat qui Christi mandata conculcat; ac per hoc totum in id revolvitur, ut qui Christiani nominis opus non agit, Christianus non esse videatur; nomen enim sine actu atque officio suo nihil est. (4.1)

So, regardless of the validity of the other suppositions on which it depends, the belief that

God should make Christians stronger than other peoples is undermined if they do not fulfil the commandments of Christ, since their Christianity is an empty name. Salvian warns that peoples who lose their merits will ultimately lose their very names. The Jews had once received two holy names, *People of God* and *Israel*, which means 'seeing God'. They forfeited these names, because those who abandoned the worship of God could not be called the people of God, and those who denied the Son of God could not be said to see God (4.3). This is the small change of Christian anti-Jewish polemic, but Salvian is not using it because he is interested in the Jews; he wishes to present another warning to his Christian audience. He therefore declares that he fears such reproaches are now equally applicable to Christians, since they disregard the word of God (4.5).[1]

Salvian then asks how anyone can believe that it is possible for them to benefit from a name alone, when God has stated that even faith is valueless without good works (4.6). The issue of the Christian name has therefore led Salvian back to the question of the nature of true Christian faith, and the implications of his definition of it as obedience to the *mandata dei*. In the passage that follows (4.6-9), Salvian quotes liberally from the epistle of James, the classic statement in the New Testament of the importance of works as an expression of faith. He quotes the admonition to show one's faith through works,[2] and points out the logical conclusion:

> Hoc indicat actus bonos Christianae fidei quasi testes esse, quia Christianus nisi opera bona fecerit, fidem suam penitus adprobare non possit, ac per hoc quod probare non valeat quia sit, sic omnino habendum esse quasi non sit. (4.7)

Quoting James's pointed admonition to those who think it is sufficient to believe in God—that demons also believe and tremble—Salvian characterises the faith of many of his

[1] Note that in the introduction to Book 3, Salvian had used the ancient Jews as a positive example, *peculiarem ac propriam dei gentem* (3.8), corresponding to his portrayal there of what the Christian community *ought* to be like.

[2] James 2:18.

contemporaries as *quasi credulitatem daemonicam*, since they claim to believe in God but do not obey him. Indeed they are worse than the demons, because they do not even fear God. How, he asks, can anyone be surprised if they are punished by weakness and defeat? (4.8-9) This rhetorical question is Salvian's response to those who believe that because of its faith the Christian community should be protected by God (3.6, 4.1), and, more fundamentally, to those for whom events call into question God's providence (1.1, 3.1). It not merely echoes the language of these passages, but foreshadows that which leads to his blunt statement at the beginning of his comparison of Romans and barbarians: *nos perferre haec mala patitur quia meremur ut ista patiamur* (4.54).

The introduction to Book 4, especially the discussion of faith and works (4.6-9), is immensely important as an exposition of Salvian's view of the nature of Christianity.[3] The religion *is* its morality. Membership of the church merely furnishes the 'name', which in itself is useless. Faith is not dismissed, but it is held that only the performance of moral action can show that it exists. In practice this amounts to saying in another way that morality and belief are identical.[4] The lack of importance which Salvian attaches to doctrine is consistent with his attitude throughout his works, an attitude which finds its fullest expression in his portrayal of the Arianism of the Goths and Vandals.[5] In the immediate context, the depreciation of faith *per se* serves as another weapon to strip away the defences which enable those who fail to carry out the *mandata dei* to evade Salvian's condemnation.

[3] On the passage see Badewien 1980, 67-70.

[4] Cf. Badewien 1980, 70: 'nicht Glaube *und* Handeln heißt Salvians Devise, sondern Glaube *als* Handeln' (emphasis in original).

[5] The attitude which Salvian was reacting against can be seen in a correspondent of Faustus of Riez who hoped that belief in the Trinity would be sufficient to ensure his salvation (Faustus, *Ep.* 5; CSEL 21, pp. 184-5).

Household and state: the attack on the nobiles (4.10-33)

Salvian uses the next part of Book 4 to launch an attack on the immorality and hypocrisy of the Roman upper classes. This has already been asserted (3.52-5), but with little detail. Now there is a full scale indictment, in which his claims about the wickedness of those he refers to as *nobiles* are justified by reference to their oppressive behaviour towards their slaves, towards ordinary citizens, and towards those of their own number who choose to adopt a religious life. The structure of Salvian's argument is essentially the same as that of the attack on the church in Book 3, with specific charges used to illustrate his claims about the wickedness of the group he is attacking.

The first point of Salvian's attack, and the one which is pursued at the greatest length (4.10-19, 23-9), is the treatment of slaves. As the attack follows immediately on the definition of Christianity propounded at the beginning of the Book 4—*hoc sit Christum fideliter credere, Christi mandata servare*—it is natural for Salvian to turn again to the comparison of the relationship between Christians and God to that between slaves and their master.[6] God is a good master because he prefers to use 'gentle and loving chastisement' (*clementissima ac benignissima castigatio*) in order to bring about reform, rather than to inflict the lethal punishment that is actually deserved (4.10). Those who object to being punished are hypocrites, since they punish their own slaves for their transgressions while they wish to sin without being punished, just as their slaves do (4.11-12). These points are not new in themselves, but they are now turned by Salvian in a wholly new direction, as he goes on to make a comparison between masters and slaves that is wholly to the advantage of the latter.

Salvian imagines the rich replying that at least they do not have the vices of slaves,

[6] Originally made at 3.27-9.

who steal, run away, tell lies and think only of their stomachs (4.13). He does not deny this, but insists that slaves are driven to such behaviour by the way in which they are treated. If they steal, it is because they are driven to it by hunger (4.14). If they run away, they have even more justification, because they do so from fear of torture, if not by their masters then by other slaves in positions of power (*actores, silentiarii, procuratores*). If they tell lies it is to avoid atrocious punishments. If slaves occasionally overindulge in food, this is understandable in those who frequently are not given enough to eat (4.15-16). In relation to each charge, Salvian claims that while the action concerned may be reprehensible, it is permissible for slaves because they act under compulsion, not out of desire. The guilt therefore falls on those who force them to behave in such a way.

The criticism which Salvian directs at slave-owners has precedents in the consideration of the issue by earlier moralists.[7] His overt sympathy for slaves, however, has hardly any parallels in ancient literature. It was almost unheard of for someone to put forward a justification for such acts of rebellion as running away, and this was as true of Christians as pagans.[8] From Paul to Augustine and beyond, the usual prescription of Christian writers to slaves was submissiveness.[9] In view of the precepts about moral behaviour which Salvian puts forward himself, this ought logically to be what he demanded as well. His inconsistency can only be the result of sympathy for those subject to oppression.[10] This does not imply that he is opposed to slavery. Nowhere in the passage does he imply that slavery itself is a condition that justifies flight. He defends those who try to

[7] In general, see Garnsey 1996, 53-101.

[8] On this issue, see Bradley 1994, 107-31, especially 108, 111. Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 4.30.2 states that it is understandable if oppressed slaves sometimes steal from their masters.

[9] Among many New Testament passages counselling obedience to slaves, there is at least one which explicitly tells slaves to be loyal and obedient even to oppressive masters: 1 Peter 2:18-21. Augustine also believed slaves should submit even to bad masters: *Civ.* 19.15.

[10] The same inconsistency appears in Salvian's approval of the Bacaudae.

escape by claiming that their true desire is to serve their masters. So eager is he to establish this that he blames their flight not on oppression by their masters, but by the more privileged slaves, who interpose themselves in what would otherwise be a harmonious relationship:

> Discedere a servitio dominorum suorum omnino nolunt et conservorum suorum crudelitate non permittuntur ut serviant. (4.15)

The primary significance of the passage in Salvian's general argument, however, is not its defence of slaves but its attack on their owners. It contrasts the pretensions of the rich to moral superiority with their actual indulgence in the acts they condemn as *vitiis servilibus* (4.18-19). The rich condemn the occasional, opportunistic greediness of underfed slaves, while they indulge in constant gluttony. They condemn petty theft by slaves while they plunder the state and seize the land of their neighbours (4.20-21). Slaves cannot commit casual killings, or keep a horde of concubines, but these are characteristic of the rich (4.23, 28). Therefore the comparison with slaves reveals the hypocrisy of the rich, just as the later comparison between Romans and barbarians reveals the hypocrisy of the entire community.

The charge given the greatest emphasis by Salvian is the sexual exploitation of female slaves by their owners (4.24-6).[11] He accuses the rich of turning their houses into brothels where they can give full rein to *furor libidinis*, seizing anyone on whom their desire fixes, so that, by comparison, merely to have a few concubines would be a species of chastity. Salvian also accuses slave owners of treating their slaves as objects in a more extreme way. He claims that the rich feel free not merely to exploit their slaves sexually, but to kill them. This allegation is made much more briefly than the other, and without any detail. It first appears at the very beginning of Salvian's attack on the rich (3.55), with the question *Quis enim est aut humano sanguine non cruentus aut caenosa impuritate non sordidus?* He does not at this point specify the victims, but the pairing of the two accusations

[11] This charge is renewed in Book 7 (7.15-20). The two passages largely overlap.

strongly implies that he envisaged slaves in both cases, and this is confirmed later, when Salvian asserts that, while slaves commit murder rarely, because of the likelihood that they will be punished with death, the rich do so constantly because of their confidence that they will go unpunished. However, he declares, they might think it unfair of him to treat this as a sin, since when they kill slaves they do not think that they are doing anything wrong (4.23).

The role of Salvian's comparison between slaves and masters in the rhetorical structure of *De gubernatione dei* is similar to that between Romans and barbarians.[12] In each case he starts from his audience's presumption of superiority, then shows that this is an illusion, and that their actual behaviour is as bad as, or worse than, that of those to whom he is comparing them. In each case, he imagines that those criticised will find the idea offensive; in this instance nobles or 'those who want to appear to be nobles' (4.27). Just as with the barbarians, Salvian then claims that when the acts committed by the two groups are the same, the guilt of the 'superior' group is greater, because it has a greater obligation to be good. In his comparison with the barbarians, Salvian borrows the language of social differentiation to describe the difference between them and the Romans (*criminosior enim culpa est, ubi honestior status,* 4.57), but provides an additional, independent explanation for the Romans' greater duty in their knowledge of Christianity. He uses the same language to differentiate between the rich and their slaves, but in this context its only reference is to social superiority. It is simply assumed that those higher in the social hierarchy ought to be morally superior, which implies, of course, an expectation that those lower in the hierarchy will be inferior:

> Malos esse servos ac detestabiles satis certum est, sed hoc utique ingenui ac nobiles magis execrandi si in statu honestiore peiores sunt. Quo ... necesse sit non ut servi sint a reatu nequitiae suae absoluendi, sed ut plurimi divites magis sint servorum comparatione damnandi. (4.29)

[12] Noted by Cleland 1970, 271.

Salvian's attitude towards slaves therefore emerges as highly ambivalent, as it is expressed in both in the lengthy discussions of 4.11-29 and 7.15-20 and in remarks scattered elsewhere in *De gubernatione dei*. While he is able to show an unusual degree of fellow feeling with the suffering caused by being the chattel of another person, and with the way in which this drives slaves to revolt against it, he still sees slaves as inferior beings who are naturally prone to wickedness. Even the passages that are most sympathetic to slaves are littered with derogatory comments and phraseology.[13] As we have seen, when he is justifying the flight of slaves, he puts the blame on other slaves (4.15). There is thus an important difference between Salvian's portrayal of slaves and of barbarians. The Romans are held to be under a moral obligation to be better than the barbarians, but only because the barbarians do not possess the knowledge that the Romans do. Salvian's subsequent portrayal revises even this position, so that they are portrayed as morally superior to the Romans. His portrayal of slaves does not have such positive implications. Sometimes he portrays them as driven to commit sins by the pressure put on them, but elsewhere he portrays them as simply inclined to criminality. His contrast between slaves and the rich takes much of its rhetorical force from the assumption, shared by Salvian and his audience, that the upper classes are simply better than other people, or ought to be, and that it is disgraceful for them to possess 'servile' vices.

In the formal structure of his argument, Salvian's accusations of oppression inflicted by the rich in society at large (4.19-21, 30-31) are introduced merely to illustrate his claim that they commit the same crimes as slaves but on a larger scale. It is the central accusation of the passage on slaves—hypocrisy in condemning others when they are guilty of the same or greater crimes (4.19, 22)—which leads Salvian to discuss for the first time the activities

[13] Even good *patres familias* cannot make slaves good (7.20); slaves are usually worse than their masters (8.14); modesty and discipline are imposed on slaves through fear (6.68); *vilitate servarum* (7.17).

of *nobiles* outside the household. He contrasts the crimes of slaves—trivial, housebound *furta*—with the unconstrained *latrocinia* of the rich, which afflict not households, but the whole community. The rich prey on the poor, whether by simply seizing their property, or by purchasing public offices and using the powers thus bestowed on them to recoup both their expenditure and further profits from those over whom they exercise power (4.20-21). After further discussion of the treatment of slaves, Salvian returns to consideration of the public role of the *nobiles*, this time in their fundamental public role of overseeing the collection of the empire's taxes (4.30-31). When the whole Roman world is being killed by taxes, the rich do not pay their own taxes, but force the poor to do so. Moreover, when the government granted a remission of taxes, the rich took it all for themselves, so that the poor received no benefit. Salvian's purpose here is to emphasise as strongly as possible the theme of hypocrisy, by showing that the rich do not merely commit crimes as slaves do, but commit them on a much greater scale. As within the household, so without: those *in statu honestiore* ought to govern like loving fathers and to relate to their fellow Christians as brothers. Instead they treat them simply as objects to be exploited.

God, paternal authority and the household

There is a more fundamental reason why the moral conduct of the rich should be compared with that of slaves, and it adds another dimension to Salvian's discussion of slavery:

> Omnes enim dominum suum fugiunt qui legem domini derelinquunt. Quid ergo, dives, culpas in servo? Hoc facis quod et ille. Ille fugitivus est sui domini, et tu tui. Sed hoc culpabilior tu quam ille, quia ille fugit forsitan malum dominum et tu bonum. (4.18)

This passage links the issue of slavery to Salvian's portrayal of Christianity as obedience to the law, an important exposition of which has preceded it. If obedience is regarded as the central virtue of the Christian, then there are various images that can be used to express this. One is the relatively impersonal image of obedience to law. But an alternative to this is the highly personal structure of power and obedience which existed within the Roman household. Here the image of the slave comes into play very forcefully. According to Salvian the essential characteristic of a Christian should be obedience, and if one looks for parallels to this condition then one is led almost inevitably to slaves, the group in ancient society for whom obedience was supposed to be the very principle of their existence. The use of the slave as a metaphor for the Christian went back to the New Testament.[14] Salvian gives it particular prominence, clearly because it fits so well with his general characterisation of Christianity, but also, no doubt, because it could be given a polemical edge in criticism of the privileged.

The image is first used by Salvian in Book 3, when he challenges those who think they should be given credit for obeying some of God's commandments even though they disobey others (3.27-9). Salvian asks how a human master would feel if his slaves decided that they were only going to obey those orders that they felt like obeying. However, while slaves and masters differ in status, their essential condition as human beings is the same. He

[14] For a survey, see Garnsey 1996, 173-235.

therefore invites his audience to contemplate the gulf that separates disobedience between two human beings, and disobedience between human beings and God. Yet people expect God to bear from them what they would never tolerate from their own slaves. Therefore a duty of absolute obedience lies both on slaves in relation to their masters and Christians in relation to God (3.29). Ideally, therefore, in relationship to the *mandata* of their masters, there is no room for either slaves or Christians to exercise an independent will. They have no right to distinguish between one command and another. To sin, or to neglect any of the positive obligations of Christianity is not just wicked in itself, it is a violation of obligations to God which are so fundamental as to be an inherent part of human nature, just as obedience is part of the very nature of a slave. But while the powerful take this for granted of slaves, and are enraged at the very idea of disobedience, they show no sense of obligation to obey their own master in the same way.

God punishes the Romans in the same way that a kind master punishes his slaves; not destroying them, but inflicting a certain amount of chastisement in order to demonstrate to them the error of their ways. Salvian goes on to claim that it is with the utmost reluctance that God punishes the Romans at all (4.34).[15] The dismay of privileged Romans at these gentle punishments is equivalent to the contumacy of a stubbornly rebellious slave; combined with it, their severity towards their own servants is a sign of their blindness and hypocrisy.

To Salvian, therefore, the relationship between slaves and masters encapsulates the contrast between God and human beings. The sins of Christians, whose master is God, especially those of the noble and rich, are a constant provocation to God, driving him to punish them, in spite of the fact that he cannot be affected by anger (4.34). Because he is

[15] As will be clear by now, this is a point reiterated continually by Salvian throughout *G*, though with its most concentrated expressions in Books 1 and 6.

infinitely merciful he does not inflict on these rebellious slaves the punishment they deserve, which would be absolute destruction, but he must correct their sins by denying them peace and prosperity in this world. However, they respond, not with contrition, but by asserting that since they suffer, God must have no interest in the world. Their treatment of their own slaves, and the punishments they inflict on them are therefore stark evidence of their arrogance and blindness to their own sins:

> Sed quid miramur si peccantes nos deus verberat, cum ipsi peccantes servulos verberemus? Iniusti iudices sumus: homunculos nos flagellari a deo nolumus, cum ipsi condicionis nostrae homines flagellemus. (4.11)

The quoted passage is the one that introduces Salvian's defence of slaves, in which the hypocrisy of their masters is made even more blatant, since they are shown to be not only less merciful than God, in relation to whom they themselves are like slaves, but also the perpetrators of brutal crimes against the very ones whom they punish. Hence in judging they truly condemn themselves, since the sins they commit are worse than the ones they punish (4.17-19). Behind Salvian's criticisms it is possible to discern two images of the exercise of power: the ideal represented by God's rule over the world, and the warped image of it represented by the abuse of power by those who possess it in human society. God's government of the world is represented as that of an ideal, perfectly just and benign patriarchal authority. The activities of the earthly *nobiles* are a perversion of that ideal. This antithesis underlies the criticism of the rich in the first half of Book 4. This is not true only of the oppression of slaves (4.22-29), but for other, analogous abuses: oppressing the poor and exploiting official positions for personal gain (4.20-1, 30-31), rejecting those of their own number who adopt a religious life (4.32-3).

The attack on the *nobiles* is followed by a passage in which Salvian attempts to demonstrate the way in which all human sins, but especially doubting God's government of

the world, constitute an attack against God (4.34-53). Several aspects of the passage become clearer when seen in the context of the criticisms of the abuse of human power that precede it. Thus, the complaints about God that Salvian condemns are not merely wrong but hypocritical, because the rich treat those under their power with much less consideration than God treats the Romans. The image of God as absolutely unwilling to punish human beings until he is overwhelmed by their sins like a besieged city by its conquerors (4.36) is not only a vivid image of God's mercy but draws the strongest possible contrast with the arbitrary and hypocritical behaviour of the *divites*. In all the passages God is an infinitely patient *pater familias* while human sinners play the role of ungrateful and rebellious slaves (4.34-6, 40-42, 52-3).[16] It is characteristic of Salvian's portrayal of God that the words *pius* and *pietas* are used by him far more often of God's attitude to human beings than vice versa.[17] The portrayal of divine action in *De gubernatione dei* is centred on judgement, but Salvian rarely compares God to a judge in the judicial sense. Instead he portrays him in the image of an ideal father, bearing in mind that the position of a Roman *pater familias* incorporated the idea not merely of fatherhood, but of the exercise of government and authority over the *familia* (which denoted not just the family in the modern sense, but its slaves).[18] From the very beginning of the work (e.g. 1.39), the portrayal of God's judgement is marked by an insistence that he is so influenced by love and clemency that he will not inflict punishment except when people's sins become so scandalous that they overwhelm his reluctance. This implicitly adds to the severity of the indictment of the Romans, who while seeing themselves

[16] This is not the only occasion on which Salvian couples a denunciation of human sin with an emotive account of God's love for the world. He does the same during his attack on the games (6.26-7), as well as in *E*.

[17] E.g. 1.3, 1.48, 1.60, 2.1, 4.48, 6.90. On Salvian's depiction of God as a *pater familias*, and especially on parallels with the comparable portrayal by Lactantius, see Lof 1975; for the use of the image in wider Christian literature, Garnsey 1996, 181f., 221-31; for comparisons between the relationship of the *pater familias* with his children and his slaves in secular Latin literature, Fitzgerald 2000, 78-81.

[18] For an excellent account of the portrayal of God as *pater flagellans* in early-Christian literature (not including Salvian), see Bruyn 1999.

as deserving recipients of God's favour are in reality so wicked that they force God to punish them against his own desire. But it is a characterisation which is only possible in a portrayal of judgement as carried out in the context of the household, rather than a formal, juridical setting.

Salvian's presentation of God as an ideal *pater familias* creates the strongest possible contrast with most holders of power in the world, who oppress and exploit those whose destinies they control, and punish mercilessly any transgression. Their power confers on them a great moral responsibility, which almost all of them betray, and this compels God to punish them (4.34). This is the corollary for Salvian of God's role as father; the consequence of his role as master is the obedience which everybody owes to his commands and which makes all the more unforgivable the complacent belief of the Romans that God owes them worldly prosperity, and that if it is not forthcoming the fault or defect must be in him.

The ideal of the *pater familias* which is expressed in Salvian's image of God is also used by him to judge the actual heads of households in his own society. We have seen that he attributes to them a duty to be just, which most of them neglect, but in addition he sees the role that they exercise towards those whom they govern as being more than simple physical power, whether used justly or unjustly. He clearly believes that they influence the moral character of those under their authority. Consequently, if they are corrupt, others are unlikely to be virtuous. They are the decisive influence on the character of the household. As he puts it at a later point in *De gubernatione dei*:

> In domo autem sua dominus quasi corporis sui caput est et vita eius cunctis norma vivendi. (7.19)

For Salvian patriarchal power within the household is fundamental to society. Although he does not spell this out, his various pronouncements suggest that he envisages a hierarchy, in which those at each level exercise care, judgement and a beneficial influence over those for

whom they are responsible, with God doing so for the whole world, the *domini* for their households. But in practice this hierarchy is disrupted at the level of the household, within which almost all masters abuse their power. Such a paternalistic social ideal demonstrates that while Salvian is prepared to express unusual sympathy with slaves, and subsequently with victims of oppression in general, his criticism of those who possess power is based on a very traditional image of their role. He is a paternalist, not an egalitarian.[19] While, at least in *Ad ecclesiam*, Salvian writes in a way that suggests that he wished people to give up their property, he says nothing to suggest that he did not see slavery as anything other than a permanent institution of society. He has no objection to differences in power and status; all he demands is that those who possess power should exercise it justly, in what he would see as a Christian fashion. Christian writers in general, from Paul's epistle to Philemon onwards, did not see any contradiction in calling on a slave and his master to regard each other as brothers while remaining slave and master.

In this aspect of his ideas about Christian society, as in others, his models are the communities of the early church, as portrayed in Paul's epistles and such works as Tertullian's *Apologeticum*. These were communities in which social hierarchy continued to exist, but in which, as an ideal (actual practice is irrelevant to Salvian's ideas), all those who participated lived in unselfish devotion to each other.[20] Salvian was the heir of a tradition, going back to Paul, which stressed the equality of all human beings before God, and the unity

[19] There is no equivalent in Salvian to Pelagius' attack on the idea of earthly nobility *per se* (*De virginitate* 16).

[20] Salvian's social ideals can be compared to the ideas of the New Testament scholar Gerd Theissen on the social character of the Pauline communities (see especially Theissen 1982, 106-10). He coined the term 'love-patriarchalism' (*Liebespatriarchalismus*) to describe an outlook which 'takes social differences for granted, but ameliorates them through an obligation of respect and love ... within a community which, on the one hand, demanded of its members a high degree of solidarity and brotherliness, and, on the other, encompassed various social strata' (op. cit. 107). Theissen's claims for the influence of 'love-patriarchalism' on actual social practice are excessive, especially for the post-Constantinian empire, but this does not detract from the utility of the concept in defining the kind of social ideal advocated in the writings of Paul, Salvian or other writers, such as Tertullian.

of all Christians in the church, yet also accepted existing social hierarchies as natural and legitimate. There were various ways in which theologians could attempt to square the circle of these contradictory impulses, one of which was to present a metaphor for Christian society which included both hierarchy and intimacy; the Roman family provides just such an image for Salvian. It can be used both as an image of what the community should be like, and, polemically, to highlight the failings of the actual possessors of power in Salvian's world, whose actions contrast so miserably with the patriarchal ideal which the image embodies. In Salvian's attack on the *nobiles*, therefore, the fundamental point is the disruption of correct order through the divorce of social hierarchy from the moral order which should accompany it. The moral character of the socially privileged is not far short of the opposite of that appropriate to their position. These passages of social criticism therefore reinforce Salvian's theme of the perversion of hierarchy, itself a subdivision of his general theme of the perversion of the moral nature of the entire community; as he states at this point, *perversa enim sunt et in diversum cuncta mutata* (4.33).

Guilt and obligation (4.34-56)

The central section of Book 4 is a passage of more abstract argument (4.34-54), which returns to some of the themes of Book 1, though now Salvian's claims about the nature of divine government are more clearly integrated into his indictment of Christian society. This part of Book 4 discusses the gravity of doubting God's government and justice, and the guilt which the entire community incurs through it. It forms the link between Salvian's attack on the sins of the community and his comparison of Christian society with that of the barbarians, which begins at 4.54 and forms the main theme of the remainder of *De gubernatione dei*.

Salvian begins by returning to the issue of people's complaints that they suffer unjustly, reiterating again that no matter what they suffer, it is less than they deserve (4.34). Salvian has discussed such complaints several times before, but never in such emotional terms as in the passage that follows. He begins by renewing the contrast between human disregard of God, and God's care for the human race, which causes him to defer punishment for their sins until these reach the point at which he is compelled against his own wishes to take action against them (4.35). Salvian likens this process to an army attacking and overwhelming a fortified town (4.36). The simile conveys not only the immense reluctance to punish that Salvian attributes to God, but gives a strong impression of sin as something deliberate; not a thoughtless slip, but a conscious, wilful and sustained act of aggression. As he goes on to state directly, to do something forbidden by God is to trample on his commandments (4.36), an image which implies both deliberation and hostility. Sin is always an act of violence against God; nothing is so trivial that it does not wound him: *Omnis siquidem Christianorum omnium culpa divinitatis iniuria est* (4.35). When people commit the sins that are punished by God, they are therefore the authors of their own punishment

(4.36).

Salvian now renews the attack on those who doubt God's government which he represents as the culminating sin, surpassing all that he has already discussed. It does so because while other sins constitute an implicit attack on God, to assert that he does not govern the world is equivalent to attacking him directly. To deny that he observes the world is equivalent to depriving him of sight, and even of his entire substance; in effect it is to believe that he does not exist. It is its nature as a direct assault on God that makes it more terrible than the *lites, calumniae, rapinae, vinolentiae, comessationes, falsitates, periuria, adulteria, homicida* and other sins, which Salvian describes as *consuetudinarii reatus* (4.40-41). Evidently Salvian is grappling with the problem of finding a way to convey to his audience the magnitude that he saw in an action which most people doubtless regarded as something trivial, and certainly not to be compared with most of the activities that Salvian lists. To further this purpose, he embarks on another demonstration of the argument for God's government based on the natural world (4.41-4), followed by a description of the debt owed by human beings for the extent of God's paternal love, as manifested in the incarnation and crucifixion (4.45-51), here made for the first time in *De gubernatione dei* (though of course they have already been described in detail in *Ad ecclesiam*).[21] Once again he uses highly emotional language in an attempt to convey the extent of people's debt. Yet instead of trying to repay it, they offer God a succession of crimes. These are crowned with the outrage of complaining that God is unconcerned about the world, which surpasses these long-established blemishes on the church. Salvian insists that this is a novelty, calling it *quaedam paganica ac prodigiosa et in ecclesiis dei ante non visa*. People may have sinned before, but they never made themselves the accusers of God (4.52-3).

[21] *E* 2.4-8, 23-4.

It is at this climactic point that Salvian imagines one of the doubters throwing back at him the objection which is pivotal to all his subsequent arguments:

> Si ergo, inquiunt, respicit res humanas deus, si curat, si diligit, si gubernat, cur nos infirmiores omnibus gentibus et miseriores esse permittit? Cur vinci a barbaris patitur, cur iuri hostium subiugari?
>
> Brevissime, ut iam ante dixi, ideo nos perferre haec mala patitur quia meremur ut ista patiamur. Respiciamus enim ad turpitudines, ad flagitia, ad scelera illa Romanae plebis quae supra diximus, et intellegemus si protectionem mereri possumus, cum in tanta impuritate vivamus. (4.54)

Thus Salvian claims that the indictment of the Romans which he has given in the preceding two books provides sufficient justification for the defeats they have suffered. Appropriating his opponents' argument (4.54), Salvian claims that it would be precisely if, in such wickedness, the Romans were strong and prosperous, that there would be good reason to think that God was negligent of the world. But people fail to understand this, because they are so arrogant that they do not realise they are criminals and believe they do not deserve to be judged (4.55-6).

The claim that people disbelieve in God's government, and Salvian's justification of the Romans' misfortunes as punishments have of course been stated several times before, but this passage transforms the terms in which the issues are discussed by linking them directly to the relationship between Romans and barbarians. It therefore marks a major change in Salvian's argument. His discussions of the Christian community up to this point have juxtaposed two elements: the actual life of the community and God's commandments. Now a third element is added. All subsequent portrayals of the Romans are explicitly or implicitly contrasted not just with God's demands, but with the way of life that Salvian attributes to the barbarians. The passage which introduces the barbarians is the culmination of the indictment of Christian society that began in Book 3, as Salvian acknowledges in his invitation to look back at the sins which he has portrayed in it. It forms both a climax to

Salvian's hostile characterisation of Christian society, and a bridge to the new style of characterisation—contrast with outsiders—which follows in the remainder of Book 4.

In the latter part of the book Salvian continues to add to his indictment of the Christian community both in detail,[22] and in general. His more general characterisation is important as the full formulation of his definition of the church as a community which is aware of God's will but disobeys it (contrasted with the barbarians, who commit sinful acts because they do not know God's will). It is thus a further development of the character that he has already established for the Christian community in Books 3 and 4. It is the comparison of Romans and barbarians in the remainder of Book 4 which systematically establishes knowledge of the law as the essence of Christianity. In a sense, therefore, the discussion of the Christian community in the latter part of Book 4 is simply a continuation of the argument that Salvian has been making since the beginning of Book 3. However, the introduction of the barbarians into his the argument also marks a major change, establishing the central role which they play in the remainder of the work.

22 For example his discussion of swearing and perjury (4.71-7).

3) The Barbarian Counter-Community

'Where there is no law, there is no transgression' (4.54-95)

The barbarians enter *De gubernatione dei* in the midst of Salvian's assault on the morality of contemporary life (4.54), after he has described the collective desertion of Christians from their duty in Book 3, and when he is well embarked on his denunciation of the *nobiles*. The role of the barbarians is determined by his ideas about the nature of Christian society within the world. The barbarians form an antithesis to Roman Christians which is integral to the dialectical development of his arguments about morality, the state of Roman society, and the manner of divine judgement. Salvian's first major argument about the barbarians in fact has little to say about the barbarians themselves; it is a development of his definition of true Christianity as obedience to God's law, and his portrayal of the fracture between this and the attitude of Christians who rely on formal membership of the Church (the *nomen Christianum*), for which they expect to be protected by God regardless of their failure to fulfil their duty to obey his law.

Thus, though Salvian's treatment incorporates elements from the classical depiction of the barbarian, it is not concerned in a traditional sense with politics or ethnography. Instead Salvian deals with the difference between knowledge of God's will and ignorance of it, and with the effect that the actions of Christians have on the attitude of pagans towards Christianity. What differentiates Salvian's from the customary theological treatment of these issues is that, in keeping with his identification of Christian society with the Roman political entity, he identifies the pagan barbarians as those who are ignorant of God's will, and who may be turned against God by the behaviour of Christians. Salvian saw the Roman empire as a Christian society. It is therefore a natural move for him to identify the *significant*

boundary between pagans and Christians with that between Romans and barbarians. There were still pagan Romans, as Salvian occasionally acknowledges, but as far as evaluating Salvian's thought is concerned, this is irrelevant. We have seen that Salvian's identification of Christian society with the empire has its roots in the biblical example of Israel as much as, or more than, the empirical fact of Christianisation. His portrayal of the relationship between Christian Rome and the barbarians is an extension of his portrayal of the failure of Christian Roman society. The phenomenon which linked Christian failure with the division between Romans and barbarians was the barbarians' growing military supremacy. For Salvian, consideration of deeper theological issues enables him to explain why God permits pagans to prevail over Christians, and at the same time his examination of the reasons for the barbarians' success provides a route for him into these more fundamental issues. As in his previous arguments, the ways in which he conceives of the Christian community, and its relations to others, are deeply rooted in the Bible; in this case in his interpretation of the writings of Paul.

The first appearance of the barbarians (4.54) follows a long refutation of those who doubt God's government (4.40-53).[1] Once again, people's failure to recognise this is ascribed to their belief in their own righteousness, a self-deception which makes them more guilty (4.56). Then he makes one of the most important moves in his argument:

> An meliores simus barbaris iam videbimus. Certe, quod non dubium est, meliores esse debemus, et hoc ipso utique deteriores sumus, si meliores non sumus qui meliores esse debemus. Criminosior enim culpa est, ubi honestior status. (4.57)

We have already encountered hierarchies of moral duty in Salvian's writings. When he draws such a contrast between Romans and barbarians, his most obvious reference is to the general Roman sense of superiority over barbarians. It is clear that he does have this in mind.

[1] There is one fleeting reference earlier (3.2).

Claiming that the barbarians, whose inferiority was regarded by educated Romans as virtually part of the natural order, were actually superior to them, was an extremely forceful way to point out the perversion of the moral order which Salvian saw in Roman society. It shocked the complacent by attacking a belief in their own superiority which formed part of their sense of identity.[2] This is a tactic that we have seen Salvian using in his arguments about slaves. Salvian draws attention to his own strategy by ironically acknowledging that his audience will be angered by his claims.[3]

There is, however, a more important reason why Romans ought to be better than barbarians. This is that Salvian's audience do not differ from the barbarians merely as Romans, but as *Christiani et catholici* (4.58). It is their adherence to Christianity which places a greater duty on them to be good than on other peoples, and which means that, if they do evil, they are more guilty than other peoples (4.59). As portrayed by Salvian, he and his audience are in agreement in believing that they *should be* morally superior to the barbarians. The difference between them is that most of his audience believe that they *really are* superior. Salvian therefore seeks to demonstrate precisely how the guilt of the Romans is different from, and greater than, that of the barbarians. In each barbarian people (*gens*), he argues, there are two kinds (*genera*) of person: pagans and heretics. He concedes (4.61-4) that the Romans are incomparably better than either in their possession of the divine law. However, with the exception of *religiosi* and some *saeculares* who equal or approximate to them, they are much worse as regards their way of life. The Romans do not possess the law through their own virtues but through the gift of Christ; their sins, on the other hand, are their

[2] Amory 1997, 22, n.33, cites Salvian as an exponent of 'the literary genre of "inverse ethnocentrism" in which the author incidentally upheld traditional values by pointing up the ridiculousness of inverting them'. This is a fair description of his strategy in the central books of *G*, though 'ridiculousness' is too weak a word to convey Salvian's position.

[3] People will find the idea *intolerabile* (4.60), *inrationabile atque absurdum* (4.62).

own. Because they profess the law but do not obey it, it does not benefit them. Indeed, the law itself is their accuser (4.64). Salvian argues that if the law is left out of account and the actual way of life of the two groups is examined, there is no difference between them. The barbarians are unjust, greedy, faithless and lustful; so are the Romans (4.65).

Salvian's argumentation in this passage resembles to that of Paul in Romans, when he attacks Jews who feel a sense of superiority over gentiles because of the law, even though they do not obey the law.[4] This is not coincidental. Salvian goes on (4.78-95) to justify his claims by means of lengthy citations from Paul, mostly from Romans, so he must have had Paul's argument in mind. For the moment, however, he does not refer explicitly to Paul, but develops the argument in relation to the antithesis which he is drawing between Romans and barbarians. He imagines the objection that, if both groups commit the same actions, the Romans should be as strong as the barbarians, or the barbarians as weak as the Romans (4.66-7). The reason why this does not happen is that the Romans incur greater guilt than the barbarians for the same actions. Therefore they are punished for them, but the barbarians are not. Here and in the succeeding chapters, Salvian makes a distinction between *vitia* (the acts which are committed) and *peccata* (sins) or *reatus* (guilt). While actions, *vitia*, are identical, their status as *peccata* and the degree of *reatus* which attaches to them vary according to the person who commits them. In explanation of this, Salvian refers back to his previous statement that barbarians are either pagans or heretics. Deferring comment on heretics,[5] he produces a catalogue of the vices of different pagan *gentes* (4.67). They may be bad, but how can the same action be as reprehensible for a Hun or an Alan as for a Roman?

> Si fallat Chunus vel Gipida, quid mirum est, qui culpam penitus falsitatis ignorat? (4.68)

[4] Romans 2:11-29. Salvian has already made use of this text in relation to masters who judge their slaves (3.12ff.).

[5] He discusses them at 5.5-14.

In other words, the barbarians have no concept of morality. They do not know the difference between right and wrong; nor do they know God and his commands (*legem et deum nesciunt* - 4.69). The Romans do know all these things, yet in spite of this they commit such crimes as freely as the barbarians do (4.69-70). In this passage, as elsewhere in Book 4, Salvian's identification of Romans and Christians is absolute. In effect, the Romans are portrayed as a Catholic *gens*, just as the Franks are a pagan *gens* and the Goths an Arian *gens*: thus, Salvian can oppose *Alamanni* and *Alani* to *Christiani* (4.68). It is not unnatural, therefore, for him to portray Roman prejudice against barbarians as being in some sense an attitude of *religious* superiority, and thus a manifestation of the hypocritical presumption that he has already denounced so often.

By this stage in Salvian's argument it has become clear that his interpretation of the differing treatment which barbarians and Romans appear to receive from God is a product of his conception of obedience to the law as the essence of Christianity, and the contradiction between the Romans' knowledge of the law and their failure to obey it.

> Nihil enim contemptu agunt caelestium praeceptorum praeceptum domini nescientes, quia non facit aliquid contra legem legis ignarus. Noster ergo hic peculiariter reatus est, qui legem divinam legimus et legalia semper scripta violamus, qui deum nosse nos dicimus et iussa illius ac praecepta calcamus. (4.70)

This passage is almost a distillation of Salvian's ideas about the nature of Christianity and the failings of Roman Christians: the division of the human race into two categories, those who are bound by the law and those who are not. On one side there are those who are part of the church and thus committed to obey God's commandments; on the other there are those outside the law. Regarding the former, while Salvian habitually refers to Christianity as law, this passage goes unusually far in describing Christianity in language (*legalia scripta*) that evokes secular law codes. More widely, it points out that the Romans are the only people

whose sins are committed in spite of the fact that they know—and take pride in knowing—the law which tells them that what they do is wrong. The pagan barbarians are outside God's community, and being so excluded are also excluded from salvation since they have no means of knowing how it must be attained. But precisely because they are excluded in this way, the concrete acts which they commit are not offensive to God, they are simply irrelevant.[6] In a sense one could say that to Salvian, if one is outside the church, one's position is so bad that nothing further that one does can make it worse.[7] But in another, the barbarians' ignorance of morality is a form of innocence. They commit sinful actions not out of malevolence, but rather because they have no idea that what they are doing is wrong. Ignorant of God, ignorant of right and wrong, their life is a kind of anomic chaos.[8]

There is a revealing inconsistency in Salvian's treatment of pagans and their capacity for moral knowledge. It is difficult to imagine a more compelling extrapolation of his claims about law as the defining element of God's community than his portrayal of the amoral, or pre-moral, condition of the pagan barbarians. It implies a world in which human beings are devoid of any kind of moral consciousness until they are enlightened by God's revelation of the law. In Book 5 Salvian attributes qualities to pagan barbarians which *he* judges to be morally good, but this is not itself a contradiction; it does not necessarily imply that *they* were able to differentiate between good and evil.[9] The inconsistency is in the fact that when

[6] This needs to be qualified: he claims later that God is offended if they blaspheme him.

[7] Salvian states this more explicitly later (5.1-4), in an attempt to dispel the impression, which he recognises he might have given, that those outside the law are better off than those within it.

[8] This part of Book 4 answers negatively the question (raised by Badewien 1980, 61-2) of whether Salvian has any concept of natural law, in the sense of a moral code, or knowledge of God, innate in every human being. This was a commonplace both of pagan moral philosophy and Christian literature. A notable example contemporary with Salvian is Prosper of Aquitaine, who argues that God's existence and nature is evident in the order of creation, even to those who have not received revelation (*De vocatione omnium gentium* 1.5; 2.4).

[9] That is, Salvian praises barbarians for spontaneous mutual altruism, but does not suggest that they were able to perceive any difference between such behaviour and the violence, drunkenness and so on which they also practised.

Paul discusses those outside the law, before the coming of Christ, he is referring to pagans *per se*. When Salvian uses the distinction between those inside and outside the law, he applies it only to pagan *barbarians*. Elsewhere in his works, Salvian makes a number of references to the pagan past of his own society, and there is no sign that in this context it even occurred to him that pagans were unable to distinguish between right and wrong. This suggests that, while the explicit terms in which Salvian contrasts Romans and barbarians are drawn from his development of concepts taken from the Bible, under the surface his portrayal is indebted to the conventional Roman idea that the world beyond the frontiers was one of primitive chaos. It was the traditional image of the barbarian which predisposed Salvian to map the boundary between those bound by the law and those ignorant of it onto that between Romans and barbarians.

In the remainder of Book 4, Salvian develops and justifies the claims made in 4.54-70. He begins with an attack on swearing oaths, which he claims to be ubiquitous among Christians, with people frequently swearing to carry out trivial or even criminal actions (4.71-7). By definition this is a sin which can only be committed by Christians. When pagans appear to swear or commit perjury, they are not really doing so, because the gods by whom they swear do not exist. Both oaths and perjury are therefore illusory (4.77). Salvian then embarks on a scriptural justification of his portrayal of barbarians and Romans as peoples distinguished by their relationship to the law:

> Denique qui vult scire quam verum sit, audiat beatum apostolum Paulum ipsa haec quae nos dicimus praedicantem. Sic quippe ait: *Scimus autem quoniam quaecumque lex loquitur, his qui in lege sunt loquitur.* Et iterum: *Ubi non est lex*, inquit, *nec praevaricatio*. Duabus his sententiis duas evidenter exposuit partes generis humani, extra legem positos et in lege viventes. Qui sunt igitur nunc in lege positi? Qui scilicet nisi Christiani? ... Qui igitur sine lege Christi? Qui nisi pagani homines, legem dominicam nescientes? Et ideo de his dicit: *Ubi non est lex, nec praevaricatio*. (4.78-9, quoting Romans 3:19 and 4:15)

Salvian has referred to Paul as an authoritative figure before (e.g. 3.6, 17-19, 26), but never as boldly as he does here, with the claim for an absolute identity between Paul's ideas and his own. From this passage onwards, quotations from the Bible, rare in the argument until now, become very prominent until the end of the book. Most of them are from Paul.[10] Salvian's use of Paul, here and in the remainder of the book, has two aspects. Rhetorically, a barrage of quotations from the apostle appearing to support his argument gives it formidable weight. Salvian's claim that his ideas and Paul's are the same is, of course, questionable, but as far as winning over an audience is concerned, what matters is simply that he can muster quotations that make it convincingly *appear* that their ideas are the same. This should not be taken to imply that his use of Paul is solely a rhetorical move. There is no reason to doubt that Salvian believed in his own claims (and by contemporary standards his interpretation of Paul was a tenable one). Paul's apparent support is simply an advantageous weapon, and Salvian uses it aggressively.[11]

The deeper theological aspect of the passage is its reinforcement of Salvian's claims about *duas partes generis humani*. Salvian is claiming that the division he has just described between Romans and barbarians is merely the contemporary manifestation of a fundamental division in the human race between the people of God, who know God's will and are therefore committed to obey it, and the mass of humanity which remains ignorant of it. While in this passage Salvian takes the division back to Paul, we have seen that in Book 1 he has already shown it going back to the time of Moses. It is clear that Salvian sees the people of God as, by nature, a cohesive community, separated from the rest of humanity by

[10] There are nineteen biblical citations in 4.78-95, compared to only four in 4.54-77. Thirteen of the nineteen are from Paul, nine of them from Romans.

[11] Salvian's use of Paul in his account of the barbarians has attracted very little comment. The only exception is Lebeau 1963, 161, who notes that there seems to be no parallel for the use in such a context of the passages cited by Salvian.

clear boundaries, the lives of its members defined by the law to which they are subject even when they disobey it. In its actual historical existence, however, God's community has continually been disrupted by rebellion and disobedience, which are now so ubiquitous that, with the exception of a minority which remains true, it is little more than a perverted caricature of its true self. The other part of the human race, by contrast, is defined only by what it is not. It has no true nature to betray. However, Salvian now goes on to argue that this does not prevent certain actions and attitudes of its members from offending God.

The last part of Book 4 (4.78-95) moves from contrasting pagan ignorance and Christian transgression to examining the impact of Christian behaviour on pagans' perception of Christianity. Until now, the contrast drawn by Salvian between Christians and pagan barbarians has been viewed from the perspective of the relationship between God and each group separately. The actions of the Christians are significant because they offend God. Those of barbarians are insignificant because they do not. Now he embarks on a new argument which binds together the acts of Christians and pagans. This begins from another citation from Paul: 'You who glory in the law dishonour God through transgression of the law, for through you his name is blasphemed among the gentiles' (Romans 2:23-4). The evil actions of Christians therefore cause non-Christians to blaspheme against God, and responsibility for this is added to the guilt which the Christians have already incurred. Salvian quotes from the Gospel of Matthew to give a characteristic view of the relationship of the Christian community to the world: a light should shine from it which others will see and then praise God. Instead Christians live in such a way as to incite others to blaspheme against God (4.80). So much, he declares, for their self-congratulation on possessing the *nomen Christianitatis* (4.81). They act, he claims, in such a way that the fact that they are called Christians is a libel against Christ. Can this, he asks, be said about pagans?

> Numquid dici de Chunis potest: Ecce quales sunt, qui Christiani esse dicuntur? Numquid de Saxonibus aut Francis: Ecce quae faciunt, qui se adserunt Christi esse cultores? (4.81)

Thus the ultimate offence which Christians cause to God does not arise from the acts in which they indulge, but from their hypocrisy. The barbarians *cannot* offend God in this way, no matter how terrible their actions may be in themselves. Only Christians can do so, because others judge the nature of their faith, and of the God they worship, on the basis of the actions which they observe them committing (4.81-2). Thus a new element is thrown into the scales to make the imbalance between Christians and barbarians even greater. Not only do Christians transgress the law while pagans cannot, but their guilt is exacerbated by the hostility to God aroused among pagans as a consequence of their actions.

In the following chapters (4.82-8), Salvian develops his allegation rhetorically, first with a satirical speech in the persona of a pagan deriding the Christians (the significance of direct speech in Salvian will be recalled):

> Si enim bona discerent, boni essent! Talis profecto secta est, quales et sectatores ... Quomodo enim bonus magister est, cuius tam malos videmus esse discipulos? ... Promptum est omnibus Christi intellegere doctrinam: vide Christiani quid agant, et evidenter potes de Christo scire quid doceat! (4.83-4)

Then, in a passage of even harsher sarcasm, Salvian refers to an example from the times of the early church (4.85-6).[12] Once, he relates, pagans believed that Christians practised rites involving incest and the killing and eating of children. His source, Tertullian, had dismissed this as a preposterous rumour, which discredited only those who believed in it. Salvian claims that, given pagans' experience of those who are called Christians but defame the name of religion with their crimes, such ideas were only to be expected.[13]

Finally, Salvian illustrates the gravity of causing such blasphemy with a more remote

[12] Based on Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 7-8.

[13] Inglebert 1996, 662-3, completely misses the sarcasm of this passage and states that Salvian believed in the truth of the allegations reported by Tertullian, and approved of pagan persecution of Christians.

example from the Old Testament (4.87-8). This is the punishment of David by the death of his son, which he could not avert even through extravagant penitence.[14] The source of this punishment, as narrated in the Bible, is David's action in bringing about the death of Uriah in order to marry his wife. Symptomatically, Salvian does not even mention this, but instead quotes a statement that David was punished because 'he caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme'.[15]

So there is no greater crime than causing blasphemy among *gentes* (4.89). Salvian gives his reasons: first because it precipitates others into damnation, and the guilty one is responsible for their fate as well as his own sin; secondly because it injures God by arousing blasphemy and curses against him, 'a sin beyond the measure of human crime' (4.89). Concern about dishonouring God is a constant theme in Salvian's writings, manifested, for example, in his anger when people doubt God's government. It is nevertheless striking that in all his condemnations of the way in which the behaviour of Christians discredits Christianity, he gives only these reasons to explain why such discredit among pagans should matter. In particular, Christian attitudes towards pagan peoples in later periods might lead one to expect that Salvian would have been worried about Christianity being discredited in this way because it would deter pagans from converting to Christianity. However, it is by no means clear that such an idea entered into his thought at all, and if it did, it is certainly expressed only in a confused and inchoate manner.

Salvian never makes any explicit reference to the prospect of pagan barbarians being converted to Christianity. In this he was typical of his time.[16] Few, if any, fifth-century Christian writers seem to have thought of the conversion of non-Roman peoples as a matter

[14] 2 Samuel 11-12. This story is also used by Salvian in Book 2 (2.16-23).

[15] 2 Sam. 12:14.

[16] On this, see Badewien 1980, 131.

of immediate concern. Texts can even be found which reject the idea.[17] Salvian later expresses the hope that Arian barbarians will be converted to orthodoxy (5.13), but even this is placed in the indefinite future. Images used by Salvian in the later chapters of Book 4 could easily be read as signs that he had the conversion of the barbarians in mind when he used them (the light which makes those who see it praise God – 4.80; the cold food which can be heated – 4.92), but he never says anything which gives a definite sign that he entertained the idea. There are a number of factors in Salvian's thought which would have militated against the idea of conversion occurring to him, in particular his identification of Christianity with the Roman empire, and the church as the successor of ancient Israel. Another possible factor is that Salvian's conception of the barbarians does not fit easily with his portrayal of the Christian convert. Salvian never portrays barbarians as individuals, always as *gentes*, collectivities; adherence to Christianity, on the other hand, is something which he sees (as in his references to baptism) as the deliberate choice of an individual.

It will be remembered that the reason why Salvian discusses the effect that Christian behaviour has on pagans is to show the effects of Christian hypocrisy. When all the other manifestations of their wickedness have been examined, this is the essential crime which differentiates them from the barbarians. Christians speak good but do evil; they confess God with words but deny him with deeds (4.90). Barbarians may do evil deeds, but they cannot be dishonest to God and they cannot dishonour him. Salvian has argued that Christians may deceive themselves about their own righteousness, but they cannot deceive those who observe their actions. These pagan observers naturally judge the faith from the deeds of those

[17] The author of an anonymous Arian work, the *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum*, attacks Catholic priests for preaching to barbarians, because this means handing over Christianity to *populis ineruditis et indisciplinatis et barbaris, qui nec quaerunt nec audiunt eum cum iudicio, qui nomen habent Christianorum, mores autem gentilium* (824). The context is an attempt to draw parallels between Catholic priests, and the Jewish priests of the crucifixion narrative, and the presentation of the barbarians may be determined by the need to fit the parallel; however, it is an instructive instance of the way in which the same general image of the barbarians could be given an implication the reverse of Salvian's. (It is, incidentally, a striking refutation of any idea that Roman Arians felt any affinity with the barbarians.)

who profess it, not their words, and so the evil of the original actions is compounded by the perverted image of Christianity which they convey.

The final chapters of Book 4 (4.90-95), are based around biblical statements on hypocrisy and the abandonment of God's commandments by those who are subject to them. Salvian applies words that Paul used in Romans to characterise the Jews to describe the Christians of his own time: they preach not stealing and steal, they read not to commit adultery and commit adultery (4.90-1).[18] Salvian now defines the nature of such Christians. They have professed good but fallen away to evil. Thus they are the *tepid*, those who are warned in Revelation that because they are neither hot not cold, God will vomit them from his mouth (4.91-2).[19] The true Christian is hot and fervent with faith; pagans, untouched by faith, are cold. The tepid are those who have been hot and whose faith has cooled to lukewarmness. Just as food which has gone cold cannot be made edible again, Christians whose faith has decayed into *tepor* cannot be restored to the fervour of true faith.

Tepor is a key term in the ascetic literature of the time, especially in the works of Cassian.[20] In *Ad ecclesiam* Salvian several times refers to the mass of Christians as *tepidi* or *tepidissimi*, though without giving the word much emphasis. This is the only time he uses the term in *De gubernatione dei*. It is symptomatic that Cassian normally uses the term to characterise monks who have lost their vocation for the ascetic life, while Salvian applies it to Christians in general. The allusion implies sinking away from an original state of fervour. While this may a legitimate assumption to make about an ascetic, to apply to Christians collectively is obviously remote from reality. However, it coheres with Salvian's portrayal of the commitment inherent in Christianity, as expressed for example in his remarks about

[18] Salvian quotes Romans 2:20-3.

[19] Rev. 3:15.

[20] See especially *Collationes* 4, 21.

baptism at the beginning of Book 3.

Salvian concludes the book (4.93-5) with a string of citations from the Bible in support of his claim that a bad Christian is worse than a pagan, and that one who disobeys the law is worse than one who is ignorant of it. This concludes an argument which, in the course of two books, has moved outwards from life within Christian society to the place of that society in the world, while distilling the diverse sins denounced in Book 3 to their essence: the disjunction between doctrine and action, words and deeds. It is characteristic of the care with which he employs the contrast with pagan barbarians to define the nature of Christian betrayal that the sins which he denounces in the second half of Book 4 are different from those which he attacks in Book 3 and elsewhere. The latter are mostly activities which would be condemned by any system of morality, Christian or otherwise. Those discussed in Book 4, beginning with his attack on Christians who doubt God's government, moving on to swearing, and culminating in his attack on Christians for discrediting their religion by their behaviour, are meaningful only in a Christian context. In essence, the nature of such sins is the betrayal of the Christian's covenant with God, something of which *ipso facto* no non-Christian can be guilty.

The only role which the barbarians play in Salvian's arguments in Book 4 is that of a counterpoint to the Romans. All specific characteristics attributed to pagan barbarians are negative ones: Saxons, Gepids, Moors and Scythians are cruel, Franks are faithless, Huns lustful, Alamanni drunken, Alans greedy (4.68-9, 81-2). The essential quality which subsumes the others and means that they are not blameworthy is ignorance. The only role of the barbarians is to emphasise Roman wickedness by comparison. Salvian's use of them in later books will not be so restrained.

4) The Barbarians and Roman Society

The beginning of Book 5 (5.1-4) forms a kind of epilogue to the argument of the previous book. It responds to the problem, admitted by Salvian, that people may conclude from his arguments that pagans, not knowing the law, are better off than Christians. He responds that it is not the law that harms sinners, but their own vices (5.1). In fact the law helps those who are subject to it. It cares for them by prescribing good. Those who are against it are really against themselves, like someone who has been made ill by his own vices, but blames his doctor (5.3-4). The idea that his demanding portrayal of the law might have such a negative effect had occurred to Salvian before. In *Ad ecclesiam* he defends himself against an analogous charge (that he had made it seem safer to be a *saecularis* than a *religiosus*) at considerable length.[1] It is not difficult to see how his argument in Book 4 could seem to imply such a conclusion, and Salvian evidently felt it necessary to acknowledge the possibility and dismiss it, even if in a relatively cursory fashion. No doubt he used the introductory passage of Book 5 to deal with the question in order to avoid spoiling the rhetorical effect of the final part of Book 4 by including an anti-climactic passage.

This passage marks the end of Salvian's long account of the desertion of most Christians from their commitment. The new developments in the argument of *De gubernatione dei* are accompanied by a change in the nature of Salvian's portrayal of the barbarians. In Book 4 he uses the comparison between Romans and barbarians to extend the indictment of the Christian community on which he embarked in Book 3. In Book 5 and later books, he begins to use them as models for the Romans in their own right.

[1] *E* 2.44-73.

The barbarian Bible (5.5-14)

Salvian's mapping of the division between those who know the law and those who do not onto that between Romans and barbarians would have been perfect if all barbarians had been pagans. However, the Goths and the Vandals, the peoples who had enjoyed the greatest victories over the Romans, were Christians. Though they were Arians, not Catholics, and thus regarded as heretics, any well-informed member of Salvian's audience would have known that the differences between Arian and Catholic doctrine related only to the nature of the Trinity. The moral teaching of the two churches was identical. On the basis of Salvian's arguments up to this point, therefore, the relationship of the Goths and Vandals to the law should be identical to that of the Romans, and the same weight should attach to their transgressions.[2]

The fact that the Goths and Vandals were Arians presented him with an obvious additional problem. By the standards of late antique Christianity, heresy was an inexpiable crime. Writers before Salvian had made positive references to Gothic Christianity, but they had usually avoided mentioning the fact that their Christianity was unorthodox.[3] Normally, when Catholic writers discussed the Arianism of the barbarians, their opinions were variations on that expressed by Quodvultdeus: *Cavete, dilectissimi, arrianam pestem.*[4] Salvian argues in two ways that the heresy of the Goths and Vandals should not be held against them. The first, put forward in this section of Book 5, is that knowledge of Christianity has been given to them only through the medium of a corrupt and interpolated version of the Bible, and therefore they do not really know God's commandments. The

[2] For further discussion, see Lebeau 1963, 160-2, 170-3; Henss 1979; Badewien 1980, 128-32

[3] For example Augustine, in his account of Alaric's sack of Rome (*Civ.* 1.1, 4, 7; 5.23).

[4] *Serm. de temp. barb.* 1.8.7. For similar hostility, see *Chron. Gall. 452* 138; Hydatius, *Chron.* 79, 110, 112, 228; Faustus of Riez, *Ep.* 3. There was considerable production of anti-Arian treatises in the fifth century, though these were also directed against Roman Arians.

second, which forms the main theme of his account of the Goths and Vandals in subsequent books, is that in practice they are better Christians than the Romans, and that what matters is their obedience towards God's moral law.

Although by arguing as he did Salvian was setting himself at odds with the virtually unanimous opinion of his contemporaries, the arguments which he employs are consistent with the ideas about the nature of Christianity which he expresses elsewhere in his works. Salvian has already stated that correct belief is valueless unless one lives one's life according to God's commandments (e.g. 4.7-9). When discussing Roman Christianity, he never disputes that correct belief is necessary to salvation, but regards it merely as an essential preliminary. Just as one cannot be saved without baptism, but if one does not live a Christian life the value of baptism is nullified, so the value of correct belief is removed if one does not obey God's commandments in full. In fact, if one does not try do so, then strictly speaking one does not possess correct belief, because one does not believe God when he says that total obedience to his commandments is essential (this claim forms the basis for much of the argument of *Ad ecclesiam*). Much of Salvian's hostility to the mass of Christians is directed at their belief that membership of the church and doctrinal correctness are sufficient to excuse failure to obey God's moral commandments: the belief that it is sufficient to possess the *nomen Christianum*. Such an ecclesiology is inherently more suitable for a flexible position about doctrine than that of most Christian thinkers of the period.[5]

If Salvian's case rests on the principle that correct action is more important than doctrine, the detail of his argument is based on the barbarians' knowledge of Bible. He begins by referring to his previous division of barbarians into pagans and heretics, and imagines someone objecting to the idea that the freedom from the law which he has

[5] Cf. Badewien 1980, 130-32.

demonstrated for pagans can apply to heretics. They read the same text; they have the same prophets and apostles. The law is therefore neglected by them in the same manner as it is by the Romans (5.5). Salvian's responds by claiming that, in fact, the barbarians do not read the same Bible as the Romans:

> Quomodo eadem, quae ab auctoribus quondam malis et male sunt interpolata et male tradita? Ac per hoc iam non eadem, quia non possunt penitus dici ipsa, quae sunt in aliqua sui parte vitiata. Incolumitatem enim non habent quae plenitudinem perdiderunt, nec statum suum omnino servant quae sacramentorum virtute privata sunt. Nos ergo tantum scripturas sacras plenas, inviolatas, integras habemus, qui eas vel in fonte suo bibimus vel certe de purissimo fonte haustas per ministerium purae translationis haurimus. (5.6)

Salvian is referring here to the Gothic translation of the Bible, and it is the translators whom he denotes as *auctores*. The word suggests that they were responsible for creating rather than merely translating the text.[6] Salvian claims that they interpolated it, but the word can be pressed further. The course of his argument shows that he sees the translators, by altering the text, as having created a new thing, which was no longer truly the Bible. As he then says, it cannot be said to be the same thing if it has been damaged (*vitiata*) in any part. It has lost its fullness (*plenitudo*); it has been 'deprived of the power of the sacraments'.[7] Consequently, the Romans are the only ones who possess a Bible which is full and has not been violated, because they read it in the original, or in a faithful translation. Therefore the heretical barbarians possess the law in a form so mutilated (*debilem et convulneratam*) that they do not really possess it at all. *Non habent quae sic habent* (5.7).

Salvian concedes that there may be barbarians who possess the Bible in a less damaged form as a text (*in libris*), but even so, their understanding of it is corrupted by the

[6] Cf. Heather & Matthews 1991, 167, n.7.

[7] The complaint of Heather and Matthews that 'It adds nothing to say that the *Arians'* Bible lacked the authority of the *Catholic* sacraments' is based on a misunderstanding of Salvian's point (168, n.8; emphasis in original). He means that it no longer had the authority of a Christian sacrament *at all*. For the significance of *plenitudo*, see Henss 1979.

tradition they have received from their former teachers. They therefore have tradition rather than scripture. They do not possess the true law, but 'what the wickedness of a bad tradition has inserted' (5.7). Furthermore, they are powerless to escape from this tradition:

> Barbari quippe homines, Romanae, immo potius humanae, eruditionis expertes, qui nihil omnino sciunt nisi quod a doctoribus suis audiunt, quod audiunt hoc sequuntur; ac sic necesse est eos, qui totius litteraturae ac scientiae ignari sacramentum divinae legis doctrina magis quam lectione cognoscunt, doctrinam potius retinere quam legem. Itaque eis traditio magistrorum suorum et doctrina inveterata quasi lex est, quia hoc sciunt tantummodo quod docentur. (5.8)

The result is that the barbarians are heretics but sincerely think that it is they who are truly orthodox (*haeretici sunt sed non scientes*). They believe that the catholics are heretics.

> Quod ergo illi nobis sunt, hoc nos illis. Nos eos iniuriam divinae generationi facere certi sumus quod minorem patre filium dicant, illi nos iniuriosos patri existamant quia aequales esse credamus ... Errant ergo, sed bono animo errant, non odio sed affectu dei, honorare se dominum atque amare credentes. (5.9-10)

No one can know how they will be punished for their error on the day of judgement, declares Salvian, except the judge himself. In the meantime, because their error is committed in love, God is patient with them, especially since he knows that they err in the belief that they are doing right, while the Romans sin in full knowledge that they are doing wrong. The barbarians' sinfulness is due to the vices of their teachers, the Romans' to their own (5.11).[8] Having reached this conclusion, Salvian is able to reiterate all his charges about Roman wickedness compared to barbarian ignorance, in exactly the same terms as with the pagan barbarians (5.11-13).

As an answer to the fact that Arians possessed as much knowledge of Christianity as did Catholics, Salvian's argument cannot pass beyond special pleading. However, its weakness is in its relation to the facts, not in the arguments themselves. These are based on

[8] Salvian repeats this claim later, in the context of an account of barbarian military victories (7.38).

ideas about the status of the Bible which are expressed throughout his works. His whole justification for his condemnation of the ordinary practice of Christianity is that the Bible is a text whose integrity cannot be violated. It is the oracle of the mind of God (3.5). In principle, his arguments in 5.5-14 simply follow from this. If the Bible is an inviolable whole, every part of which must be respected and obeyed, then one cannot come to a conclusion other than Salvian's: that a version of the Bible which has been interpolated and otherwise tampered with is, in a very real sense, no longer the Bible. *Non habent quae sic habent*. Salvian's complaints about interpolation and mistranslation do not imply merely that people may have been misled by an occasional interpolated passage of unorthodox teaching, but that the Bible has been undermined in its very essence. The law has been corrupted. As their Bible no longer embodies the law, Arian barbarians can be portrayed as being in the same state of ignorance as their pagan fellows.

This state of ignorance is compounded by their lack of education, which means that they are completely dependent on their heretical teachers for the interpretation of scripture. They do not have the capability, which a Roman would have, of escaping such influences through their own efforts, simply by going to the text. A Roman who seeks the law has it unmediated in the Bible. Barbarians who seek the law *think* they are given it by their teachers, but what they are actually given is what Salvian calls a bad tradition. Nonetheless they believe it is the law. It is this state of dependence which excuses their heresy. Salvian's comments on their heretical beliefs must be understood in the light of these ideas. This passage has acquired for Salvian a certain undeserved reputation as an advocate of religious toleration.[9] However, it does not argue (as it might seem to when taken out of context) that because people who hold different religious beliefs sincerely worship God, their beliefs

[9] Isichei 1964, 103: 'revolutionary'; Lecler 1955, 81: 'une véritable exhortation à la tolérance'.

should be tolerated. It argues that this toleration should be given to the barbarians—and only to them—because they have no means of escaping from the doctrines imposed on them by their teachers. Thus, when the barbarians believe that it injures the Father to regard the Son as equal, they do so not on the basis of erroneous theological reasoning, but because, through the tradition to which they are subject, this is—to them—the law, that is, the direct expression of God's will. Salvian does not contradict himself when shortly afterwards (5.14) he disclaims any desire to advocate toleration for Roman heretics; as far as he is concerned, they *do* hold their beliefs on the basis of erroneous theological reasoning, and could easily find out true doctrine if they wanted to. Their beliefs are therefore held out of sheer perversity.

Salvian's exculpation of heretical barbarians is a natural development of his ideas about the nature of religious knowledge; its weakness is that it depends on his factual claims about the corruption of the Gothic Bible. In fact, the few surviving manuscripts of the Gothic Bible do show a degree of corruption and interpolation greater than would be expected in a Latin or Greek text of the Bible. There is, however, no evidence that this was the result of any intention to distort its message, or that any, even unintentional, distortion resulted.[10] Salvian's account of the Gothic Bible implies that the text had been much more seriously distorted than it actually had. It may well be that he believed this, but in any case the status which he accorded to the Bible would inevitably have made him interpret even the textual

[10] Friedrichsen 1939, 174, 214-41, 270; Heather & Matthews 1991, 155-61. According to Friedrichsen, the probable reason for the state of the Gothic text is that the original translation, made in the fourth century by Ulfila, was made from a Greek text, which it followed almost word for word. This meant not only that the text must have been very distant from spoken Germanic, but that it often appeared to differ from the Latin Bible , which was in use in the territories in which the Goths eventually settled, and was often copied side by side with the Gothic in bilingual editions. Most of the changes in the text seem to have been made to make it match the Latin. However, this was done in an unsystematic way, so that versions in different manuscripts often differed from each other. More significantly for Salvian's comments, it sometimes resulted in material from commentaries being intruded into the text. There is virtually no evidence that alterations were made to distort the text for sectarian reasons. Friedrichsen (236) identifies only one passage which appears definitely to have been given an Arian slant, and one or two ambiguous instances.

state of the Gothic Bible in the worst possible light. No other Latin author displays any knowledge about the Gothic text of the Bible, and the means by which Salvian came by his information, however imperfect, are a mystery. The most obvious possibility would be through contact, direct or indirect, with Gothic Christians, but there are others, such as the use of a literary source.

Salvian's claim that the barbarians' sincere belief in God excuses their heresy (5.9-11), and that God will reward them for the goodness of their lives by eventually leading them to become Catholics (5.13), have been cited as evidence for Salvian's 'semi-Pelagianism', on the grounds that it embodies the idea of salvation through foreseen merits.[11] Although Salvian's suggestion is clearly incompatible with Augustinian ideas about salvation, according to which nothing given by God to human beings can ever be regarded as a reward, the suggestion that it should be seen as evidence of a formal doctrinal position on Salvian's part seems to me to approach his ideas in the wrong way. Salvian has little interest in doctrine, and there is no reason to believe that doctrinal niceties such as 'salvation through foreseen merits' had any relevance to him.[12]

Salvian's argument about the Arian barbarians ends, fittingly, with a final accusation against the Romans (5.14). The very fact that the Goths and Vandals are heretics rebounds on the Romans, because it is from them that the heresy originally derived. It is *nostrum crimen*. Salvian's claim that the heresy of the Goths and Vandals was the result of Roman teaching (*Romani magisterii*), is one of a number of points in his argument which raise the question of what he knew about the religious practice of the barbarians. Salvian's statements

[11] Bordone 1937, 338-40; rejected by Pellegrino 1940a, 136-42.

[12] The concept of salvation (or damnation) through foreseen merits was an expedient devised by opponents of Augustinian predestination to account for cases where individuals' putative fate after death could not be accounted for by anything that they had actually done, chiefly infants who died unbaptised (whom both sides agreed were damned) or who died immediately after baptism (whom both sides agreed were saved). Augustine's opponents argued that they were judged according to God's foreknowledge of what their way of life *would have been* if they had lived. See Weaver 1996, 46.

about the text of the Gothic Bible are difficult to explain unless he possessed accurate information; however, one should not jump to the conclusion that he was well-informed about everything to which he alludes in his argument. His references to the Gothic conversion and the Gothic Bible have sometimes been identified as references to the fourth-century translator of the Gothic Bible, Ulfila.[13] In fact, Salvian's vague language (*magisterii*, *auctores*) suggests nothing of the kind. Almost certainly, like Orosius, he believed that the Goths had been converted to Arianism on the initiative of the emperor Valens.[14] He probably thought that the Gothic translation of the Bible had been made as a consequence of this event. There is no reason to believe that he had ever heard of Ulfila, whose reputation among Romans seems to have been limited to the Greek East.[15]

How Salvian came by his knowledge of the Gothic Bible, is unclear. It seems unlikely that he was directly acquainted with the Gothic text.[16] It is more likely that he became aware of the textual imperfections of the Gothic Bible, or perhaps simply of the editing and other textual activity which went on in relation to it, through direct or indirect contacts with Gothic Aquitaine, though it is possible that he took his information from a literary source. In any case, the important thing is the use which he made of the information; he turned the existence of the Gothic Bible, potentially a considerable obstacle to his claims about the ignorance of the barbarians, into a way of reinforcing them.

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[13] Lagarrigue 1975, 314; O'Donnell 1983, 27.

[14] Orosius, *Hist.* 7.33.19.

[15] Ulfila is mentioned by all four of the ecclesiastical historians who wrote in Greek in the fifth century (Hunter 1969, 339), but the only reference to him in a Latin text is in a letter by a fourth-century Arian bishop named Auxentius, which survives only because it was quoted by another Arian bishop named Maximinus in a commentary on the acts of the Council of Aquileia. This commentary in turn survived only because someone copied it into the margins of a manuscript of Ambrose's *De fide* (Heather & Matthews, 145). This obscure document can hardly be used as the basis for a claim that Ulfila had any reputation in the West.

[16] Suggested by Friedrichsen 1939, 270.

Barbarians and community (5.15-61)

The greater part of Book 5 is taken up with Salvian's attack on the oppressive behaviour of Roman officials and landowners. Only occasionally does he refer to the barbarians directly,[17] and at first sight they do not appear to play a major role in his argument. However, their importance is greater than the number of explicit references might suggest. The entire argument of Book 5 proceeds from a single contrast:

> Ac primum ut de affectu et caritate dicam quam praecipuam dominus docet esse virtutem et quam non solum per omnes scripturas sacras sed etiam per se ipse commendat dicens, *In hoc scietur quod discipuli mei estis, si vos invicem diligatis*,[18] omnes se fere barbari, qui modo sunt unius gentis et regis, mutuo amant, omnes paene Romani mutuo persequuntur. (5.15)

In other words, the mutual love which is the essence of Christian community is practised by the barbarians, but not by the Romans who actually constitute the church. The members of each barbarian *gens* behave towards each other in the way characteristic of true disciples of Jesus. Here, for the first time, it is correct to talk of Salvian idealising the barbarians, whose behaviour towards each other is portrayed as precisely that advocated by Salvian for Christian communities: a complete alteration from the portrayal of barbarians in Book 4.

The structural role of the passage is clear—the entire remainder of the book is essentially an expansion of the statement *Romani mutuo persequuntur*. Underlying all the forms of mutual persecution that Salvian describes there is the implication (sometimes made explicit) that they are alien to the barbarians. Salvian's critique of Roman *potentes* is thus an exercise in sustained irony; it is the barbarians who behave towards each other in a civilised way, and the Roman upper classes, those who regarded themselves as most civilised, who behave like barbarians.

The passage is also a milestone in Salvian's portrayal of the barbarians. He advances

[17] 5.15, 17, 21-3, 36-7, 46, 57.

[18] John 13:35.

from arguing merely that barbarians are less culpable than Romans because their sins are committed in ignorance, to claiming that their morality is superior to that of the Romans. This claim is maintained and extended in subsequent books, at least for the Goths and Vandals.[19] His reservation that it is only barbarians who belong to the same *gens* and have the same king who love each other is not a very significant restriction of his argument. Presumably it would have undermined his credibility if he implied that barbarians loved members of other *gentes*. However, the whole force of his attack on the Romans is that they persecute *each other*, not outsiders, so that the existence of enmity between different barbarians peoples does not diminish the contrast.[20] There is not, in fact, any evidence in *De gubernatione dei* that Salvian found conflict between peoples objectionable; he seems simply to have accepted such conflicts as natural, including the conflict between Romans and barbarians. One might say that in practice Salvian forgets the requirement for people to love their enemies, but not that to love their neighbours.

The barbarians therefore have both a literary and a religious role in Book 5. At a literary level, Salvian plays on the image of the barbarian in order to highlight the extent to which the Romans were betraying their own standards. This is most obvious in the passage in which he considers the phenomenon of Romans fleeing to barbarian territory (5.21-3), where he makes an overt contrast between *apud barbaros Romanam humanitatem* and *apud Romanos barbaram inhumanitatem* (5.21). Here his irony is clearly dependent on his and his audience's sense of the traditional, negative portrayal of the barbarian. His debt to tradition is particularly clear in this passage, in that he is contrasting the Romans with barbarians specifically *as Romans*, not as Christians. As elsewhere in *De gubernatione dei*, Salvian

[19] The generalisation of 5.15 must apply to pagan barbarians as well, since Salvian names several pagan *gentes* in this context later (5.36), but his enhanced claims for barbarian virtue in later books are made only in relation to the Goths and Vandals.

[20] Note the opening sentence of his attack on the Romans: *Quis enim civis non invidet civi?* (5.16).

shows that he is sufficiently influenced by Roman tradition to believe in Roman standards of moral conduct which exist independently of Christianity. This more traditional literary aspect of Salvian's portrayal coexists with the religious level of his argument, expressed in the passage quoted above. At this level the point at issue is the duty for Christians to love one another. Once again, when the state of Christian society which is, for Salvian, not merely an ideal but an absolute imperative is compared with its actual condition, the latter cannot appear as anything other than a hideous perversion. The barbarians, on the other hand, live according to God's commandment, even though they are not bound to obey it in the way that the Romans are.

This proposition is amplified when Salvian turns to a concrete difference between barbarian and Roman society: taxation. The Romans destroy each other through taxation, the barbarians do not (5.17). In most of the ensuing attack on the Roman tax system, and the injustice of those who operate it (5.17-35), Salvian does not refer to the barbarians, but throughout his account the opening contrast between Romans and barbarians continues to apply: whatever abuses Salvian describes, the barbarians are free of them.[21] However, the direct comparison is reasserted vigorously at the conclusion (5.36-7). Where, asks Salvian, can such evils be found except among the Romans? Certainly not among the Huns or the Goths. The Goths are so far from tolerating such things that they do not even inflict them on the Romans whom they rule over. As a result these Romans fear nothing more than the restoration of Roman power. How, in such a situation, can the Romans expect to defeat the Goths? The latter question is a good example of the way in which, in Book 5, Salvian's social criticism is often expressed in secular terms. However, the foundation for his comparison of Romans and barbarians remains the extent to which they approach the model

[21] The reference to Romans fleeing to the barbarians (5.21-3) is a digression within this passage.

of a Christian community characterised by mutual love. The Romans, who have an obligation to behave as members of such a community, are the ones whose actual behaviour is most distant from it.

The role of the barbarians in inflicting judgement comes to the fore after Salvian's next passage of social criticism, this time directed at landowners (5.38-45). He describes how poor people seek refuge from insecurity by putting themselves under the protection of powerful landowners, only for their 'protectors' to seize their land and reduce them to the slave-like status of *coloni*. In view of this, Salvian argues, the conquests of the barbarians are a manifestation of direct retributive justice:

> Et miramur si nos barbari capiunt, cum fratres nostros faciamus esse capitvos? Nil ergo mirum est quod vastationes sunt atque excidia civitatum. Diu id plurimorum oppressione elaboravimus ut captivando alios etiam ipsi inciperemus esse captivi. Sentimus enim, etsi tardius multo quam merebamur, sentimus tandem illa quae fecimus. (5.46)

He goes on to enumerate a series of acts perpetrated by powerful Romans against their fellows, which have now been inflicted on the perpetrators themselves (5.47). Yet the Romans are too proud to understand that they are being punished (5.48). They have been able to maintain this pride because they still do not suffer what they deserve. God is merciful, and wishes, through those blows which he does inflict, to make the Romans understand what they deserve, without having to make them experience it (*ostendit .. non inferat*). The stubborn sinfulness of the Romans is such that they compel God to punish them, even though he does not want to, because if he left their crimes unpunished he would seem unjust (5.49-50). This is the first time that Salvian has produced a systematic account of judgement since he dealt with the Israelites in the desert, and his treatment points directly to the much more detailed discussion of the theme in Book 6, where the themes stated briefly here are developed at much greater length.

Salvian does not explicitly assert the absence among the barbarians of the abuses that he condemns (as he does at 5.36-7), but there is no change in his attitude. The nature of the attack on the Romans, with its continued pursuit of the theme of perverted community, makes this clear. The barbarians act as a true community towards each other. Towards the Romans they act as the instruments of God's judgement, but even in this their actions against the Romans are no worse than the actions which the Romans, who as Christians are members of the community which should excel all others in mutual love and care, commit against each other.

The final chapters of Book 5 (5.51-61) deal with clerics who continue to indulge in abuses of secular power. Once again, the barbarians are used as a contrast (5.57). In this case, the contrast is most damning of all, since it is not with ordinary Romans, but with those who should be the very embodiment of selfless love, but instead exploit and persecute all those around them. As Salvian exclaims, in a line which could sum up his entire argument in this book: *Quid ergo simile apud barbaros Gothos?*

Salvian treats the barbarians in different ways in different parts of *De gubernatione dei*. In Book 5, their function is to represent the opposition between a true community and a perverted one. His emphasis is therefore slightly different from that in later books, in which they are contrasted with the Romans primarily as peoples who govern themselves in accordance with God's commandments. The treatments in Book 5 and in Books 6 and 7 cohere in that they reflect different aspects of Salvian's use of the Christian barbarians as a positive contrast to the Romans, unlike the purely negative role played by the pagan barbarians in Book 4. The contrast which is made between barbarians and Romans in Book 5, and the criticisms in the book of Roman society are therefore absolutely dependent on his ideas about Christian community, to the same extent as, for example, his indictment of the

church in Book 3. The criticisms in Book 5 simply have a more specific focus, on the abuse of social power. The importance of this issue to Salvian, however, is that it is the expression of a more fundamental failing of those he attacks: their abandonment of the essential Christian duty to govern their actions at all times by love of their fellows. The features of Roman society criticised by Salvian in Book 5 are selected by him because they are concrete manifestations of this abandonment, just like the abuses within and outside the household which he attacks in Book 4.

Salvian's projection of a counter-image onto the barbarians is, by modern historical standards, a fantasy, but there is no reason to assume that Salvian would not have regarded it as justified on both empirical and religious grounds. The extent to which territories under barbarian control were genuinely free from the abuses which he denounces is debatable; probably not at all in the case of *patrocinium*, and dubiously so in the case of taxation.[22] But the extent of disruption in territories under barbarian occupation would almost certainly have made it seem plausible that such abuses had disappeared, as did the fact that such territories formed a refuge for those who wanted to escape from the attentions of the Roman state. For Salvian, however, such empirical reasoning may well not have been the primary consideration. The later books of *De gubernatione dei* make clear the extent to which he believed that the role of the barbarians as agents of the God's judgement made their own justice almost axiomatic, and empirical justification of it largely unnecessary.[23]

[22] The issue of taxation in the barbarian kingdoms is controversial. See Goffart 1980; Wickham 1993.

[23] See especially pp. 259-61.

Salvian's social criticism in Book 5

The other side of Salvian's portrayal of the barbarians is his further invective against the upper classes, this time in their public role as decurions and government officials.[24] The main part of his argument (5.17-37) covers several different aspects of the way in which such people controlled the Roman tax system. Salvian begins with a series of complaints against the rich who administer the tax system in their own interest (5.17-18), and against clerics who fail to prevent them (5.19-20), followed by a long account of the responses of the poor to their depredations (5.21-8), which includes Salvian's account of the Bacaudae (5.24-6). After a renewed attack on the rich (5.28-35), Salvian concludes by restating his claim that everything he has denounced is characteristic of the Romans and alien to the barbarians (5.36-7). Salvian's uses of the theme of taxation to draw together discussion of several different issues makes the passage a complex one, within which it is possible to trace four interrelated topics. The most familiar of these is the iniquity of the Roman upper classes, a theme already dealt with in Book 4, but now reinforced and extended. Secondly, Salvian describes the state to which the behaviour of the upper classes reduces their victims, and their strategies for escaping or defending themselves against such treatment. On the basis of these portrayals, Salvian draws conclusions about the nature of the Roman state and its relations towards its citizens. Finally, he utilises the cumulative effect of all three of these elements to reinforce his claims about the differing characters of Roman and barbarian society.

Salvian's charges against the rich here are slightly longer and more detailed than those made briefly in Book 4, but they follow the same rhetorical lines, and to some extent make the same allegations. His attack is directed against the curial aristocracies of the towns,

[24] For historical background to Salvian's claims, see the relevant chapters of *CAH*[2] volumes XIII and XIV, together with Lepelley 1983; Van Dam 1985, 25-46; Whittaker 1987; Drinkwater 1984; 1989; 1992.

as his terminology makes explicit,[25] though in any case it would be evident from his focus on tax-collecting, for which they were responsible. They are accused of turning public taxation into a source of private gain (5.17, 25), repeating with a slight change of emphasis the earlier charge of exploiting public office for the same purpose (4.21).[26] The charges that the rich force the poor to pay the taxes which they themselves owe (5.28), and that they prevent the poor from benefiting from remissions of taxation (5.34-5), reiterate claims made earlier (4.30-31). To the former, Salvian adds the allegation that people are tortured to extract money from them. A new claim is that the rich impose their own levies on the poor, aside from regular taxes (5.29). This happens when envoys (*nuntii, epistolarii*) are sent out by the imperial government (*summis sublimitatibus*) and have to be accommodated and entertained. Instead of doing so at their own expense, the rich pay for them by imposing new *indictiones* and *munera* (technical terms for taxes and compulsory services) on the poor (5.30). The rich never explain why people have to pay what they do unless they happen to disagree among themselves and one of them reveals it out of annoyance with his colleagues (5.32-3).

The primary focus of Salvian's critique on the oppressive consequences of the tax system leads him into a discussion of two phenomena which he portrays as responses to it: the flight of Romans to territory controlled by the barbarians, and the rebellion of those known as the Bacaudae. The evidence for these phenomena is fragmentary; indeed for the Bacaudae Salvian is our most substantial primary source.[27] For these issues, therefore, close

[25] *Curiales, principalibus civitatum* (5.18); *exactores* (5.28). His reference in the same context to *iudices* and their henchmen (*obsequentes*), suggests that he also had provincial governors and their staffs in mind (5.17).

[26] This less specific charge can of course include activities other than tax collecting.

[27] Apart from Salvian, sources which refer to the fifth-century Bacaudae by name are Zosimus 6.2.5 (in the Alps in 409); *Chron. Gall. a.452* 117, 119, 133 (Gaul in the 430s and 440s); Hydatius, *Chron.* 117, 120, 133, 150 (Spain in the 450s). Several other sources have often been judged to refer to the Bacaudae although they do not name them: Zosimus 6.5.2-3; Rutilius Namatianus, *De red.* 1.213-6; anon., *Querolus* 30; John of Antioch, fr. 201.3 (all referring to Aremorica in the 400s and 410s); Merobaudes, *Panegyric* 2.8-22, 148-86; Constantius, *V. Germ.* 28, 40; Sidonius, *Carm.* 7.246-8 (Aremorica or Gaul in general, 430s/440s). The relevance of some of these is debatable: see Drinkwater 1989, 193-6.

consideration of Salvian's words becomes particularly important.

During his denunciation of the oppressive behaviour of the *curiales* in collecting taxes, Salvian claims (5.21) that it has forced many people to flee to the enemy so that they should not die through the public oppression, even, as he puts it, *non obscuris natalibus et liberaliter instituti*.[28]

> Quaerentes scilicet apud barbaros Romanam humanitatem, quia apud Romanos barbaram inhumanitatem ferre non possunt ... Malunt enim sub specie captivitatis vivere liberi quam sub specie libertatis esse captivi. (5.21)

Salvian's antithesis between barbarian humanity and Roman barbarism resembles a passage in which Orosius claims that Romans in Spain prefer to live among the barbarians than suffer oppressive taxation under Roman rule, to the extent that it may well be a deliberate echo.[29] Salvian's reference to *libertas* should be noted, with its paradoxical inversion of the usual belief that freedom is to be found among one's own people, and slavery under alien rule. It is people's desire for *libertas* which is used by Salvian to link flight to the barbarians with the Bacaudae.

He presents the mere phenomenon of flight from Roman to barbarian territory is an indictment of the Roman upper classes. When the victims of the tax system flee to the barbarians they encounter differences in language, religion, and standards of personal hygiene (5.21),[30] which ought to make the company of the barbarians repellent to them, yet they prefer their new environment, because if they remained among the Romans they would experience not such relatively trivial vexations, but raging injustice. The negative

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[28] This claim may well be a calculated piece of hyperbole intended to strike a stronger cord with his (presumably well-born and educated) audience. It seems to me inadvisable in the extreme to take it as a piece of sociologically accurate information about the social character of those fleeing, as is done by, among others, Van Dam 1985,43-4, and Drinkwater 1992.

[29] Orosius 7.41.7: *Romani qui malint inter barbaros pauperem libertatem quam inter Romanos tributariam sollicitudinem sustinere*.

[30] Salvian's invokes the barbarians' foul-smelling clothes in imagery standard in the classical representation of the barbarian.

characteristics of the barbarians are morally neutral, unlike those of the Roman *potentes*. In their way of life the traditional differences between Romans and barbarians remain, but their moral qualities have been reversed. Hence Salvian's antithesis between humanity and inhumanity. It is this which should be the essential distinction between Romans and barbarians. As Salvian's use of adjectives suggests, *humanitas* ought to be *by nature* a Roman quality, and its opposite a barbarian quality, yet in real life they have become transposed. As ever, the moral order has been turned upside down: in traditional Roman thought the barbarians represented danger, the Roman empire protection. Most concretely, conquest by the barbarians implied enslavement, real or metaphorical. Now, it is those under Roman rule who are in practice treated like captives of the enemy, but by their own people. Those under alien rule appear to be captives, but precisely because of the different rule under which they live are the ones who are free in practice, but only enjoy their birth-right as Romans because they are ruled by barbarians.

The role of Salvian's references to the Bacaudae is to support his denunciation of the upper classes; this necessarily limits the content of his discussion, which, in fact, can very nearly be reduced to a single point: the scandal that Roman citizens have been forced out of the Roman state and turned into aliens. Salvian's very first reference to the Bacaudae is an ironic statement of this: people flee *vel ad Gothos vel ad Bacaudas vel ad alios ubique dominantes barbaros* (5.22). At first sight this would seem to imply that the Bacaudae were a barbarian *gens*; this is a piece of deliberate irony.[31] What Salvian means is that the Bacaudae have been stripped of their Roman identity. This creates a deeply paradoxical situation. The human race is divided into two classes, Romans and barbarians. Therefore if the Bacaudae are no longer Romans, they must by definition be barbarians. But how can they

[31] Not a sign that Salvian was 'very confused', as claimed by Drinkwater 1992, 210.

be barbarians when they are in fact Romans?

> Hi qui ad barbaros non confugiunt, barbari tamen esse coguntur ... quos ... fecit Romana iniquitas iam non esse Romanos (5.23).
>
> Inciperant esse quasi barbari, quia non permittebantur esse Romani. Adquieverunt enim esse quod non erant, quia non permittebantur esse quod fuerant (5.26).

It is Salvian's indignation that oppression by the upper classes has, in effect, forced people out of their very nationality, that leads him to emphasise the issue of citizenship.[32]

> Itaque nomen civium Romanorum, aliquando non solum magno aestimatum sed magno emptum, nunc ultro repudiatur ac fugitur, nec vile tantum sed etiam abominabile paene habetur. Et quod esse maius testimonium Romanae iniquitatis potest quam quod plerique, et honesti et nobiles et quibus Romanus status summo et splendori esse debuit et honori, ad hoc tamen Romanae iniquitatis crudelitate compulsi sunt ut nolint esse Romani? (5.22-3)

Subsequently he asserts that the ultimate loss suffered by the Bacaudae is that of the *honorem Romani nominis* (5.24).

In this passage, Salvian displays a veneration for the *nomen civium Romanorum* almost equal to that he shows towards the *nomen Christianorum*. His accusation against Roman society is that it is no longer capable of including all those who are legally its citizens within a community of true citizenship, because those who hold power in the state exploit it so ruthlessly in their own interests. This is expressed in secular terms, though its resemblance to his explicitly Christian critique of society will be obvious. Salvian evidently believes that in the past the empire did embrace all its citizens, and that everybody had an interest in being a member of it. The failure of the Roman state which he condemns is a failure to achieve standards of behaviour towards its citizens, or rather to control the behaviour of the powerful towards their fellow citizens, which it did achieve in the past, and which are still incumbent on it. For Salvian the resistance of those who flee the clutches of

[32] On the significance of the concept in this period, see Lepelley 1994. Salvian was not unique in his feelings on this issue: see Augustine, *Ep.* 10*, which expresses his indignation at the enslavement of the free rural poor by slave traders.

the Romans state, relatively passive in the case of those who flee to barbarian territory, active and violent in the case of the Bacaudae, can be justified as a response to the experience of oppressive rather than paternal power. In the case of these free Roman citizens, however, the situation is even more shocking because of their higher status.

This is the significance of another political term employed by Salvian in this passage, *libertas*. He defines life under the barbarians as *libertas* in the guise of captivity (5.22). The Bacaudae seceded to defend their lives, because they had already lost their *libertas*; those who would like to join them but are too weak (*omnibus ferme humilioribus*, according to Salvian) desire *libertas* even while they endure servitude (5.26). *Libertas* here denotes free status as opposed to slavery.[33] Those who flee to the Goths or the Bacaudae are free citizens, yet under the oppression of the *potentes* they are reduced to a state indistinguishable from slavery or captivity by the enemy (5.26). Once again the natural state of things is twisted into its opposite. The free—Romans in the Roman empire—are reduced to slavery; the only way in which they can achieve freedom is voluntarily to live under the *captivitas* of barbarian rule, or else to join the Bacaudae and endure being deemed *rebelles*, *perditos* and *quasi barbari* (5.24, 26).

The final passage of social criticism in Book 5 is Salvian's account of rural patronage (5.38-45), which is independent of his attack on the tax system[34] He describes how poor people seek refuge from insecurity by putting themselves under the protection of powerful landowners, only for their 'protectors' to seize their land and reduce them to what he claims to be the slave-like status of *coloni*. The passage begins with the assertion that all the poor would flee to the Bacaudae or the barbarians but for the fact that they would be unable to

[33] 'Libertas primarily denotes the status of a "liber", i.e. a person who is not a slave, and comprises both the negation of the limitations imposed by slavery and the assertion of the advantages deriving from freedom' (Wirszubski 1950, 1).

[34] On the historical ramifications of Salvian's account, see Krause 1987, 233-83.

take their possessions and their families with them. They would like to carry their *agellos ac tabernacula* away with them, out of the reach of the tax-collector, but since this is impossible, they have recourse to the second best:

> Ergo quia hoc non valent quod forte mallent, faciunt quod unum valent. Tradunt se ad tuendum protegendumque maioribus, dediticios se divitum faciunt et quasi in ius eorum dicionemque transcendunt. (5.38)

Salvian's language here suggests that to come under the protection of the rich is equivalent to being annexed by a foreign power. Those who accept it have ceded control of their lives to another. The first thing they lose is their property, since the protection of the rich over the poor is actually a means of despoiling them. In order to be defended the poor must first give up almost all their property, thus depriving children of their inheritance.[35] In offering such protection, therefore, the rich are not really giving anything away, merely grabbing something for themselves in a hypocritical guise (5.39-41).

The passage about *patrocinium* is structurally important in Salvian's argument, because by enabling him to describe the ways in which the injustices of the landowners have rebounded on them,[36] it brings the theme of divine judgement back to the centre of his argument, where it remains throughout the later books of *De gubernatione dei*.[37]

[35] Note the contrast between Salvian's indignation in this passage at the idea of children being deprived of their inheritance, and the views about inheritance expressed in *E*.

[36] See above pp. 214-5.

[37] Book 5 concludes with an attack on churchmen who behave like *potentes*, ending with the (perhaps fictional) portrait of such an individual (5.51-61).

6) The Present Judgement in Action

1) *Spectacula* and their Consequences

The theme of judgement, which Salvian had left in the background from Book 2 until towards the end of Book 5, becomes central again in Books 6 to 8. In these, for the first time, Salvian cites specific events in the recent history of the empire as instances of divine judgement. The attacks on immorality which continue throughout the last three books are also connected much more overtly to the events that occur to punish them than is the case in the earlier books of *De gubernatione dei*. Book 6 contains the most systematic description of the reciprocal relationship between sin and punishment. After the usual introductory passage (6.1-9), the book presents an argument in three stages. First, Salvian advances yet another demonstration of the collective apostasy of the church, this time based on the attendance of Christians at the games and the theatre (6.10-38); then he shows how God, through the agency of the invading barbarians, has caused these to disappear from most of the West (6.39-52); finally he describes how, in spite of this visible demonstration of God's anger, the Romans have not been reformed, and have thus become more guilty than they were before (6.52-99).

After his criticisms directed primarily at the powerful, therefore, Salvian is once again attacking the entire Christian community. His attack is confined to a single phenomenon and one which was specific to Roman society: the games, the theatre and other public entertainments, which Salvian usually refers to collectively as *spectacula*. The importance of *spectacula* lies first in the fact that they were characteristically Roman, but also in the fact that they had been demonstrably affected by the invasions and impoverishment of the preceding generation. They could therefore be used as a proof that

God's judgement was active in the contemporary world.

The attack on public spectacles forms a foundation for the further arguments of Books 6 to 8, just as Book 3 does for the arguments of Books 4 and 5.[1] In each case, Salvian begins by establishing the guilt of the Christian community, and then goes on to explore its implications. While Books 3 to 5 are devoted primarily to describing the activities that arouse God's anger, the later books describe how such behaviour is punished. This shift in Salvian's focus is slightly disguised by the fact that so much even of the later books is taken up with the denunciation of sin. But we have already seen how, in Books 3 to 5, his targets are never chosen at random, but to illustrate the points which he is trying to make about God's anger and judgement. This is so in Books 6 to 8, in which the sins denounced have two common characteristics: they explain the judgements which have been inflicted on the whole empire or on particular regions, and they can plausibly be argued to have been stamped out, or at least hindered, as a result of these judgements. Here as elsewhere in *De gubernatione dei*, Salvian's argument proceeds in a series of steps: his characteristic method in the later books is to begin with a passage of denunciation which establishes that the Romans deserve to be punished (in this case 6.10-34), and then to argue that recent events constitute the punishment which has been elicited (6.35-89).[2] The successive stages of his argument tend to be self-contained, but this is particularly so in Book 6, in which the denunciation of *spectacula* contains no reference to the later parts of the book to show why the subject is relevant to Salvian's argument about judgement. The rather lopsided structure of the book means that if the direct attack on *spectacula* is read in isolation, or if the connections between the denunciatory and explanatory passages are overlooked, its overall

[1] Parallels between the rhetorical structure of Books 3-5 and Books 6-8 are set out in detail by Richter 1929, 50-52.

[2] See, for example, 7.62-83 and 7.84-107 (The pattern is anticipated in 5.15-45 and 5.46-50).

relevance may not apparent.[3] Seen in the context of the entire book, however, the attack on *spectacula* plays a crucial role: it is the first major illustration of the direct link between the behaviour of contemporary Christians and the disasters that had fallen on the Roman empire.

[3] This is evident in the discussion of Book 6 by Robert Markus (Markus 1990, 171-4). Markus correctly notes that Salvian sees *spectacula* as occurring largely in the past, and that he uses them as a symbol of the general corruption of Christian society. But his conclusions that 'his attack on the shows had no immediate target', and that 'he was using a fiction to state a view of Christian morality on which the shows would have to be condemned if they existed' (173), do not take account of Salvian's grasp of the historical processes in which the shows were involved, and which made them relevant to his argument about judgement.

The decline of the church – again (6.1-9)

As he does throughout *De guberntione dei*, Salvian begins Book 6 with an introductory passage (6.1-9) which signals some of the themes of the book which follows. Here he returns to the theme of the collective wickedness of contemporary Christians. He begins from the idea that someone might dispute the relevance of the attack on the corrupt priest which concluded Book 5. Why should one person's wickedness be harmful to anybody else? Salvian begins by citing a number of Old Testament examples in which large groups were punished for the actions of individuals (6.1-2); he uses the question as a cue to renew his attack on the entire church, and his antithesis between its present corruption and past perfection.[4] Paul, he notes, had advised that a single sinner should be expelled from the church so that he should not corrupt it. Peter had punished Ananias and Sapphira with death for a single lie. Now, he claims, almost everybody acts in such a way as to merit punishment, and it would be a cause for celebration if even half the church's members were not evil (6.3-5). Salvian uses the imagery of decline which is so familiar:[5]

> Quam dissimilis est nunc a se ipso populus Christianus, id est ab eo qui fuit quondam ... Ecce in quid recedimus, ecce in quid post illam Christiani populi puritatem qua omnes quondam immaculati erant. (6.4-5)

Thus, in its present state, the *populus Christianus* has been perverted into something different from its true being. The change has been from a church which was defined by the absence of sin, where the sin of any individual caused him to be cast out of the community, to one which is almost defined by its tolerance of sin (6.4-5). Salvian therefore concludes that he was indeed mistaken to condemn the sins of an individual; not because one person's sin is irrelevant to the community, but because the community is so full of sin that to denounce any

[4] This is one of several occasions in *G* when Salvian touches on, but does not fully discuss the issue of the relationship between individual and collective sin and retribution (see e.g. 3.57-9).

[5] Cf. *E* 1.2-5; 3.41-4; *G* 3.22.

given individual is superfluous (6.6).

Salvian goes on to portray the pursuit of evil as virtually a new unifying principle in the church. Even those who commit lesser sins desire to be worse than they are; their evil actions correspond to the extent of their opportunity, and as far as is possible they strive to outdo each other in wickedness (6.6-7). Such deliberate striving after evil suggests that there is little hope of reform:

> Et quae tandem, rogo, spes emendationis in nobis est, qui non errore opinionis ad malum ducimur, sed studio malae voluntatis adnitimur ut semper peiores esse videamur? (6.9)

Salvian goes on to repeat his point that the sins of the barbarians, in contrast, are not committed in malice of such a kind, but in ignorance. Then he abruptly changes subject to the wickedness of *spectacula*.[6]

The claims made in this opening passage are pursued by Salvian throughout his treatment of *spectacula* and the judgement they provoke, especially his claim that because the Romans sin through a will to commit evil rather than from ignorance they are unlikely to become better. In the course of the book he illustrates this proposition by describing the many different punishments which have fallen on parts of the Roman world, apparently without effecting any reformation, before returning to it as the central theme of discussion at the conclusion of the book (6.90-99). In *spectacula* he has therefore found a subject with which he is able to sum up the entire relationship of his society to the moral demands made of it and the punishments it suffers when it turns away from them.

[6] The abruptness of the transition may be due to a lacuna in the text.

Pompa diaboli (6.10-38)

In the games and the theatre, Salvian had chosen a target which attracted monolithic hostility from church fathers.[7] His discussion contains some derivative elements; parts of it are borrowed from Tertullian's *De spectaculis*.[8] However, while Salvian has borrowed some of the details of his attack on *spectacula* from other sources, its overall role is entirely adapted to the argument of *De gubernatione dei*.[9] Salvian is not concerned with persuading people that they should renounce the games and the theatre, and explaining why they should do so. His purpose is to demonstrate the corruption of the church, by displaying the ubiquity of wickedness within it. The structural role of the attack in relation to Books 6 to 8 therefore parallels the role of the attack on everyday sins in Book 3 in relation to Books 3 to 5.

Salvian begins with a relatively perfunctory attack on the cruelty of contests in which men are killed by beasts, the vicious emotions which these arouse, and the vast amounts of money and effort which are expended to obtain beasts from remote places (6.10).[10] It is no excuse to say that these things do not happen all the time; murderers and robbers are still murderers and robbers, even when they are not committing their crimes (6.11). Having made this point, Salvian embarks on a brief digression in which he accuses the consuls of participating in pagan rites of augury and feeding the sacred chickens at the beginning of their year of office, rites which were regarded as absurd even by pagans (6.12-13). Once again, the wider significance which he attributes to their act is that the whole community agrees to it (*consensu publico aguntur*), and by doing so participates in the guilt and

[7] For general treatments see Jürgens 1972; Weismann 1972.

[8] Waltzing 1920.

[9] For discussions of Salvian's attack on *spectacula*, see Schaefer 1930, 44-5; Bordone 1937, 320-21; Pellegrino 1940a, 97-9; Lagarrigue 1975, 34-5; Badewien 1980, 83-93; Markus 1990, 171-4.

[10] It is not clear whether has gladiatorial contests in mind as well as those between men and beasts. Gladiatorial contests had almost certainly ceased everywhere by the time *G* was written (Ville 1960). Wild beast shows continued, though (at least in the West) only in very large cities such as Rome and Carthage.

pollution which it incurs.[11] Salvian then declares that he will not pursue the subject further, in deference to the objection that such acts do not occur all the time.[12] Instead he will discuss the 'daily obscenities' which do. He lists these as *amphitheatris scilicet, odiis, lusoriis, pompis, athletis, petaminariis, pantomimis*.[13] Salvian emphasises their ubiquity: they are innumerable, devised by 'legions' of demons (6.14-15).[14]

Salvian then puts forward his argument against the theatre. He claims that it pollutes all the senses and every aspect of the personality, to the extent that it is not safe even to talk about it. This makes it qualitatively different even from crimes like murder, adultery, or blasphemy, which can be witnessed without pollution, as long as one dissents from them (6.15-18). It is only the theatre which makes those who see crimes participants together with those who commit them. It makes people (even those who just permit it) consent to fornication and other crimes, and thus become guilty of them (6.19). His point seems to be (it is not made with absolute clarity) that in a theatrical performance immoral acts are committed on stage, and the audience, and by extension those who allow such performances to take place, approves of them, and thus morally shares in them.[15] This is a more complex

[11] This example is clearly derived from literature, not from contemporary reality. The role of the sacred chickens in guiding the consuls is redolent of anti-pagan apologetic (it appears in e.g. Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 25.12-26.3; Augustine *Civ*. 3.21), as is the reference to the absurdity of augury to pagan philosophers (perhaps deriving in this instance from Cicero, *De div.* 1.15; 2.35). Some rituals of pagan origin, such as the Lupercalia, continued to be celebrated in the fifth century, and were eventually denounced by Pope Gelasius I in the 490s (Thiel, pp. 598-607), though they seem to have been divested of religious significance and simply used as an excuse for festivities. This was also true of the celebration of the Kalends of January, which was denounced by many Christian writers (Markus 1990, 103-6), who do not, however, make Salvian's accusation against the consuls.

[12] Twice in this passage Salvian suggests that people will excuse the things he denounces on the grounds that they do not happen all the time. These apparently casual references are not developed at this point in the book, but later (6.39-45) Salvian will use this claim as the rhetorical cue for his argument about the judgement and punishment of the games and theatre.

[13] Theatres, at least, seem to have been ubiquitous in Gallic cities; separate amphitheatres were less common (some cities used the same structure as both a theatre and an amphitheatre). Few circuses have been discovered in Gaul, though this may be because they are more difficult to identify archeologically. See Drinkwater 1982, 148-51; Woolf 1998, 122.

[14] Salvian's only references to demons interfering in everyday life are in his discussion of *spectacula* (here and 6.61).

[15] Salvian does not distinguish in his text, and it is unclear how far he distinguished conceptually, between representing immoral acts and actually committing them.

argument than the standard claim that the theatre acted as an incitement to vice (Salvian does make this claim in the course of it: 6.19), and since it makes the actual behaviour of the audience outside the theatre irrelevant to their participation in immorality, it is more effective for Salvian's purpose of discrediting the whole community.[16] Salvian concludes by returning from the nature of the theatre's wickedness to his accustomed focus on the community. It is not primarily the corruption engendered by the theatre that matters, but the unanimity of participation in it, either directly or simply by tolerating it:

> Omnes ea visu atque adsensu agunt ... itaque in illis imaginibus fornicationum omnis omnino plebs animo fornicatur. (6.19)

This characterisation of the wrong that is embodied in the theatre brings Salvian back to his attack on Christians for ignoring God's commandments. The rest of the argument about *spectacula* (6.20-38) hardly deals with the events themselves, but uses them as a sign of the corruption of the Roman Christian community.[17] Salvian begins by alluding again to the complaint that the Romans are neglected by God. How, he asks, can God watch over the 'innumerable thousands' of Christians who defile themselves every day in theatres and circuses? (6.20). If God looks on those who attend such places, he must also see the disgraceful things they are watching; if he averts his eyes in disgust, he must also avert them from the people there (6.21). When Salvian refers to God 'averting his eyes', the anthropomorphic image is evidently sarcastic,[18] setting the tone for the rest of the passage. Do Christians believe like pagans that they have a God of circuses and theatres? If these pleased God, then their behaviour would be irreproachable (6.22). But as they are fully conscious of the fact that God hates such things, how can they claim to be Christians?

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[16] Lactantius, *Div. inst.* 6.20, provides a possible (partial) parallel for such criticism.

[17] The entire section (6.20-52) is a particularly striking instance of Salvian's indiscriminate use of *Romani* and *Christiani* as synonyms. See the quotation from 6.40 below, p.240.

[18] Cf. the references to God's ears in Books 1 and 2.

Yet again, this time in stronger language then ever, the majority of Christians are characterised as collectively striving against God, as being in a state of wilful apostasy. They attack God *non casu aut imprudentia*, but deliberately, in full knowledge of what they are doing: *gnari et scientes, de consilio et industria* (6.23). They offer circuses and mimes to Christ (as Salvian characterises the practice of holding such performances to celebrate some favourable event, like a military victory).[19] They are therefore like someone who attacks his benefactor, or like a slave who plots evil against the master who has freed him (6.24-5). Salvian juxtaposes the gift given to human beings by Christ in the Incarnation, with the repayment offered by Christians in the form of the theatre (6.26-7).[20] He quotes from Paul a description of the life of piety and rejection of sin that should be the true repayment (6.27). Where, he asks, is the church of the kind that Paul desired? Where are those who fulfil it, who display faith in good works? (6.28)

> Ubi est populus ille mundus, ubi populus acceptabilis, ubi populus boni operis, ubi populus sanctitatis? (6.29)

Instead of this true church, whose members obey Paul's command to follow in the footsteps of Christ, there is one in whose members claim to follow his footsteps in the theatres and circuses (6.29-30). Here Salvian is making yet another variation on the theme of ingratitude towards God for the benefits given to the human race, this time uniting it with one of the major themes of Book 6, the claim that the Romans misuse both God's favour and his disfavour.[21]

By this stage, Salvian has established *spectacula* as the phenomenon which embodies

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[19] Sarcasm again, though it has been taken by some as evidence that games and theatrical performances were actually dedicated to Christ (Schaefer 1930, 45).

[20] The passage resembles others in which Salvian refers to the Incarnation (e.g. *E* 2.4-6; *G* 4.45-51). In all of these, Salvian attempts to convey the extent of the debt which it imposes on human beings by using extravagant language to juxtapose the divinity of Christ with the indignities of bodily existence.

[21] 6.66-8, 75-8.

more than any other the perversion of the Christian community. He now takes his indictment a step further, by claiming that to attend the games or the theatre constitutes not merely metaphorical desertion from the faith, but apostasy in the literal sense (6.31-4). He points out that when Christians are baptised they renounce the devil, his pomps, and his spectacles.[22] Therefore at their very entry to the faith, Christians have acknowledged pomps and spectacles to be the works of the devil (6.31). Having done so, to return to them after baptism can only constitute a conscious (*prudens et sciens*) choice to return to the devil (6.32). Moreover, the profession of faith in God is inextricably linked to the renunciation of the devil. Therefore to return to the devil by attending his spectacles constitutes a direct repudiation of the faith (6.32-3). To attend the games is therefore to renounce Christianity in a quite literal way, by transferring one's allegiance from the church to the realm of the devil.

The argument that attendance at the games constitutes apostasy from the baptismal vow is borrowed from Tertullian's *De spectaculis*, but it is thoroughly reworked by Salvian for the purposes of his own argument. Tertullian begins by stating that the games are part of the pomp of the devil renounced at baptism because they are idolatrous.[23] He uses this to introduce a long, antiquarian exposition of the origin of the games as rites to pagan gods.[24] Later he argues that visiting them constitutes apostasy from the baptismal vow, and compares

[22] *Diabolo ac pompis eius et spectaculis atque operibus* (6.31). It is not clear how close this is to the wording of the actual baptismal formula. The inclusion of *spectaculis* may well be an adaptation by Salvian. The words used by Tertullian (*Spec.* 4) are *diabolo et pompae et angelis eius*, and the same formula is used by Quodvultdeus (*Serm de symb.* 1.2). Cf. Beck 1950, 157-65.

[23] *Spec.* 4.

[24] *Spec.* 5-12. A subsequent passage in Book 6 seems to be based on this part of *De spectaculis*. See p. 244 below.

this to desertion from an army.[25] This is the point that Salvian found useful, and he makes it more emphatic in his argument than it is in Tertullian's, developing and reiterating it at greater length, and stressing the deliberate nature of the apostasy in a way that Tertullian does not.

Salvian follows this demonstration of the perversity of the Christian community with a renewed posing of the familiar question, *Quid simile apud barbaros?* (6.35). As with previous subjects of indictment, like taxation, they are entirely free of a sin which is characteristic of the Romans, and Salvian points out, predictably, that even if they were not, their sin would be forgivable as the result of ignorance, not rebellion. Christians, on the other hand, possess the creed but trample on it; they assert their piety and simultaneously deny it; they despise the church and honour the theatre (6.36). The climax to the argument is a portrayal of this in practice: if the games take place on a holy day, churches are deserted, and if anyone should go to church without knowing that games are taking place, he hurries out again when he hears the noise from them (6.37-8). This is a cliché,[26] but in context it provides a fitting conclusion to the image of the Christian community constructed by Salvian. He has already, in Book 3, used disrespect for churches as a climactic manifestation of the corruption of their congregations (3.46-9), and the image here of the congregation deserting the altar for the stage or circus is analogous to the earlier image of the congregation plotting new sins in the church to which they have come to repent their old ones. It rounds off assertions about the perversion of Christian values by portraying it in action, by portraying the way in which people respond to the direct choice of allegiance with which the

[25] *Spec.* 24. Tertullian also describes renunciation of spectacles as the one of the characteristic signs of Christianity in the eyes of pagans, so that those who compromise it lose the mark by which their identity is known. This ought to have appealed to Salvian, with his concern for the ways in which the church is defined, but he does not reproduce it.

[26] Markus 1990, 118, 172.

spectacula present them: *Verba Christi an verba mimi?* (6.37). This is the climax of Salvian's discussion of *spectacula* and the Christian community. He now moves on (6.39ff.) to the way in which the community has been punished.[27]

It is clear that in Salvian's argument in Book 6 games and spectacles in themselves, and the reasons why they are wrong, are a relatively marginal issue. He is really concerned with the light which is shed on the Christian community by the indulgence of Christians in *spectacula*. Persuading people inclined to go to the games or the theatre that they should not do so may not be absent from Salvian's agenda, but it is a minor element. This is evident from the content of his arguments. Evils that take place during *spectacula* are hardly mentioned: one brief condemnation of wild beast hunts (6.10), almost as if Salvian is paying lip service to the issue, and his description of the corrupting power of the theatre (6.17-18). Apart from this, Salvian's attack takes place entirely at one remove; he does not deal with what goes on at games or theatrical performances, but with the implications of the fact that by attending them Christians offer them their consent and approval. It is his concern with consent and its implication of vicarious participation even by those who are not present that makes it relevant for him to include his reference to the involvement of the consuls in pagan rites. As he says, if what was at issue was simply the action of two individuals, it would not matter. But because it is done *consensu publico*, their crime becomes the crime of the whole of society (6.12-13). In the same way, the fornication committed on stage becomes, through the consent of the audience, the crime of their whole society or community (6.19); when they are Christians, it becomes the crime of the church. Other elements of his attack all relate to the implications of this crime. Theatre and games are offensive to God (6.20-21, 24); but the assault on him comes from the community and it is on the community that judgement will

[27] He returns to the nature of *spectacula* at one point in his subsequent argument (6.59-61), when he discusses their role in honouring pagan gods.

rebound, not specifically on the actors or the individuals members of the audience. Christians who attend the games nullify their baptismal vow and return to the realm of the devil (6.31-3); each apostasy may be individual, but cumulatively they constitute a reorientation of the whole community towards the devil.

The language in which Salvian expresses his detestation of the spectacles is violent but devoid of detail—*immunditia, immoderatio, furor, impudicitia* and so on—and beyond the brief passages mentioned above, he never explains why *spectacula* should be characterised in such terms.[28] That profane spectacles are absolutely wrong, and enjoying them absolutely incompatible with being a Christian, is the presupposition of his argument, not its conclusion. This contrasts with *De spectaculis*, for example, which is presented by Tertullian as an argument against Christians who believe that Christianity and the spectacles are compatible. Apart from meeting the arguments that such people might put forward, such as that *spectacula* are not forbidden in the Bible,[29] Tertullian fills his work with denunciation of the content of various spectacles for obscenity, violence, idolatry or mere inanity, in order to demonstrate that such things are unsuitable for Christians. In Salvian's exposition this is taken for granted. The clearest sign that he is using *spectacula* primarily as evidence for the corruption of the community is his insistence that those who attend the spectacles already know the implications of their actions (6.22-5, 32-3). They are fully aware that the spectacles are the devil's realm, and return to them deliberately. Having made a conscious pledge in their baptismal vow, they must be aware of what they are doing when they break it.

> Necesse est ut prudens et sciens, dum ad spectacula remeas, ad diabolum te redire cognoscas. (6.32)

All this is done by *omnes aut paene omnes Romani* (6.20). According to this argument, there

[28] Badewien 1984, 84, n.15, lists all the words used by Salvian about *spectacula*.

[29] *De spec.* 3.

is no purpose in showing people that they are deserting the Christian faith; they are already as well informed about the implications of their actions as Tertullian could have wished them to be. They have chosen to act as they do anyway. When the majority of Christians attend spectacles, it is a sign that the majority of Christians have renounced their faith and transferred their allegiance to the devil.

The tendency of all Christian polemic against *spectacula* is to deny the possibility of divesting them of religious significance.[30] Salvian is typical in the implications that he sees in attending spectacles; he is unusual in the fact that he does not portray those who do so as ignorant of these implications, but as fully conscious and accepting of them. The language that he uses about Christians who go to *spectacula* is unusually strong, but his claims about them are another instance of his general tendency to attribute sin to conscious and deliberate rebellion against God. Here, as in the previously discussed passages in *Ad ecclesiam* and Books 3 and 4 of *De gubernatione dei*, Salvian moves from people's actions to what he sees as the implications of those actions without acknowledging the possibility that their understanding of the implications may differ from his. Here he is implying that his own interpretation of the games is the only one possible, and that therefore other Christians must share it; consequently there is only one course of action possible for Christians, but most Christians do not carry it out. Therefore, according to his process of syllogistic reasoning, they must have decided to renounce Christianity. As before these claims emphasize as strongly as possible the corruption of the community before explaining the punishments which God has inflicted on it, which form the subject matter of the remainder of Book 6. Salvian may have had other reasons for making such a claim at this point: it helps to establish a parallel between the behaviour of the Romans and incidents of apostasy by the

[30] On this see especially Markus 1990, 107-21.

Jews mentioned in the Old Testament. Though Salvian does not refer to the parallel here, it must have been on his mind, because he makes direct reference to it later in Book 6.

Salvian's claim that, since Christians know the will of God, failure to act on this knowledge must be a deliberate choice to disobey God, is a central element in his diagnosis of the degeneracy of the church. By making the claims that he does about *spectacula*, Salvian is trying to show the extremity of the point that this has reached. His attack on *spectacula* therefore fulfils the same function as the description of the sins of everyday life in Book 3. In both books, Salvian portrays the ubiquity in the church of sin and rebellion against God; as far as the content of the two attacks is concerned, that on spectacles differs in that Salvian makes much more far-reaching claims about the religious dimension of the sins described. There is thus a cumulative increase in the severity of his accusations against the Christian community. Sinfulness and rebellion are first attributed to it in Book 3, the superior moral knowledge which makes these so culpable is explained in Book 4. By Book 6 the accusation has been extended from simple disobedience to deliberate apostasy, and an actual abandonment of allegiance to God.

The attack on *spectacula* has a key position in the architecture of *De gubernatione dei*. As a climactic depiction of the church's decay, it precedes the major shift in Salvian's focus which takes place in the later books, from the condition of the church to the process of judgement and punishment. Indeed, it can only be fully understood if it is seen in the light of the arguments which follow it as well as those which precede it.

The end of the games (6.39-52)

The wider significance of the attack on games and spectacles does not lie in Salvian's denunciation (6.10-38), but in the remainder of Book 6 (39-99), his account of the historical process which has brought *spectacula* to an end in most of the western empire. He uses this account to spell out in detail the relationship between the immorality of the Romans and the current state of the empire, and to unite his claims about these with the ideas which he sketched in Book 1 about the relationship between God and the people on earth who owe him allegiance. We have seen that the attack on *spectacula* stresses their nature as communal phenomena in order to demonstrate that the entire Roman population has rebelled against God's commandments. But there was an additional reason why *spectacula* should appeal to Salvian as the almost perfect example of the provocation of judgement. This was the observation that because of the poverty and insecurity which resulted from the barbarian invasions, that is, as a direct result of God's judgement on the empire, they were actually dying out. This could not be said about any of the activities denounced in Books 3 to 5.[31] There is in Book 6, therefore, a qualitative change in Salvian's references to judgement; he no longer supports his claims by means of general statements about Roman weakness, but by reference to specific aspects of the contemporary situation and specific events from the recent past.

Salvian begins with the anticipated objection that *spectacula* do not take place in all Roman cities. He concedes that this is so, and that they have ceased in some where they took place before, but the question which he poses in the ensuing discussion is *why* they have ceased (6.39):

Non enim hoc agitur iam in Mogontiacensium civitate, sed quia excisa atque

[31] Though it is a claim which he makes, rather less plausibly, about the activities (mostly sexual) condemned in Books 7 and 8.

> deleta est; non agitur Agrippinae, sed quia hostibus plena; non agitur Treverorum urbe excellentissima, sed quia quadruplici est eversione prostrata; non agitur denique in plurimis Galliarum urbibus et Hispaniarum.

In other words, *spectacula* have ceased only because cities have been destroyed or have fallen under the control of the barbarians. They have come to an end, but not because of any change for the better on the part of those who indulged in them. The supposed defence is therefore no defence; spectacles have come to an end, but the fact that their sins are ended only by external intervention compounds Roman guilt:

> Quae spes Christianis plebibus ante deum est, quandoquidem ex illo in urbibus Romanis haec mala non sunt ex quo in barbarorum iure esse coeperunt? (6.40)

Another imaginary objection, that there are few even among cities still under Roman control where such things still take place (6.41), becomes the starting point for a new attack. Cities are still the homes of the games even though the games have ceased. Where they have not been stopped by the barbarians, they have died out because society is now so poor that it can no longer afford them.[32] *Spectacula* have ceased through necessity—people simply cannot afford what they once did.[33] The desire for them, however, is as strong as ever (6.42-8):

> Quantum ad vota hominum pertinet, etsi iam non ubique sunt, ubique adhuc sunt, quia ubique ea populus velit esse Romanus. Cum enim ab homine mala res sola necessitate non agitur, ipsa turpis rei cupiditas pro actione damnatur. (6.48)

Even in such circumstances, Romans are able to assemble some resources for self-indulgence, and this condemns them further. It shows how much they would spend on sinful pleasures if they could, and shows how little meaning there is in the fact that the games have

[32] *Prae miseria temporis atque egestate* (42); *calamitas enim fisci et mendicitas iam Romani aerarii non sinit* (43); *miseriae est beneficium non disciplinae* (48).

[33] Salvian seems to be the only observer to attribute the decline of *spectacula* to economic impoverishment. Jürgens 1972, 189, cites as parallels Augustine, *De consensu evangeliorum* 1.33 and *CTh* 6.4.29 (396), but neither is really relevant. Augustine claims that theatres are disappearing but attributes this solely to the arrival of 'Christian times'; the law, which mentions that funds for theatrical performances organized by the praetors had been diverted to the maintenance of aqueducts, orders them to be *restored* to the theatres.

declined (6.44). Salvian brings this section to a rhetorical climax by borrowing language from the book of Jeremiah, in which the prophet invoked the laying waste of the kingdom of Judah, to link these events to the judgements of God recorded in the Old Testament.[34] The Romans have sinned so much that they have aroused God's anger and now their land has been laid waste:

> Per haec ergo iam factum est ut maior pars Romani orbis in desolationem esset et in stuporem et in maledictum. (6.45)

If the Romans had renounced *spectacula* themselves then God would perhaps have been appeased, but in fact if the old conditions were restored the spectacles would be too. As far as the Roman's desire for them is concerned there has been no change at all; it is simply no longer possible to satisfy it (6.46-8). Just as a man who looks at a woman lustfully commits adultery in his heart, those who yearn for the spectacles are as guilty as if they attended them in reality. In any case, if people from Gaul ever go to places like Rome or Ravenna, where the theatre and the circus still operate, they seize the chance to visit them (6.49).[35]

The guilt that games and theatres impose on the Romans has actually increased, because in the past the Roman world was so affluent that, even though they were indulged in more widely, the spectacles were not a financial burden. Wealth was so abundant that the state needed things to spend it on, and prosperity was so great that temptations overwhelmed the power of religion to control people's morals. Now the Romans are reduced to poverty, but are still spendthrift. This shows that their sins were not due to temptations presented to them by circumstances or events, but simply to wickedness. Their changed conditions have therefore done nothing to reform them (6.50-2). While Salvian makes this point specifically about the changed circumstances of the Roman empire, it has a wider significance, in that

[34] Jeremiah 44:21-2.

[35] This statement indicates that though Salvian has referred throughout to *Romani* without qualification, he has been thinking only of Gaul and perhaps Spain, not the whole empire or even the whole West.

it is an instance of a more general claim—that the Romans are corrupted by both good and bad fortune—which is reiterated throughout Book 6 (6.63-6, 90-2) and in later books.[36]

[36] The charge is repeated in almost the same terms in Salvian's attack on the Aquitanian *nobiles* (7.21-2).

The lesson of the invasions (6.53-89)

An important argument is introduced at 6.47, when Salvian compares the Romans to a person who sees his neighbour's house burning down but makes no effort to protect himself from the fire (6.47). The issue which this simile indirectly introduces is a major theme in the later books: the way in which one region after another in the Roman world has been affected by the invasions, not just as a punishment for those attacked but as a lesson to others which, if heeded, would allow them to reform and thus escape punishment themselves, but which in practice is always ignored.[37] Salvian goes on to point out the exemplary nature of some of the punishments inflicted on people in the Old Testament, such as the man who gathered wood on the Sabbath (*unus enim incautior periit ne multi per incautelam postea deperirent* – 6.55).[38] On a larger scale, the Hebrews longed for meats in the desert instead of manna, and complained about their labours.[39] They were punished with heavenly blows. Salvian claims that their punishment was because, since desire for meat is not forbidden in itself, the punishment of something not forbidden by the law acted as a lesson of the even greater need to obey the law. All Salvian's examples emphasize the exemplary nature of punishment. Some of the people are punished not merely because they deserve it, but to communicate God's displeasure to the remainder, and instruct them in the necessity of obedience in every detail. The parallels with the Romans are obvious, and indeed had already been drawn by Salvian in Book 1, where the discontent of the Hebrews with manna was applied to the Romans and generalised as a sign of the desire of everyone for what they do not have, rather than what God has given them. The parallels between the desire of the Hebrews for meat and that of the Romans for the games is clear, as is that of their complaints and those of the

[37] Chiefly 6.67-8, 7.50-6.

[38] An example repeated from his account the Israelites in the desert (1.49), where it is also explained as an instance of an individual being punished in order to give an example to the remainder of the population.

[39] Numbers 11:4-6.

Romans, though neither is explicitly remarked upon by Salvian.

The other parallel to be drawn between the punishments of the Hebrews and the Romans is in their exemplary nature, and it is this which Salvian explores in most of the remainder of Book 6. This does not follow until Salvian has digressed further on the offence caused to God by the games. This begins with the passage about the roots of the games in pagan cult (6.59-61). Seeking to explain the magnitude of the offence towards God that *spectacula* constitute (6.59), he claims that they are consecrated to pagan gods: gymnasia to Minerva, theatres to Venus, and so on, and that the character of these patrons determines the nature of the sins committed in each place. In fact demons are everywhere in such places; therefore for a Christian to attend them is sacrilege, because it is to participate in pagan cult (6.61). This argument is clearly derivative; like the argument about apostasy, it seems to be borrowed from Tertullian.[40] Its value for Salvian is as a reiteration of the message given earlier, in the passage about the baptismal vow: to demonstrate that visiting *spectacula* is tantamount to renouncing Christianity and transferring one's allegiance to its enemies. The placing of this argument here, apparently somewhat out of place, is probably to be explained by Salvian's desire to suggest parallels between the apostasy of Christians who cultivate pagan gods at the games, and the Jews who worshipped the golden calf or who had been denounced by Jeremiah, and whose pursuit of strange gods caused God to bring about the destruction of their land.

Salvian now embarks on his demonstration of the relevance of these themes to the current situation of the Roman empire. Following from a passage condemning the Romans for regarding peace and prosperity simply as opportunities for luxury and self-indulgence

[40] The same point is made at great length in *Spec.* 8-12, though there are not the direct verbal similarities in Salvian's text that there are to other passages of Tertullian. Some of the gods mentioned by Salvian are different from those in Tertullian. Waltzing sees a reminiscence of *Apol.* 38.4 in the last sentence of 6.60, but the resemblance is not particularly striking (Waltzing 1920, 42-3).

(6.62-5), he asks whether, having been corrupted by prosperity, they have been corrected by their recent adversities (6.66). Italy, the city of Rome, Gaul, Spain and Africa have successively been ravaged by barbarians (6.67-8):

> Et quid? Ingressis terram illam gentibus barbaris forsitan vel metu vitia cessarunt? Aut, sicut corrigi ad praesens etiam nequissimi quique servorum solent, modestiam saltim ac disciplinam terror extorsit?

The people of Cirta and Carthage, he asserts, continued to luxuriate in the circuses and theatres while their fellow-citizens were slaughtered outside the walls (6.69-71). His point is not to highlight merely their self-indulgence, but their obliviousness to the vivid lesson for themselves which the fate of their neighbours provides. *Qui iugulari se in suorum iugulis non intellegebat?* (6.69). Willfully obtuse to these lessons, such people compel God even against his own wish to punish them in full force (6.71). This moral is also implied, on a larger scale, in Salvian's references to the invasions and conquests of the previous forty years, though he only spells this out explicitly in the next book (7.50-6). The Romans, in Salvian's view of their recent history, have been given a whole series of opportunities to draw the appropriate conclusions from the punishments inflicted on their fellows, but invariably fail to do so and thus bring down such punishments on themselves as well. Salvian goes on to provide an illustration of this on a large scale in his account of the invasions of Gaul and the sacks of Trier (6.72-89).

Salvian begins this by asking why he should discuss events in Africa when almost all the upper classes (*praecelsiores*) of Gaul have been made worse by their disasters (6.72). His description of their behaviour, which made them, in his words, greater enemies to themselves than were the enemies outside, is less original than the argument within which it is deployed. Its elements are largely clichés of rhetorical invective: even though they are old men, the *nobiles* of Trier and a neighbouring city are concerned only with gluttony and

lust; they lie around drunk and stuffed with food; they dance (6.73-9).[41] These standard elements are applied by Salvian to the context of the invasions: Trier was sacked four times, but the behaviour of the *nobiles* grew worse rather than better (6.75-6); the rulers of its unnamed neighbour continued feasting even when the enemy was entering the city (6.77). In fact, Salvian claims, such behaviour was universal in Gallic cities. Everywhere their rulers continued to indulge in complacent debauchery even when they were directly threatened by the barbarians, and did nothing to protect themselves (6.80-1).[42] Salvian describes this negligence towards their situation as the sleep of the Lord, which ensured that they should not escape the punishment of their sins (6.81). This is not entirely consistent with the implication of his attack up to this point, which is that their torpor is one of the sins causing punishment rather than part of the punishment itself. Possibly this is because in making both this point and in his previous emphasis on self-indulgence as a sin, he is thinking chiefly of the conclusion which he now enunciates: *ne in summo quidem rerum discrimine cessasse umquam vitia civium usque ad excidia civitatum*. Whether their torpor is a sin or a punishment or both, the result is the same.

For the rhetorical climax of Book 6 (6.82-9), Salvian returns to another claim that he has made, closely related to that about the universal torpor of the Gallic ruling class: the assertion that the Romans are corrupted by adversity as much as they are by prosperity. This is portrayed on a large scale in Salvian's account of the sacks of Trier.[43] Most of this passage (6.83-9) is a description of Trier after it was sacked by the barbarians,[44] and it is filled with imagery of destruction: burnt buildings, bodies and severed limbs lying in the streets, people

[41] Favez 1957 attempts to use this part of Book 6 as an accurate source for Gallic history in this period.

[42] In his reference to the lack of *custodia civitatum*, Salvian slips from moral condemnation of behaviour which was supposedly punished by conquest, to criticism of failure to take practical measures to ward off conquest.

[43] For the historical background see Chapter 2 above.

[44] The third of four sacks (6.89).

dying of hunger, and so on. This creates a vivid and highly emotional sense of the city's destruction, heightening the effect of Salvian's accusation against the citizens:

> Pauci nobiles qui excidio superfuerunt, quasi pro summo deletae urbis remedio, circenses ab imperatoribus postulabant. (6.85)

But it should be noted that the point of his attack is not to attack them simply for wishing to indulge in the immorality of circuses, but to portray them as possessing the two characteristics that he has been denouncing throughout Book 6: indulgence in the sins of prosperity even when their world is devastated and poverty-stricken, and the basic sin of which this is a manifestation, blindness to judgements which are being inflicted on them. It is for these reasons that the Treveri are denounced (6.89): *Nam quia te tria excidia non correxerant, quarto perire meruisti*. Their persistence in sin *compelled* God to punish them again. The entire section on the sack of Trier, with its vivid imagery, therefore provides a rhetorical and emotional climax to the accusations which he has made throughout his account of the invasions, in relation to Gaul and Spain, and to Cirta and Carthage.

Although Salvian stresses his status as an eyewitness, the content of his portrayal gives every appearance of being determined by this rhetorical purpose, by his need to produce shocking imagery, than by any desire to produce an historically faithful account of the sack of Trier.[45] Salvian's imagery conforms extremely closely to standard rhetorical portrayals of cities which have been besieged and sacked.[46] At one point, for example, his language echoes Virgil's description of the sack of Troy in the *Aeneid*.[47] There is no reason to doubt the central factual claim made by Salvian, about the request of the *curia* for a circus

[45] Blänsdorf 1990, 319-20.

[46] On such portrayals, see Paul 1982.

[47] *Ubique facies captae urbis, ubique horror captivitatis, ubique imago mortis* (6.89). *Ubique luctus, ubique pavor et plurima mortis imago* (*Aeneid* 2.368-9).

performance,[48] but his portrayal may well exaggerate the devastation of the city. Whatever, the actual situation, Salvian's description is vague, and in spite of his claims to be an eyewitness, contains nothing that could be regarded as specific eyewitness information; this does not mean that Salvian's claim to have been there himself is necessarily false, simply that his description is constructed entirely of topoi; its purpose is not to pass on information about the situation in Trier, but to provide a rhetorically effective climax to Salvian's argument.

[48] On the political context of the request, see Heinen 2000. It has been argued (Jones 1964, 1016; Ward-Perkins 1984, 106; Markus 1990, 173) that request of the *curia* was not frivolous, but a well-judged attempt to encourage people's morale at a time of crisis ('a heroic resolve to maintain civilisation in the direst extremities', Jones, loc. cit.). This is a reasonable point, but it provides no basis to argue that Salvian misjudged their action: from his point of view the fact that it was beneficial to people's morale would simply have been a symptom of their corruption.

Incorrigible corruption (6.90-99)

The pessimistic implication of the preceding passages is made explicit in the conclusion to the book. The sufferings described have not happened through God's neglect, but deliberately and with justice, because no part of the Roman world was ever corrected, no matter how much it suffered. The Romans never deserve to be prosperous, but sometimes it is granted to them because God's mercy overwhelms his justice (6.90). Like a doctor using harsher or gentler remedies, God's treatment varies from time to time, but the corruption of the Romans is such that neither harsh nor gentle treatment effects any cure (6.91-2). This is proved by people's reaction when the divine aid for which they pray in adversity is actually granted. Instead of giving thanks in a way acceptable to God, they rush to the circus or the theatre, repaying assistance with impiety (6.93-6). Those who sin in error can be reformed by knowledge, those who do so from the temptations of excessive abundance can be chastened by adversity, but the Romans sin in knowledge and are profligate in adversity. They have no excuse. Therefore their former strength has vanished, and God has made them tributary to the barbarians (97-99).

The conclusion to Book 6 is the most pessimistic of *De gubernatione dei*; more so than Book 7, which ends with an account of how the Romans have been reformed by barbarian rule.[49] Throughout Book 6 Salvian argues that sufferings are inflicted by God to inspire repentance is raised, but that in the case of the Romans they have failed. Book 6 essentially restates the case made in Book 1 about the punishment of part of a community in order to act as a warning to the whole, except that it is illustrated by events taken not from the Bible, but from contemporary Gaul and Africa. If Salvian followed the pattern of the Exodus story exactly, their inability to profit from correction should doom the Romans to

[49] The end of Book 8 is lost.

absolute destruction. In fact, another of Salvian's themes comes into play: the idea of God's overwhelming indulgence and mercy. This has already been invoked to explain why punishments (of both the Israelites and the Romans) were not as severe as they might have been. Salvian reiterates that even the punishments which the Romans have suffered have been the result of justice being overwhelmed by mercy (6.90). Ultimately he does come close to threatening total destruction for the Romans:

> Sed quia inveterata in nobis malorum omnium labe aliter iam non vitiosi esse non possumus nisi ut omnino non simus, quae in nobis, rogo, spes bonae frugis est? (6.96)

There is therefore a degree of tension at the end of Book 6. The example of the Israelites suggests, and Salvian hints, that if the Romans do not change their ways (which he has already virtually ruled out) they will be destroyed. His stress on the image of God as a loving father conflicts with this, giving as it does the impression that final destruction will always be delayed, but the parallel between the disobedience of the Romans and that the Israelites remains clear. Salvian will attempt to resolve these tensions in Books 7 and 8 by introducing a new factor which differentiates the situation of the Roman empire from the events of the Old Testament: the power of the barbarians.

2) The Justice of the Invasions: Gaul and Spain

In all their essentials, Salvian's claims about the nature of divine judgement and the guilt of the Romans have been presented by the end of Book 6. Books 7 and 8 add no new theoretical points, but they represent the rhetorical climax of the work, and are therefore a vital part of Salvian's case.[1] The structure of the two books follows the standard pattern in *De gubernatione dei*, with passages devoted to the condemnation of Roman sins alternating with passages in which Salvian gives an exposition of God's judgement as it has been worked out in the military and political events of contemporary history. The development which gives them their particular character and notoriety is the heightening, to unprecedented levels, of Salvian's claims about the virtue of the barbarians.

When Salvian's claims about the moral difference between barbarians and Romans were first made, in Book 4, he confined himself to arguing that the barbarians' acts, even when they were bad, were not sinful in the same way as the Romans' because of the barbarians' ignorance of God's will. In Books 5 and 6 he moves beyond this to argue that the barbarians are morally superior to the Romans, but, in comparison with Books 7 and 8, these claims are still comparatively restrained, confined largely to the assertion that the barbarians were free of the sins of which Salvian accuses the Romans. In the last two books, Salvian's claims about the barbarians reach a climax with his insistence that the morality of two barbarian peoples, the Goths and the Vandals is superior not merely to the practice of contemporary Romans but to the morality of such canonical figures as Socrates and Cato the Younger (7.101-4), and that the experience of being ruled by them has succeeded in reforming the hitherto unreformable Romans. Salvian's concentration on the Goths and

[1] In its present form the incomplete Book 8 is effectively no more than an extension of Book 7, and in this chapter the two books will therefore be treated together.

Vandals is a response—as he states himself—to the fact that they had not merely invaded but successfully conquered and established their own realms in Roman territory. The historical significance of this fact can hardly be overemphasized: it amounted to an uprooting of all the landmarks by which Romans interpreted their situation in the world, and naturally invited a response in prophetic terms from someone of Salvian's outlook, as did the fact that the barbarians who conquered were the ones who had converted to Christianity. In interpreting this situation, Salvian is no longer comparing the Romans with abstract 'barbarians', but with specific peoples, now rulers of kingdoms, whose acts are recorded by numerous other sources. It is the gulf between the representations of the Goths and Vandals in these sources and by Salvian which has fuelled much of the controversy about him in the scholarly literature.

Salvian's concentration on the Goths and Vandals determines his treatment of the Romans in Books 7 and 8. His attacks on Roman immorality are now directed not at society in general, but at the specific regions that had been invaded by the barbarians—Aquitaine (7.7-25), Spain (7.26-33), and Africa (7.57-83; 8.9-25)—whose inhabitants he portrays as being bound to their conquerors in a reciprocal relationship, by which the barbarians punish and correct them for their own particular sins.

Aquitaine and the Goths (7.1-25)

Like all books of *De gubernatione dei*, Book 7 opens with a passage of general argument (7.1-6), which in this case largely restates points made in earlier books, though very much in the pessimistic tone of the conclusion to Book 6. Salvian insists that the fact that the Romans conquered the world as pagans but are defeated as Christians, cannot be used as an argument against God's government. Such an idea can be refuted by the argument already used of the barbarians: those who do not know the Law cannot be as sinful as those who know but neglect it. In addition, Salvian promises to demonstrate that, in any case, the ancient Romans deserved their past successes (7.1-2).[2] Now the Romans are chastised in order to cure them, but cure does not result. Sick animals may be healed by cauterisation or amputation. Such cures are imposed on the Romans. When they are unsuccessful on animals, those animals are slaughtered. They are unsuccessful on the Romans; therefore the Romans are slaughtered (7.3-4). This is because, living in poverty and insecurity, the Romans are *miseri pariter et luxuriosi*: the accusation which has already formed a central part of Salvian's attack on *spectacula*, and will be a central feature of the attack on the Aquitanian *nobiles* which follows. The observation leads Salvian into one of his most quoted similes. The Romans are like someone poisoned with Sardonic herbs: they die laughing: *moritur et ridet* (7.5-6). Thereupon, with his usual abruptness, he turns to the main argument of the book.

Salvian announces that in case someone should think that Romans are worse than barbarians only because of the games, he will compare them in respect of fornication. With which barbarians, he asks, can he compare the Romans more appropriately than those whom God has allowed to settle *in medio rei publicae* and to become the possessors and lords of

[2] He never does so, at least in the text as we have it; presumably he would have based his argument on the austere virtue of the ancient Romans, to which he alludes elsewhere (1.10-12; 6.98-9).

Roman soil?

> Unde quamvis nihil disputari de iudicio dei possit, tamen cum ablatam nobis iuris nostri optimam partem barbaris dederit, videamus an id quod nobis tulit et illis tradidit, iusto iudicio tradidisse videatur. (7.7)

For Salvian, the issue of whether God has ordered events according to a *iustum iudicium* is not—cannot be—a real question. Since God has given the richest territories to the barbarians, there *must* be a just reason for his action, and Salvian's task is to present it. He begins with a description of the wealth and fertility of Aquitaine the *medullam omnium Galliarum*, an image of paradise (7.8). By doing so he stresses the severity of God's judgement: he has taken this from the Romans and given it to the Goths.[3] The description emphasizes the gravity of the Romans' punishment.

Within the passage, Salvian lays particular stress on the benefits enjoyed by those who owned land in this paradise. It is they who particularly benefited from it, and consequently they have been deprived of the most by God. Enjoying such benefits through God's gift they should therefore have been more dutiful than others towards God, especially since God does not require anything harsh of people and rewards them with great benefits. Salvian's treatment of the Aquitanians therefore emerges as a variant on the argument from benefits received which he makes elsewhere in his works.[4]

He then turns to invective—the Aquitanians were first in Gaul in vice just as in wealth. His attack on the Aquitanian nobles shares many common features with that on nobles in general in Book 4. Now, however, Salvian claims that the men he is denouncing themselves attest his accusations, and not in shame but boastfully (7.13). He exempts a very

[3] The Goths had settled in Aquitaine in 418. Their original settlement was not the result of conquest: they were permitted to settle there as federates by the Roman government. Their kingdom was effectively independent, however, and by the time Salvian wrote they had already attacked Roman territory several times (Salvian discusses their most recent conflict with the Romans at 7.39-45). For an account of the early history of the Visigothic kingdom, see Heather 1992.

[4] *G* 4.34-54; *E* 2.1-13.

few holy men who have given away their wealth; the sentence in which he says this contains a quotation from Paulinus of Nola, to show his informed audience whom he means (7.44).[5]

But as for the remainder, Salvian renews the accusations made in Book 4 about the sexual exploitation of slaves (4.22-9), which are repeated in somewhat more violent language: *luto libidinis ... barathro sordidissimae conluvionis ... debacchatione grassantes* (7.15-18). Salvian then extends the point made in his earlier discussion into a more general reflection on hierarchy and moral influence. What kind of corruption of slaves must there be when the *pater familias* was like this? The head of a household is like the head of a body, which when it is corrupt infects the rest of the body. The Aquitanian *nobiles* corrupted the women they desired by force, and everybody else by their example (7.19-20). These accusations can be proved, Salvian asserts, simply by looking at them now. They are exiles, poor and old, without a homeland, but are still corrupt. They are therefore, by Salvian's previous arguments, worse than they were to begin with. Like the Romans in general, with their addiction to *spectacula*, they are poor but still do not cease from crime. Those who remain under the barbarians still practice the vices that caused them to be conquered (7.21-2). If their new rulers were such that they desired lustful behaviour from their subjects, it would still be wrong to obey them. But the Goths do not practice fornication; it is illegal among them. Among the Goths the only impure people are Romans (7.23-5).

The sexual exploitation of slaves condemned by Salvian is a phenomenon inherent in the nature of slavery, and so hardly requires documentary confirmation (though such confirmation is of course abundant). Salvian's claim that such activities were particularly characteristic of Aquitaine, on the other hand, seems at first sight whimsical and arbitrary. However, there is another literary figure contemporary with Salvian and also living at

[5] Paulinus, *Ep*. 33.3.

Marseille, whose work and personality may be relevant. This is Paulinus of Pella, author of the autobiographical poem, the *Eucharisticon*.[6] Paulinus was himself an aristocrat from Aquitaine who had been driven from his home by the barbarians and whose account of his own life and circumstances—including a remarkably complacent account of his early sexual relations with female slaves—is such a close match of Salvian's caricatured Aquitanians that if it had been written before *De gubernatione dei* it would be almost impossible not to see Salvian's attack as a response to it. Unfortunately, Paulinus' poem can be dated very precisely to 459, some fifteen years *after* the composition of *De gubernatione dei*. There are various ways that one can attempt to resolve this problem. It is difficult to read the *Eucharisticon* as a response to Salvian, because it is strikingly lacking in any defensive or polemical tone; rather than defending his way of life, Paulinus writes as if it had never occurred to him that anyone would criticize it (though this could be construed as a particularly subtle response to criticism).[7] Possibly Paulinus circulated earlier versions of the poem (or other works about his life) before completing the final version of the *Eucharisticon*. Also, since both men lived in Marseille, there is the possibility of personal contact, though it is impossible to go further without resorting to speculation.[8]

Salvian's attack on the Aquitanians says little about their Gothic conquerors. The role of the Goths is indirect, and the only claim Salvian makes is about their superior sexual morality. This contrasts sharply with the level of attention which he accords to the Vandals. The accusation of sexual immorality against the Aquitanians, however, sets a pattern which will be repeated for all the conquered peoples mentioned in Book 7, though the detail of the accusations are different in each case.

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[6] On Paulinus, see McLynn 1995, especially 482-3 on his possible relevance to Salvian.

[7] Moussy 1974, 23, states that *G* influenced the *Eucharisticon*, but without providing any arguments. Oddly he makes no mention of the resemblance between parts of Paulinus' account of his life and Salvian's caricatured Aquitanians.

[8] E.g. Griffe 1962, 259: 'Les fameuses diatribes de Salvien sur l'immoralité de la noblesse de l'Aquitaine sont peut-être un écho des conversations qu'il eut avec ces deux hommes.'

Spain and the Vandals (7.26-33)

Salvian turns to Spain, which had been invaded by the Vandals in 408, and in which they had lived before crossing to Africa in 429. His treatment is brief, but important, since it introduces the Vandals, who dominate the remainder of *De gubernatione dei*, and is also—perhaps precisely because it lacks what a modern reader would regard as factual detail—unusually revealing about the way in which Salvian interpreted events. He compares Spain to Aquitaine:

> Hispanias nonne vel eadem vel maiora forsitan vitia perdiderunt? Quas quidem caelestis ira etiamsi aliis quibuslibet barbaris tradidisset, digna flagitiorum tormenta toleraverunt puritatis inimici; sed accessit huc ad manifestandam illic impudicitiae damnationem ut Wandalis potissimum, id est pudicis barbaris, traderentur. Dupliciter in illa Hispanorum captivitate ostendere deus voluit quantum et odisset carnis libidinem et diligeret castitatem, cum et Wandalos ob solam maxime pudicitiam superponeret et Hispanos ob solam vel maxime impudicitiam subiugaret. (7.26-7)

There are a number of striking features about this passage. One relates to Salvian's references to the Spaniards. The language in which he accuses them of impurity is as vehement as anything which appears in his attacks on Aquitanians and Africans, but, in contrast to those parts of the book, he does not instantiate it with the slightest detail. Their corruption is introduced in a rhetorical question, as if it was simply something known to everybody. It seems likely that the disparity in the length and content of the attacks on the Aquitanians, Spaniards and Africans is not the result of any significant difference in Salvian's attitude towards them, or in his interpretation of their fate as victims of the barbarians, but simply in the amount of source material which was accessible to him about each region. Very few literary works relating to Spain are known from this period, and there is no obvious reason why Salvian should have had access to any other source of information. His summary judgement on the Spaniards is therefore likely to be a direct inference from the fact that they had been conquered by the Vandals. Sexual immorality is the main accusation

against the Romans in Book 7, so this is the charge he makes against the Spaniards. In the other cases—especially Africa—he had much more material at hand to fill out details.

Salvian's claims about the Vandals seem to be based on a similar chain of inferences. He claims both that they were the most chaste of the barbarian peoples, and the weakest and most cowardly (7.28-9). On this basis, he can assert that God allowed them to conquer Spain to show that the Romans were destroyed not by the strength of the enemy but by their own vices. Why should God have given the richest part of the Roman world to its weakest and most cowardly enemies, except to confound the Romans, and force them to acknowledge the cause of their misfortunes?[9]

> Et vel sic plagam caelestis manus agnosceremus quia nos non fortissimi hostium sed ignavissimi subiugarent. (7.29)

It should not require much reflection to see that Salvian's claims about the weakness of the Vandals can have no more factual basis than his attributions to entire peoples of lust or chastity.[10] Once again it is an inference, and the source of the inference is made clear by Salvian himself when he goes on to compare the rise of the Vandals to incidents in the Old Testament in which God allowed the weak to gain victories over the strong in order to demonstrate that the outcome was due to his power (7.30-33).[11] These follow a similar group of biblical citations which Salvian has assembled and applied to the Spaniards (7.28), all of which are warnings to Israel or its enemies of punishment by God through invasion and conquest.[12]

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[9] As Salvian has written it, this refers to Spain, to which it is hardly appropriate. However, the subsequent development of his argument indicates that he is thinking of Africa.

[10] Though its historicity has been defended by the normally sceptical Walter Goffart (Goffart 1989b, 126). Note the way in which Goffart's summary ('Despite the trials recently endured by Italy, Gaul, Spain, and Africa, Salvian in the 440s still did not consider the barbarians to be inherently strong ... he could hardly have spoken as he did of the Vandals if their strength had been as notorious as their successes') neatly omits the religious context in which Salvian's claims are made.

[11] Sisera and Abimelech killed by women (Judges 4:21; 9:53-4); Benedad conquered by a few soldiers (1 Kings 20:28-30; explicitly stated to be a sign); Gideon defeated the Midianites with 300 men (Judges 7:2).

[12] Deut. 28:49; Ezek. 26:11, 39:24.

The chain of reasoning in this passage is neither arbitrary nor irrational, given Salvian's presuppositions. He is applying the mechanisms of divine judgement which he has described in the preceding books (especially Books 1 and 6) to the observed historical situation. The underlying principle—that current events can be interpreted as following the pattern of events in the Bible—has already been established. Such an intellectual framework provided a coherent rationale for the otherwise inexplicable rise of the Vandals, apparently from nowhere, to conquer the richest, and hitherto the most secure, region of the western empire. It was a uniquely powerful approach to interpreting events, because its explanatory force was inseparable from its implied moral judgement against the Romans. It is important to stress this point, because failure to recognize it is one of the intellectual causes of the kinds of misapprehension of Salvian discussed in the Introduction. Hostile characterisations of his attitude to barbarian conquest, such as that by Courcelle, rest on the assumption that in passages such as this one Salvian cannot really mean what he says because by modern standards it is not rational, and that he must therefore have had some ulterior motive. But given Salvian's beliefs it was as rational as reasoning on the basis of empirically observed facts, such as that which underlies his diagnosis of the decline of *spectacula*.

A sign of the extent to which the ideas presented in the passage about the Vandals in Spain underlie the entire argument of Book 7 is the prominence throughout the book of citations from the main prophetic books of the Old Testament—Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel—almost all of which appear to be chosen carefully to allude to the points which Salvian wishes to reiterate about the sins of the conquered and the role of the conquerors as instruments of judgement rather than agents in their own right.[13]

[13] These points are not always explicit, in that they are not always contained in the actual quotation, but can be found in the passages from which quotations are drawn. This seems to be to be deliberate, and perhaps directed at the religiously literate milieu in which Salvian worked.

Romans and barbarians in conflict (7.34-56)

The moral of the biblical passages applied to the Vandals is that those who trust in their own strength alone blaspheme against God. But, Salvian claims, this is the very attitude of the Romans (7.34). People ascribe successes to chance or human merits, never to God. Hence God is never thanked for anything (7.35-7). People's failure to acknowledge the benefits they receive from God is one of the threads which run through Salvian's works. Now he brings the Goths and Vandals into the argument, insisting that they, unlike the Romans, regard prosperity as a gift from God (7.38). This was demonstrated in what Salvian refers to as 'the last war' (*bello proximo*), a conflict between the Goths and the Romans in the late 430s which had been provoked by Gothic attacks on Arles. (Salvian alludes only to the final battle at Toulouse in 439, in which the Goths inflicted a heavy defeat on the hitherto victorious Romans.) He claims that the Goths were afraid and sought peace, sending bishops as intermediaries, but that their request was rejected by the Roman commander, who trusted in the strength of his force of Hun mercenaries (7.39). The Roman leader, who had believed that he could win through his own strength, was defeated, captured and humiliated, and died a prisoner (7.40-43), an event which 'revealed the Present Judgement of God' (*praesens iudicium dei patuit*).[14] In contrast to his arrogance, the king of the Goths,[15] prayed before the battle, stretched out on hair-cloth, *as the outcome proved* (7.44).[16]

Salvian cites further a conflict between the Romans and the Vandals which had taken

[14] From other sources we know that the leader, referred to by Salvian merely as *dux nostrae partis*, was Litorius, a military commander active in Gaul in the 430s. He appears to have been *magister utriusque militiae per Gallias*, and the immediate subordinate of Aetius by 439 (*PLRE* II, 684-5), when he led an army composed largely of Huns into Visigothic territory in an apparent attempt to capture Toulouse, the Gothic capital. He was defeated and died (was killed, according to sources other than Salvian) in captivity. The event is described in the chronicles of Prosper (1335), Hydatius (108) and Cassiodorus, and alluded to in Sidonius, *Carm.* VII, 300f.

[15] Theodoric I, 419-451. As always with contemporary figures, Salvian does not mention his name.

[16] *Quantum res prodidit ac probavit*. The complaint of Courcelle 1964, 152, that these words show that Salvian was not reporting a fact but merely his own conjecture, based on the outcome of events, demonstrates his failure to appreciate the way in which Salvian reasoned from events. The claim may, in fact, be an allusion to the prayer of Theodosius before the Battle of the Frigidus (Orosius 7.35).

place in Spain (7.45-6).[17] Just as in the case of Litorius, the Romans relied on their own strength and were destroyed, while the victorious Vandals prayed and read the Bible. If anyone suggested that the Romans should prepare for battle by praying, they would be treated with derision. How, therefore, can they claim to be Christians? (7.47-8) God's judgement on the merits of Romans and the Goths and Vandals is clear, and is demonstrated by events (7.49). Salvian illustrates his points in this passage with a string of quotations from Jeremiah, all of which are taken from passages which warn of the consequences of deserting God and his commandments, while his conclusion on the waning of the Romans before the Goths and Vandals is illustrated by a reference to the decline of the house of Saul before that of David.[18]

Salvian goes on to make his strongest claims about the role of the barbarians as tools of God (7.50-6). The Vandals, a *gens ignavissima*, were raised up by God to destroy the Roman provinces; first Germania Prima, then Belgica, then Aquitaine, then the whole of Gaul. This punishment by invasion was gradual in order that the regions that had not yet been affected might learn by example. But the Romans were blind (7.50-51). The people of Spain learned nothing from the fate of Gaul, so suffered in turn.

> Et ideo compulsus est criminibus nostris deus ut hostiles plagas de loco in locum, de urbe in urbem, spargeret, et excitas paene ab ultimis terrae finibus gentes etiam trans mare mitteret, quae Afrorum scelera punirent. (7.52)

There was nothing to cause the Vandals to move from Gaul, or from Spain. They were stronger than anyone else there, and had nothing to fear.[19] The only reason there could possibly be for their migration is that they were led by the hand of God. They say themselves that they did not move of their own volition, but *divino iussu* (7.53). Salvian cites more

[17] The only known event to which Salvian can be referring is the defeat of the Roman commander Castinus in 422 (Hydatius, *Chron*. 69).

[18] Jeremiah 2:37, 9:23-4, 8:8, 7:4-7; 2 Sam. 3:1.

[19] Salvian seems to have forgotten their *ignavia*.

passages from the prophets in which they make such claims about the Assyrians and Babylonians;[20] once again, there is every reason to believe that he made such a claim precisely in order to be able to draw such parallels. Returning to consideration of the Vandals' victims, Salvian reiterates that those who are afflicted are struck *by* the judgement of God, but *because of* their sins. Their suffering is their own responsibility not God's. Therefore the conquest of Africa by the Vandals was the fault of the Africans, whose sin drew them forth from their own land. Their punishment was long deserved, but had been deferred through God's mercy. They deserved punishment more than any other people, because every kind of impurity flourished among them (7.56). The presentation of the progress of the invasions as a warning to the Romans is exactly parallel to that in Book 6 (6.66-7). The new element here is the emphasis on the passivity of the barbarians under the direction of God, and the citations from the prophets which accompany it.

[20] Isaiah 36:10; Jeremiah 25:8-9, 43:11.

3) The Justice of the Invasions: Africa and the Vandals

The invective against Carthage (7.57-108; 8.9-25)

Salvian justifies the statement in 7.56 by launching a violent and extremely long invective against the moral corruption of the Africans, especially the Carthaginians. He interrupts it only at one point, to reiterate his admonition that the vices of individuals can bring down the punishment of God on whole communities (7.81). The remainder of this section is confined to denunciation, and to asserting the ubiquity of various sins in the province or its capital, and can be passed over briefly. First, he claims that Africa was distinguished by the indulgence of its people in every form of sin, unlike other nations who indulged in some kinds but not others (7.57-64). Eschewing comment on other crimes, he will concentrate on impurity (7.65-7). He then digresses on the greatness of Carthage, which can stand for the rest of the province (7.68-9), reiterating that every kind of sin was practised there (7.70), and singling out oppression of the poor as worse there than elsewhere (7.71). After this interruption, he returns to the theme of lust, moving with a tone of increasing horror over its general ubiquity in Carthage (7.72-5), the tolerance of the Carthaginians for homosexuality (7.76-8), and the public appearance in the city of men dressed as women (7.79-80, 82-3).

After the opening passage of Book 8, which deals with now standard themes (8.1-8),[21] Salvian returns to denunciation of the Africans, this time for impiety (8.9-25). Many still profess paganism, and worship the goddess Caelestis (8.9).[22] Even worse, some self-styled Christians still worship her (8.10-11). This was what the Christianity of the Africans, especially of nobles, amounted to; since households or communities usually follow their

[21] People say God is negligent rather than facing their own sins (8.1-5). They compel God to punish them, and therefore really punish themselves (8.6-8).

[22] For Caelestis see Rives 1995, 65-72.

masters, the sins of the powerful corrupted everybody (8.12-14).[23]

Finally, Salvian accuses the Carthaginians of hating and persecuting *sancti.* God is injured when one of his servants is, just as a father suffers an injury to his children. If someone injures a servant of God, they injure God (8.15-7). The Carthaginians manifested their hatred against monks by insulting them in the way that the Jews had insulted Jesus (8.18-19). The monks aroused such hatred because their morals were a reproach to those of the citizens; it was safer for the Apostles to enter pagan cities than for a monk to enter Carthage (8.20-23). The barbaric treatment of *sancti* by the Carthaginians makes it just that they should now have suffering inflicted on them by barbarians (8.25). With this opinion, *De gubernatione dei* abruptly comes to an end.[24]

Salvian's sources for the various claims made about Carthage are obscure. It has sometimes been suggested that he had visited Africa himself, but there is no reason to believe this. His attack on sexual immorality in Carthage contains virtually no substantive information, but simply consists of vague but bombastic accusations of sinfulness.[25] When these are stripped away from the passage, there is only one concrete accusation: that the public practice of homosexuality and transvestism were tolerated, or even formally permitted, by the authorities in Carthage. In the case of the worship of Caelestis, Salvian's claims are demonstrably anachronistic. We know that pagan worship had ceased in the temple of Caelestis by the end of the fourth century, and by 421 the building had been

[23] This is one of two places in Salvian's works where the survival of paganism is an issue, the other being the pagan rites mentioned at 6.12-13.

[24] The abruptness of the ending, the lack of any formal closure (compare the end of *E*, quoted above p. 33, n.31), the fact that Book 8 is far shorter than all but one of the books in Salvian's surviving works, and the fact that Salvian alludes elsewhere in *G* (7.2) to arguments which do not appear in the extant text, all suggest that the conclusion to the book has been lost. Since Salvian was alive more than twenty years after the composition of *G*, this is presumably due to truncation of the text in the course of transmission rather than to the work being unfinished. How much has been lost is unknowable, but if Book 8 was originally comparable in length to the other books of *G* (except Book 2), it would have been at least twice its current length.

[25] Demonstrated by Blänsdorf 1990.

demolished.[26] The passage probably derives from a polemic against Christian converts who remained attached to pagan beliefs written in Africa before the suppression of the temple, and which might easily date even from the fourth century. The same work may well be the source of Salvian's accusations about homosexuality and transvestism.[27] We know that works from Africa which are now lost were circulating in Gaul, since those of at least one author are known. Gennadius includes in *De viris illustribus* a Donatist author named Vitellius, who wrote a work described by Gennadius as *De eo quod odio sint mundo dei servi*.[28] It is impossible to say whether Vitellius was the source (or a source) of Salvian's portrayal of Carthage, but it is an intriguing possibility. The title given by Gennadius cannot but evoke Salvian's claims about the Carthaginian persecution of monks, and a Donatist author who wrote about Carthage might well have done so in an extremely hostile manner.

There are additional possibilities for Salvian's sources about Africa, some of which do appear to contain contemporary material (like the reference to the sieges of Cirta and Carthage at 6.69) perhaps deriving from the writings of an African author such as Quodvultdeus,[29] or simply from hearsay (easily possible given the degree of contact between southern Gaul and Africa). It has been suggested that Salvian obtained his information from

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[26] Quodvultdeus, *Lib. prom.* 3.44. When Quodvultdeus was young the temple, which had already been disused for several years, was occupied and consecrated as a church by a group of Christians led by Bishop Aurelius. This seems to have been an anti-pagan demonstration rather than an attempt to permanently appropriate the building, as Quodvultdeus does not refer to any subsequent use by Christians, and says that under Constantius (so in 421) it was demolished.

[27] The most obvious interpretation of Salvian's claim about men in the city streets dressed as women is that they were prostitutes. However, it might be a tendentious reference to the carnival-like celebrations surrounding the cult of Caelestis, mentioned by Augustine, *Civ.* 2.4.

[28] *Vir. ill.* 4. The placing of Vitellius in Gennadius' catalogue suggests that he lived at least a generation before Salvian.

[29] Courcelle 1964, 155, argued that this passage was based on Quodvultdeus, *Sermo de tempore barbarico* I, and attempted to demonstrate this by printing the two texts in parallel, emphasizing the words that he claimed show dependence. I find the comparison of the two texts less than convincing: many of the words highlighted by Courcelle are so common (even *et* at one point!) that their mere appearance in the two passages (unless in significant phrases, which most of them are not) does not seem to me significant. Worse, while the Salvian passage is only a few lines long, the lines from Quodvultdeus that Courcelle prints in parallel are actually drawn from several pages of text, reducing the significance of the parallels even further.

ascetics who had fled to Gaul after the Vandal invasion.[30]

There is another factor in Salvian's portrayal of Carthage, however. Salvian clearly saw a direct parallel between the fate of Carthage and the fate called down by the prophets on the cities which they denounced. During his attack on Carthage (7.58-61) Salvian quotes from chapters of Ezekiel which denounce the corruption of Jerusalem and Tyre and predict their destruction.[31] From Salvian's point of view such passages were not just effective in a literary sense, but constituted evidence that was applicable to contemporary events. The punishment that had befallen Carthage showed that it was a city of wickedness; the prophets demonstrated the kind of sins which went on in such cities and the destruction that would follow; sources from his own time showed that such sins did indeed go on there. The different strands validated each other. Such reasoning may have formed the basis for the other, and even more problematic, side of his account of Africa, his praise for the Vandals.

[30] Lepelley 1979, 33.

[31] Ezekiel 22 and 28. There seems to me every likelihood that Salvian cited the latter chapter because Tyre was the mother city of Carthage.

The virtue of the Vandals (7.84-108)

After the invective against the Africans, the final part of Book 7 is devoted to a eulogy of their conquerors. Salvian declares that it would have been understandable if, having conquered a land so rich, the Vandals had succumbed to luxury (7.85-6). None of them became effeminate or indulged in pederasty, as had happened to Roman soldiers even in the distant past (7.87-8).[32] This would itself be enough to make them superior to the Romans, but in addition they refrained from female prostitutes or concubines (7.89). They not only refrained from vice themselves but suppressed it in others, thus differing from the enforcement of law and morality by Romans, which is riddled with hypocrisy (7.90-93). They suppressed the *sordes virorum mollium*, and compelled all prostitutes to marry, thus ensuring both their morality and their welfare (7.94-8). They suppressed adultery and prostitution by law (7.99-100). By suppressing all expressions of sexuality except monogamous marriage, the Vandals proved themselves to be superior to the moral heroes of the classical world, Socrates and Cato, of whom the first advocated the holding of women in common and the second gave his wife to another man (7.101-5).[33] What hope can there be for the Romans when they are less pure than the barbarians? The Vandals have begun to do what is unheard of: to make the Romans chaste (7.107). The barbarians have not been victorious through their own strength, nor through the military weakness of the Romans, but only because of the Romans' sins (7.108).

Salvian's portrayal of the Vandals conflicts with that in other sources, which portray them as particularly cruel and brutal. This portrayal is related to the long-lasting persecution of the Catholic church in Africa by the Vandal government, described in most detail by

[32] An antiquarian reference perhaps owed to Valerius Maximus 6.1.11f. Cf. also Livy 39.42.9; 21.34; Cicero, *Phil.* 3.31.

[33] These exempla are derived from Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 39.12f.; Lactantius, *Div. inst.* 3.21. The original source of the story about Socrates is Plato, *Republic* 5.457 C-D. See Waltzing (1920), 42.

Victor of Vita, who wrote in the 480s. Some scholars, faced with the discrepancy between Salvian's account and the other sources, have accused Salvian, sometimes in highly emotional language, of whitewashing the Vandals.[34] Salvian does not, in fact, deny the violence that accompanied the barbarian conquest (e.g. 7.26, 29, 50, 61), though he gives it no rhetorical prominence compared to his claims for their virtue.[35]

Salvian's praise of Vandal rule in Carthage is based on the claim that they ordered their laws to follow God's (7.94-106).[36] Since we know effectively nothing about the immediate aftermath of the Vandal occupation of Carthage,[37] we cannot confirm his claims one way or the other, though they have an obvious air of unreality. Salvian's claims about the Vandal treatment of prostitutes (7.96-8), which are inconsistent not only with what is known about the Vandals but with late antique government in general, appear to reflect the kind of laws he would have liked to see in his own society. Though it too might be an idealisation, the simpler claim that the Vandals outlawed sex outside marriage is more credible (7.99), since the one fact that is attested about the Vandal leadership by virtually every source is the intensity of their religious commitment. This, after all, is what lay behind the persecution. The possibility that Gaiseric issued the kind of moralising laws described by Salvian should not therefore be dismissed out of hand (as it usually is) simply because it does not fit the accepted image of the Vandals. It is impossible, however, to treat Salvian's claims as usable evidence for Gaiseric's policies, simply because they are so clearly projections of his own wishes about how society should be organized.

I think the primary explanation of Salvian's claims is that he felt the need for an event

[34] E.g. Courcelle 1964, 155; Blänsdorf 1990, 329, 331.

[35] Cleland 1970, 271-2, overemphasises Salvian's acknowledgement of barbarian violence.

[36] Pointed out by Cleland 1970, 272-3.

[37] The only measure reported by Victor is a decree ordering people to give up their valuables to the conquerors (*Hist. pers.* 1.12).

on the scale of the fall of Carthage to be reflected by consequences of the same magnitude. Since the process of successive Roman defeats described by Salvian reaches a climax with the fall of Carthage, then in order to avoid an anticlimax in both his rhetoric and his claims about God's judgement, there has to be a corresponding enhancement of the consequences: having begun in Gaul with the barbarians ending the games and theatre, he finishes in Carthage with the Vandals effecting a complete reformation of Roman morality. Again, though, I think we should see this not as a detached and utilitarian judgement on Salvian's part about rhetorical effectiveness, but as a conclusion based on the arguments which lead up to this point—an inference drawn from events which, given his premises, is legitimate and even inescapable.

Salvian never states what he believes to be the future for relations between Romans and barbarians. We know that he hoped that the Christianity of the Goths would be perfected by their conversion to Catholicism (5.13). He shows no sign of believing that the Romans were capable of reforming themselves. Whether he believed that since the Vandals had reformed the Romans of Africa (7.107), the mission of the Christian barbarians was to reform and purify the Romans,[38] or whether he believed that the barbarians would actually replace the irredeemably corrupt Romans as the people of God, in the same way as he believed the Christians had replaced the Jews,[39] remains unclear.

Embedded in Salvian's praise of the Vandals is his final attack on the Roman social system. It begins from his claim that the Vandals have not merely avoided indulging in the sexual corruption which he claims to have been rampant in Africa, but have attempted to stamp it out altogether (7.90). It is easy, he notes, to deplore something but not to remove it, an observation which immediately provokes him to contrast the Vandals' practice with the

[38] Inglebert 1996, 668.

[39] Teillet 1984, 171, n.90. It is surprising that Teillet should have suggested this, in view of her insistence that Salvian's treatment of the barbarians is purely formulaic.

way in which the Romans frame and administer their laws. The Romans enact that one should not steal yet they steal; that one should not commit adultery, yet they commit adultery. This is another direct reference to Romans 2; on this occasion Salvian transfers the accusation of hypocrisy in relation to the law from God's law, the theme of his discussion in Book 4, to those who uphold the secular law of the Roman empire, in a classic statement of the hypocrisy of the privileged, who condemn the crimes that the poor commit out of desperation while committing far greater crimes on their own account.

> Punit effractores claustrorum et ostiorum, cum ipse sit eversor urbium; punit expoliatores domorum, cum sit ipse expoliator provinciarum. (7.91)

Once an office has been held, it gives the individual a permanent right to pillage the community: *ius exercendorum latrociniorum honor ipse largitur.* Public office is a *beneficium*, which gives those who enjoy it a *ius latrocinandi*. In fact, he declares, *iudices* are less powerful when they are in office than after they have left it; in office they will soon be replaced, but as private citizens their privileges never come to an end (7.92). In the fifth century the term *iudex* normally denoted a provincial governor, who exercised both judicial and administrative powers. Clearly Salvian is thinking of him primarily in his role as a judge, and thus in theory the guardian of justice. But the guardian of justice has become a criminal; once again the right order of things has been perverted into its opposite. Salvian concludes by noting that the situation with the law is the same as with taxation. The poor are compelled by the threat of punishment to obey the law and to pay their taxes, while those with access to political power gain such security from the privileges that accompany it that they can treat both obligations *quasi nulla* (7.93).

The terms used by Salvian to describe the situation—*ius latrocinandi* and so on—can hardly be interpreted as other than a deliberate, sarcastic echo of legal terminology. The entire passage is scattered with legal or legal-sounding language; even the words used by

Salvian to refer to criminal activities are legalistic (*peculatio*, *sicarius*, *effractores*) rather than those in ordinary use. The whole passage is thus not merely a denunciation of hypocrisy, but an ironic commentary on the abuse of law. Salvian's language describes a system in which the apparatus and the terminology of law flourish, but the values that are supposed to animate them are entirely absent.

7) Conclusion: History and Community

Salvian's interpretation of history

Though it has many affinities with traditional Christian apologetic, *De gubernatione dei* is directed against Christians who doubt God's justice, not against pagans (1.1; 3.5). There is no reason to doubt Salvian's claims about the audience which he envisaged. The content of *De gubernatione dei*, which portrays most Christians as morally corrupt, and suggests that they are indeed responsible, at least indirectly, for the empire's misfortunes, would have made it worse than useless as a piece of apologetic directed at pagans. The belief which Salvian professes to refute is that God does not govern the world. People believe this because of the inconsistency between the moral character of individuals and their enjoyment of good or bad fortune, and, more specifically, because the Romans are Christian and orthodox, but are defeated by enemies who are not.[1] Salvian responds with two arguments. The first is that the political and military decay of the Roman empire is the result, not of God's neglect, but of his deliberate judgement. The second is that this judgement has been provoked by the failure of most Christians to live according to the standards of morality to which they are committed.

In the first two books of *De gubernatione dei*, Salvian uses abstract reasoning and incidents from the Bible to demonstrate that God punishes sinners within the world; what he calls *praesens iudicium*, 'present judgement'.[2] In succeeding books, he develops his arguments in relation to the contemporary world. In Book 3 he begins his argument about morality by confronting Christians who believe that they should enjoy security in this life

[1] 1.1, 6, 13; 2.1; 3.2; 4.54, 57. Cf. Badewien 1980, 31-50

[2] The phrase is used in the alternative title to *G* reported by Gennadius, and frequently in Salvian's text (1.50, 51; 2.15, 18, 25, 26; 3.4; 5.57; 7.41, 50).

as a 'payment for faith' (*stipendia fidei*, 3.6). He portrays a church whose members indulge in every kind of sin and disdain every commandment, yet still complacently regard themselves as good Christians. Books 4 and 5 attack the brutal and exploitative behaviour of Roman aristrocrats and officials. Book 6 condemns the games and the theatre, the manifestations of sin and apostasy which have been most directly suppressed by the process of judgement he describes. Books 7 and 8 attack those who had been the most obvious victims of the process. The Aquitanian landowners dispossessed by the Visigoths are portrayed as merciless sexual exploiters of their female slaves (7.8-25), while the Romans of Africa, conquered by the Vandals, are accused of a whole range of sexual and religious crimes (7.76-84; 8.9-25).

While Salvian uses these varied forms of immorality to build up an indictment of Christian Roman society, he also develops an argument about the nature of divine judgement. He begins from the principle that God judges and punishes sinners within the world as well as after death; using examples from the Old Testament, he argues that such punishments are not merely judgements on individuals, but signs which indicate to the whole community that God is angry and that they must renounce the sins which have been punished in such a manner.[3] In Books 3 to 5 Salvian is mainly concerned with undermining his audience's belief in the adequacy of their Christianity; only towards the end of Book 5 (5.46-50) does he argue explicitly that Rome's contemporary defeats are judgements of the kind outlined in Book 1. The exposition of the claims about God's judgement made briefly in this passage becomes the main theme of his argument in the subsequent books. Book 6, after Salvian's account of how *spectacula* have died out in Gaul and Spain because the destruction caused by the barbarian invasions no longer permits wealth to be squandered on such activities (6.39-45), portrays recent history as a contest between the sins of the Romans and

[3] *G* 1.48, 55-9.

God's inclination to mercy. God is reluctant to punish, but in the end is compelled to by the sheer scale of the Romans' wickedness. He therefore punishes them mercifully, by permitting parts of the empire to be chastened by the barbarians, but sparing the remainder, so that its inhabitants have a chance to recognize that the invasions are a sign of God's anger and respond by changing their way of life. But so ingrained is the obstinate corruption of the Romans, that they fail to respond to these signs, even though their meaning is obvious (6.52, 66-71, 75) and therefore compel God to punish them more and more severely, though never as much as they deserve (6.90). Even so, they have not been reformed (6.76, 82, 91-99; 7.4). In Books 7 and 8, Salvian claims that God has awarded victory to the Goths and the Vandals because of their greater chastity and humility. It is the Vandals, after their conquest of Africa, who have finally succeeded in reforming the Romans (7.107). Whether Book 8, after its opening attack on pagan survivals in Carthage, would have outlined an analogous conclusion about the effects of barbarian rule, will remain unknown.

The differences between Salvian's ideas about the relationship between human action and divine judgement, and their main contemporary alternative, those of Augustine, are obvious, and have often been remarked upon.[4] The differences centre on two issues: the extent to which the severity of the punishment inflicted through events corresponds to the sinfulness of the victims of such punishment, and the extent to which God's purpose in causing events is intelligible to human beings. In Augustine's first response to the sack of Rome, when he interpreted the event to congregations in Hippo and Carthage, he sought to minimize the extent to which it surpassed the trials which Christians could expect to suffer in temporal life.[5] He argued that earthly affliction had always befallen the good as well as

[4] Most recently by Markus 1990, 171.

[5] *Sermons* 81, 105 (*PL* 38, 499-506, 618-25), 296 (*Miscellenea Agostiniana*, vol. 1, 401-12) and *De excidio urbis* (*CCSL* 46, 243-62). On these see Bruyn 1993.

the evil, illustrating this claim with examples like Job, Daniel and the apostles.[6] He employs the same argument in his consideration of the sack in the *De civitate dei*.[7] Augustine claims that temporal suffering may be inflicted as a punishment, but stresses that those who experience such a punishment may be reformed by their experience.[8] He argues that temporal suffering such as that caused by the sack of Rome is an act of mercy if it corrects those who experience it. Therefore such punishment does not signify that God's anger against either the people of Rome in general or the individual victims of the sack was greater than against others.[9] Salvian, conversely, argues that God only inflicts present judgement when people's sins have exhausted his patience, with the implication that, while it may be a sign to others, its direct victims are destined for eternal as well as temporal punishment.

In the *De civitate dei*, Augustine develops a general interpretation of the significance of temporal suffering or prosperity.[10] He maintains that some people are rewarded or punished by God within the world, but others are not. God does not do this capriciously; he is acting on his infinite knowledge and wisdom, but the reasons why he makes some people but not others experience the consequences of their actions in this world will frequently be inscrutable to humans, with their severely limited knowledge and understanding. The very lack of a consistent relationship between actions and consequences has a purpose, because it teaches people neither to value temporal goods nor to be too anxious to avoid temporal evils, since each may be experienced by good or evil people. Moreover, if sin were always punished within the world, there would appear to be no need for a final judgement, while if

[6] *Sermons* 81.2, 7; 105.11; 296.6, 8, 10; *De excid.* 9.

[7] *Civ.* 1.10, 14, 26.

[8] *Civ.* 1.1, 24, 28.

[9] *De excid.* passim.

[10] On Augustine's theodicy in general, see Markus 1970, and now Trompf 2000, 255-83.

it were never punished, people would doubt whether God's providence existed at all.[11] Augustine accepts that the meaning of temporal success or affliction is sometimes apparent, as when he claims that God granted a long and prosperous reign to Constantine in order to demonstrate that it was not necessary to be a pagan in order to obtain power, but on the other hand allowed the reigns of Jovian and Gratian to be prematurely terminated in order to show that Christianity should not be seen as a way of securing power.[12] Generally, temporal suffering has a corrective role, because even the most virtuous human beings have sins which require chastisement, and tend to be too attached to worldly things. God may inflict punishments of varying severity to correct them. However, why God determines that particular individuals should suffer and others prosper is usually opaque to human understanding.[13]

Salvian, by contrast, claims that God's present judgement has an unambiguous meaning. It is a sign that he is angry because most Christians have betrayed their faith. Salvian sometimes uses arguments which resemble Augustine's, but they are subordinate to this claim. Like Augustine, he uses the prophets and apostles as examples to refute the idea that the suffering of the good is evidence against God's government (1.7-17, 30; 3.6). Like Augustine, he insists that the loss of temporal goods should be a matter of indifference. But Salvian resorts to these claims as an ad hoc argument to explain why some of the minority of true Christians are caught up in the punishment which God inflicts on the majority. For Augustine, everyone possesses some degree of guilt, and temporal punishments may be the means by which people are saved from damnation. Salvian portrays a church divided into two groups, a minority of sincere Christians, and a majority which is guilty of sustained,

[11] *Civ.* 1.8.

[12] *Civ.* 5.25

[13] *Civ.* 1.9; 19.15; 20.1-3.

wilful disobedience to God.[14] The meaning of God's temporal punishments, which should be apparent to all, is that God wishes to display his anger and warn people to reject the guilty majority and join the faithful minority.

To interpret events as manifestations of God's judgement was the almost universal practice of ancient Christians; it is Augustine who is unusual in partially rejecting the practice. By comparison with Augustine, Salvian may seem simplistic, but comparison with the (usually unconscious) theodicy of the majority of Christian authors, the most striking quality of treatment is the discipline with which he exploits the theme, and the clarity with which he pursues the implications of his ideas. As commonly used, God's judgement provided an indiscriminately edifying explanation for events. Those who anger God are visibly punished; those who please him are visibly rewarded.[15] God's anger can be used as an explanation for virtually any destructive event—plague, famine, natural disaster—regardless of whether the victims are the same as those whose actions are held to have caused it.[16] In *De gubernatione dei*, Salvian takes great care to demonstrate that Christians deserve punishment as a community. He portrays a reciprocal relationship between Christians' collective betrayal of their duty to God and the punishment of invasion and conquest which God inflicts on them. Salvian never portrays people receiving temporal punishments from God because of their actions as individuals. He never implies that individual experiences like illness, or oppression of the kind which he denounces in his social criticism, are instances of God's judgement. He never claims that obedience to God will bring temporal benefits, even to the community. His work cannot avoid implying that

[14] For the distance between this view of the church and Augustine's, see Markus 1970, 105-32, 166-86.

[15] For example, Sidonius, *Ep.* 3.1.2-3, in which a man who has given an estate to the church is rewarded by God with a legacy. Such instantaneous judgements on individuals, good or bad, are the form in which judgement is typically manifested in hagiography, and the works of writers whose outlook was moulded by it, such as Gregory of Tours.

[16] For example, Orosius 2.1.1; 7.15.5, 21.5, 22.2, 22.6-9.

renunciation of sin would cause cessation of punishment, but this is never explicitly stated. He does not offer God's help in defeating the barbarians as an incentive to his audience to reform.[17] Indeed, he implies that the only hope of such reform occurring is as a result of barbarian conquest.

The portrayal of God's judgement in *De gubernatione dei* is thus based as much on Salvian's ideas about the church as those about the nature of God. To understand it, one must examine Salvian's beliefs about the nature of the Christian community, and the historical development which had brought it to a state where it deserved the punishment which he depicts.

[17] A major theme in the preaching of Maximus of Turin, for example (e.g. *Sermons* 81-83).

Church and community

For Salvian, the church is defined by its morality.[18] His definition of a 'true' Christian makes no reference to doctrine: *Opinor, fideliter hominem Christo credere, id est fidelem deo esse, hoc est fideliter dei mandata servare* (3.7). These commandments as binding on Christians as a master's orders are on his slaves (3.8, 27-30). The words that Salvian normally uses to refer to them are *lex* and *mandata*. For Salvian, being subject to these *mandata* is the very essence of what it is to be a Christian. He portrays baptism as an act of admission to a community dedicated to obedience (3.8).

If one recognizes the implications of Salvian's claim that the church is an entity whose very nature is constituted by obedience to God's commandments, one can understand why the actual behaviour of Christians should constitute for him an almost indescribable scandal. In Book 3 of *De gubernatione dei*, when he describes how Christians constantly indulge in lying, swearing, litigation and so on, he is concerned less with the acts themselves than with the perversion in the nature of the Christian community which they embody.[19] His views on this are, again, very different from Augustine's.[20] Salvian does not claim that it is possible to live without sin. To have done so would have been to court the accusation of Pelagianism, but there is no reason to believe that his denials of the idea are disingeuous. He is really concerned with complacency; with the fact that most Christians hardly attempt to avoid sin, yet still think their faith should be rewarded by God. The minority of true Christians are not sinless; they are simply sincere in their attempts to obey God's commandments. However, Salvian is vastly more confident than Augustine in people's capacity to avoid sin simply on the basis of their knowledge of God's commandments, and

[18] Badewien 1980, 51-83, 150-51; Olsen 1982; Nouailhat 1988, 272-80.

[19] Nouailhat 1988, 275; Badewien 1980, 193.

[20] *Civ.* 19.27 is a typical expression of Augustine's view. See Markus 1990, 45-62, 174-76.

of the rewards of obedience and punishments for disobedience. He regards failure to act on this knowledge as the result not of weakness, but of sheer perversity. In this respect, his view of moral duty indisputably runs along the same lines as that of Pelagius and his followers. Salvian's critique contains no explanation for the behaviour which he denounces except that people do not believe that they are required to do what God, through the Bible (3.5), commands them to do: *quae dominus ... voluit, nos superflua iudicemus* (3.10) The implication is of a mixture of blindness and weak will, which ought to be capable of being reversed simply by pointing out sharply enough the requirements to which Christians are subject. Salvian is not concerned about examining the motive force of sin, as Augustine is, with his preoccupation with the force of habit, *consuetudo carnalis*.[21]

The demands which Salvian makes, and his hostility to the *mores* accepted by ordinary Christians, have led to his being paired with his contemporary Cassian as a representative of a new morality based on ascetic and monastic ideals.[22] His apparent belief that sin can be avoided by will, and his failure to attribute any role to grace in the moral reformation which he advocates, appear to link him to Pelagianism,[23] and he has been portrayed as a writer at odds with Augustine, perhaps writing in conscious opposition to him.[24] There is no doubt that Salvian puts forward an extremely demanding moral ideal, sometimes expressed in literally perfectionist terms:

> Perfectae siquidem ac sincerissimae sanctitatis volens cultores suos facere, salvator iussit ab his cautissime etiam minima vitari, scilicet ut quam pura est pupilla oculi, tam pura esset vita hominis Christiani. (3.38)

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[21] For an account see Brown 1967, 149-50. Compare the realistic comment about swearing quoted there (*Contra Fortunatum* 22) with Salvian's comments at 3.31.

[22] Leonardi 1977; Markus 1990, 157-77.

[23] Badewien 1980, 176-99.

[24] Badot 1976, 392, 400. Though Salvian's thought belongs to a different tendency from Augustine's, and his personal attitude towards Augustine may have been hostile, Badot's attempt to portray *G* as a direct attack on Augustine's thought is wildly exaggerated (suggesting, for example, that Salvian singled out Africa for attack in Books 7 and 8 because it was the homeland of Augustine). O'Donnell 1983, in denying any essential disagreement between Salvian and Augustine, goes too far in the opposite direction.

Salvian's attack on contemporary morals is interspersed with many such statements about the way in which life ought to be lived, usually based on uncompromising passages from the Bible: those who say they are Christians should walk as Christ walked (3.14); whoever keeps the whole Law but breaks one part, becomes guilty of all (3.30).

It is also possible, however, to amass quotations—even from the same part of the text—which imply a different opinion. His statements about the more severe biblical demands (3.10, 12-15), are far from being assertions that they can easily be carried out. His often repeated claim that 'very few' Christians obey the *mandata dei* is sometimes replaced by the admission that some are fulfilled by no one at all: 'Just as no one is immune from anger, so no one is immune from guilt' (3.13); though it is incumbent on Christians to walk as Christ walks, *absque dubio nullus* actually does so (3.15). Such concessions to realism or pessimism are never reconciled with other statements which insist on the absolute necessity of obeying every commandment. Thus the question of whether Salvian believes it is possible to live without transgressing the Law has no clear answer: there are passages in his works that can be cited in support of this view, but there are others that suggest the opposite.[25] Salvian's comments will therefore be seen to follow a pattern familiar from the discussion of wealth in *Ad ecclesiam*: uncompromising statements undermined by concessions which then turn out not to be real concessions. On close analysis, Salvian's rhetoric, for all its ferocity, appears to be filled with equivocation.

One can, of course, make conjectures about Salvian's true opinion, but they remain conjectures.[26] Rather than wrestling with the contradictory statements in his works in the hope of somehow making them cohere, it seems more profitable to look at the factors which

[25] As recognised by Badewien 1980, 72-3.

[26] Thus Badewien, 73, concludes, plausibly enough, that Salvian 'probably' believed that complete fulfilment of the *mandata* is impossible, but that everyone must still pursue it. Earlier writers tend to ignore the complexities of Salvian's position, and hence to be much less cautious in their conclusions.

promote inconsistency in his rhetoric, and which militate against the espousal of an unambiguous position on the theological issues which concern modern scholars. Writers like Salvian, Cassian, Augustine and Pelagius are responding in different ways to the pressures placed on them by the various currents of Christian culture, by their own preoccupations, and by the dictates of the Bible (as these were interpreted by each of them). In addition, what finally appears in their texts is influenced in turn by the demands of genre, purpose, and the audience envisaged. All the other authors mentioned are less ambiguous than Salvian about the degree of 'perfection' that can be expected of, and demanded from, Christians, and the degree of assistance from God necessary to achieve it. Personal perfection is a central preoccupation of Cassian and of other monastic writers like Eucherius.[27] It is quite probable that Salvian shared the assumptions of these writers. But he is writing about a different kind of environment, and his writing implies that he is addressing a different audience. Cassian's concern is for the world of the dedicated ascetic. The kind of perfectionism to which he aspires is a spiritual perfection by which people may become truly good in that they pass beyond the desire to do evil. The audience suggested by works like the *Collationes* or *De laude eremi* is one for which such issues are important: self-conscious Christians sympathetic to asceticism, whether clerics, monks or lay *religiosi*.[28]

The perfectionism of *De gubernatione dei* relates to a much more mundane environment. Most of its strictures are against committing evil acts, breaking the moral commandments of everyday life. Even when Salvian's admonitions suggest a concern with the inner life of his audience, his pastoral interests are obvious.[29] While he very likely shares Cassian's concern with the necessity of the ascetic to free himself of all sinful desires, the

[27] Cassian, *Collationes* 9.4; 10.11; 20.5ff.; 21.1ff., 29ff.; 23.15 (among many others). For Eucherius, see especially *De laude eremi* 31. On Cassian see Markus 1990, 164ff.; Rousseau 1997 points out some complexities in this view of Cassian.

[28] Note that Cassian's works are all addressed, in their prefaces, to bishops and ascetics.

[29] For example 3.10-11, on genuinely loving one's enemies.

argument of *De gubernatione dei* is concerned with deterring people from swearing oaths, robbing their neighbours or sleeping with their slave girls. As I argued above, one of his main concerns is to shake his audience out of the complacent tolerance of sin as part of life. Given this preoccupation, the passages which proclaim the need for a revolution in one's emotions and desires can be seen to be reinforcing his other arguments, which relate to people's actions. When people are warned that anger is as bad as murder (12), it is not because Salvian believes they are capable of never feeling anger, but because he wishes to make it impossible for his audience to believe that they are living a satisfactory Christian life already.[30]

If Salvian's failure to engage with the question of perfection in the same way as Cassian is attributable to a different literary purpose and audience, the same is even more clearly true when he is compared to Augustine. We know that Augustine believed that it was dangerous to regard personal perfection as a realisable goal, and ultimately came to oppose voluntarism in any form. But such arguments were generally put forward in treatises or letters addressed to bishops, monks or other churchmen, not in works about morality addressed to a popular audience.[31]

The works of moral exhortation in which unequivocal discussion of the possibility of following all God's commandments appears in the forefront of the argument are those of Pelagius and his followers. Many of the arguments which appear in the Pelagian writings also appear in Salvian. One need not assume that Salvian was a crypto-Pelagian; he is most likely to have shared the outlook of contemporaries like Cassian and Faustus, who rejected both Pelagianism and the later teachings of Augustine. However, he clearly did share with

[30] Cf. Olsen 1982, 6, 'This attention to the literal purport of the gospel texts seems directly related to his pastoral goal of defending against the complacency that comes from thinking one has adequately kept the Gospel by complying with a diluted rendition of the biblical precepts'.

[31] The obvious examples in a Gallic context are the anti-Pelagian works *De praedestinatione sanctorum* and *De dono perseverantiae*, addressed to Prosper and Hilary.

the Pelagians a sense of outrage at the gulf between the demands of the Bible and the actual behaviour of most Christians. It is this which would have propelled him towards many of the same attitudes, as regards the absolute bindingness of the Law, and the lack of excuse for those who fail to act in complete obedience to it. What Salvian is concerned about is not whether people who wish to be free of sin have the capacity to do so, but that—as he sees it—most people see no need to improve their lives, even in so far as it is within their capacity. Evidently the chief obstacle which he sees to his arguments is that his audience believe that their life is free from sin already, or that their sins are trivial. His urgent concern is therefore to communicate to them his sense of the wickedness of their way of life. In such a context the question, abstract and remote from everyday life, of whether human beings are capable of living without sin is hardly relevant. Salvian's references to demands made in the Bible which are fulfilled by nobody are probably intended to show his audience the extent of their delinquency; to contrast the high standards which they ought to fulfil with the depths in which they actually live. If this is the case, then, even if he believed their fulfilment was impossible, he would not have said so, in order to avoid weakening his own argument.

As far as the role of grace is concerned, there is a whole complex of motives to which his silence can plausibly be ascribed. Augustine's later teachings on grace had been rejected by Cassian and other Gallic Christian intellectuals on the grounds that they undermined human effort, as well as being inextricably tied to the unacceptable doctrine of predestination.[32] Salvian probably shared these opinions, and the first in particular would have been a powerful reason to avoid the issue.[33] All these are strong reasons for Salvian to avoid being explicit about his exact views, but, more fundamentally, there is nothing in his

[32] Cassian, *Collatio* 13. See Weaver 1996, 71-117.

[33] O'Donnell 1984, 30, suggests (echoing a claim made about Pelagian attitudes by Myres 1960, 25) that Salvian would have found the concept of *gratia* inherently suspect because of its association with the unattractive features of human society: '*Gratia* for Salvian ... was the arbitrary bestowal of favors by the powerful on the less-powerful'. There is little or no evidence for this in Salvian's text, however. *Gratia* is rarely used by Salvian, and then almost always in its simple, literal sense of 'favour' or 'good will'; see e.g. 6.62, 7.37.

works to suggest that he was particularly interested in such issues. Salvian was interested in moral reform. Probing the precise nature of the human will and divine grace was simply not relevant to his purpose.[34] Here as elsewhere, Salvian is a moralist, not an abstract theologian, and can tolerate contradictions and obscurities as long as they do not affect his central purpose. In this he was hardly alone; the rhetoric of moral admonition simply tended in a different direction from that of theological discussions of issues such as the power of the will.

> Nam qui scit se vel unum hominem in odio habere, nescio si ad altare domini securus possit accedere, praecipue cum beatus Iohannes evangelista terribiliter clamet et dicat: *qui fratrem suum odit, homicida est*.

This passage, enshrining one of the biblical citations on which Salvian places the most emphasis, could have been drawn straight from the indictment of the Christian community in Book 3 of *De gubernatione dei*. In fact it comes from a sermon which is almost certainly by Caesarius of Arles, generally regarded as the man who established Augustinian doctrine in Gaul.[35] It is a reminder that much of Salvian's 'perfectionism' was simply a factor of the genre within which he wrote.

It would have been meaningless for Salvian to express such views about the nature of the church, and to claim that Christians had begun to be punished in a manner which had not occurred before, unless he believed that Christians had once lived in the way which God had commanded. He clearly does so. Once, he claims, a single sinner would have been expelled from the church; now a Christian community would think itself fortunate if even half its members were not corrupt (6.2-5). Complaining that God does not govern the world is something 'never seen before in the church' (4.53). Salvian's moral demands may be

[34] Cf. Markus 1989, 219, on Pope Leo, 'he was uninterested in theological refinements of a sort around which the debate about grace and predestination had come to revolve since the time of Cassian and Prosper'.

[35] [Faustus of Riez], *Serm*. 1 (CSEL 21, p. 226). The sermons in this volume were attributed by the editor to Faustus, but were demonstrated to be by Caesarius by Morin 1892.

founded on the commandments of the Gospels, but they are supported by his perception that in the past the church had been a community united in a sincere attempt to fulfil these commandments. He does not limit this idealized church to the apostolic period. He claims that at one time every single Christian had equalled Paul in their willingness to suffer for Christ, and cites as evidence 'books about religion' written later than the time of Paul (3.22). He is therefore basing his idealization of the early church not only on the New Testament, but on the portrayal of Christian communities by authors like Tertullian.[36]

A key image for Salvian, as for many late-antique Christians, is the apostolic community portrayed in Acts 4:32-37. Salvian's older contemporary, Cassian, had used this passage to produce an historical myth portraying the origin of monasticism as a reaction to the dilution of the Acts community by less committed converts.[37] In one of his own references to the Acts community (*E* 1.2-5), Salvian echoes Cassian, claiming that the early church, in which all Christians gave up earthly wealth and were united in heart and soul, has decayed because of an influx of merely nominal Christians. Salvian does not use this to argue for withdrawal from the world, however, and elsewhere (*E* 3.41-44) he draws a completely different moral. In the latter passage the significance of the Acts community is held to be precisely that it did *not* constitute an elite but the entire church. It was not a very few who lived a truly Christian life, but whole peoples.

Salvian's use of the Acts passage displays the way in which his thought about the church differed from that of Cassian, and certain other ascetic writers. In spite of his own monastic background, Salvian never suggests that the solution to the unsatisfactory nature of ordinary society is to withdraw from it.[38] There is a gulf between his attitude and that of

[36] For example, *Apologeticum* 39, a work which Salvian knew.

[37] *Collatio* 18.5, on which see Markus 1990, 165-68.

[38] Leonardi 1977, 606.

Cassian, who comes close to dismissing the possibility of living a Christian life in secular society.[39] Salvian approves unreservedly of marriage, procreation, and involvement in all activities of ordinary life as long as they do not conflict with Christianity. He also resolutely argues that all Christians must live according to the true nature of the church, as was achieved in Jerusalem, and, he implies, throughout the early history of the church. However, there is an unresolved tension around this issue, signalled by the way in which he attributes the moral decay of the church to the increase in the number of its members (*E* 1.2-5).[40] Salvian bases his critique of society on the fact that it is Christian and must live by Christian standards, but appears unable to visualize a church true to its own nature except as a minority within a hostile society. The contrasts which he draws between past and present often give the impression that he sees the adherence of most of the population to Christianity as having led to the subversion of the church by sinners. Except in the passage cited above, this alway remains implicit and unexamined. There is therefore an element of ambivalence in Salvian's thought about the church; a desire for it to be the vehicle for universal salvation, combined with nostalgia for a church of the pure, closely bound to each other and separate from the corrupt world. This tension, however, gives much of the force to Salvian's critique of society. He would not be so intolerant of social injustice were it not for his ideal of the church as a close, fraternal community.

[39] See especially *Collatio* 21.

[40] It should be noted that this claim is never repeated.

Appendix 1: The Textual Transmission of *Ad Ecclesiam* and *Epistle* 9.[1]

There are five authorities for the text of *Ad ecclesiam*.[2] Lagarrigue uses the following sigla:[3]

A Paris, *Bibl. nat. lat.* 2172. Ninth or tenth century.

B Paris, *Bibl. nat. lat.* 2785. Tenth century.

b Paris, *Bibl. nat. lat.* 2173. Late twelfth century.

C Berne, *Bibl. mun.* 315. Eleventh century.

p *Editio princeps* (Basel 1528).

The family A, B, b, p

Manuscripts A, B and *b* are codices containing *Ad ecclesiam*, the *Commonitorium* of Vincentius, and some of Jerome's letters.[4] The *Antidotum contra diversas omnium fere saeculorum haereses*, or *p*, is a collection of patristic texts printed by Johannes Sichardus in 1528 and almost certainly drawn from several sources (Sichardus provided no information about the manuscripts he used). It is the *editio princeps* of *Ad ecclesiam*, *Ep*. 9 and the *Commonitorium*. Sichardus must have taken these from a codex similar to A, B and *b* since he prints the same works in the same order (including the selection of Jerome's letters) among various other works. The manuscript used by Sichardus is not extant. Another manuscript of the same collection (Paris, *Bibl. nat. lat.* 13386) is extant but incomplete, beginning only some way into the *Commonitorium*, so that it is not relevant to the text of *Ad*

[1] My work on this topic benefited greatly from the advice of the late Professor L. D. Reynolds.

[2] See the stemma at the end of this appendix (p. 296).

[3] The account of the manuscripts given here is based mainly on that of Lagarrigue 1971, 45-57.

[4] B and *b* also contain some excerpts from the works of Ambrose, placed between *E* and the *Commonitorium*.

ecclesiam.[5] Catalogues show that copies of the collection were possessed by the monasteries of St. Riquier in 831, and Lorsch in the tenth century.[6] The Lorsch codex was probably the source used by Sichardus, who took many manuscripts from Lorsch.[7] One manuscript, Lagarrigue's C, which contains *Ad ecclesiam* alone, may be independent of this tradition.

Ep. 9 is preserved in only two authorities, B and *p*, in both of which it appears at the beginning of *Ad ecclesiam*. Its absence from the others is probably not significant: MS *b* is incomplete, beginning only at *Ad ecclesiam* 1.4, so that we do not know whether it contained *Ep.* 9 or not. As it was copied from the same exemplar as B, it probably did.[8] The text of MS C has been changed radically from Salvian's original by a subsequent editor, whose alterations included providing a new preface, so that the absence of *Ep.* 9 is not surprising. Only in the case of MS A, therefore, do we have a representative of the main tradition from which *Ep.* 9 has definitely been omitted. This does not cast any doubt on the original presence of *Ep*. 9 in the tradition: collation of the textual authorities shows, as might be expected, that all are ultimately, descended from a common archetype. *Ep.* 9 must have appeared in this archetype. This does not prove that *Ep.* 9 was there from the beginning. *Ad ecclesiam* appears in the AB*bp* tradition as part of a collection of texts, and it can hardly have circulated in that form originally. The codex from which A, B, *b* and *p* are derived must be removed by several stages from the original, and it can never be proved that *Ep*. 9 did not become attached to the text at some time between its composition and the compilation of the collection. It is unlikely on textual grounds, however, and there is no reason to assume it on literary grounds.

Examination of the authorities for *Ep.* 9 does suggest something about its original

[5] Moxon 1915, lxxvii.

[6] Lagarrigue 1971, 45.

[7] Lehmann 1911, 59, 156-7.

[8] Lagarrigue 1971, 49-52.

presentation however. In MS B it is headed *Incipit epistola Salviani ad Salonium*, followed by the greeting to Salonius printed in modern editions of the text. In *p* it is headed *Salviani episcopi Massiliensis in librum Timothei ad Salonium episcopum praefatio*, and the greeting to Salonius is omitted. Of the two incipits, that in *p* appears to give the most support to the idea that *Ep.* 9 constituted the preface to *Ad ecclesiam*, but it cannot be original. The greeting to Salonius, which appears only in B, must be genuine because of the information about Salonius that it contains. The heading in *p*, however, is of the kind that would be devised by an editor like Sichardus to replace a manuscript heading that was either missing (as might be suggested by his omission of the greeting), or simply seemed insufficiently imposing. We should note the tell-tale slip *episcopi Massiliensis*, an error which could not have been in the original, and is unlikely to have been made by a medieval scribe. The heading in B, with its much more ambiguous implications about the relationship between *Ep.* 9 and *Ad ecclesiam*, almost certainly represents what Salvian wrote.

Sichardus's edition contains a puzzle. Its text of *Ad ecclesiam* contains twelve passages which do not appear in any of the extant manuscripts.[9] These amplify statements made in the text, sometimes adding extra biblical citations, but none of them makes any new points.[10] Most of them are brief additions of one to three lines, though three are more substantial.[11] They do not contain any obvious anachronisms or solecisms, and Lagarrigue at least, among modern editors, is inclined to accept them as Salvian's, suggesting that they were passages from a first draft which Salvian subsequently deleted.[12] Textual criticism, or at least textual criticism confined to AB*bp*, cannot solve the problem, since *p* represents the

[9] In modern editions they are printed in the apparatus criticus.

[10] The extra passages occur at 2.37, 2.72, 3.16, 3.22, 3.40 (twice), 3.44, 3.56, 3.57, 3.79, 4.5 and 4.28. It will be seen that they are not spread evenly through the text, but are concentrated in Book 3, especially around the middle of the book.

[11] 3.40 (eight lines in Lagarrigue's edition), 3.57 (thirty-four lines), 4.5 (fifteen lines).

[12] Lagarrigue 1971, 54-5.

earliest branch of the tradition, so that the passages could have been omitted in an intermediate manuscript from which the other representatives derive (see stemma). It can disprove Lagarrigue's suggestion, however. It cannot be the case that *p* represents a first draft when it derives from the same archetype as A, B, and *b*; the archetype not just of *Ad ecclesiam* but of an entire collection of texts. Either the passages are genuine and were omitted from the exemplar of AB*b* through scribal error, or they are interpolations. If they are genuine, their omission could have nothing to do with Salvian. This slip must be due to Lagarrigue's having concentrated on the text of *Ad ecclesiam* alone and forgotten that several other works are common to *p* and the manuscripts.

There seem to me to be strong literary grounds for regarding the passages as interpolations. They add nothing to Salvian's arguments. Their general effect is simply of padding: they usually repeat in slightly different language points that Salvian has already made, making his text less sharp and more verbose. Some of them demonstrably weaken the force of his rhetoric. In the manuscripts 3.16 ends with a reference to feasting heirs belching; in *p* there is an extra sentence which describes them subsequently vomiting. This might appear to add to the satirical force of the description, but in fact it blunts Salvian's conclusion. The phrase about belching (*si lautus et pransus bene eructavit*) is an allusion to Juvenal.[13] Without the addition it is in a prominent position as the culmination of a series of rhetorical questions. With an extra sentence tacked on the end, it loses this prominence. One gets the impression that the addition was made by somebody who wanted to make the passage seem more forceful, without realising the significance of its original conclusion. Later in Book 3 Salvian attacks those who neglect the safety of their own souls by leaving their property to distant relatives (3.57-8), concluding with the sharp exclamation, *Nec interest paene iam apud homines quibus consulant, dummodo sibi omnino non consulant*. In

[13] *Sat*. 3.106-7.

p, however, this conclusion is separated from the preceding argument by a rambling passage of thirty-four lines, which repetitively goes over parts of his previous arguments and adds a series of biblical citations.

A more general consideration is that it seems hard to account for the loss of such a large number of passages through accidental omission without the creation of obvious lacunae, which strikingly fail to result from the omission of the passages in *p*. If they are original, their removal looks more like a piece of deliberate editing, something far more unlikely than interpolation. There are therefore very strong reasons to regard them as interpolations, though decisive proof of their status could only come if we had the evidence of a manuscript independent of the AB*bp* tradition.[14]

Manuscript C

This manuscript, though it was listed in published catalogues, was completely neglected until Morin drew attention to it in 1931. It was not consulted by Halm or Pauly, the editors of the MGH and CSEL editions of Salvian. It contains only *Ad ecclesiam*, and presents a text that differs from all other authorities. Lagarrigue describes it as 'maladroitement abrégé d'un bon cinquième, il a en outre fait l'objet d'additions aussi nombreuses qu'inopportunes'.[15] Morin and Lagarrigue agree that the omissions from the manuscript are the result of deliberate editing, not faulty transmission.[16]

Morin concluded from the language and style of the additions that they dated from no later than the sixth century.[17] The most substantial is a preface, addressed to an unnamed

[14] Pauly 1881, 32, suggested that the interpolations were made by the first editor, Sichardus. This idea was strongly rejected by Lehmann in his study of Sichardus (Lehmann 1911, 156f.); he attributed the passages to a late medieval scribe.

[15] Lagarrigue 1971, 53.

[16] Morin 1931, 196; Lagarrigue 1971, 53.

[17] One of the interpolated passages refers to pursuit of the ranks of *illustris*, patrician and consul, which ceased to be meaningful in the course of the sixth century. Morin 1931, 205.

bishop, which expresses the hope that he will profit from receiving a copy of the book.[18] There is no correspondence between the interpolations in C and the extra passages in *p*. Some of the latter are in sections of *Ad ecclesiam* which are omitted in C, but others are in parts of the text which C includes, and in these instances C presents the same text as AB*b*. This is important, because it means that if the extra passages in *p* are genuine, their omission must have occurred at a very early period, before the sixth-century redaction of the text presented in C. On the other hand, it must still have occurred *after* the compilation of the collection preserved in both *p* and the manuscripts AB*b*. This adds considerably to the case against the genuineness of the extra passages in *p*.

Manuscript C does not contain *Ep.* 9, though since the redactor of its text composed a new preface this is not surprising. Both in this preface and elsewhere it attributes *Ad ecclesiam* to a *Timotheus episcopus*.

Conclusions

Of the two main textual questions relating to *Ad ecclesiam*, the status of *Ep.* 9 and of the additional passages in *p*, the first cannot be solved by reference to the manuscripts. However, the fact that someone chose to include *Ad ecclesiam* in a codex with the *Commonitorium* and select letters of Jerome, is interesting evidence about the use of the work after its publication.[19] (The collection perhaps also included a selection of excerpts from the works of Ambrose, but these only appear in B and *b*, so are probably interpolated.) Such a collection would presumably have been produced for use by a cleric, or as part of a monastic library. This must have happened in Gaul, and it is naturally tempting to link the joining of

[18] Published by Morin 1931, 196.

[19] The letters are Jerome, *Epp.* 98, 96, 100, 91, 113, 114, 99 (in that order). All of them are from correspondence between Jerome, Epiphanius of Salamis and Theophilus of Alexandria, relating to the Origenist controversy. Were they included because the compiler of the collection was concerned about Vincentius' themes of heresy and the preservation of correct doctrine?

two Lerinian texts in this way with Lérins, or with one of the churches or monasteries with which it had links. The text of C is more significant still as evidence for continued interest in Salvian's works in the late fifth or sixth century, as it shows *Ad ecclesiam* not merely being copied but adapted and rewritten by someone concerned to pass on its message to his contemporaries.

Lagarrigue reported readings from C in his edition of *Ad ecclesiam*, but his discussion of the manuscript does not make its relationship to the rest of the tradition entirely clear. The question that obviously arises is whether, since the other authorities ultimately derive from a single codex, C does so too, or whether it represents an independent tradition. To put it more concretely, did the man who produced the version of *Ad ecclesiam* represented by C copy his abbreviated and interpolated text from a manuscript of the collection which lies behind all the other authorities, ignoring the other works which it included, or did he use a manuscript descended independently from Salvian's original? The stemmata given by Vecchi and Lagarrigue both show C and *p* as equally distantly related to the AB*b* group.[20] However, *p* derives from the same source as AB*b*, since it contains the same texts. As C does not contain these, it could be derived separately from Salvian's original, unless it can be shown for textual reasons that this is not the case. Neither Vecchi nor Lagarrigue give such reasons.[21] No other studies appear to have addressed the question.[22]

If C's relationship to the other manuscripts were established, it might be possible to resolve conclusively the problem of the extra passages in *p*. If they were part of Salvian's original text, it would be necessary for all other manuscripts, including C, to derive from the

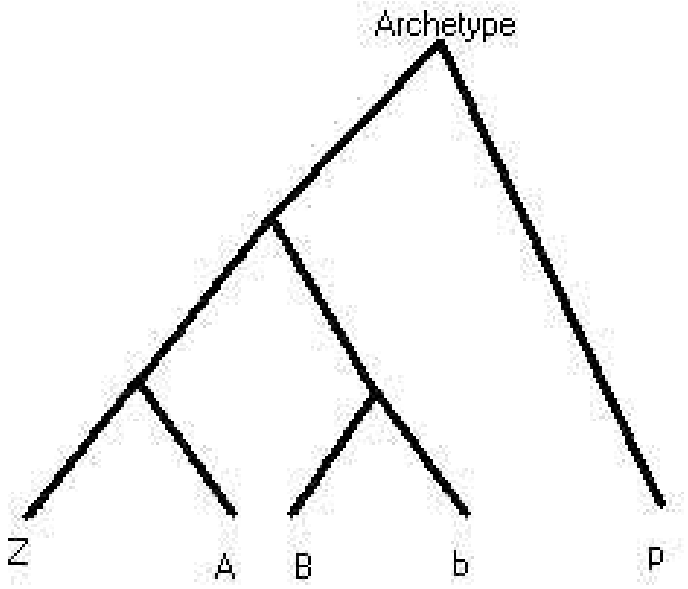
[20] Lagarrigue 1971, 55; Vecchi 1951, 17.

[21] Vecchi's stemma and discussion (86ff.) do not claim to be more than a summary of what had been published on the issue.

[22] With the possible exception of Vandeven 1943, which has not been accessible to me. The issue is not treated in the other publications on Salvian's text since C's discovery (Pellegrino 1952, Shackleton Bailey 1977, Blomgren 1991).

source of *p*, via an intermediate manuscript which omitted the passages in question. If C represents a tradition independent of the AB*bp* family, then the passages must be interpolations. While the solution of this problem would not result in any major change to the interpretation of *Ad ecclesiam*, the clarification of the work's textual history that would result from the establishment of the relationship between C and the other manuscripts would be valuable in itself.

Stemma of the *Ad ecclesiam* codex[23]



Z Paris, *Bibl. nat. lat.* 13386. Eighth or ninth century

A Paris, *Bibl. nat. lat.* 2172. Ninth or tenth century

B Paris, *Bibl. nat. lat.* 2785. Tenth century

b Paris, *Bibl. nat. lat.* 2173. Late twelfth century

p *Editio princeps* (Basel 1528)

The relationship of MS C (Berne, *Bibl. mun.* 315) to this stemma has not been clearly determined.

[23] After Lagarrigue 1971, 55; Vecchi 1951, 17; Moxon 1915, lxxxiv. My sigla are those of Lagarrigue, except for Z, which was omitted from his stemma, since it does not contain a text of *Ad ecclesiam*. In Moxon's stemma of the *Commonitorium* it is MS A.

Appendix 2: The date of *De gubernatione dei*

To determine the period at which *De gubernatione dei* was written, we have to rely on Salvian's references to contemporary events.[1] All the references that are significant for dating the work occur in Books 6 and 7. In these Salvian refers to a number of events which belong—or appear to belong—to the first forty years of the fifth century. In one passage (6.67-9) he summarises the barbarian invasions, alluding to the invasion of Italy and the sack of Rome, the invasions of Gaul, the Vandal invasion of Spain, attacks on Sicily and Sardinia, the separation of Africa from the empire, and the capture by the Vandals of Cirta and Carthage. Another passage (7.50-2) describes the course of the Vandals through the empire: first Germania Prima, then the *regio Belgarum*, then Aquitaine, Spain and Africa. Salvian refers to the settlement of the Visigoths in Aquitaine in 418 and the Roman landowners who were dispossessed by it (7.7-25). He makes several references to the Vandal occupation of Spain, which ended in 429 (7.26-7, 52-4), and to a defeat which they inflicted there on a Roman army (7.45-6, 53). The only known incident to which this could apply occurred in 422.[2]

Two references to events in 439 establish a *terminus post quem.* One of these is to the defeat and capture of the Roman general Litorius by the Visigoths (7.39-45),[3] described in language which suggests that it was a recent event (*bello proximo* – 7.39; *proxime ad*

[1] Apart from these, the reference to *G* by Gennadius in the late 460s gives an absolute *terminus ante quem*. It is not necessary to use the dedication to Salonius to date the work as it is for *E*, since Salvian's references to datable events provide a much clearer *terminus post quem*.

[2] The defeat of Castinus: Hydatius, *Chron*. 69.

[3] Prosper, *Chron.* 1335; Hydatius, *Chron.* 108; Sidonius, *Carmen* VII, 300f.; Cassiodorus, *Chron.* s.a. 439. Salvian does not name Litorius (he never refers to contemporary individuals by name), but the details which he gives (a Roman general leading a force of Hun auxiliaries who was defeated and captured while attacking the Gothic capital) make the identification certain.

Gothos – 7.45). The other is to the capture of Carthage by the Vandals.[4] Salvian mentions the Vandal invasion of North Africa several times (6.68-71; 7.52-6, 84-108). The last of these passages includes a detailed account of moral reforms allegedly enforced by them after their occupation of Carthage (7.94-100). Regardless of their credibility, Salvian's claims about the Vandals' moral legislation are significant since they show that, when he wrote, enough time had passed since the fall of Carthage for the claim that such laws had been enforced, and had altered the behaviour of the Roman population (7.107), not to seem inherently absurd. This suggests that he was writing at least a year or two after 439. On the other hand, he writes of Vandal rule as something still new, and its establishment as a revolutionary change.

There appears to be no reference in *De gubernatione dei* to any event which occurred later than 439. Taking into account Salvian's treatment of the events of that year, there is therefore nothing which requires us to place its composition later than the early 440s. One might suggest the period 440-43. Such dating has an additional advantage, in that it explains a silence on Salvian's part which some scholars have found mysterious.[5] In spite of his interest in the barbarians, Salvian never makes any reference to the Burgundians. The Burgundians were allowed to settle in the Rhone valley by the Romans in 443,[6] and their kingdom gradually expanded and became more powerful and independent. The later the date one posits for the composition of *De gubernatione dei*, the more difficult it is to explain Salvian's silence. But if Salvian was writing at the beginning of the 440s, the problem disappears. Before 443 the Burgundians were merely one of a number of peoples settled along the Rhine, and Salvian would have had no particular reason to mention them.

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[4] Dated to 439 by Prosper, *Chron.* 1339; Hydatius, *Chron.* 107; Cassiodorus, *Chron*. 1233; Marcellinus Comes, *Chron*. s.a. 438/9; *Laterculus Regum Wandalorum et Alanorum* 2.

[5] Badot and De Decker 1998, 252, with nn. 101-2 (p. 257-8).

[6] *Chron. Gall. 452* 128. This date cannot be relied on absolutely, since it is only given by the Chronicle of 452, a source which is frequently inaccurate in dating events (Wood 1992, 15).

The balance of evidence placing the composition of *De gubernatione dei* in the 440s appears so overwhelming that it has been accepted by virtually all the modern scholars who have discussed the work, whatever their other differences.[7] The only reason to challenge this consensus would be if it could be definitely established that Salvian refers to events which took place after 439. Such a claim was made in an article published in 1918 by Umberto Moricca, which argued that *De gubernatione dei* was written as late as the 460s.[8] Until very recently this was the only modern attempt to argue for a late date of composition, and it was almost universally rejected.[9] Now, however, Moricca's ideas have been restated forcefully by Philippe Badot and Daniel De Decker.[10] The central claim of Moricca, and of Badot and De Decker, is that in some of the events which Salvian refers to at 6.67-9 actually took place in the 450s and 460s. They would have it that the sack of Rome referred to by Salvian is that by the Vandals in 455, that Salvian's reference to Vandal attacks on Sardinia could not have been made before 461, and (in the case of Badot and De Decker) that his reference to Cirta could not have been made before the 450s.

In my view, none of these claims are convincing. The most obvious objection to a late date is based on Salvian's language about Litorius' campaign against the Visigoths (7.39, 45). This immediately reduces both Moricca and Badot and De Decker to desperate expedients. The response of the former is simply to deny that the passage implies that the event was recent, and to support this denial with a selective quotation of 7.39-45 which omits the relevant sentences.[11] Such an approach hardly inspires confidence in his scholarship.

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[7] Most scholars have been vaguer than I have in their suggestions of a *terminus ante quem*, because they have generally not taken the settlement of the Burgundians into consideration. At least since Tillemont, it has been conventional to give 451 as a *terminus ante quem* for *G*, on the grounds that Salvian could not have failed to mention the invasion of Gaul by the Huns in that year (Tillemont 1712, 192).

[8] Moricca 1918.

[9] It was accepted by Ianelli 1948, 25, but rejected by Pellegrino 1940, 66-72; Courcelle 1964, 146, n. 6; Paschoud 1967, 293; Lagarrigue 1975, 14; Badewien 1980, 18.

[10] Badot and De Decker 1998.

[11] Moricca 1918, 242.

Badot and De Decker attempt to get round the problem by arguing that multiple versions of *De gubernatione dei* were written over the years, implying that the Litorius passage was incorporated in the extant version of *De gubernatione dei* from an earlier one.[12]

In addition, the proposed dating of events makes the content of 6.67-9 incoherent. If the passage refers to events from the period 400 to 440, it provides a clear chronological narrative. Salvian refers to the invasions of Italy by the Goths and others in the first decade of the century, to the sack of Rome by the Goths in 410, to the devastation of Gaul by the Vandals, Alans, and Sueves in the years after 406, and to the occupation of Spain by the Vandals from 409 to 429. He then describes the Vandal conquest of Africa from 429 onwards, and the sea raids of the Vandals to other parts of the Mediterranean which accompanied it, ending with the approach of the Vandals to Carthage before they seized the city in 439. In other words, the passage lists successive invasions of different parts of the western empire, basically in chronological order, but with the chronology slightly adjusted in order to keep events in each region together (as with the placing of the sack of Rome before the invasions of Gaul and Spain). Salvian does not explicitly state the temporal relationship between events in Italy, Gaul and Spain but his language suggests a chronological sequence, and the invasion of Africa is specifically stated to have been the final event in the series. This chronological coherence is destroyed if the events like the sack of Rome and the Vandal attacks on Sicily and Sardinia are redated to the 450s or 460s.[13]

Furthermore, Salvian is using events to support his claims about Roman blindness in the face of divine judgement. But why, if he was writing in the 460s, should he illustrate this in relation to Spain with the Vandal occupation, which had ended in 429? The only logical reason would be if there had been no subsequent incursion into Spain by the

[12] Badot & De Decker, 1998, 252, with nn. 108-11 (pp. 260-61).

[13] Salvian's narrative corresponds to that of the course of the Vandal invasion from 406 onwards which he gives in 7.50-56. Moricca denies that the latter passage refers to the same events as 6.67-9 (Moricca 1918, 246-8). Badot and De Decker simply ignore it.

barbarians. This was anything but the case, however. In the early 460s Spain was in the process of being conquered by the Visigoths, and much of it was also being ravaged by the Sueves.[14] To counter these objections, the proponents of a late date would need to have evidence that Salvian's references could *only* be to events after 450. In fact much of their argumentation consists only of tenuous inferences from Salvian's use of language.[15] When they try to amass evidence for their preferred dating, it does not withstand scrutiny.

Moricca's chief claim is to have established a new *terminus post quem* for *De gubernatione dei* based on Salvian's words in 6.68, *eversis Sardinia ac Sicilia*.[16] His argument, accepted by Badot and De Decker,[17] is that this cannot refer to events earlier than 461, because it was only in that year that the Vandals occupied Sardinia. It appears to be the case that no Vandal attack on Sardinia is mentioned explicitly in any primary source before the 460s. However, the activities of the Vandals from the 420s onwards make this a flimsy basis for asserting that the island had never been attacked before.[18] There is abundant evidence for raiding by the Vandals all over the western Mediterranean in the 430s and 440s. Their most substantial raid was an attack on Sicily in 440 described by the chroniclers Prosper and Hydatius.[19] It was sufficiently destructive for the emperor to exempt Sicily from taxation.[20] Moricca denies that this raid on Sicily is relevant to Salvian's words because other sources make no reference to an attack on Sardinia at the same time. However, while there is no direct evidence for an attack on Sardinia at this period, Sicily is far from the only

[14] See e.g. Hydatius, *Chron.* 167-205.

[15] Badot & De Decker (op. cit. 261, n. 112) argue that Salvian must have had the Vandals in mind when he referred to the sack of Rome because he mentions them later in the same passage (though only in relation to Spain); Moricca 1918, 252, claims that Salvian could not refer to Africa being cut off from the empire by the Vandal invasion because North Africa was not *completely* conquered by the Vandals until later.

[16] Moricca 1918, 254-5.

[17] Badot & De Decker 1998, 260, n.108.

[18] Most of the following objections are outlined by Lagarrigue 1975, 14.

[19] Hydatius, *Chron.* 112; Prosper, *Chron.* 1342.

[20] *CTh* Nov. Val. 3.

attested victim of their raids. Hydatius refers to raids on the Balearic Islands and Galicia.[21] Prosper states that in 438 'barbarian pirates', who can hardly be other than the Vandals, raided not just Sicily but 'many islands'.[22] The evidence for substantial Vandal raiding in the 430s and 440s is surely substantial enough to constitute reasonable circumstantial evidence for the likelihood of an attack on Sardinia. Considering the scrappy and jejune quality of the literary sources for these years, and the fact that Sardinia was a backwater about which information was probably not easily available in other parts of the empire, it is perfectly credible that Vandal attacks on the island should have taken place without a record of them surviving in the sources.

While there is nothing in Salvian's reference to Sicily and Sardinia, therefore, that gives cause to date it later than the early 440s, it is worth noting that the date of 461 given by Moricca for the occupation of Sardinia by the Vandals is itself a conjecture. No primary source states that the Vandals conquered, or even attacked, Sardinia in 461. However, Procopius says that Sardinia was under Vandal occupation at the time of the attempted Roman reconquest of Africa in 468.[23] A fragment of Priscus states that major Vandal raids were launched against Sicily and Italy in 461.[24] Moricca relies on the suggestion of an earlier historian that Sardinia had been occupied during these raids.[25] His *terminus post quem* for *De gubernatione dei* is therefore founded on a debatable conjecture.[26] Indeed, it is hard to see any qualitative difference between the circumstantial evidence for the likelihood of Vandal attacks on Sardinia in the period around 440, which he dismisses, and the equally

[21] Hydatius, *Chron*. 77, 123.

[22] *Multas insulas sed praecipue Siciliam vastavere* (*Chron*. 1332).

[23] *Bell. Vand.* 1.6.8.

[24] Priscus, fr.38 (Blockley).

[25] Martroye 1907, 196ff., cited by Moricca 1918, 254.

[26] It is surely at least equally probable that the Vandals occupied Sardinia in 456, when they are known to have attacked Corsica (Hydatius, *Chron.* 170).

circumstantial evidence for the likelihood of a Vandal occupation of Sardinia in 461, on which he relies.

Badot and De Decker do not add any arguments on this issue, but they evidently find Moricca's claims compelling, since they quote them at length, referring respectfully to his 'analyse détaillée', and disparaging Lagarrigue's counter-arguments.[27] Their treatment of the arguments does not suggest that they have investigated Moricca's case in detail. They attribute the idea that Sardinia could have been raided before 461 solely to Lagarrigue, as if he had invented it, without mentioning the primary evidence for widespread Vandal raiding around 440,[28] and they refer to 461 as the date for the Vandal occupation of Sardinia as if it was a securely attested fact, without showing any awareness of the complexities surrounding it.[29]

The original contribution of Badot and De Decker to the discussion is their claim that Salvian's reference to the capture of Cirta by the Vandals (6.69) could not have been made before 455.[30] They base this on the argument that it was only in that year that the city fell to the Vandals, although it had been besieged by them since the 430s. This is stated by Lagarrigue in his edition of *De gubernatione dei*, in a footnote to the passage in question.[31] He does not cite any source. The only source which is cited by Badot and De Decker is Lagarrigue's footnote.[32] I have not been able to find any evidence for a Vandal siege of Cirta,

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[27] Badot and De Decker 1998, 260, nn.107-8, referring to Lagarrigue 1975, 13-15.

[28] 'D'après G. Lagarrigue, il est fort probable que les Vandales n'ont pas dû attendre aussi tard pour ravager la Sardaigne' (op. cit., 260, n. 107).

[29] Op. cit. 260-61, nn.108 and 112.

[30] Salvian does not actually say that Cirta had fallen, but his coupling of Cirta and Carthage seems to imply that they had suffered the same fate.

[31] 'Cirta en Numidie (appelée par la suite Constantina) résista âprement aux Vandales jusqu'en 455. Elle fut prise par Genséric qui tenait Carthage depuis 439' (Lagarrigue 1975, 406, n.2).

[32] 'G. Lagarrigue nous apprend que Cirta résista âprement aux Vandales qui l'assiégeaient jusqu'en 455' (Badot and De Decker 1998, 261, n.112).

let alone one lasting two decades.[33] It is not mentioned by any primary source known to me. Nor is such a siege, or anything resembling it, mentioned in the standard modern work on Vandal Africa.[34] In fact the political geography of the early Vandal kingdom makes such a long siege impossible. Cirta was in Numidia, which the Vandals ceded back to the Romans in 442; it is mentioned by name in a law of 445 as one of the towns restored to the empire by the treaty.[35] Even if it had been besieged till then, the siege must have ended when the province returned to Roman sovereignty. It is generally assumed that it was occupied again by the Vandals in 455, at the time of the sack of Rome.[36] The statement in Lagarrigue's footnote is an error, perhaps caused by him seeing some reference to the Vandals taking Cirta in 455, and forgetting that they had not been continuously in occupation of the province in which it was situated.[37] One cannot avoid the conclusion that Badot and De Decker have based a claim which is central to their efforts to redate Salvian's text on an unreferenced statement in a work of secondary literature, without, apparently, making any effort to check its reliability.

It will be seen that the arguments originally advanced by Moricca, and now reiterated by Badot and De Decker, cannot substantiate the claim that Salvian wrote in the 450s or 460s.[38] Their redating of events relies on artificial and unconvincing interpretations of

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[33] Possidius, *V. Aug.* 28 states that Cirta held out against the Vandals, but he was discussing the situation in the immediate aftermath of the invasion of 429.

[34] Courtois 1955, index s.v. Cirta.

[35] Nov. Val. 13.9.

[36] It is known that Gaiseric expanded his kingdom at this point (Victor of Vita, *Hist. Pers.* 1.13), though there is no direct evidence that Cirta was under Vandal rule until much later. Courtois says the following about Cirta in his chapter on the geographical extent of the Vandal kingdom: 'Il semble que la région de Cirta (Constantine) ait été annexée, mais la chose n'est pas rigoureusement certaine et il n'est pas possible, en tous cas, de préciser à qu'elle date cette annexion aurait en lieu ... La ville était demeurée dans la part de l'Empire en 442 ... Je crois cependant que Geiseric n'a pas laissé passer, en 455, l'occasion qui s'offrait à lui de réoccuper ce point stratégique exceptionnel' (Courtois 1955, 181).

[37] Though one would like to know how he felt able to say that the people of Cirta resisted the Vandals 'âprement'.

[38] 'Nous sommes, donc, dans ces trois *loci*, sûrement, en présence d'événements postérieurs à 439 et 455, voire 461' (Badot and De Decker 1998, 261, n.112).

Salvian's words, dubious arguments from silence, and, in at least one case, a basic factual error. Against this, one must set the fact that redating the events in 6.67-9 makes the passage incoherent in itself and inconsistent with 7.50-56, as well as producing a whole series of problems relating to Salvian's treatment of recent history, of which his silence about the Burgundians and about events in post-Vandal Spain are examples. The establishment of the Burgundian kingdom in the Rhone Valley, in or about 443, provides the only *terminus ante quem* which does not cause such problems. With every subsequent year it becomes more difficult to account for Salvian's language about the defeat of Litorius, more necessary to assume that he passed over important events in silence, and more problematic to explain why he chose to instantiate his claims about divine judgement with incidents from the 420s and 430s rather than events which had occurred more recently. It makes no sense to suggest a date for *De gubernatione dei* later than the first half of the 440s.

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