LAYPERSON, ASCETIC, AND CLERIC IN IBERIAN CHRISTIANITY, c. 500-711

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SHORT ABSTRACT

We tend to see late antique and early medieval Christianity through a clerical lens. This is particularly true in the Iberian Peninsula, with its highly episcopal and legalistic source base. The Suevic and Visigothic kingdoms both saw ambitious projects of state formation marked by doctrinal unification and the confluence of ecclesiastical and royal structures of power. In the Visigothic kingdom, the exceptional literary production of Isidore of Seville has been characterized as indicative of a 'Renaissance' in Christian culture, clerical organization, and pastoral care. I show, however, that Iberian Christianity should be understood in a much more decentralized and fragmentary manner. Turning away from paradigms of Christian state formation, 'the church' appears as a much more complex, and conflictual entity, rooted more in local contexts than top-down structures. I argue that questions of hierarchy within the *ecclesia* itself—the distinction between the clergy and laity, or between ascetic ideals and the 'worldly' elements of Christian organization—were key factors in the emerging structure of post-Roman medieval Christian societies. Subjecting the notion of 'the church' itself to historical scrutiny, I render visible the important role of actors outside of the formal clerical hierarchy in matters of religion, and show the persistent fragility of episcopal structures, rooted as they always were in local contexts. Overall, what emerges is a view of Iberian Christianity in which the apparent institutional high point of the Visigothic seventh century is less pronounced, and the long-term significance of persistent tensions within the *ecclesia* comes to the fore.

LONG ABSTRACT

The Suevic and Visigothic kingdoms, which emerged following the breakdown of Roman power in the Iberian Peninsula, both saw ambitious projects of Christian state formation. Each was marked by doctrinal unification and the confluence of ecclesiastical and royal structures of power. The seventh-century Visigothic kingdom was a territorially unified polity encompassing the majority of the Iberian Peninsula as well as territories north of the Pyrenees. It was unified, too, under the Nicene confession following Reccared's stewarding of the Visigoths to Nicene faith at the Third Council of Toledo in 589. The Visigothic seventh century, marked by the exceptional literary production of Isidore of Seville, has been characterized as indicative of a 'Renaissance' in Christian culture, clerical organization, and pastoral care. Historians have long looked to Isidore's work, as well as the writings of other luminaries like Ildefonsus and Julian of Toledo, to build up a picture of Iberian Christianity in the seventh century as remarkably well institutionalized and assertive, prefiguring, in some ways, the ecclesiastical structures fortified north of the Pyrenees by Carolingian *correctio*. In this thesis I argue, however, that we should understand the Iberian 'church' in a much more decentralized and fragmentary manner. Only by turning away from the dominating influence of the teleology of state formation can we properly understand the intertwining of religion and society.

This thesis challenges uncritical notions of 'the church', too often imposed over more complex early medieval realities. The fragmented, contested world of late Roman Christianity must be the baseline from which the historical developments of the following centuries are identified. The end of the seventh century is a world very different to that of the latter days of Roman Hispania, but this difference needs to be traced carefully and slowly, without allowing the shadow of 'the medieval Church' to skew analysis. Our post-Roman sources must be encountered as particular, partial voices within debates and

controversies regarding the order and nature of the *ecclesia* and Christian society, not endless iterations of a centralist, Toledan monologue. When we turn away from paradigms of Christian state formation, 'the church' appears as a much more complex, and conflictual entity, rooted more in local contexts than top-down structures. Questions of hierarchy within the *ecclesia* itself—the distinction between the clergy and laity, or between ascetic ideals and the 'worldly' elements of Christian organization—were key factors in the emerging structure of post-Roman medieval Christian societies. Any attempt to understand the role of religion in the political and social life of the post-Roman kingdoms has to take seriously ecclesiological questions and their practical consequences.

The thesis is structured as a series of interlocking studies, prioritizing depth of study over breadth of coverage. Each case study uses a focussed source base as a jumping off point to explore much wider themes regarding the relationship of clerics, ascetics, and laypeople in the kingdom, and therefore of the structure of Christian society in its widest sense. In order to challenge homogenizing accounts of 'Visigothic culture' or an 'Isidorian Renaissance', I argue that individual authors or clusters of authors need to be addressed in their specificity. By carefully building up specific regional and chronological contexts from textual and archaeological evidence, solid bases can be established from which to contrast and compare different cultural ferments. Martin of Braga provides a way into the study of the Suevic kingdom, the religious and political culture of which need to be disaggregated from paradigms developed in the study of the quite different Visigothic polity. Within the Visigothic world, there is a need to distinguish different regional cultures from the political centre of Toledo. Isidore, despite his evident connections to the Visigothic court, is therefore placed primarily in a Baetican context, with the influence of the cultural contacts precipitated by the neighbouring Byzantine enclave weighing heavily over his formation. Valerius of Bierzo's works speak of the very different world of Gallaecian ascetic culture, flourishing in a region with a distinct political history and particular monastic traditions.

Each of these must be understood on its own terms before being placed in relation to the master-narrative of Visigothic state formation.

Three of my five chapters are therefore structured around the close-reading of individual authors' works—those of Martin of Braga, Isidore of Seville, and Valerius of Bierzo. Many of these sources are familiar and well-studied, but I show that they can be re-framed to show much more about lay religiosity or conflict over status within the *ecclesia* than has previously been recognized. Each author is used to develop arguments which go far beyond their particular works—Martin tells us much about Christian ethical thought, Isidore about the accountability of episcopal authority to laypeople, and Valerius about the way asceticism and monastic ideals could underpin some Christians' independence from ecclesiastical structures. The remaining two chapters address wider historical themes—the divide between Arian and Nicene Christianity in the sixth century, and the wider nature of pastoral care and independent lay religiosity in the sixth and seventh. These take a different tack, bringing in underused and often anonymous sources to shed new light on difficult questions. The most important of these are the collection of sermons known as the *Homiliae Toletanae* and the collection of martyr passions knows as the *Pasionario Hispánico*. These give us a very different, but equally important angle onto Visigothic society and culture than the works of well-known, named authors, but they require significantly more source-critical work and have to be approached with a different methodology.

My studies add up to an institutionally minimalist history of Christianity in the Suevic and Visigothic kingdoms, emphasizing the porous boundaries between the worlds of laypeople, ascetics, and clerics, and the precarious and provisional emergence of clerical power over religion. Chapter 1 centres on the monk-bishop Martin of Braga, active in the Suevic kingdom in the second half of the sixth century. I argue that, while his famous model sermon *De correctione rusticorum* is valuable evidence for episcopal understandings of rural lay religion, historians have done him a disservice by passing over his unique ethical treatises. In

these, ideas from the Roman philosopher Seneca the Younger and Christian ascetic John Cassian were précised and repackaged for an elite audience, both clerical and lay. These works, I argue, tell us about the religious culture of the Suevic elite, and help us understand the opaque process of Nicene conversion occurring in the Suevic kingdom at the time—an unclear and distinctly non-triumphalist model of conversion from Arianism which contrasts starkly with the grand celebration of conversion undertaken by the Visigoths under Reccared's leadership at the Third Council of Toledo.

Chapter 2 works back from this moment of orthodox assertion, tracing the more complex divisions between Arian and Nicene Christianity in the sixth century. Firstly, I argue that accounts of two rival 'churches' typically over-emphasize the unity and coherence of the Nicene 'church'. Using a little-studied sermon from the *Homiliae Toletanae*, I show that doctrinal dispute was a real phenomenon, which may even have reached certain interested laypeople, and that the contours of this debate should be seen in relation to those which are known from some of the Frankish evidence. Doctrinal difference did not define Christian life—many Christians could move between churches—but it needs to be taken seriously as an element of Christian life. That said, there were many different disputes within Christian culture, and the division between Arian and Nicene should be neither exaggerated nor presumed to dominate the sixth century outside of high politics: its status as the definitive division owes as much to the narrative of Visigothic state-formation elaborated by the Third Council of Toledo as it does to the earlier sixth-century evidence.

Chapter 3 centres on Isidore of Seville, the pre-eminent ecclesiastic in the Visigothic kingdom in the first half of the seventh century. He has often been positioned close to the Visigothic court, as the chief ideologue of the new Nicene state and, in the most maximalist readings, as the motive force behind a kingdom-wide 'Isidorian Renaissance'. Locating him in a more regional and specific context, I argue against the idea that he was solely concerned with strengthening the kingdom's clergy as an order. I show firstly that Isidore's ethical

thought had more applicability to lay elites than is usually recognized, and secondly that Isidore's model of clerical authority tells us, in spite of itself, that episcopal power was more precarious and provisional—and more dependent on the moral judgements of laypeople—than is usually recognized. The result is a revisionist account flattening out, to some extent, the supposed Isidorian 'high point' of ecclesiastical institutionalization.

Taking this lead, Chapter 4 turns to pastoral matters and the question of non-elite lay religiosity. Through an analysis of the *Homiliae Toletanae* and *Pasionario Hispánico*, it becomes clear that preaching and martyr cult in Hispania need to be understood primarily in their local contexts, not within a framework of top-down, kingdom-wide doctrinal dissemination. I also argue, through bringing Martin of Braga's *De correctione rusticorum* into dialogue with the material evidence of *defixiones*, that a great deal of lay Christianity diverged from clerical expectations. Our scant clerical evidence shows a certain incomprehension at divergent religious forms, and we cannot reconstruct sub-elite lay religiosity in detail, but we can deepen our appreciation of how narrow a view the clerical sources give us of a world that was evidently much richer and more complex.

Finally, Chapter 5 examines the world around Valerius of Bierzo in late Visigothic Gallaecia, using this as a springboard to question the relationship between ascetic elitism and clerical office across the whole peninsula. This sheds a different light on the order of the *ecclesia* to that seen in Chapter 3, since it allows us to highlight eremitic ascetic vocations, and the manner in which monasticism allowed some Christians to leverage independence from clerical structures and supervision. This also had effects on the exercise of clerical office. In Gallaecia, at least, it seems that some strands of radical ascetic thought had not only produced the eremitic vocations of people like Valerius, but also led to a discourse critical of supposedly 'worldly' clerics. Some notions of ascetic excellence impinged on the practice of episcopal and clerical office by those unconvinced by more radically ascetic visions of spiritual authority. The *Vita Fructuosi*'s subtly harsh picture of Isidore of Seville is evidence

for this jostling for spiritual authority, in which asceticism and office interacted in different ways, not all of which were complementary. Competing visions of asceticism led sometimes to competing visions of clerical power, and there is at least some evidence that expectations of ascetic excellence came from laypeople as well as ascetic or clerical rivals.

Taken together, these studies present a revised understanding of Christian organization in the Suevic and Visigothic periods, emphasizing conflict and tension within the *ecclesia* rather than consensus and institutional homogeneity. This serves to help free the religious history of the period from long-standing narratives of state formation and helps make visible commonalities across time, either side of the watersheds of 589 and 711. While I do not address the period after the fall of the Visigothic kingdom in this thesis, my analysis helps us chart a path from the rich and diverse world of late Roman Christianity to the highly decentralized and proprietorial world of the post-Visigothic Christian kingdoms without interrupting this with a rapidly institutionalized and bureaucratized 'Visigothic church'. In paying a greater attention to lay agency, and to the vagueness that characterized the divides between certain lay ascetics and formal monastics, or canonical penitents and other fervent Christians, we can call into question the very idea of 'the church' as it often appears in historiography. We do a disservice to the Christian culture of the period if we reduce it the world and imagination of formal ecclesiastical actors. Furthermore, we make it harder to see continuity in local religious worlds as they developed through the period covered in this thesis and beyond.

'The church', if we permit the term, was a complex and conflictual entity, rooted more in local contexts than top-down structures. Subjecting the notion of 'the church' itself to historical scrutiny, I make visible the important role of actors outside of the formal clerical hierarchy in matters of religion, and show the persistent fragility of episcopal structures. Overall, what emerges is a view of Iberian Christianity in which the apparent institutional high point of the Visigothic seventh century is less pronounced, and the long-term

significance of persistent tensions within the *ecclesia* comes to the fore. This has wide consequences for the ways in which historians should think about the history of the Iberian Peninsula over the *longue durée*, from the later Roman period to the Christian and Muslim polities of post-Visigothic Iberia.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Annales	*Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* [formerly, *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale* (1929-39), *Annales d'histoire sociale* (1939-42, 1945), *Mélanges d'histoire sociale* (1942-4), and *Annales. Economies, sociétés, civilisations* (1946-94)].
Asán chart.	Charters of the monastery of Asán, ed. G. Tomás Faci and J.C. Martín Iglesias, 'Cuatro documentos inéditos del monasterio visigodo de San Martín de Asán (522-586)', *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch. Internationale Zeitschrift für Mediävistic und Humanismusforschung*, 52/2 (2017), pp. 261-86, at pp. 277-81.
AT	*Antiquité Tardive*
Augustine, *De ciu.*	Augustine of Hippo, *De ciuitate Dei*, ed. B. Dombart and A. Kalb, CCSL, 47-8, 2 vols (Turnhout, 1955).
Barlow, *IF1*	C.W. Barlow (trans.), *Iberian Fathers, Vol. 1: Martin of Braga, Paschasius of Dumium, Leander of Seville*, Fathers of the Church, 62 (Washington, DC, 1969).
Barlow, *IF2*	C.W. Barlow (trans.), *Iberian Fathers, Vol. 2: Braulio of Saragossa, Fructuosus of Braga*, Fathers of the Church, 63 (Washington, DC, 1969).
Braulio, *Epp.*	Braulio of Zaragoza, *Epistolae*, ed. L. Riesco Terrero, *Epistolario de San Braulio* (Seville, 1975).
Braulio, *Renotatio*	Braulio of Zaragoza, *Renotatio librorum domini Isidori*, ed. J.C. Martín Iglesias, CCSL, 113B (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 199-207.
Braulio, *VAem.*	Braulio of Zaragoza, *Vita sancti Aemiliani*, ed. L. Vázquez de Parga, *Sancti Braulionis Caesaraugustani episcopi Vita s. Emiliani* (Madrid, 1943)
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina (Turnhout, 1966-).
Coll. Hisp.*	G. Martínez Díez and F. Rodríguez (eds), *La coleccíon canónica Hispana*, 6 vols (Madrid, 1966-2002).

Conc.*	J. Vives, T. Marín Martínez, and G. Martínez Díez (eds. and trans.), *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos* (Barcelona-Madrid, 1963).
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna, 1866-).
De mon. perf.	*De monachis perfectis*, ed. M.C. Díaz y Díaz, *Anecdota Wisigothica, I: Estudios y ediciones de textos literarios menores de época visigoda* (Salamanca, 1958), pp. 80-7.
EME	*Early Medieval Europe*
Ep. Wis.	*Epistulae Wisigothicae*: Unless otherwise noted: J. Gil (ed.), *Miscellanea Wisigothica* (2nd edn, Seville, 1991), pp. 3-49. Where noted, letters are read in W. Gundlach (ed.), MGH, Epp. 3 (Berlin, 1892), pp. 661-90 [note Gundlach's different numeration].
Fear, *Lives*	A.T. Fear (trans.), *The Lives of the Visigothic Fathers*, Translated Texts for Historians, 26 (Liverpool, 1997).
Form. Wis.	*Formulae Wisigothicae*, ed. J. Gil, *Miscellanea Wisigothica* (2nd edn, Seville, 1991), pp. 70-112.
Gennadius, *De viris*	Gennadius of Marseille, *De viris illustribus*, ed. E.C. Richardson, *Hieronymus, Liber de viris inlustribus. Gennadius, Liber de viris illustribus*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen literatur, 14/1 (Leipzig, 1896), pp. 57-97.
Gr. Mag., *Reg. past.*	Gregory the Great, *Regula pastoralis*, ed. F. Rommel, trans. C. Morel, with notes by B. Judic, *Grégoire le Grand, Règle pastorale*, SC, 381-2, 2 vols (Paris, 1992).
Gr. Mag., *Dial.*	Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, ed. A. de Vogüé, *Grégoire le Grand, Dialogues*, SC, 251, 260, 265, 3 vols (Paris, 1978-80).

Gr. Mag., *Reg. ep.*	Gregory the Great, *Registrum epistolarum*: I-VII, ed. P. Ewald and L.M. Hartmann, MGH, Epp. 1 (Berlin, 1891); VIII-XIV, ed. L.M. Hartmann, MGH, Epp. 2 (Berlin, 1899).
Gr. Tur., *DLH*	Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum*, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, MGH, Auct. ant., SS rer. Merov., 1/1 (Hannover, 1951).
Hom. Tol.	So-called *Homiliae Toletanae*. I refer to these sermons by their numeration in the catalogue of R. Grégoire, *Les homéliaires du Moyen Âge. Inventaire et analyse des manuscrits* (Rome, 1966), pp. 161-85: *Hom. Tol.*, 9, 14, 20, 27, 31, 32, 40, 44, 52, 56-60, 72, 80, add. 11, add. 14, add. 26, can be read in Grégoire (ed.), *ibid.* pp. 197-230; *Hom. Tol.*, 6, add. 1, can be read in H. Barré (ed.), 'Sermons marials inédits "in Natali Domini"', *Marianum*, 25 (1963), pp. 39-93, at pp. 46-7, 48-50; *Hom. Tol.*, 26, 50, can be read in M.C. Díaz y Díaz (ed.), *Anecdota Wisigothica, I: Estudios y ediciones de textos literarios menores de época visigoda* (Salamanca, 1958), pp. 69-70, 66.
Hyd., *Chron.*	Hydatius, *Chronica*, ed. and trans. R.W. Burgess, *The* Chronicle *of Hydatius and the* Consularia Constantinopolitana*: Two Contemporary Accounts of the Final Years of the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 70-123.
ICERV	J. Vives (ed.), *Inscripciones cristianas de la España romana y visigoda* (Barcelona, 1942).
Ildef., *De cog. bapt.*	Ildefonsus of Toledo, *De cognitione baptismi*, ed. V. Yarza Urquiola, CCSL, 114A (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 345-435.

Ildef., *De itin.*	Ildefonsus of Toledo, *De itinere deserti*, ed. Yarza Urquiola, *ibid.*, pp. 436-71.
Ildef., *De viris*	Ildefonsus of Toledo, *De viris illustribus*, ed. C. Codoñer Merino, *El "De viris illustribus" de Ildefonso de Toledo. Estudio y edición crítica* (Salamanca, 1972).
Isid., *De eccl.*	Isidore of Seville, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, ed. C.M. Lawson, CCSL, 113 (Turnhout, 1989). Where noted, I have used the translation of T.L. Knoebel (trans.), *Isidore of Seville, De ecclesiasticis officiis* (New York, NY, 2008).
Isid. *De viris*	Isidore of Seville, *De viris illustribus*, ed. C. Codoñer Merino, *El "De viris illustribus" de Isidoro de Sevilla. Estudio y edición crítica* (Salamanca, 1964).
Isid., *Diff. (II)*	Isidore of Seville, *Liber differentiarum (II)* [=*De differentiis rerum sive Differentiae theologicae vel spiritales*], ed. M.A. Andrés Sanz, CCSL, 111 A (Turnhout, 2006).
Isid. *Epp.*	Isidore of Seville, *Epistolae*, ed. and trans. G.B. Ford, *The Letters of St. Isidore of Seville* (2nd edn, Amsterdam, 1970).
Isid., *Etym.*	Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX*, ed. J.M. Lindsay, 2 vols (Oxford, 1911) [unpaginated].
Isid., *Sent.*	Isidore of Seville, *Sententiae*, ed. P. Cazier, CCSL, 111 (Turnhout, 1998). Where noted, I have used the translation of T.L. Knoebel (trans.), *Isidore of Seville, Sententiae* (New York, NY, 2018).
Isid., *Syn.*	Isidore of Seville, *Synonyma*, ed. J. Elfassi, CCSL, 111B (Turnhout, 2009).
Jerome, *De viris*	Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, ed. E.C. Richardson, *Hieronymus, Liber de viris inlustribus. Gennadius, Liber de viris illustribus*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen literatur, 14/1 (Leipzig, 1896), pp. 1-56.

J. Bicl., *Chron.*	John of Biclarum, *Chronicon*, ed. C. Cardelle de Hartmann, CCSL, 173A (Turnhout, 2001), pp. 59-83.
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JThS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
Justus, *Expl.*	Justus of Urgell, *Explanatio in Cantica Canticorum*, ed. R. Guglielmetti, *Giusto d'Urgell, Explanatio in Cantica Canticorum. Un vescovo esegeta nel regno visigoto* (Florence, 2011).
Leand., *De inst. uirg.*	Leander of Seville, *De institutione uirginum et de contemptu mundi*, ed. J. Velázquez, *De la instrucción de las virgenes y desprecio del mundo* (Madrid, 1979), pp. 97-174.
Lic. Cart., *Epp.*	Licinianus of Cartagena, *Epistolae*, ed. J. Madoz, *Liciniano de Cartagena y sus cartas. Edición crítica y studio histórico* (Madrid, 1948).
LV	*Lex Visigothorum* [=*Liber iudiciorum*]: Unless otherwise noted: K. Zeumer (ed.), '*Liber iudiciorum sive Lex Visigothorum*', MGH, LL nat. Germ., 1 (Hannover-Leipzig, 1902), pp. 33-456. Where noted, the laws of Egica and Witiza are cited from Y. García López, *Estudios críticos de la "Lex Wisigothorum"* (Alcalá, 1996).
Mart. Brac., *De corr.*	Martin of Braga, *De correctione rusticorum*, ed. J.-F. Berthet and G. Sabbah, *Oeuvres morales et pastorales*, SC, 594 (Paris, 2018), pp. 234-74.
Mart. Brac., *De ira*	Martin of Braga, *De ira*, ed. C. Torre, *Martini Bracarensis* De ira. *Introduzione, testo, traduzione e commento* (Rome, 2008).
Mart. Brac., *De sup.*	Martin of Braga, *De superbia*, ed. J.-F. Berthet and G. Sabbah, *Oeuvres morales et pastorales*, SC, 594 (Paris, 2018), pp. 98-116.
Mart. Brac., *De trina*	Martin of Braga, *De trina mersione*, ed. Berthet and Sabbah, *ibid.*, pp. 280-92.

Mart. Brac., *Exhort. hum.*	Martin of Braga, *Exhortatio humilitatis*, ed. Berthet and Sabbah, *ibid.*, pp. 208-26.
Mart. Brac., *Form. vit.*	Martin of Braga, *Formula vitae honestae*, ed. Berthet and Sabbah, *ibid.*, pp. 166-202.
Mart. Brac., *Pro rep.*	Martin of Braga, *Pro repellenda iactantia*, ed. Berthet and Sabbah, *ibid.*, pp. 74-92.
Mart. Brac., *Sent. patr.*	Martin of Braga, *Sententiae patrum Aegyptiorum*, ed. C.W. Barlow, *Martini episcopi opera omnia* (New Haven, CT, 1950), pp. 30-51.
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
Auct. ant.	Auctores antiquissimi
SS rer. Merov.	Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum
LL nat. Germ.	Leges nationum Germanicarum
Epp.	Epistolae
Pacian, *De paen.*	Pacian of Barcelona, *De paenitentibus*, ed. A. Anglada Anfruns, CCSL, 69B (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 9-37.
Pacian, *Epp.*	Pacian of Barcelona, *Epistulae*, I-III, ed. Anglada Anfruns, *ibid.*, pp. 55-153.
PVinc. [brève]	*Passio Vincentii* [version brève =*BHL* 8638], ed. V. Saxer, *Saint Vincent diacre et martyr. Culte et legends avant l'An Mil* (Brussels, 2002), pp. 137-9.
PVinc. [commune]	*Passio Vincentii* [version commune = *BHL* 8628-8631], ed. V. Saxer, *ibid.*, pp. 186-226.
Pasionario Hispánico	P. Riesco Chueca (ed.), *Pasionario Hispánico (Introducción, edición crítica y traducción)* (Seville, 1995).
PEulE.	*Passio Eulalie Emeritensis*, pp. 50-68.
PFel.	*Passio Felicis Gerundensis*, pp. 166-80.
PInnum.	*Passio Innumerabilium Cesaragustanorum*, pp. 166-80.

PIusteR.	*Passio Iuste et Rufine*, pp. 142-8,
PIustiP.	*Passio Iusti et Pastoris*, pp. 184-8.
PLeoc.	*Passio Leocadie*, pp. 42-6.
PMant.	*Passio Mantii*, pp. 324-32.
PVSC	*Passio Vincenti, Sabine et Christete*, pp. 214-24.
PL	Patrologia cursus completus, series latina, ed. J.P. Migne, 221 vols (Paris, 1841-65).
Priscillian, *Tract.*	Priscillian of Ávila, *Tractatus* (I-XI), ed. and trans. M. Conti, *Priscillian of Avila: The Complete Works* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 32-163.
Prudentius, *Peri.*	Prudentius of Calahorra, *Liber Peristephanon*, ed. M.P. Cunningham, CCSL, 126 (Turnhout, 1966), pp. 251-389. Where indicated, I have used the translation of H.J. Thompson, *Prudentius*, Loeb Classical Library, 387, 2 vols (Cambridge, MT, 1949), ii, pp. 99-345.
RComm.	*Regula communis*, ed. J. Campos Ruíz in *idem* and I. Roca Melia (eds and trans), *Santos Padres Españoles, II: San Leandro, San Isidoro, San Fructuoso. Reglas monásticas de la España visigoda. Los tres libros de las "Sentencias"* (Madrid, 1971), pp. 172-211
RFruct.	Fructuosus of Braga, *Regula Fructuosi*, ed. Campos Ruiz, *ibid.*, pp. 137-62.
RIsid.	Isidore of Seville, *Regula Isidori*, ed. Campos Ruiz, *ibid.*, pp. 90-125.
SC	Sources Chrétiennes (Paris, 1942-).
Sisebut, *VDes.*	Sisebut, *Vita Desiderii*, ed. J. Gil, *Miscellanea Wisigothica* (2nd edn, Seville, 1991), pp. 52-68.

Sulp. Sev., *Chron.*	Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica*, ed. G. de Senneville-Grave, SC, 441 (Paris, 1999).
Taio, *Sent.*	Taio of Zaragoza, *Sententiarum libri V*. ed. J.P. Migne, PL, 80 (Paris, 1863), cols. 727-990. Note that chs. I.24-5 and V.33-5 have to be read in E. Anspach, *Taionis et Isidori nova fragmenta et opera* (Madrid, 1930), pp. 6-22.
Valerius, *De gen.*	Valerius of Bierzo, *De genere monachorum*, ed. M.C. Díaz y Díaz, *Valerio del Bierzo. Su vida. Su obra* (León, 2006), pp. 324-36.
Valerius, *De uana.*	Valerius of Bierzo, *De uana seculi sapientia*, ed. Díaz y Díaz, *ibid.*, pp. 172-92.
Valerius, *Ep. Egerie*	Valerius of Bierzo, *Epistola beatissime Egerie laude conscripta fratrum Bergidensium monachorum a Valerio conlata*, ed. Díaz y Díaz, *ibid.*, pp. 228-40.
Valerius, *Ordo quer.*	Valerius of Bierzo, *Ordo querimonie prefati discriminis*, ed. Díaz y Díaz, *ibid.*, pp. 246-76.
Valerius, *Quod de sup.*	Valerius of Bierzo, *Quod de superioribus querimoniis residuum sequitur*, ed. Díaz y Díaz, *ibid.*, pp. 312-22.
Valerius, *Repl. serm.*	Valerius of Bierzo, *Replicatio sermonum a prima conuersione*, ed. Díaz y Díaz, *ibid.*, pp. 280-310.
VFruct.	*Vita Fructuosi***,** ed. M.C. Díaz y Díaz, *La Vida de San Fructuoso de Braga. Estudio y edición crítica* (Braga, 1974).
Wolf, *Conquerors*	K.B. Wolf (trans.), *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*, Translated Texts for Historians, 9 (2nd edn, Liverpool, 1999).

*Note on Iberian church councils:

The *acta* and canons of the Iberian councils are cited in the following form:

> Conciliar number (where relevant)—Location—Canon number
>
> (for example: II Toledo, c. 4; III Braga, c. 1).

Where possible, councils are cited from the as-yet incomplete critical edition begun by the late Gonzalo Martínez Díez:

> G. Martínez Díez and F. Rodríguez (eds), *La coleccíon canónica Hispana*, 6 vols (Madrid, 1966-2002).

Remaining councils are cited from:

> J. Vives, T. Marín Martínez, and G. Martínez Díez (eds. and trans.), *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos* (Barcelona-Madrid, 1963).

The edition used is noted in the brackets in the form indicated in the abbreviations—that is, as (Coll. Hisp. [vol. no.], [page no.]) or (Conc., [page no.]), respectively.

INTRODUCTION

I. THE 'NEGATIVE TRAJECTORY'

We tend to receive a highly clerical view of the post-Roman world in the Latin West. With the collapse of the Roman state's overarching political structures, the volume of source material which speaks of life outside the domain of religious specialists—be they clerics, monastics, or other people with a full-time religious vocation of some other sort—dwindles substantially. In a recent work on lay religiosity, Lisa Bailey diagnosed a pervasive historiographical assumption which she refers to as the 'negative trajectory' of lay involvement in Christianity. This takes different forms, with different chronologies. Nonetheless, the assumption that the early Middle Ages lie somewhere on the teleological line from the early church's diverse yet internally undifferentiated communities to the highly stratified and institutional clericalism of the Church after Gregorian Reform remains ubiquitous. As Bailey has put it, 'the laity, like the Roman Empire, are always declining'.[1] Indeed, as André Vauchez noted in the 1980s, the history of 'the Church' has typically been reduced to the history of the clerical hierarchy.[2] This is a problem that has been attacked from various angles—from Vauchez's and Bailey's own work into the laity, to Virginia Burrus' edited volume concerning the 'people's history of Christianity' in late antiquity—but the tendency to clericalize (or else monasticize) remains firmly embedded in the scholarship, based as it is in the stubbornly clerical nature of most of the written sources.[3]

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[1] L.K. Bailey, *The Religious Worlds of the Laity in Late Antique Gaul* (London, 2016), pp. 6-7, quote at p. 7. Cf. R.N. Swanson, 'Apostolic successors: priests and priesthood, bishops, and episcopacy in medieval western Europe', in G. Peters (ed.), *A Companion to Priesthood and Holy Orders in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2015), pp. 4-42, esp. pp. 5-10.

[2] A. Vauchez, *Les laïcs au Moyen Age: practiques et expériences religieuses* (Paris, 1987), p. 7, though note that Vauchez's 'emergence du laïcat' (p. 10) is chiefly an eleventh- and twelfth-century phenomenon.

[3] V. Burrus (ed.), *Late Ancient Christianity: A People's History of Christianity, Vol. 2* (Minneapolis, MN, 2005).

This is very much the case for the historiography of late antique and early medieval Hispania. Late Roman Hispania has rich sources on lay Christianity but lacks anything comparable for the post-Roman kingdoms. In the late Roman period, the poetic oeuvre of the lay poet Prudentius of Calahorra and the various writings surrounding the controversial ascetic Priscillian of Ávila stand out.[4] Though these two figures had sharply divergent legacies—Priscillian was executed in Trier on a charge of *maleficium*, following a protracted ecclesiastical controversy, and considered the founder of the heresy of 'Priscillianism', while Prudentius became one of the most widely read Latin Christian poets of the Middle Ages—they lived, in their own times, within a common space for elite lay religion.[5] This was a time before the advent of cenobitic monasticism, when elite laypeople might conduct elaborate religious observances on their own property; it was time when, as Kim Bowes has richly shown, domestic villa religion flourished.[6]

The boundaries between lay and clerical religion were unclear. Priscillian's surviving works contain a suite of homilies intended for the community gathered around himself.[7] While Priscillian did eventually become a bishop as a defensive measure, he began as a lay teacher, operating within the well-worn grooves of domestic piety, and there is no reason to think that communal, liturgical life began only after his ordination.[8] Priscillian's radical ascetic teaching spurred a bitter dispute in which bishops sought to restrict the scope of domestic, non-clerical Christianity—to forbid people attending private villas rather than churches during Lent, for example, and to make sure liturgical acts like the Eucharist or

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[4] M.P. Cunningham (ed.), *Aurelii Prudentii Clementis carmina*, CCSL, 126 (Turnhout, 1966); M. Conti (ed. and trans.), *Priscillian of Avila: The Complete Works* (Oxford, 2010).

[5] On Priscillian and 'Priscillianism': H. Chadwick, *Priscillian of Ávila: The Occult and the Charismatic in the Early Church* (Oxford, 1976); V. Burrus, *The Making of a Heretic: Gender, Authority, and the Priscillianist Controversy* (Berkeley, CA. 1995); S.J.G. Sanchez, *Priscillien, un chrétien non conformiste: doctrine et pratique du Priscillianisme du IVe au VIe siècle* (Paris, 2009).

[6] K.D. Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values, and Religious Change in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2008).

[7] Prisc., *Tract.*, IV-X; *Tract.*, XI is a blessing, perhaps used liturgically.

[8] For his ordination: Sulp. Sev., *Chron.*, II.47.2, with discussion in Sanchez, *Priscillien*, pp. 387-96.

lucernarium were performed under the supervision of priests rather than at home.[9] Yet Prudentius, writing two decades after 'the Priscillianist' controversy, shows that domestic observances of the kind forbidden by anti-Priscillianist bishops did not foment automatic controversy. His *Cathemerinon* outlined a devotional rhythm for villa piety, with *hymni* marking different hours and days in paraliturgical form.[10] Among these was a hymn for marking *lucernarium* at home, in imitation of liturgical observances elsewhere.[11] This was a time in which the boundaries between 'public' and 'private', and the 'clerical' and 'lay' Christianity were still fluid and subject to competing claims.

The source material for the post-Roman Suevic and Visigothic kingdoms presents a very different picture. The written record is rich in normative material, particularly canon law and (in the case of the Visigothic kingdom) royal law.[12] There are also abundant texts written by ecclesiastical luminaries like Martin of Braga, Isidore of Seville, and Julian of Toledo. We are, however, comparatively lacking in sources which shed light on the complexities of religious practice, particularly among laypeople. Post-Roman Hispania does not have the hagiographical riches that underlie much recent work on the Merovingian world, nor a historian who provides the vivid detail of the Frankish narrative sources ('It is tempting to criticize Isidore of Seville for not being Gregory of Tours', as Roger Collins has dryly put it).[13] Only a handful of surviving texts can conceivably be related to non-royal laypeople:

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[9] Zaragoza, cc. 2-3; I Toledo, c. 9 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 293-4, 332).
[10] The best discussion is G. O'Daly, *Days Linked by Song: Prudentius'* Cathemerinon (Oxford, 2012).
[11] Prudentius, *Cathemerinon*, 5, ed. Cunningham, CCSL, 126, pp. 23-8, with discussion in J. Fontaine, 'Poésie et liturgie: sur la symbolique christique des luminaires, de Prudence à Isidore de Séville', repr. in his *Études sur la poésie latine tardive d'Ausone à Prudence* (Paris, 1980), pp. 184-212.
[12] On the *Collectio Hispana*: G. Martínez Díez, *La colección canónica Hispana, Vol. 1: Estudio* (Madrid, 1966). On the various Iberian law codes: R. Collins, *Visigothic Spain, 409-711* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 223-39; on the *Lex Visigothorum* and its redactions and manuscripts: M.C. Díaz y Díaz, 'La *Lex Visigothorum* y sus manuscritos. Un ensayo de reinterpretación', *Anuario de Historia de Derecho Español*, 46 (1976), pp 163-224; Y. García Lopez, *Estudios críticos de la "Lex Wisigothorum"* (Alcalá, 1996).
[13] R. Collins, 'Isidore, Maximus, and the *Historia Gothorum*', in A. Scharer and G. Scheibelreiter (eds), *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna, 1994), pp. 345-58, at p. 345.

some letters from lay authorities, a collection of legal formulae, a corpus of inscriptions.[14] There are also the famous texts written on slate (the *pizarras visigodas*), which reflect a variety of contexts, from estate-management to education, at least some of which had lay authors.[15] The archaeology of churches has flourished in recent years, providing a corpus of buildings some of which were likely founded by laypeople. It is usually impossible to tell this for an individual church, however, and estimates as to how many were lay foundations vary markedly.[16] These fragmentary sources do not add up to anything like a detailed picture of lay life, independent from the much richer clerical materials.

The historiography on lay religiosity in the post-Roman Iberian Peninsula is accordingly little developed. Because many of the richest sources speak of the political centre—particularly the law codes and the records of the grand Toledan Councils convened by Nicene Visigothic monarchs from 589 onwards—lay religiosity, when addressed, has tended to appear from this angle.[17] Our sources speak verbosely of the religious and political ambitions of the Nicene Visigothic monarchs who followed the lead of Reccared (r. 586-601)—the king who dramatically performed the conversion of the Visigoths from Arian to Nicene Christianity at the Third Council of Toledo in 589—in identifying royal power, political community, and Nicene orthodoxy in one tightly connected political theology. This equation had a particular force for nationalist Spanish scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, for whom the Visigothic polity created by Reccared was the origin of a notion of Spain equated with Catholicism and a territorially unified Iberian Peninsula.[18] The

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[14] *Ep. Wis.*, 2, 4-5, 10-16; *Form. Wis. passim*; *ICERV*, *passim*.

[15] I. Velázquez Soriano, *Las pizarras visigodas: entre el latín y su disgregación: la lengua hablada en Hispania, siglos VI-VIII* (Burgos, 2004).

[16] For a somewhat clerically focussed synthesis: A. Chavarría Arnau, *A la sombra de un imperio. Iglesias, obispos y reyes en la Hispania tardoantigua (siglos V-VII)* (Bari, 2018). I discuss lay patronage below pp. 13-15.

[17] On the councils: R.L. Stocking, *Bishops, Councils, and Consensus in the Visigothic Kingdom, 589-633* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2000).

[18] On the historiography: P. Linehan, *History and the Historians of Medieval Spain* (Oxford, 1993); J.N. Hillgarth, *The Visigoths in History and Legend* (Toronto, 2009).

view from the centre is hard to avoid even for contemporary scholars, however. A great deal of critical attention has been paid to the dynamics of royal and clerical ideology in recent years, with episcopal writers like Isidore of Seville and Julian of Toledo placed firmly within this project of Christian state-formation.[19] Much excellent work has been done in this vein, but it is not clear how much light it sheds on the laity besides, perhaps, those at the royal court.

Twentieth-century historiography did ignore the post-Roman Iberian laity completely, but it comprehended them, for the most part, within a top-down pastoral view of religion.[20] One of the few direct attempts to study lay religiosity came with Justo Fernández Alonso's *La cura pastoral en la España romanovisigoda* (1955) which, under the influence of wider European strands of scholarship on pastoral care, drew together a vast amount of normative evidence on the structure and nature of the clergy, the functioning of clerical discipline, the administration of the sacraments, and other such matters. This remains a rich resource, but it is steeped in a celebratory and optimistic outlook, with the Iberian church emerging, as per the ideals of the normative sources, as unusually well-organized and successful in its pastoral endeavours: ('en los siglos VI-VII, y más en el segundo que en el primero, fué España el lugar donde la Iglesia desarolló una mayor vitalidad').[21]

In 1980, the British scholar Jocelyn Hillgarth published an important study of 'popular religion' in the Visigothic world, distinguishing this, in principle, from the religiosity of clerical elites. That said, Hillgarth's conception of 'popular religion' was a resolutely top-

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[19] E.g. J. Wood, *The Politics of Identity in Visigothic Spain: Religion and Power in the Histories of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden, 2012); E. Dell'Elicine, *En el principio fue el Verbo: políticas del signo y estrategias del poder eclesiástico en el reino visigodo de Toledo (589-711)* (Cadíz, 2013).

[20] On twentieth-century Iberian historiography see esp. L.A. García Iglesias, *El P. Zacarías García Villada: académico, historiador y jesuita* (Madrid, 1974); G. Pasamar Alzuria, *Historia e ideología en la postguerra Española: la ruptura de la tradición liberal* (Zaragoza, 1991); P. Castillo Maldonado, '*Angelorum participes*: the cult of the saints in late antique Spain', in K. Bowes and M. Kulikowski (eds), *Hispania in Late Antiquity: Current Perspectives* (Leiden, 2005), pp. 151-88, at pp. 151-8. On Francoist Catholicism: J. Casanova, *La Iglesia de Franco* (Madrid, 2001).

[21] J. Fernández Alonso, *La cura pastoral en la España romanovisigoda* (Rome, 1955), quote at p. 591.

down and denigratory one, defining it as 'the religion presented to them [the laity], which may one day, but not at once, become their own'.[22] We are still in a world in which the laity's Christianity is defined by clerical superiors, and in which it can only be a pale imitation of that which they received from above. Recent interest in the Iberian liturgy promises to deepen our understanding of lay religion conceived of in this way.[23] Similar caveats remain, however. We cannot reduce lay religion to that which clerics wanted it to be: as we know from the late Roman evidence, the normative texts of 'official' religion speak of only one segment in the spectrum of Christian devotion.

More recent scholarship has made the gap between ideal and reality clearly visible and repeatedly highlighted the centrifugal forces in religious life—the prevalence of factional conflicts, the difficulty of establishing clear, uncontested hierarchies, and the breakdowns of ecclesiastical discipline.[24] Historians have also become much more interested in the darker side of religious hegemony—not least the unprecedented persecution of the Jewish minority in the seventh-century Visigothic state. Beginning with Sisebut's edict of forced baptism, promulgated around 615 or 616, the progressive waves of anti-Judaism that marked the Visigothic state saw a lengthy series of anti-Jewish laws and canons emitted from Toledo, particularly in the legislative programmes of Reccesuinth (r. 649-72) and Ervig (r. 680-7), culminating in the attempt of Egica (r. 687-702) to enslave all the kingdom's Jews on the

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[22] J.N. Hillgarth, 'Popular religion in Visigothic Spain', *Visigothic Spain: New Approaches* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 3-60, quote at p. 4. Most accounts of 'popular religion' are more interested in difference: see now L. Grig, 'Reconsidering "popular religion" for a new era', *Studies in Late Antiquity*, 5/1 (2021), pp. 139-49.

[23] E.g. A. Kurt, 'Lay piety in Visigothic Iberia: liturgical and paraliturgical forms', *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 8/1 (2016), pp. 1-37; R. Maloy, *Songs of Sacrifice: Chant, Identity, and Christian Formation in Early Medieval Iberia* (New York, NY, 2020).

[24] Respectively: P. Castillo Maldonado, '*In ecclesia contra ecclesiam*: algunos ejemplos de disputas, violencias y facciónes clericales en las iglesias tardoantiguas hispanas', *AT*, 15 (2007), pp. 263-276; S. Panzram, 'La formación del orden metropolitan en la Península Ibérica (siglos IV a VI)', *Pyrenae*, 49/1 (2018), pp. 125-54; R.L. Stocking, 'Martianus, Aventius and Isidore: provincial councils in seventh-century Spain', *EME*, 6/2 (1997), pp. 196-88.

pretext of international conspiracy.[25] Visigothic anti-Judaism is an important case-study in the history of Christian identity formation and religious intolerance, and it tells us much about the religious and political ideals of the centre. Like much else in Visigothic history, however, it presents historians with a troubling gap between ideal and reality. The elaborate anti-Jewish legislation is understood in terms of political rhetoric partly because it is so hard to understand how its more minute measures could have been enacted in practice. The same is true, in a less drastic way, of many sources proclaiming to tell us about Christian lay religion.

The central difficulty lies in the incommensurability of our pictures of the post-Roman kingdoms—dominated as they are by the Nicene Visigothic state—to the decentralized and complex picture of religious life we see in late Roman sources. The problem is that in studies of the Suevic and Visigothic kingdoms 'the church' is taken for granted as a legalistic, well-structured entity ruling over the Christian laity. John Blair, writing of a different geographical context, has spoken of 'the insidious assumption that the role of the Church in the seventh and eighth centuries resembled what it would be in the better-documented high middle ages'.[26] It is this assumption that this thesis challenges. The fragmented, contested world of late Roman Christianity must be the baseline from which the historical developments of the following centuries are identified. This is not to argue for continuity at all costs—a lot changed between Priscillian of Ávila and Valerius of Bierzo—but it is to argue for a more minimalist account of the institutional structure of 'the church' throughout the period. The nature of 'the church' should not be presumed before historical inquiry but established through the examination of the shifting relationships between

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[25] For overviews of the vast scholarship: 'Early medieval Christian identity and anti-Judaism: the case of the Visigothic Kingdom', *Religion Compass*, 2/4 (2008), pp. 642-658. On enslavement: C. Martin, 'Statut de juifs, statut de libre dans l'Occident du haut Moyen Âge: l'example ibérique', in J. Tolan *et al.* (eds), *Jews in Early Christian Law: Byzantium and the Latin West, 6th-11th centuries* (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 55-71.

[26] J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2005), p. 6.

different actors within it—between the competing claims of clerics, ascetics, and laypeople over the manner in which the Christian community should be structured and governed. What emerges is a much more complex, fragmented, and locally differentiated 'church' in Iberia, with a greater space for lay agency and non-institutional religious vocation than has been recognized. This has important consequences for our understanding of the structure of the Suevic and Visigothic kingdoms more widely.

II. 'THE CHURCH', CHURCHES, AND SOCIETY

It is important that we do not exaggerate the extent to which 'the church' in the post-Roman kingdoms of Iberia functioned as a single institution, or the extent to which it existed apart from wider social structures. The nature and coherence of the Visigothic 'state' has been subject to searching inquiry, both from paradigms of 'feudalization' or 'protofeudalization', as well as from those which contrast central and local powers.[27] Whether the Visigothic polity was characterized by a 'weak' state, dependent largely on personal loyalty for local enforcement, or had greater infrastructural and bureaucratic power in its own right remain matters of contestation.[28] The 'church', however, tends to appear in the historiography as a less problematic entity—if not as the universal, abstract *ecclesia* of the ecclesiologists (the *corpus Christi*, headed by Christ, or the spotless *sponsa Christi* set against heresies and sects),

[27] On Spanish accounts of (proto-)feudalism see esp. W. Davies, 'The early middle ages and Spanish identity', in H. Pryce and J. Watts (eds), *Power and Identity in the Middle Ages: Essays in Memory of Rees Davies* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 68-84. For central and local powers: S. Castellanos and I. Martín Viso, 'The local articulation of central power in the north of the Iberian Peninsula (500-1000)', *EME*, 13/1 (2005), pp. 1-42

[28] P.C. Díaz Martínez and M.A. Valverde Castro, 'The theoretical strength and practical weakness of the Visigothic monarchy of Toledo', in F. Thuews and J.L. Nelson (eds), *Rituals of Power: From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2003), pp. 59-93; C. Martin, *La géographie du pouvoir dans l'Espagne visigothique* (Villeneuve d'Ascq, 2003); D. Fernández, *Aristocrats and Statehood in Western Iberia, 300-600 C.E.* (Philadelphia, PN, 2017).

then at least as something firmly institutional and legalistic which stretched across the kingdom as a corporate body.[29]

In Visigothicists' work, the notion of the 'Isidorian Renaissance', understood as a project of clerical education and disciplinary reform as well as a high-cultural project, has nourished maximalist accounts of ecclesiastical institutionality.[30] In this interpretation, the Fourth Council of Toledo—the 'Isidorian' council *par excellence*—represents a thorough attempt at top-down ecclesiastical reform, all aimed at bringing orthodoxy and orthopraxy to pass at the pastoral level. The debts to scholarship on the Carolingian reforms is evident. For Carolingianists, Mayke de Jong's important work has allowed the *ecclesia*, as a political idea, to come to the rescue of those who hope to find trans-personal understandings of political communities and the public realm in the Middle Ages. The whole polity, it is argued, could be conceived as a salvific community, rooted in correct religious belief and efficacious ritual.[31] Here, questions of 'state' and 'church' are tightly linked at the highest level. It has long been noted that the Visigothic church councils, like others in the early medieval world, involved the participation not only of bishops and clergy but of kings and lay officials.[32]

While the Visigoths certainly show the ambition to create a polity ideologically rooted in Christian orthodoxy, we need to insist on the distinction between the idea of *ecclesia*, on the one hand, and, on the other, its actual real-world instantiation in bishoprics, canon law, lone rural churches, saints' shrines, and all manner of other, scattered entities. As

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[29] For ecclesiological visions of *ecclesia*: Justus, *Expl.*; Isid., *Etym.*, VIII.1, 3; on the wider discourse: Y.M.-J. Congar, *L'Eccleésiologie du Haut Moyen Age: de saint Grégoire le Grand à la disunion entre Byzance et Rome* (Paris, 1968).

[30] This paradigm is rooted in J. Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique dans l'Espagne wisigothique*, 2 vols (Paris, 1959); for wider historiography see below, pp. 111-13.

[31] M. de Jong, 'The state of the church: *ecclesia* and early medieval state formation', in W. Pohl and V. Wieser (eds), *Der frühmittelalterliche Staat: Europäische Perspektiven* (Vienna, 2009), pp. 241-255; *eadem*, 'The two republics: *ecclesia* and the public domain in the Carolingian world', in R. Balzaretti, J. Barrow, and P. Skinner (eds), *Italy and Early Medieval Europe: Papers for Chris Wickham* (Oxford, 2018), pp. 486-500.

[32] E.g. in Congar, *L'Ecclésiologie*, p. 94.

Dominique Iogna-Prat has shown, the relationship between the idea of *ecclesia* and its concrete manifestations is a complex and shifting one in which the pre-Carolingian Middle Ages have a notably different profile to those postdating Carolingian *correctio*.[33] It would not be until after the Visigothic kingdom's collapse that 'the church' consistently structured the landscape of any region of Europe with parishes, systems of tithing, and transpersonal 'territorial' rule. For much of the early Middle Ages, personal power was as important as institutional structures, and informal norms were as important as canonical stipulations.[34] Ideal and reality sharply diverge here, as in so much else in the history of the Suevic and Visigothic kingdoms.

The questions of 'state' and 'church' are conceptually alike: both require historians to posit administrative, hierarchical entities which transcended the individual persons who exercised offices within them, and which were distinct in some way from wider structures of 'private' elite power. Peter Linehan makes this clear, launching a sceptical attack on both 'state' and 'Church': 'the dynamic of the seventh century (and of every century down to the fourteenth) involved not the Church but churchmen, not the monarchy and nobility but monarchs and nobles. […] Beyond society itself there *was* no "Church"'.[35] From a different intellectual angle, Marxist historians have frequently seen the 'Church' as irrevocably ensconced in the relationships of production and exploitation that defined society as such (that is, 'feudal' relations), with little corporate existence, in any practical sense, beyond this. Thus, in Abilio Barbero and Marcelo Vigil's totalizing sense of 'feudal' production, ecclesiastical actors were little different to other landowners, and relationships within the

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[33] D. Iogna-Prat, *La maison Dieu: une histoire monumentale de l'Église au Moyen Âge (v. 800-v. 1200)* (Paris, 2006).

[34] For 'de-institutionalized' accounts of the early medieval diocese see: M. Lauwers, '*Territorium non facere diocesim*… Conflits, limites et representation territorial du diocèse (V^e^-XIII^e^ siècle)', in F. Mazel (ed.), *L'Espace du diocèse. Genèse d'un territoire dans l'Occident médiéval (V^e^-XIII^e^ siècle)* (Rennes, 2008), pp. 23-65; F. Mazel, *L'Évêque et le territoire: l'invention médiévale de l'espace* (Paris, 2016).

[35] Linehan, *History and the Historians*, p. 37.

clerical hierarchy were little different to the personal bonds between patrons and clients.[36] We do not have to accept either of these reductionist positions in their fullest articulation to see the force of their critique. The burden of proof lies on those who wish to argue for an institutional transcendence to the 'Church', not on those who are critical of ecclesiological abstractions.

Even within the canons we can see a church having to work hard to distinguish itself from the socio-economic structures of wider society. The conciliar canons worked hard to stop clerics—particularly bishops—from appearing as indistinguishable from private landlords or acquisitive profit-makers. This was a theme with a long heritage: as ecclesiastical institutions became wealthy, there was an urgent need to show that ecclesiastical wealth and those who controlled it were distinct from their merely 'worldly' counterparts.[37] The Council of Tarragona (516) forbade priests to buy and sell for profit, or to charge interests on loans.[38] The Fourth Council of Toledo forbade bishops from treating monks like servile dependents, lamenting in a telling phrase that such abuses made the *cenobium* a *possessio*. The fear was that the bishop would become indistinguishable from the *possessor* or *dominus* of landed property, and the monks indistinct from bound labour.[39] A canon of the provincial council of Braga (675) admonished *rectores ecclesiae* to not deploy the servile workforce of the church (the *familiae ecclesiae*) on their own personal properties, for their own profit, rather than the church's. The salient distinction here was between personal profits ('rei propriae profectus') and the Lord's ('dominici'—that is, ecclesiastical incomes).[40]

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[36] A. Barbero and M. Vigil, *La formación del feudalismo en la Península Ibérica* (Barcelona, 2017 [1978]), pp. 53-104.

[37] For the ecclesiastical discourse on wealth: P.R.L. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD* (Princeton, NJ, 2012); V. Toneatto, *Les banquiers du Seigneur. Évêques et moines face à la richesse (IV^e^-début IX^e^ siècle)* (Rennes, 2012).

[38] Tarragona, cc. 2-3 (Coll. Hisp. IV, p. 273).

[39] IV Toledo, c. 51 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 230-1).

[40] III Braga, c. 8 (Conc., pp. 377-8).

However much the ideal of clerical office held it to transcend the socio-economic structures of lay society, the two could never be detached. Clerics were not just part of society but were a driving force in its changing structure. The bishops gathered at the Fourth Council of Toledo formed a justification for the perpetual and heritable dependence of ecclesiastical freedpeople (that is, people who had been manumitted from slavery, having been owned by a church). The bishops took the logic of existing law—which required freedpeople to continue a degree of residual dependence (termed *obsequium*) to their former lord until the latter's death—and added the novel argument that, since the *ecclesia* never dies, this dependence should never end for ecclesiastical freedpeople. Here clerics were instrumental in forging new structures of exploitation.[41]

Most significantly of all, some canons suggest that some relationships within the *ecclesia* itself had a strong personal basis. The enslaved labourers (*familia*) of a given church could be manumitted so as to be admitted into holy orders, and some of these seem to have retained a level of personal dependence, despite earlier canons declaring the incompatibility of dependence and clerical office. In the seventh century, people in holy orders were still forbidden from being under *obsequium* to a lay patron, but they could be dependent on ecclesiastics. Freedpeople who served as clerics remained bound to the church which manumitted them, and their property would pass to it upon their death.[42] Local priests who manumitted slaves for clerical service would continue to be responsible for their sustenance and clothing; they could punish them corporally or with re-enslavement.[43] Here, dependence

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[41] IV Toledo, cc. 70-2 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 244-6); cf. Mérida, c. 20 (Conc. pp. 339-40). For discussion: Barbero and Vigil, *La formación del feudalismo*, pp. 90-6; D. Claude, 'Freedman in the Visigothic Kingdom', in E. James (ed.), *Visigothic Spain: New Approaches* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 159-88; S. Esders, *Die Formierung der Zensualität. Zur kirchlichen Transformation des spätrömischen Patronatswesens im früheren Mittelalter* (Ostfildern, 2010), esp. pp. 37-44.

[42] IV Toledo, cc. 73-4 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 246-7). Cf. the (late Roman) canon, I Toledo, c. 10 (Coll. Hisp. IV, p. 332), which required those entering the clergy to have the consent of their *patroni*.

[43] Mérida, c. 18 (Conc., p. 338); IX Toledo, c. 11 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 504-5).

reached right into 'the church' itself. This was not simply a bureaucracy of free persons, but a complex and hierarchical structure tied always into wider structures of dependence.[44]

If 'the church' looks more like wider lay society that we might expect, so were laypeople more involved in religious matters than is commonly supposed. The normative evidence provides good evidence for the lay patronage of churches and monasteries throughout the period.[45] By the seventh century, lay founders could not only defend the integrity of their foundations against episcopal encroachment, but even had the right to select clergy and present them to the bishop for ordination.[46] Lay rights, which could pass down to heirs, were referred to in some canons as *cura* and *sollicitudo*—two words with rich semantic fields in the context of clerical and abbatial authority, as well as that of laypeople.[47] Ecclesiastical property was not a single patrimony owned by a legal subject called 'the church' or even a set of diocesan patrimonies, each ruled by a monarchical bishop. As Peter Brown has put it, 'as far as wealth was concerned, there was no such thing as "the Church" with a capital C.'[48] Focussing on lay patronage and structures of property, we are led to disaggregate 'the church' into loosely grouped constituent parts. The burden of proof should lie on those who wish to argue for the utility of abstractions like 'the church'.

It is important to conceptualize lay agency with care: as with discussions of local elites and 'the state', the spectre of 'feudalism' sits in the background.[49]. The foundational

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[44] See Barbero and Vigil, *La formación del feudalismo*, pp. 96-103.

[45] I summarize the Iberian evidence in D. Addison, 'Property and "publicness": bishops and lay-founded churches in post-Roman Hispania', *EME*, 28/2 (2020), pp. 175-96. For a wider survey: S. Wood, *The Proprietary Church in the Medieval West* (Oxford, 2006).

[46] IX Toledo, cc. 1-2 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 492-5).

[47] The canons in question are those of IX Toledo cited above. On *cura* and *sollicitudo*: Toneatto, *Les banquiers*, pp. 320-33.

[48] Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, p. 493.

[49] Against the legalist notion of 'feudalism': S. Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford, 1994); *eadem*, 'Still fussing about feudalism', in Balzaretti, Barrow, and Skinner (eds), *Italy and Early Medieval Europe*, pp. 87-94. Socio-economic notions of the 'feudal mode of production' (or 'tributary mode of production'), constitute a distinct and viable framework of analysis: see J. Haldon, *The State and the Tributary Mode of Production* (London, 1993); C. Wickham,

scholarship written at the turn of the twentieth century tended to see lay power in 'the church' as a novel, disruptive force foreign to the essence of the *ecclesia* as it existed in late Roman society. For Ulrich Stutz, who coined the term *Eigenkirche* to denote churches under the proprietorial and spiritual control of their owners, lay ownership was a 'Germanic' importation to a church previously governed by Roman law.[50] For French scholars like Émile Lesne, *églises privées* were formed by the decomposition of a once-integral diocese, governed by a monarchical bishop.[51] In each case, lay power is a 'feudal' incursion into an institution that was fundamentally apart from the dynamics of wider society. Spanish scholarship adopted similar positions (though usually rejecting Stutz's Germanist thesis), with most twentieth-century scholars of canon law suggesting that *iglesias propias* or *privadas* did not exist, in the full sense, until after the end of Visigothic power, but came about only when legalistic clerical rule became untenable, and lay power was able to occupy the resultant vacuum.[52]

As I have argued in more detail elsewhere, lay-founded churches should not be positioned as a 'private' appropriation of clerical power by over-mighty lay subjects, but as a continuation of the independent lay impetus that can be seen in other forms in the villa world of the late Roman period.[53] This is not to say that lay-founded churches were continuous in a material sense with the spaces of domestic religion on Roman villas—Alexandra Chavarría has disproven most of the evidence formerly marshalled in support of this case—but it is to argue that the inclination of laypeople to use wealth to carve out spaces

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'How did the feudal economy work? The economic logic of medieval societies', *Past & Present*, 251 (2021), pp. 3-40.

[50] For a summary of Stutz's views: U. Stutz, *Die Eigenkirche als Element des mittelalterlich-germanischen Kirchenrechts* (Darmstadt, 1955).

[51] É. Lesne, *Histoire de la propriété ecclésiastique en France, I: Époques romaine et mérovingienne* (Lille/Paris, 1910).

[52] For the classic Spanish scholarship see esp.: M. Torres López, 'El origen del sistema de "iglesias propias"', *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español*, 5 (1928), pp. 83–217; R. Bigador, *La "Iglesia Propia" en España: Estudio Historico-Canonico* (Rome, 1933). See below, pp. 271-2.

[53] Argued more fully in Addison, 'Property and "publicness"'.

of relative independence from episcopal power was long-standing.[54] As Kim Bowes has put it, the questions that emerge from lay-founded churches and domestic religiosity are not peripheral to 'the church' proper, but fundamental to understanding its nature: it did not go without saying that 'the church' would be a bishop-led structure of offices and territories rather than, for example, a network of households without much formal hierarchy.[55] Thinking about lay power is, at root, a way of thinking about formation of 'the church' as such without taking for granted the institutional structure it came to acquire through the Middle Ages.

III. THE GENEALOGY OF A STRUCTURE: CLERIC, ASCETIC, AND LAYPERSON

The history of the internal structure of the *ecclesia*—of its hierarchies and divisions—is underappreciated in the history of Christianity. The terms of my title—'cleric', 'ascetic', 'layperson'—refer to concepts which emerged gradually, and which must be understood historically. The second term, in particular, was subject to shifting meanings and divergent interpretations, each irreducible to an institutional category like 'monk'. It is over-hasty, therefore, to proclaim with Alexandre Faivre that by the fifth century the basic tripartite structure of layperson, monastic, and cleric was fixed in the Latin West in a form in which it would continue all the way to modernity.[56] Each of these terms demands further investigation; each has its own history, while also being interlaced with the shifting nature of the others. The structure of the *ecclesia* was always subject to new claims made by different

[54] Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values*; A. Chavarría Arnau, 'Aristocracias tardoantiguas y cristianización del territorio (siglos IV-V): ¿Otro mito historiográfico?' *Rivista di Archaeologia Cristiana*, 82 (2006), pp. 201-30. For a catalogue of the archaeological evidence: A. Oepen, *Villa und christlicher Kult auf der Iberischen Halbinsel in Spätantike und Westgotenzeit* (Wiesbaden, 2012).
[55] K.D. Bowes, 'Personal devotions and private chapels', in Burrus (ed.). *Late Ancient Christianity*, pp. 188-210, esp. pp. 209-10.
[56] Faivre, *Les laïcs*, p. 248.

groups within it and the balance between each—indeed, the very definition of each—emerged from such processes, not from mere legal stipulation.

The distinction between clergy and laity does not go back to the earliest Christian communities. The Greek term *laikos*—from which derives the Latin *laicus* and the English 'lay'—is not found as a noun in the Bible. It appears only sporadically in the first centuries of Christian writing, firstly in a late first-century work of Clement of Rome, then a second-century work of Clement of Alexandria. The noun *laos*, from which *laikos* derives is found, by contrast, as a term for 'people', in the sense of 'common' or civilian people. This was not constitutive of a divide between 'cleric' and 'lay': no institutional dichotomy existed in the New Testament's descriptions of apostolic Christianity.[57] When the clergy were increasingly set apart, this was often done in relation to Old Testament imagery of exclusive ritual competency drawn from the Israelite priesthood—a pre-Christian vision of priestly separation which was reconfigured within the *ecclesia*. This was especially true of bishops, who could be referred to simply as *sacerdotes* in some texts.[58] The increasing attempt to distinguish the clergy from the wider group of Christians was constitutive of something like what we think of as 'the laity'. The distinction seems to have been widely understood by the third century, but the nature of clerical authority remained a contested question, and the identity of 'the laity' as a category not always as clear as we might expect.[59]

Late Roman Hispania provides evidence both for assertive visions of clerical difference and for its critique. In the Iberian canons, the terms *clericus* and *laicus* (or its sometime cognate *saecularis*) appear in the earliest evidence, including the fourth-century

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[57] K.J. Torjesen, 'Clergy and laity', in S.A. Harvey and D.G. Hunter (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 398-405; Swanson, 'Apostolic successors'; Y. Congar, *Jalons pour une théologie du laïcat* (2nd edn, Paris, 1954), pp. 19-20; A. Faivre, 'Clerc/laic: histoire d'une frontière', *Revue des Sciences Religieuses*, 57/3 (1983), pp. 195-220. For recent defence of the category 'lay': G. Frank, 'Laity lives: reclaiming a "non-" category', *Studies in Late Antiquity*, 5/1 (2021), pp. 119-27.

[58] See Isid., *De eccl.*, II.5.

[59] Faivre, *Les laïcs*, pp. 160-3, attributes a 'grand mutation cléricale' to the third century.

canons of Elvira, albeit with relative infrequency.[60] Other evidence, however, points to complications in the establishment of this divide. The letters of the fourth-century bishop Pacian of Barcelona show a protracted dispute with a layman called Symphonian who argued against bishops' prerogative to bind and loose, particularly to forgive sins through penance. He also challenged the universal status of those who describe themselves as *catholicus*.[61] These ecclesiological issues avowedly went back to disputes over sin and reconciliation engaged in a century earlier by Cyprian of Carthage and Novation of Rome in the wake of the Decian persecution. The third-century watershed in clerical self-consciousness had not brought everyone with it. Pacian's defence of his clerical authority is telling. He asserted the authority of the bishop by apostolic succession and went so far as to declare Christ an *episcopus*, eliding its former meaning ('watchman') with its later institutional one ('bishop').[62] He then quoted Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians, claiming he was writing *ad laicos*.[63] Thus, the structure of bishop and layperson was cast back into the apostolic age and the past was made a mirror of the institutional present. This all served a newly assertive vision of institutional episcopal power, which cast its shadow back onto the perception of even the earliest years of the *ecclesia*.[64] Yet, as Symphronian makes clear, this clerical vision of authority was not without its critics.

By the seventh century, the clerical account of its own hierarchy was well advanced, and schematic accounts of it can be found in the writings of Isidore of Seville and others.[65] There are church canons which sharply divide the clergy and the laity in spatial terms during the performance of the liturgy.[66] This, however, is not to say that the divide between clergy

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[60] E.g. Elvira c. 20; I Toledo, c. 15 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 248-9, 334-5).
[61] Pacian, *Epp.* 1-3. On Symphronian's status: K. Shuve, *The Song of Songs and the Fashioning of Identity in Early Latin Christianity* (Oxford, 2016), p. 55.
[62] Pacian, *Ep.* 1.7.1; cf. 1 Pet. 2:25.
[63] Pacian, *Ep.* 1.7.3.
[64] For Pacian's ecclesiology see Shuve, *The Song of Songs*, pp. 53-61; Cyprian is discussed at pp. 24-37.
[65] Isid., *De eccl.*, II; see also the pseudo-Isidorian *Epistola ad Leudefredum*, discussed below, p. 125.
[66] I Braga, c. 13 (Conc. pp. 73-4) uses *laicus*; IV Toledo, c. 18 (Coll. Hisp. V, p. 206) uses *populus*.

and laity was always a central concern of ecclesiastical authorities. Isidore provides an interesting case. He evinced little ambiguity around which ecclesiastical officers were *clerici*: he considered the word to cover 'all those who serve zealously in the church of Christ', including lower grades like *ostarii* and *lectores*.[67] Yet, it was clearly easier to identify the clerical hierarchy than it was to bring structure to the larger portion of the Christian community. In his survey of the *ecclesia* in the *Etymologiae*, following sections on clerics and monks, Isidore addressed the remainder of the Christian community under the indistinct title, *De ceteris fidelibus*.[68] He glossed *laicus* as *popularis* and traced to its Greek root, but he did not define the term in relation to the clergy, nor did he give it any prominence as an overarching category.[69] One would not get the sense from reading Isidore's definitions that the *ecclesia* was divided into three separate orders: *clerici*, *monachi*, and *laici*. Indeed, there is no evidence that Isidore thought in such a tripartite way. The category of 'the laity' was not always an operative one in the ecclesiological imagination, even at its most schematic.

Ambiguities multiply when we turn to the category I have called 'ascetics'. In the early Iberian canons we find a range of designations for Christians who lived lives of exceptional separation from 'the world', characterized by disciplines of various kinds, notably sexual renunciation. We read of *monachi*, *confessores*, *puella Dei*, *professae*, and so on.[70] Whether these people were considered subsets of the laity or separate categories in their own right is unclear. People like Prudentius seem to have remained lay, for example, while taking on ascetic devotions in retirement. The canons of Elvira distinguished 'virgins consecrated to God' ('uirginis Deo sacratis') from *uirgines saeculares*, suggesting that there were gradations

[67] Isid., *Etym.*, VII.12.2: *Generaliter autem clerici nuncupantur omnes qui in ecclesia Christi deserviunt.*
[68] Isid., *Etym.*, VII.12-14.
[69] Isid., *Etym.*, VII.14.9: *Laicus popularis.* Λαὸς *enim Graece populus dicitur.*
[70] See e.g. Elvira, c. 25; I Toledo, cc. 6, 9 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 250, 330-2).

even within these categories.[71] Three or so centuries later, the Fourth Council of Toledo (633) made a similar distinction with greater clarity, explaining that widows could be *uiduae saeculares*, who retain lay dress ('laicale habitum'), or *uiduae sanctimoniales*, who have taken up a distinct religious appearance.[72] None of these measures, however, are clear about what the category of the non-lay itself is. Again, we have definition by negation, but not by positive affirmation. I have chosen to use 'ascetic' as the necessarily vague umbrella term, but this requires further unpacking.

As Albrecht Diem has reminded us, the word 'ascetic' is a modern scholarly category, bound up in the project of tracing the pre-history of Latin monasticism, rather than a term belonging to Latin late antiquity itself. Many pre-Christian Greek texts were rich in the language of *askesis*, using the term to denote 'exercise', 'practice', or 'training' in military or athletic contexts; Greek Christian authors deployed the same language to describe the disciplines and combats of the desert fathers. Yet, while Latin authors drew heavily on this literature, transfiguring the idea of desert renunciation and spiritual conflict with the vices and the devil for new, different climes, but they did not habitually use the Latinized term *asceticus*: this emerged with force only in early modern scholarship on the origins of cenobitic monasticism.[73]

It is important to disentangle the ascetic world of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages from the shadow of cenobitism, particularly in its Benedictine form. Well-institutionalized and regularized monasticism emerged very slowly. This was a period in

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[71] Elvira, cc. 13-14 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 246-7). Formerly thought to derive from a single council in the opening years of the fourth century, the canons of Elvira may in fact reflect a collection compiled through the fourth century. This thesis was first argued by M. Meigne, 'Concile ou collection d'Elvire?', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, 70 (1975), pp. 361-87, and debate was re-ignited by J. Vilella Masana and P.E. Barreda, 'Los cánones de la Hispana atribuidos a un concilio iliberritano: estudio filológico', in *I concili della cristianità occidentale: Secoli III-V* (Rome, 2002), pp. 545-79. For the voluminous subsequent scholarship: J. Vilella, 'The pseudo-Iliberritan canon texts', *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum*, 18/2 (2014), pp. 210-59.

[72] IV Toledo, c. 56 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 234-5).

[73] A. Diem, 'The limitations of asceticism', *Medieval Worlds*, 9 (2019), pp. 112-28.

which many individuals or small groups embarked on their own ascetic experiments, often at arm's length from formal ecclesiastical structures. In the fourth- and fifth-century Roman West, a number of prominent laypeople adopted ascetic lifestyles on their estates, among them Paulinus of Nola, Sulpicius Severus, and Prudentius.[74] The world of elite lay agency of which Prudentius and Priscillian were a part was one of a number of 'ascetic' experiments which were undertaken at some distance from the clerical hierarchy. There was no 'order' of monks or nuns at this point, but a spectrum of different disciplines, each with their own relationship to institutional authority. More formal visions of cenobitic monasticism emerged through the post-Roman centuries—and I discuss these in detail in Chapter 5—but they did so amidst a steadfastly diverse and complex world of ascetic vocations, which were not successfully homogenized within the chronological limits of this thesis. The category is 'ascetics' and not 'monks' for this reason.

The term 'ascetic' also functions, in a much looser sense, as an adjective. As such it can be applied to various people besides those 'ascetics' who had a full-time religious vocation. It is important to recall, following David Hunter, that many debates over 'ascetic' practices like sexual renunciation were, in the earliest centuries of Christianity, not about establishing a narrow elite within the *ecclesia*—a class of celibate monastics or senor clerics set apart from the rest—but about what true Christian 'conversion' was in a wider sense, with application to laypeople as much as institutional elites. They were debates over what was expected of Christians *qua* Christians—that is, of whether Christian conversion was compatible with sexual activity, family life, and the social structures of Graeco-Roman society.[75] They were also debates about how the *ecclesia* should be structured and who should

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[74] J. Fontaine, 'Valeurs antiques et valeurs chrétiennes dans la spiritualité des grands propriétaires terriens a la fin du IV^{e} siècle occidental', in J. Fontaine and C. Kannengiesser (eds), *Epektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou* (Paris, 1972), pp. 571-95.

[75] D.G. Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity: The Jovinianist Controversy* (Oxford, 2007). On sexuality see also: P.R.L. Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in*

lead it. The emergence of clerical celibacy as an ideal (though not a universal one) was one outcome of this.[76] The well-studied rise of the 'monk-bishop', well represented in the Iberian sixth and seventh centuries, was another.[77] 'Asceticism' could become a language of power wielded by clerical authorities, but it could also be an alternative locus of spiritual authority, suspicious of or hostile to apparently 'worldly' forms of ecclesiastical power.[78] Both sides of this come through in Chapter 5.

Conspicuously 'ascetic' ideals were by no means universal but reflected particular accounts of how the *ecclesia* should be structured and governed. Pacian of Barcelona, who we encountered above, is a good example of a different model, rooted in late Roman civic norms. He was not someone who thought that the clergy needed to live radically different lives from those to whom they ministered or who espoused ideas of steep hierarchy among the baptized faithful.[79] He was married and had a son, Dexter, who attained prominence a layperson. Jerome described Dexter as both 'clarus ad saeculum et Christi fidei deditus' (Dexter was, in fact the dedicatee of Jerome's *De viris illustribus*).[80] As I argue in Chapter 3, bishops and other high clergy continued to be married through the Suevic and Visigothic periods, even as monastic visions of office rose in prominence. Many of the most prominent prelates, like Isidore of Seville, or the string of Toledan bishops who hailed from the monastery of Agali, evinced ascetic views of ecclesiastical office, highly valorising celibacy, at least for bishops, but these are not necessarily representative examples. Such ideals were

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Early Christianity (New York, NY, 1988); on spiritual hierarchy see esp. R.A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990).

[76] D.G. Hunter, 'Married clergy in Eastern and Western Christianity', in Peters and Anderson (eds), *A Companion to Priesthood*, pp. 96-139.

[77] P. Rousseau, 'The spiritual authority of the "monk-bishop": eastern elements in some western hagiography of the fourth and fifth centuries', *JThS*, 22/2 (1971), pp. 380-419.

[78] On the former: C. Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000); C. Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley, CA, 2005).

[79] Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, pp. 37-8.

[80] Jerome, *De viris*, *prologus* and 132, quote at 132.

certainly major parts of ecclesiastical life, but they were levelled against other 'worldly' clergy who continued to live in other ways. The extent to which 'asceticism' was required for legitimate Christian authority was a matter of intense contestation both within the clergy and between clerics and others.

'Asceticism' has relevance to the laity, too: it was not just a matter of elite distinction *from* the laity but a basic part of Christianity and, on occasion, a source of independent power. The loosest notion of 'asceticism' is one where 'ascetic' is applied simply as an adjective to various practices of self-discipline and self-control. In this use, someone engaged in 'ascetic' behaviour need not *be* an 'ascetic' in the narrower way in which it has been used above, nor do they need to be imbibing essentially monastic virtues. Indeed, it can be said that Christianity, as practiced by laypeople as well as religious specialists, has necessarily 'ascetic' elements, as does much non-Christian ethical thought.[81] It is important to recall the importance that 'ascetic' ideas and practices had to many laypeople, particularly when we encounter ascetic critiques of 'worldly' clerics by laypeople. Boundaries were rarely as rigid as we are accustomed to think. The study of distinctions between laypeople, ascetics, and clerics is not just an inquiry into the relations between discrete groups of people but a way of thinking about fundamental questions regarding the nature and structure of the Christian community, and its hierarchies and centres of authority. These categories are less self-evident than they appear. Tracing their history allows us to re-found our notion of what 'the church' was in early medieval society.

[81] For the language of 'asceticism' applied to non-Christian contexts see, e.g., P. Veyne, *Seneca: The Life of a Stoic*, trans. D. Sullivan (New York, NY, 2003), pp. 33, 36.

IV. PLAN OF THE WORK

My thesis is structured as a series of interlocking studies, each of which addresses important themes pertaining to the relationship of clerics, ascetics, and laypeople in the kingdom, and therefore of the structure of Christian society in its widest sense. It bears saying that I have not sought to be comprehensive in my coverage. My examples cover both the Suevic and Visigothic kingdoms in the sixth and seventh centuries, but there are notable omissions. Chief among these is the ferment of Toledo in the later seventh century, the time when it had risen to undisputed ecclesiastical pre-eminence and benefits from illumination from the writings of Ildefonsus and Julian of Toledo. It is regrettable that space precluded their inclusion, but I have chosen to sacrifice comprehensiveness to depth. We do not lack overall summaries of the Visigothic kingdom, but we do require more detailed, discriminating work which grants specificity to the different authors and regional contexts of the peninsula.

Rather than recapitulate overarching grand narratives, or stick narrowly to existing historiography, I have preferred to examine individual authors and themes in detail, using single authors or questions as ways into much wider areas of concern. Three of my five chapters are therefore structured around the close-reading of individual authors' works—those of Martin of Braga, Isidore of Seville, and Valerius of Bierzo. Many of these sources are familiar, but I show that they can be re-framed to show much more about lay religiosity or conflict over status within the *ecclesia* than has previously been recognized. Each author is used to develop arguments which go far beyond their particular works—Martin tells us much about Christian ethical thought, Isidore about the accountability of episcopal authority to laypeople, and Valerius about the way asceticism and monastic ideals could underpin some Christians' independence from ecclesiastical structures. The remaining two chapters address wider historical themes—the divide between Arian and Nicene Christianity in the sixth century, and the wider nature of pastoral care and independent lay religiosity in the sixth and seventh. These take a different tack, bringing in underused and often anonymous

sources to shed new light on difficult questions. The most important of these are the collection of sermons known as the *Homiliae Toletanae* and the collection of martyr passions knows as the *Pasionario Hispánico*—two collections of material pulled together in the post-Visigothic period, but which preserve important earlier texts within them. These give us a very different, but equally important angle onto Visigothic society and culture than the works of named authors.

My studies add up to an institutionally minimalist history of Christianity in the Suevic and Visigothic kingdoms, emphasizing the porous boundaries between the worlds of laypeople, ascetics, and clerics, and the precarious and provisional emergence of clerical power over religion. Chapter 1 centres on the monk-bishop Martin of Braga, active in the Suevic kingdom in the second half of the sixth century. I argue that while his famous model sermon, *De correctione rusticorum* is valuable evidence for episcopal understandings of rural lay religion, historians have done him a disservice by passing over his unique ethical treatises. In these, ideas from the Roman philosopher Seneca the Younger and Christian ascetic John Cassian were précised and repackaged for an elite audience, both clerical and lay. These works, I argue, tell us about the religious culture of the Suevic elite, and help us understand the opaque process of Nicene conversion that the Suevic kingdom was undergoing at the time. The Sueves' unclear and distinctly non-triumphalist model of conversion from Arianism contrasts starkly with the grand celebration of conversion undertaken by the Visigoths under Reccared's leadership at the Third Council of Toledo.

Chapter 2 works back from this moment of orthodox assertion, tracing the more complex divisions between Arian and Nicene Christianity in the sixth century. Firstly, I argue that accounts of two rival 'churches' typically over-emphasize the unity and coherence of the Nicene 'church'. Using a little-studied sermon from the *Homiliae Toletanae*, I then argue that doctrinal dispute was a real phenomenon, which may even have reached certain interested laypeople, and that the contours of this debate should be seen in relation to those which are

known from some of the Frankish evidence. Doctrinal difference did not define Christian life—many Christians could move between churches—but it needs to be taken seriously as an element of Christian life. That said, there were many different disputes within Christian culture, and the division between Arian and Nicene should be neither exaggerated nor presumed to dominate the sixth century outside of high politics: its status as the definitive division owes as much to the narrative of Visigothic state-formation elaborated by the Third Council of Toledo as it does to the earlier sixth-century evidence.

Chapter 3 centres on Isidore of Seville, the pre-eminent ecclesiastic in the Visigothic kingdom in the first half of the seventh century. He has often been positioned close to the Visigothic court, as the chief ideologue of the new Nicene state and, in the most maximalist readings, as the motive force behind a kingdom-wide 'Isidorian Renaissance', expressed in cultural, ecclesiastical, and pastoral renovation. Locating him in a more regional and specific context, I argue against the idea that he was solely concerned with strengthening the clergy as an order. I show firstly that Isidore's ethical thought had more applicability to lay elites than is usually recognized, and secondly that his model of clerical authority tells us, in spite of itself, that episcopal power was more precarious and provisional—and more dependent on the moral judgements of laypeople—than is usually recognized. This implies a more minimalist account of the Isidorian 'high point' of ecclesiastical institutionalization.

Taking this lead, Chapter 4 turns to pastoral matters and the question of non-elite lay religiosity. Through an analysis of the *Homiliae Toletanae* and *Pasionario Hispánico*, I argue that we should think of preaching and martyr cult in Hispania as rooted in local contexts, not in any kind of top-down, kingdom-wide dissemination of authoritative doctrine. I also argue, through bringing Martin of Braga's *De correctione rusticorum* into dialogue with the material evidence of *defixiones*, that a great deal of lay Christianity diverged from clerical expectations. Our scant clerical evidence shows a certain incomprehension at divergent religious forms, and we cannot reconstruct sub-elite lay religiosity in detail, but we can deepen our

appreciation of how narrow a view the clerical sources give us of a world that was evidently much richer and more complex.

Finally, Chapter 5 examines the world around Valerius of Bierzo, in late Visigothic Gallaecia, using this as a springboard to question the relationship between ascetic elitism and clerical office across the whole peninsula. This allows us to highlight eremitic ascetic vocations, and the manner in which monasticism allowed some Christians to leverage independence from clerical structures and supervision. This also had effects on the exercise of clerical office. In Gallaecia, at least, it seems that some strands of radical ascetic thought had not only produced the eremitic vocations of people like Valerius, but also led to a discourse critical of supposedly 'worldly' clerics. Competing visions of asceticism led sometimes to competing visions of clerical power, and there is at least some evidence that expectations of ascetic excellence came from laypeople as well as ascetic or clerical rivals.

Taken together, these studies present a revisionist account of Christian organization in the Suevic and Visigothic periods, emphasizing the diverse ways in which different people and groups conceived of structure and hierarchy in the *ecclesia*. While I do not address the period after the fall of the Visigothic kingdom in this thesis, my analysis helps us chart a path from the rich and diverse world of late Roman Christianity to the highly decentralized and proprietorial world of the post-Visigothic Christian kingdoms without interrupting this with a rapidly institutionalized and bureaucratized 'Visigothic church'. With a deeper appreciation of the centrifugal and agonistic forces in ecclesiastical and Christian life, the path through the late antique and early medieval periods becomes smoother. This is not to argue for continuity at all costs, but to suggest that the very real changes Christianity and its organization saw in these periods should be investigated with some freedom from the narrative history of high ecclesiastical politics. It is this project that I attempt here.

Chapter 1:

MARTIN OF BRAGA AND THE SUEVES: NATURE, GOD, AND 'CONVERSION'

I. INTRODUCTION

The Suevic kingdom tends to receive far less attention than its larger and more durable Visigothic counterpart.[1] Annexed by the Visigothic king Leovigild in 585, the Suevic kingdom of Gallaecia has also suffered from being incorporated by historians of the period into a Visigoth-centred Iberia. Yet, Suevic religious history deserves to be understood on its own terms, not least for the contrast it gives to the Visigothic case. Having entered the Iberian Peninsula alongside the Vandals and Alans in the early years of the fifth century, the Sueves formed a durable kingdom. This Suevic monarchy converted to Nicene Christianity, from their former Arianism, some decades before the Visigoths, doing so in an unclear process which occurred in the third quarter of the sixth century. Some elements of political and religious development find later Visigothic counterparts—the Suevic kings' oversight of two church councils in the royal city of Braga being the most notable example. Yet, there was no outward assertion of royal doctrinal orthodoxy at either, nor any royal abjuration of the tenets of 'Arianism', as there would be in the Visigothic case. Indeed, we find little explicit sense of the kingdom as a distinctly sacral community, and little evocation of the *Suevi* as a people. We should be careful before seeing in this period of reform a 'conversion

[1] For recent work on the Suevic kingdom: P.C. Díaz Martínez, *El reino suevo (411-585)* (Madrid, 2011); J. López Quiroga (ed.), *In tempore Sueborum. El tiempo del los Suevos en la Gallaecia (411-585). El primer reino medieval del Occidente* (Ourense, 2018). There is useful material throughout D. Fernández, *Aristocrats and Statehood in Western Iberia, 300-600 C.E.* (Philadelphia, PN, 2017). The older studies of E.A. Thompson remain important. They were published as 'The end of Roman Spain' in four separate parts, in *Nottingham Medieval Studies*: 'Part I', vol. 20 (1976), pp. 3-28; 'Part II', vol. 21 (1978), pp. 3-31; 'Part III', vol. 22 (1978), pp. 3-22; 'Part IV. Conclusion', vol. 23 (1979), pp. 1-21.

nationale', as Bruno Dumézil has put it.[2] Most importantly, we should be wary of analysing Suevic conversion in terms to the grand performance the Visigothic monarchy gave at the Third Council of Toledo in 589. This is too often allowed to overshadow the quite different Suevic situation.

The Suevic monarchy's conversion is bound up with Martin of Braga, who constitutes the main literary source for the later kingdom.[3] Martin was Pannonian by birth, but travelled in the eastern Mediterranean, before arriving in Gallaecia around 550. He established monasteries, including the important and wealthy monastery of Dumium. This monastery, located in the former territory of Braga, became an episcopal see in its own right sometime before 561, and Martin served as its abbot-bishop before rising to the metropolitan see of Braga before 572. His rise through the Suevic ecclesiastical hierarchy was coterminous with a process of consolidation and institutionalization across the kingdom, manifest in conciliar *acta*, the compilation of canon law, and the reorganization of Gallaecian sees and dependent churches. In the two grand councils held in Braga under royal patronage in 561 and 572, we have the most ambitious presentation of the coming-together of ecclesiastical and royal government.

Yet, it is difficult to assess what 'conversion' in the later Suevic kingdom entailed. Few contemporary sources tell us anything of the Sueves' Arianism. On the other hand, a large number of sources from the region dwell on the legacy of 'Priscillianism'. Not least among these is the *acta* of the First Council of Braga which, under the patronage of King Ariamir, took the abjuration of 'Priscillainism' as the central issue, without so much as

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[2] B. Dumézil, *Les racines chrétiennes de l'Europe. Conversion et liberté dans les royaumes barbares V^e-VIII^e siècle* (Paris, 2005), pp. 272-4.

[3] On the cultural and ecclesiastical history of the kingdom: M.J.V. Branco, 'St. Martin of Braga, the Sueves and Gallaecia', in A. Ferreiro (ed.), *The Visigoths: Studies in Culture and Society* (Leiden, 1998), pp. 63-98; P. Ubric, 'The church in the Suevic kingdom (411-585 AD)', in J. D'Emilio (ed. and trans.), *Culture and Society in Medieval Gallaecia: A Cultural Crossroads at the Edge of Europe* (Leiden, 2015), pp. 210-43.

mentioning Arianism. It is not even clear that Ariamir was a professedly Nicene king.[4] The narrative sources are confused and contradictory on almost all points of Suevic 'conversion', disagreeing not only on the date of conversion but also the name of the king involved.[5] Gregory of Tours attributed conversion to the otherwise unknown king Chararicus as part of a healing miracle involving Martin of Tours' tomb.[6] Isidore named Theodimir as the converting king.[7] The nearest things we have to evidence for a council marking the 'conversion' of the kingdom from 'Arianism' to Nicene faith comes in the interpolated preface to a list of dioceses and dependent churches known as the *Parochiale Suevum*. Here there is reference to an otherwise unattested council called by Theodimir in Lugo in 569 'ad confirmandam fidem catholicam uel pro diuersis Ecclesiae causis'.[8] But even this is equivocal evidence: 'confirming' is not necessarily 'converting' in a doctrinal sense and the interpolated text does not definitely speak of a real council at all.

To elucidate the religious world of the Suevic kingdom, with its opaque relationship between clergy and king, religion and kingdom, we need to return to Martin of Braga's writings. While we know almost nothing of the Suevic lay aristocracy, we have, from Martin's pen, a highly diverse oeuvre, incorporating translations of monastic *apophthegmata* and eastern church canons, a model sermon, verse inscriptions, and moral treatises.[9] His

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[4] The Arian Visigothic king Alaric II collaborated with Nicene bishops and allowed synods: see below, p. 70, n. 8.

[5] For differing views: E.A. Thompson, 'The conversion of the Spanish Suevi to Catholicism', in E. James (ed.), *Visigothic Spain: New Approaches* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 77-92; A. Ferreiro, 'Braga and Tours: some observations on Gregory's *De virtutibus sancti Martini* (1.11)', *JECS*, 3/2 (1995), pp. 195-210; Díaz Martínez, *El reino suevo*, pp. 219-30.

[6] Gregory of Tours, *De virtutibus sancti Martini episcopi*, I.11, ed. B. Krusch, MGH, SS rer. Merov., 1/2 (Hannover, 1885), pp. 144-46.

[7] Isid. *Hist.*, 90-1.

[8] *Parochiale Suevum*, at p. 413.

[9] The most recent complete edition remains C.W. Barlow, *Martini episcopi Bracarensis opera omnia* (Rome, 1950). Where possible, however, I use the partial edition of G. Sabbah and J.-F. Berthet (eds), *Martin de Braga. Oeuvres morales et pastorales*, SC, 594 (Paris, 2018), except in the case of *De ira*, for which I use the superior edition of C. Torre, *Martini Bracarensis* De ira. *Introduzione, testo, traduzione e commento* (Rome, 2008).

place in the historical imagination is often dominated, however, by one exceptional text: his model sermon, *De correctione rusticorum*. This text attained enormous fame in the Middle Ages, as its hundreds of extant manuscripts attest.[10] Martin vividly describes a series of rural cultural practices, some deriving from Graeco-Roman religiosity, and many seemingly pre-Roman. He then explains these as *cultura diaboli*, by framing them within a brief narrative of salvation history hinged on the fall of humanity into idolatry. This somewhat picturesque text has been mined as a source for Gallaecian cultural history, with various scholars claiming it shows the persistence of 'indigenous' cultural forms, and has become a mainstay in the wider scholarship on the evangelization of the post-Roman countryside and the problem of so-called 'pagan survivals'.[11] Coupled with the image of Martin as a second Martin of Tours—a comparison cultivated by both Venantius Fortunatus and Martin of Braga's own epitaph—historians have often seen fit to give Martin of Braga a fundamentally missionary interpretation, in which he is imagined as an evangelizing figure, spreading Christianity to a largely non-Christian region through itinerant rural preaching.[12] This fits awkwardly with what we know of Martin as a monk and politically central figure. I will have much to say about *De correctione rusticorum* in Chapter 4, within the wider context of pastoral preaching, but in terms of understanding Martin's wider oeuvre it is crucial that this exceptional and unrepresentative text is not allowed to overshadow the others. We learn much more about Suevic religious life from taking a more wide-ranging look at his writings.

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[10] It even found translation in Iceland into Old Norwegian: Barlow, *Martini opera omnia*, p. 7.
[11] See J. de Pina-Cabral, 'The gods of the Gentiles are demons: the problem of pagan survivals in European culture', in K. Hastrup (ed.), *Other Histories* (London, 1992), pp. 54-61, which discusses twentieth-century attempts to claim cultural continuity with the world of *De correctione rusticorum*.
[12] Venantius Fortunatus, *Carminum libri*, V.1.11, V.2.17-18, V.2.43-4, ed. F. Leo, MGH, Auct. ant., 4/1 (Berlin, 1881), pp. 101-6, at pp. 103-5; Mart. Brac., *Epitaphium*, p. 342: *sequens famulus Matinus eodem/ nomine, non merito.* For the missionary interpretation see esp. A. Ferreiro: 'The missionary labours of St. Martin of Braga in 6th century Galicia', *Studia Monastica*, 23 (1981), pp. 11-26; 'St. Martin of Braga's policy toward heretics and pagan practices', *The American Benedictine Review,* 34/4 (1983), pp. 372-93; 'Early medieval missionary tactics: the example of Martin and Caesarius', *Studia Historica—Historia Antigua*, 6 (1988), pp. 225-238.

In particular, I use this chapter to centre his moral treatises. These can be grouped into two: a trio based on his readings in the works of John Cassian—that is, *Pro repellenda iactantia*, *De superbia*, and *Exhortatio humilitatis*—and a pair based on writings of Seneca the Younger—that is, *De ira* and *Formula uitae honestae*. These varied works were written for bishops, kings, and other authority figures, and they show Martin at his most political. They also show him thinking about lay ethics and staking interesting positions in the relationship between Christian scriptures, doctrine, and ethical life. In this regard, the *Formula* is especially illuminating. Composed for the Suevic king Miro (r. 570-83), it was a précis of the four cardinal virtues, drawing on long-standing classical traditions. Like *De correctione rusticorum*, it circulated widely in the Middle Ages and survives in hundreds of manuscripts. Its popularity, however, was doubtless down to the spurious attribution to Seneca a preface-less version of the text acquired in medieval manuscripts.[13] In the original preface, Martin claimed that his ethical injunctions were not for those who were imbued with the scriptures but for laypeople using 'the natural law of human intelligence'.[14] This was a remarkable thing for a bishop to write, even more so when directed at an orthodox Christian king, reigning at an advanced stage in the Suevic period of 'conversion'. It is by pursuing this side of Martin's oeuvre that we will illuminate the nature of Suevic religious culture. In the process we will also map a unique Christian position on the ethical capabilities of the laity—one quite different from that given in *De correctione rusticorum*.

II. MARTIN'S GALLAECIA: CHRISTIANIZATION AND CONFLICT

Martin was born in Pannonia and travelled in the Greek east before sailing to Gallaecia.[15] The nature and itinerary of his travels eastward is not clear, nor is the nature of any studies

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[13] C.W. Barlow, 'Seneca in the Middle Ages', *Classical Weekly*, 35/22 (1942), p. 257.
[14] Mart. Brac., *Form. uit.*, 1, p. 170. See below, p. 52.
[15] Mart. Brac., *Epitaphium*; Isid. *De viris*, 22, p. 145: *ex Orientis partibus nauigans Galliciam uenit*.

he may have undertaken, but Gregory of Tours says he visited 'the holy places' and it is often presumed that he was engaged in the monastic culture of the region.[16] The extent of this engagement should not be overstated, however. Indeed, Arnaldo do Espírito Sancto has suggested that Martin's grasp of the Greek monastic tradition—and indeed the Greek language—was less than masterful.[17] Venantius Fortunatus' claim that Martin corresponded with him on the opinions of Plato, Aristotle, Chrysippus, and Pittacus, as well as patristic sources like Hilary, Gregory, Ambrose, and Augustine, can be taken as flattering hyperbole, to be filed alongside Gregory of Tours' characterization of Martin as 'so imbued with letters as to be second to none in his time'.[18] Nonetheless, Martin's knowledge of Greek was rare in the sixth-century Latin West, and it doubtless set his cultural horizons apart from others in Gallaecia. Martin made considerable use of his Greek, translating a collection of *apophthegmata* while at Dumium, and producing a systematic collection of mainly Greek canons (the so-called *Capitula Martini*).[19] Martin is the most plausible vector of his Greek sources—the suggestion that he first encountered them in Gallaecia presents more questions than it answers.[20]

It remains unclear why Martin travelled to Gallaecia. His epitaph speaks of a divine call, implying missionary fervour.[21] It has sometimes been suggested that Martin's westward voyage was part of a Byzantine diplomatic mission, connected with the contemporary Justinianic reconquest of a region in the south-east of Hispania, which came about during

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16 Gr. Tur., *DLH.*, V.37, p. 243: *ad visitanda loca sancta in Oriente properans*.
17 A. do Espírito Sancto, 'Origem e formação de Martinho de Braga', in G. Hinojo Andrés and J.C. Fernández Corte (eds), *Munus quaesitum meritis. Homenaje a Carmen Codoñer* (Salamanca, 2007), pp. 263-71; *idem*, '"Sententiae patrum Aegyptiorum": implicações do estudo filológico de tradução de Martinho Dumiense', in S. López Quero and J.M[a]. Maestre Maestre (eds), *Studia Angelo Urbano Dicata* (Alcañiz, 2015), pp. 165-81.
18 Venantius Fortunatus, *Carminum libri*, V.1.7, ed. Leo, pp. 102-3; Gr. Tur., *DLH.*, V.37, p. 243: *in tantum se litteris inbuit ut nulli secundus suis temporibus haberentur.*
19 Mart. Brac., *Sent. patr.*, with discussion in do Espírito Sancto, 'Sententiae patrum Aegyptiorum'. For the *Capitula Martini*: II Braga (Conc., pp. 86-106).
20 *Pace* do Espírito Sancto, 'Origem e formação'.
21 Mart. Brac., *Epitaphium*, p. 342: *diuinis nutibus actus*.

the Visigothic civil war between Athanagild and Agila.[22] There is little evidence for this, however. We do better to look at the background hum of commercial contacts than seek political intrigue. Recent archaeological work on the Atlantic port of Vigo has shown that long-distance trade routes from the Byzantine world to Gallaecia and onto northern Europe continued, and even flourished, in the post-Roman period, peaking in the fifth and sixth centuries. Though it scarcely makes any dent on the written evidence, Vigo was in fact a significant trading post, linked to Byzantine territories (especially Tunisia but also locations on the eastern Mediterranean), the southern Gallic port of Marseilles, other Iberian ports, and the Atlantic North.[23] This may not have greatly enriched the local aristocracies of the Gallaecian interior or profoundly influenced Suevic culture: some of Vigo's wares made their way to Gallaecian centres like Braga, but the port mainly functioned as a node in long-distance trade routes and was likely occupied by foreign traders. Moreover, the interior knew a very different economic life, rooted in local production and, increasingly, on re-occupied hill-top sites as places of regional power.[24] These networks of exchange do, however, provide a context in which Martin's knowledge of and contact with Gallaecia is plausible.

If Martin's travel was 'missionary' in spirit, it was certainly not the case that he was entering a region without Christianity. The Suevic monarchy had been Christian for almost a century, albeit Arian in confession. Their conversion to Arianism is said to have occurred around 465 at the hands of a missionary called Ajax, who Isidore claims was sent by the

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[22] See G. Sabbah in the introduction to the *Sources Chrétiennes* edition of Martin's works, p. 18. Against a diplomatic interpretation: Ferreiro, 'Early medieval missionary tactics', p. 228; Díaz Martínez, *El reino suevo*, p. 221.

[23] A. Fernández Fernández, *El comercio tardoantiguo (ss. IV-VII) en el noroeste peninsular a través del registro cerámico de la Ría de Vigo* (Oxford, 2014), esp. pp. 387-478. For wider Iberian context: P. Reynolds, *Hispania and the Roman Mediterranean, AD 100-700: Ceramics and Trade* (London, 2009), esp. pp. 100-12.

[24] For the Gallaecian interior: J.C. Sánchez Pardo, 'Power and rural landscapes in early medieval Galicia (400-900 AD): towards a re-incorporation of the archaeology into the historical narrative', *EME*, 21/2 (2013), pp. 140-68; C. Tejerizo García, 'El poblamiento en el interior de la *Gallaecia* entre el final del Imperio Romano y la Alta Edad Media: nuevos datos, nuevas propuestas', *Studia Historica—Historia Medieval*, 38/2 (2020), pp. 155-87.

Visigoths.[25] Throughout the period, the Nicene episcopate was well-rooted, if somewhat disordered. There was a bishop of León-Astorga as far back as the mid-third century.[26] The ecclesiastical world Martin encountered in Gallaecia had, however, been riven by bitter factionalism. The chronicle which Hydatius of Chaves carried up to the year 468 recounts the fallout of Priscillian's execution alongside the subsequent collapse of Roman power in the region, subjecting both to apocalyptic interpretation.[27] There is no reason to think that Priscillian was based in Gallaecia during his lifetime, but 'Priscillianism' entered the region after his execution.[28] Hydatius' emphasis on the struggle against 'Priscillianism' (or 'Manicheanism', which he used synonymously) has led historians to characterize Gallaecian Christianity as essentially 'Priscillianist' and defective until Martin of Braga's time.[29] This is to overinterpret heresiological rhetoric.

Certainly, there were immediate schismatic consequences to Priscillian's execution. A number of Gallaecian bishops broke communion with others in Iberia, and only some agreed to return at the First Council of Toledo in 400. One of the dissenters took the opportunity to assert Priscillian's status as a holy catholic martyr persecuted by other bishops.[30] Sulpicius Severus had earlier characterized Priscillian's posthumous following in Iberia as one of martyr veneration, and the recognition of his status as a catholic martyr

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[25] Hyd., *Chron.* 228; Isid. *Hist.* 90, at p. 318.
[26] Cyprian of Carthage, *Ep.* 67, ed. W. Hartel, CSEL, 3/2 (Vienna, 1871), pp. 735-43. On early Christianity in Gallaecia: Branco, 'St. Martin of Braga', pp. 63-72, with bibliography.
[27] Hyd. *Chron.*, with discussion in E.A. Thompson, 'The end of Roman Spain. Part I', pp. 4-18; S. Muhlberger, *The Fifth-Century Chroniclers: Prosper, Hydatius, and the Gallic Chronicler of 452* (Leeds, 1990), pp. 193-266.
[28] Hyd., *Chron.*, 13, 16.
[29] E.g. Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila*, pp. 166-9; Ubric, 'The church in the Suevic kingdom', pp. 227-32. Some seventh-century Visigothic authors associated Gallaecia with 'Priscillianism': Braul., *Ep.*, 44, at p. 170.
[30] *Priscillianist Professions*, ed. Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila*, pp. 234-9, with historical discussion at pp. 152-7, 170-88. The text transmitted outside the main *Hispana* tradition, and survives now only in early modern copies. Cf. Hyd. *Chron.* 25.

doubtless was a bone of contention within the factionalism that followed his execution.[31] But there is no sense that, as the fifth century wore on, 'Priscillianism' and 'Manicheanism' came to describe a distinctive religious practice or confession. Rather, these labels became the regional vernacular in which ecclesiastical factionalism and schism were conducted.[32] Hydatius was himself central to the factional politics he described. He was in close correspondence with Turibius and Ceponius, two activist anti-'Priscillianist' bishops.[33] Among his opponents were, seemingly, the metropolitan bishop of Braga, about whom he says nothing, and Agrestius of Lugo, whose obscure role in the factionalism has been reconstructed by Ralph Mathisen.[34] The result of these bitter disputes was not Gallaecian isolation or collapse. On the contrary, the dispute led different parties to reach out to the see of Rome—to Innocent I and Leo I in the fifth century and Vigilius in the sixth—and to the Gallic episcopate.[35] In coming to Gallaecia, Martin was entering a bitter and split ecclesiastical world, not a pre-Christian, pre-ecclesiastical, or completely isolated one. This is important—Martin was a newcomer in a deeply fractious world, not an evangelizing missionary encountering virgin territory. Martin encountered this legacy directly in 561 at the First Council of Braga, where various papal letters were read, statements of faith given, and

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31 Sulp. Sev., *Chron.*, II.51.4.

32 On the ecclesiastical politics: J. Vilella Masana, 'Priscilianismo galaico y política antipriscilianista durante el siglo V', *AT*, 5 (1997), pp. 177-85; C. Cardelle de Hartmann, 'El priscilianismo tras Prisciliano, ¿un movimiento galaico?', *Habis*, 29 (1998), pp. 269-90, though the latter accepts a more substantive vision of 'Priscillianism' than I think reasonable. On the construction of 'Priscillianism' as a heresiological category: V. Burrus, *The Making of a Heretic: Gender, Authority, and the Priscillianist Controversy* (Berkeley, CA, 1995).

33 A letter from Turibius to Hydatius and Ceponius is ed. J.P. Migne PL, 54 (Paris, 1846), cols. 693-5. See Hyd., *Chron.*, 122, 130.

34 R.W. Mathisen, 'Agrestius of Lugo, Eparchius Avitus, and a curious fifth-century statement of faith', *JECS*, 2 (1994), pp. 71-102.

35 Innocent I, *Ep.* 3, ed. Migne, PL, 20 (Paris, 1845), cols. 485-95; Leo I, *Ep.* 15, ed. B. Vollmann, *Studien zum Priszillianismus: die Forschung, die Quellen, der fünfzehnte Brief Papst Leos des Grossen* (Erzabtei St. Ottilien, 1965), pp. 122-38, with discussion *passim*; Vigilius, *Epistola ad Profuturum*, ed. Migne, PL, 69 (Paris, 1863), cols. 15-19. For Gallic connections: Mathisen, 'Agrestius of Lugo'.

apparent tenets of 'Priscillianism' defined and abjured.[36] In many ways, the council not only rejected but constructed a distinctly 'Priscillianist' legacy out of the tangle of factional conflicts and mutual accusations that marked the prior century and a half. Attending as the abbot-bishop of Dumium, Martin witnessed and partook in this important even. 'Priscillianism' has no profile in his own writings, however.

Martin, of course, did not arrive in the Suevic kingdom as the most senior cleric, though he seems always to have been close to royal power.[37] Shortly after arrival he founded the monastery of Dumium within the diocese of Braga, only around 3km from the city. The monastery, which may well have been sponsored by royal patronage, quickly became a see in its own right.[38] Excavations of Dumium's basilica, probably to be identified with the Basilica of St. Martin of Tours, have revealed its appropriately monumental scale.[39] The verse inscription which Martin composed for this basilica, preserved in manuscript, exhibits an interestingly classicizing and imperial vocabulary: Christ's apostles were the 'senate of twelve', Paul was victor over the *curia mundi*, and Martin of Tours was an apostolic figure calling the *gentes* to the pious *foedus* of Christ.[40] This was suitable imagery for a royal commission. Serving as both abbot and bishop of Dumium, Martin was then promoted to the metropolitan see of Braga sometime before the Second Council of Braga. From this vantage-point, close to the monarchy and at the pinnacle of the ecclesiastical establishment, he came to play a significant role in the institutional organization of Christianity in the kingdom. He produced a systematic collection of canons, mainly translated from Greek

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[36] I Braga (Conc., pp. 65-77).
[37] On Braga: P.C. Díaz Martínez, 'El reino suevo de *Hispania* y su sede en *Bracara*', in G. Ripoll and J.M. Gurt (eds), *Sedes regiae (ann. 400-800)* (Barcelona, 2000), pp. 403-23.
[38] X Toledo, *Item aliud decretum* (Coll. Hisp. V, p. 545).
[39] L.F.O. Fontes, 'A igreja sueva de São Martinho de Dume. Arquitectura cristã antiga de Braga e na Antiguidade Tardia do Noroeste de Portugal', *Revista de História de Arte*, 6 (2008), pp. 163-81; Díaz Martínez, 'El reino suevo de *Hispania*', pp. 414-18.
[40] Martin of Braga, *In basilica*, p. 324: *bisseni* […] *senatus*.

councils, which were appended to the *acta* of the Second Council of Braga.[41] Presiding at this council, he oversaw the composition of canons concerned with the exercise of episcopal power over rural churches and the need for metropolitans to ensure uniformity in calendrical observances, among other matters.[42]

The ecclesiastical structure in the kingdom is elucidated by an exceptional document known as the *Parochiale Sueuum*. This lists the dependent churches of thirteen episcopal sees, each grouped into two *conventa* under the metropolitan sees of Braga and Lugo.[43] It is the clearest account of the ideal of hierarchical rule The *Parochiale* sought to give homogeneous administrative form to what was in fact a highly heterogeneous and loose collection of ecclesiastical institutions. Some bishoprics, like the *sedes Britonorum* have been understood to be organized along grounds of ethnic identity (in this case Briton) rather than territorial designation.[44] Like Dumium, this see was identified with a monastery. Some were likely lay founded churches, such as were discussed at the Second Council of Braga—here canons attacked lay foundations which were inadequately endowed, as well as those built 'not for faith's devotion but for the profit of avarice'.[45] Evidence from Visigothic Gallaecia, a century later, attests a wide variety of monastic and ecclesiastical foundations, some formed by laypeople, and some following pre-existing social forms, with families living together in

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[41] II Braga (Conc., pp. 86-106), with the sources catalogued in G. Martínez Díez, 'La colección canónica de la iglesia sueva: los *Capitula Martini*', *Bracara Augusta*, 21 (1967), pp. 224-43.
[42] Braga II, cc. 1, 9 (Conc., pp. 81, 84).
[43] *Parochiale Sueuum*, with commentary in P. David, *Études historiques sur la Galice et le Portugal du VI^e au XII^e siècle* (Lisbon, 1947) and P.C. Díaz Martínez, 'El *Parrochiale Seuvum*: organización eclesiástica, poder politico y poblamiento en la *Gallaecia* tardoantigua', in J. Alvar (ed.), *Homenaje a José M^a Blázquez, Vol. 6* (Madrid, 1998), pp. 35-47.
[44] *Parochiale Sueuum*, 13.1, p. 420: *Ad sedem Britonorum ecclesias que sunt intro Britones una cum monasterio Maximi et que in Asturiis*. See S. Young, 'The bishops of the early medieval Spanish diocese of Britonia', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 45 (2003), pp. 1-19, with abundant bibliography.
[45] II Braga, cc. 5-6 (Conc., p. 83), quote from c. 6: *non pro devotione fidei sed pro quaestu cupiditatis*. On lay church-building: Fernández, *Aristocrats and Statehood*, pp. 180-3.

communities of property declared monastic.[46] Like the canons, the *Parochiale* is eloquent testimony to the attempts by central power to network and institutionalize the links between different Christian entities, but also of the heterogeneity and centrifugal forces of the Christian organization in Gallaecia. Martin, as metropolitan of Braga, was doubtless at the centre of these administrative shifts, but he was looking out from the lofty vantage point of the kingdom's royal city into a region of varied social and ecclesiastical forms, many of them far outside of his field direct contact. He should be understood as close to government power rather than at the frontline of the evangelization of the countryside.[47]

This insight is particularly important when we turn to Martin's most well-known work, *De correctione rusticorum*.[48] This model sermon was written for the bishop Polemius of Astorga shortly after the Second Council of Braga in 572. The occasion for this sermon, drawn up under the influence of Augustine of Hippo's *De catechizandis rudibus* and Caesarius of Arles' sermons against the *pagani*, was likely the annual episcopal visitation. According to the Second Council's first canon, bishops were to visit each church in the diocesan territory at least once a year, in advance of Easter, checking on the liturgical competency of the priests and instructing and exorcizing the catechumens in preparation for Easter baptisms. Finally, bishops were to preach:

> On another day they should teach the convened people of that church, so that they might flee the errors of idols and various crimes—that is, homicide, adultery, perjury, false testimony, and the rest of the mortal sins—or that they should not do to others what they do not wish for themselves, and so that they should believe in the resurrection of all people and the Day of Judgement, in which each will be received according to their works.[49]

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[46] See below, pp. 263-4, 271. On 'indigenous' social forms: P.C. Díaz Martínez and L.R. Menéndez-Bueyes, 'Gallaecia in late antiquity: the Suevic kingdom and the rise of local powers', in D'Emilio (ed. and trans.), *Culture and Society*, pp. 146-75.

[47] On Martin and administration: Díaz Martínez, *El reino suevo*, pp. 230-44.

[48] Mart. Brac., *De corr.*

[49] II Braga, c. 1 (Conc., p. 81): *alio die convocata plebe ipsius ecclesiae doceant illos, ut errores fugiant idolorum vel diversa crimina, id est homicidium, adulterium, periurium, falsum testimonium et reliqua peccata mortífera, aut quod*

This was a brief resume of essential Christian doctrine. Martin focussed on the first part—on idolatry—but his work fits into this broad remit, speaking on basic doctrine and matters of salvation to baptized Christians (the *plebs ipsius ecclesiae* of the canon) at rural churches.

In *De correctione rusticorum*, Martin lists a host of practices and beliefs he considers typical of 'rustic' Christians, from the naming of the days of the week after Graeco-Roman gods to the habit of travelling only on certain days or offering libations into fires.[50] I discuss this evidence more fully in Chapter 4, where I contextualize Martin's sermon within the broader field of Suevic and Visigothic pastoral preaching.[51] Here it suffices to say that Martin's direct knowledge of the religious world of rural Gallaecia is unlikely to be strong.[52] His sermon is significant here not for the anthropological detail it furnishes but for its attitudes to the culture which lay outside of clerical supervision. Martin condemned a wide gamut of practices as *superstitiones*. This term was a traditional Roman designation for the excessive and immoderate religious practices of those deemed socially inferior, which had morphed slowly into a Christian notion for the worship of that which was empty and false.[53] When, in *De correctione rusticorum*, he wrote for Polemius of Astorga, he was writing for another Romanized bishop, resident in a former Roman city. Both men, then, can be thought to have looked out at a somewhat alien rural world from their sees in Roman cities with a mixture of the pastor's concern and the educated Roman's contempt for that which appeared immoderate and uncouth.

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nolunt sibi fieri alteri non faciant, [et] ut credant resurrectionem omnium hominum et diem iudicii, in qua unusquisque secundum sua opera recepturus est. Cf. esp. Mart. Brac., *De corr.*, 17.

[50] Mart. Brac., *De corr.* 9.

[51] Below, pp. 202-8.

[52] See esp. Y. Hen, 'Martin of Braga's *De correctione rusticorum* and its uses in Frankish Gaul', in E. Cohen and M. de Jong (eds), *Medieval Transformations: Texts, Power, Gifts in Context* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 35-49. More open to Martin's descriptive veracity is M. Meslin, 'Persistances païennes en Galice vers la fin du VI^{e} siècle', in J. Bibauw (ed.), *Hommages à Marcel Renard*, 2 vols (Brussels, 1969), ii, pp. 512-24.

[53] R. Gordon, '*Superstitio*, superstition and religious repression in the Late Roman Republic and Principate (100 BCE-300 CE), *Past & Present*, 199, Supplement 3 (2008), pp. 72-94.

Martin was arguing for an exclusive vision of Christian identity, shorn of what he perceived as syncretism and intolerant of what might seem the merely 'neutral' stuff of cultural tradition. This recalls the process which Robert Markus has termed the 'draining' of the secular from society in post-Roman Latin Christianity. In Markus' view, there was a general shift whereby once-neutral elements of cultural life—that which Augustine called neither sacred nor profane but 'secular'—were subsumed into one side or the other. This was a move toward a culture and society more imbued with the rhythms of Christian life, in which the world was seen through an increasingly scriptural lens, in which social order and ecclesiastical life were increasingly entangled. Markus identified this trend with Caesarius of Arles, whose sermons were a key source for Martin's text.[54] Martin and Caesarius were both monk-bishops, and Martin may well have known a range of Caesarius' works: Venantius Fortunatus discussed Caesarius' *Regula* for nuns with Martin, noting its uptake by Agnes and Radegund, both of whom he commended to Martin.[55] From *De correctione rusticorum*, we see a snapshot of how the Caesarian problematization of apparently 'profane' culture was felt in Hispania. Martin's model sermon is interesting to us here for its intellectual structure—for its basis in scriptural narrative and its exclusive dichotomy between the Christian and the demonic. In *De correctione rusticorum*, we see Martin looking out onto lay society with similar eyes to Caesarius.

It is important to highlight this, because some of Martin's other works value ancient 'secular' culture very differently. In another composition from the same period, written for the bishop Vittimer of Ourense, Martin epitomized the moral treatise *De ira* written by

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[54] R.A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990), esp. p. 226. See also *idem*, 'From Caesarius to Boniface: Christianity and Paganism in Gaul', reprinted in *idem*, *Sacred and Secular: Studies on Augustine and Latin Christianity* (Aldershot, 1994), pp. 154-72. For critical reflection see R. Whelan, 'After Augustine, after Markus: the problem of the secular at the end of antiquity', *EME*, 29/1 (2021), pp. 12-35, but note that he discusses the 'secular' in a political rather than socio-cultural frame and does not quite make contact with the themes pertinent here.

[55] Venantius Fortunatus, *Carminum libri*, V.1.10, ed. Leo, p. 103.

Seneca the Younger. Here, there was no ostensibly Christian content—no sharp divide of the Christian and the 'profane', no demands for loyalty to pacts made with God. That Martin's embraced the direct influence of Seneca speaks of more than a curious tolerance for pre-Christian culture. Martin stands out even against the usual Christian appropriation of the ancient past. He utilized ancient thought in an active and purposeful way when writing for certain audiences. These included not only bishops but lay elites and, on at least one occasion, the Suevic king. By exploring these under-studied texts in more detail, we can gain important insight into the more idiosyncratic and unique elements of Martin's works and, by extension, of his place in Suevic culture and politics. Doing so helps us explain the specificity of Suevic Christian culture in a way that the much more conventional *De correctione rusticorum* cannot.

III. MARTIN AND SENECA: *DE IRA*

Martin's encounter with Seneca was a unique and idiosyncratic one. To understand Martin's moral treatises, it makes sense to begin with *De ira*. Here, Martin can be directly compared to his Senecan source material, since almost every sentence in Martin's short text has been traced to Seneca's homonymous work.[56] Martin likely knew other works by Seneca (it is often suggested that the *Formula uitae honestae* excerpted a lost Senecan text in the same manner) but *De ira* is the only Senecan text we can be certain Martin knew.[57] We have little sense of the form in which Martin encountered Seneca's work. Modern editors draw the three books of Seneca's *De ira* from a twelve-book collection known as the *Dialogi*, whose threadbare transmission is first witnessed in an eleventh-century manuscript (the

[56] E. Bickel, 'Die Schrift des Martinus von Bracara *Formula vitae honestae*', *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*, N.S. 60 (1905), pp. 505-51; C.W. Barlow, 'A sixth-century epitome of Seneca, *De ira*', *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 68 (1938), pp. 26-42; Torre, *Martini Bracarensis* De Ira.
[57] M.L. Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, 2 vols (2nd edn, Leiden, 1990), ii, p. 297. The thesis goes back at least to Bickel.

'Ambrosianus') copied in the monastery of Monte Cassino.[58] We do not know whether Martin knew other Senecan *Dialogi* or encountered *De ira* among other works of Seneca. Certainly, Martin did not know Seneca's *De clementia*, written for the emperor Nero, and it remains unclear as to whether he knew any of Seneca's letters.[59] As the only one of his Senecan works to be directly comparable to its model, Martin's *De ira* gives us unique access to his manner of reading and of re-framing Seneca's thought for his sixth-century audience.[60]

Martin was, of course, not the first Christian to engage with Stoic thought or, for that matter, with Seneca specifically, but he was a uniquely faithful witness to Seneca's transmission.[61] Seneca was a Roman philosopher and senator, born in Córdoba around the beginning of the first century AD. Having moved to Rome, he rose to the be the personal tutor and sometime guide of the emperor Nero, before dying by suicide, in keeping with his philosophical precepts, in the year 65. He was one of the most notable men of letters of the age, and an avowed representative of Stoicism—a self-estimation that has found greater credibility in recent assessments than his philosophy previously enjoyed.[62] Stoic thought put a particular emphasis on living in harmony with nature. Its philosophy was a kind of therapy of self-improvement, training the ethical subject to use the judgements of reason to live rightly, in accordance with nature. The Christian reception of Seneca had been marked by

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[58] L.D. Reynolds, 'The medieval tradition of Seneca's *Dialogues*', *The Classical Quarterly*, N.S., 18/2 (1968), pp. 355-72.

[59] *De clementia* circulated alongside *De beneficiis*, outside the tradition of the *Dialogi*: L.D. Reynolds, 'The Younger Seneca', in L.D. Reynolds, P.K. Marshall, and R.A.B. Mynors (eds), *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 357-75, at pp. 363-5. On Martin's knowledge of the letters: P.F. Alberto, 'Séneca e Martinho de Braga: alguns fantasmas de uma recepção', *Euphrosyne: Revista de Filologia Clássica*, n.s. 21 (1993), pp. 105-39, who discusses the unpublished work of Irmã Mary Petranilla Francoeur.

[60] On his method: Alberto, 'Séneca e Martinho', pp. 121-3; Torre, *Martini Bracarensis* De ira*,* esp. pp. 22-33.

[61] For summaries: Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, ii; C. Torre, 'Seneca and the Christian tradition' in S. Bartsch and A. Schiesaro (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Seneca* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 266-76.

[62] P. Veyne, *Seneca: The Life of a Stoic*, trans. D. Sullivan (New York, NY, 2003); B. Inwood, *Reading Seneca: Stoic Philosophy at Rome* (Oxford, 2005).

the recasting of his thought into forms more amenable to Christian sensibilities. A forged correspondence between the apostle Paul and Seneca circulated from at least the fourth century, receiving credulity from Augustine and Jerome, the latter including Seneca among the Christian writers in his *De viris illustribus*.[63] It is not obvious that Martin read Seneca as a Christian, though—other Christian readers, like Gregory the Great, knew Seneca as 'aliquid secularis auctoris'.[64] Either way, Seneca was not a unique choice for Martin. He was, nonetheless, an exceedingly rare author to be read in the post-Roman period in his native Hispania. Isidore knew of his works, but seemingly only cited the *Quaestiones naturales*.[65] Eugenius II of Toledo reworked some material from Seneca's letters, though this may have been through an intermediary pseudo-Senecan text.[66] The extent and manner of Martin's engagement with Seneca's works remains unique among Christian authors. Martin cannot be fitted into the wider Christian reception history of Stoic thought: his case demands detailed explanation.

De ira was written at the request of Vittimer, bishop of Ourense.[67] A signatory to the Second Council of Braga, Vittimer was certainly in contact with Martin there, meaning *De ira* is likely a text of Martin's highly productive later period.[68] After the briefest of introductions, in which Martin gives the theme as anger, its avoidance, and its attenuation, he dives into Senecan passages, beginning by citing the opinion of 'quidam ex sapientibus' that anger is a kind of temporary madness.[69] This appeal to a vague tradition of wise men—itself borrowed

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[63] C.W. Barlow (ed.), *Epistolae Senecae ad Paulum et Pauli ad Senecam* (Horn, 1938), with discussion of reception at pp. 1-7; Jerome, *De viris*, 12.
[64] Gr. Mag., *Reg. ep.*, I.33, at p. 47. On Gregory and Seneca: C. Leyser, 'Pope Gregory the Great: ego-trouble or identity politics?', in R. Corradini (ed.), *Ego Trouble: Authors and Their Identities in the Early Middle Ages* (Vienna, 2010), pp. 67-77, esp. pp. 73-5.
[65] Alberto, 'Séneca e Martinho de Braga', pp. 105-10.
[66] Eug. II, *Carm.*, 80.
[67] Mart. Brac. *De ira*, 1.
[68] II Braga, *subscriptiones* (Conc., p. 85).
[69] Mart. Brac. *De ira*, 1.2, p. 102.

from Seneca—is typical of Martin's position throughout.[70] He does not declare himself a Stoic or mention Seneca by name. There is no reason to presume that his audience would have been conversant with Senecan thought. His authority rests on a more vaguely, and more universally conceived tradition of knowledge. This universality is key. His thought was not only not distinctly Stoic, in doctrinal terms, but nor was it identifiably Christian, despite its episcopal addressee. Martin was positioning himself on universal ground. His work fits into a longstanding discourse on the management of anger in authority figures, which had its Christianized expression, including at church councils, but which was rooted in a very ancient conversation around the responsible exercise of power—one in which self-mastery and control of the passions grounded one's claims to rule others well.[71]

The contents of the treatise can be briefly summarized. He begins, as Seneca did, by discussing the physical appearance of anger—its somatic effects on the body, its effect on speech, and on comportment. Anger is considered a particularly manifest vice, not hidden inside but projected outwardly (2.1).[72] Anger inverts people, turning the just into the opposite, making citizens enemies. It does not listen, it entrenches errors, it multiplies when challenged (3.1). It dominates all other *passiones*, and appears with full strength straight away, exploding suddenly and overpoweringly. Unlike some other vices, anger can seize whole groups of people at once (3.2). Such an emotion is to be avoided and, if it cannot be, every effort should be made to stop it quickly, to avoid sinning through anger (4.1). Next, Martin turns to anger's causes. Among the *primae causae* of anger is *opinio iniuriae*, the sense of having been wronged or insulted. The solution is to not rush to judgement when one feels insulted,

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[70] Seneca, *De ira*, I.1.2, ed. L.D. Reynolds, *L. Annaei Senecae dialogorum libri duodecim* (Oxford, 1977), p. 39: *Quidam itaque a sapientibus uiris.*

[71] For canons, see esp. the much later XI Toledo, c. 4 (Coll. Hisp., VI, pp. 103-5). For the wider discourse: P.R.L. Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, WI, 1992), pp. 48-58; W.V. Harris, *Restraining Rage: The Ideology of Anger Control in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, MT, 2001).

[72] In-text references are to Martin's *De ira*, following the numeration of Torre's edition.

and to avoid suspicious interpretations of others' words. The root problem is over-hasty credulity, caused by suspicion of others and curiosity about their views of oneself. Martin devotes a whole section to the problems of credulity that surround insulting words reported by others. These others may themselves have malicious intent, may be slandering others, may be themselves mistaken (5.1). He also attacks anger raised by inanimate objects: such anger flows from an excessive and dependent regard for external comforts (6.1-2). Nor should one be angry at others' vices—a sin cannot be cured with another sin (7.1). To lessen anger, the body can be relaxed in advance of the mind. This conceals anger and allows the interior to cool in conformity with the exterior (8.1). One should also be aware that everyone makes mistakes and recall that one's own mistaken judgements may arouse anger in others (8.3).

Martin's treatment of anger tallies with Seneca's, though it is a notably barer treatment, little interested in theoretical questions and entirely bereft of Seneca's illustrative *exempla*. Martin agrees with Seneca that anger is never useful in judging and correcting others but unlike Seneca—who positioned his views against a prominent instrumentalist view of anger associated with Aristotelians and others—Martin gave no sense of this being a surprising or contested position.[73] There is therefore no attempt to give an account of Seneca's theory of emotions, despite it receiving a particularly full and clear treatment in Seneca's original *De ira*.[74] The distinctive Stoic position on emotions, from Chrysippus onwards, held that they were judgements under the control of reason, which could therefore be corrected and critiqued by rational means. This was rooted in a distinctive psychology which denied the existence of irrational elements of the soul, like the appetite and desire of the Platonic tradition. According to this view, emotions consisted in the judgement and assent of reason—fear, to give one example, arose from reason's assent to the impression

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[73] On the ancient debate: Harris, *Restraining Rage*, pp. 88-127.

[74] See esp. Seneca, *De ira*, II.1.3-4.2, ed. Reynolds, pp. 62-5, with wider discussion in M.R. Graver, *Stoicism and Emotion* (Chicago, IL, 2007), pp. 93-101, 122-32.

that some future matter will be bad. Emotion consists entirely in this judgement—the physiological feelings that accompany the first stirring of what others would call fear are only 'first movements' according to Seneca. These are pre-rational, do not involve the will, and are not to be confused with emotion proper. This basis in reason made it plausible that emotions could be entirely extirpated through cognitive means, and this was the express aim of much Stoic thought on the matter.[75] Martin staked no claim of this wider project or its underlaying moral psychology: Marcia Colish is right to judge, therefore, that Martin's *De ira* cannot be regarded as distinctly Stoic.[76]

Martin does, however, stand apart from much of the contemporary Christian discussion of emotion. Christian authors had taken on some of the intellectual apparatus of Stoic psychology, but they usually considered the emotions essential to human life, at least in the post-lapsarian state. According to Augustine, Isidore, and others, it did not matter *whether* one had emotions, but rather *how* one used them—they could be used for good or bad depending on how they were directed by the will.[77] In this understanding, emotions were not themselves a matter of the will's assent, but were anterior. This was a shift away from Stoic conceptions, collapsing the characteristically Stoic distinction between pre-emotional movements of the soul ('first movements', as Seneca put them) and emotions proper (which required the will's assent). Augustine provides notable evidence for the elimination of this distinction in Christian thought on the emotions.[78] Martin, too, did not present an intellectual structure that distinguished the *primi motus* from the emotion. He did not even use terms like *voluntas*. What he preserved, however, was the vaguer sense that the therapy of emotion was about putting distance between the initial impression and considered, rational response. That

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[75] For overviews: R. Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford, 2000); Graver, *Stoicism and Emotion*. On the 'the will': M. Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, ed. A.A. Long (Berkeley, CA, 2011).

[76] Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, ii, p. 299.

[77] Augustine, *De ciu.*, XIV.8-9; Isid., *Diff. (II)*, 41.

[78] Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, pp. 372-84.

emotion was essentially about judgement, and that its management rested on reflection about one's judgements had an echo of the Stoic conversation, if only in an indistinct sense.

More surprising than Martin's disinterest in the niceties of Stoic doctrine is his apparent disregard for contemporary Christian debates on anger. Martin made no mention, for example, of the controversy over the interpretation of references to God's anger in scripture. The early-fourth century writer Lactantius had devoted a whole work to arguing for a literal understanding, while Augustine and Cassian had rejected this as an unduly literal interpretation, improper to God's immutable perfection.[79] Not only did Martin make no reference to this issue in *De ira*, he also repeatedly referenced God's anger in *De correctione rusticorum*, at seeming variance with his solely negative picture of anger in *De ira*.[80] Perhaps more significantly, Martin did not engage in *De ira* with the well-established discussion on the utility of anger in acting against one's own sins. Augustine and Cassian had both argued that anger was built into humanity's nature by God for this very reason.[81] According to his view, anger could be misused, but it nonetheless had proper objects—especially sin—and was therefore not always an error of reason. This was a position which found expression also in some of the *apophthegmata*, as Paschasius of Dumium's translation makes clear.[82] Martin, the dedicatee of Paschasius' work, would doubtless have been aware of it as an intellectual possibility.

The question of anger in self-judgement was tied into the more pastorally relevant one of anger's place in the judgement and correction of others. Seneca's unequivocal position, argued for at length in *De ira*, was that anger and vengeance had no place in judgement or correction. Seneca was thinking here particularly of Roman judicial processes,

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[79] Lactantius, *De ira Dei*, ed. C. Ingremeau, SC, 289 (Paris, 1982); Aug., *De ciu.*, IX.5; John Cassian, *Institutiones*, VIII.4, ed. J.-C. Guy, SC, 109 (Paris, 1965), pp. 340-4.
[80] Mart. Brac., *De corr.* 5, 8, 11.
[81] Augustine, *De ciu.* IX.5, p. 245; Cassian, *Institutiones*, VII.3.2-3, ed. Guy, pp. 294-6.
[82] Paschasius of Dumium, *Verba seniorum*, 44.1, ed. J.P. Migne, PL, 73 (Paris, 1849), cols. 1025-62, at col. 1060.

but the point could be generalized. The vocabulary of judgement passed freely between the literal and the figurative, the external and the internal (Seneca often wrote of the ethical subject acting as judge over the self, for example).[83] Martin followed Seneca's hard line on corrective anger, arguing that one should never employ anger in the correction of others: 'One need not be angry to correct wrong-doers. Since anger is a sin of the soul, one must not correct a sinner with a sin'.[84] Other Christian authors disagreed. A contemporary of Martin's in the Visigothic kingdom—the abbot (and later bishop) Eutropius of Valencia—argued for anger's corrective utility in an epistolary treatise sent to the bishop Peter of Ercávica. His argument was elaborated through an exegetical attempt to reconcile Exodus 32:19, where Moses smashes the tablets in anger at his people's idolatry, with Christ's injunction in Mat. 5:22 that 'everyone who is raised to anger by his brother will be held guilty in judgement'. Eutropius drew a distinction between anger at vice and anger at original human nature, such that 'one is considered punishable who would have wanted to attribute the stimulus of anger not to the vice (*vitio*) which is the evil in humanity, but to human nature itself which God, by all means, made good.'[85] Anger at sin was acceptable, then, whether this sin was one's own or that of others—it was bad only when it was aimed at elements of God's good creation, to which sin was foreign. Again, this raises a host of issues in Christian thought to which Martin's Senecan précis devotes no attention whatsoever. Martin's choice of a different approach to the question demands explanation.

To understand Martin's work, we have to move away from doctrine. What Martin took from Seneca was not Stoic doctrine, *per se*, but an ethical position from which to speak.

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[83] B. Inwood, 'Moral judgement in Seneca', in *idem*, *Reading Seneca*, pp. 201-23.

[84] Mart. Brac., *De ira*, 7, p. 125: *Ad coercitionem autem errantium irato castigatore non opus est. Nam cura ira delictum animae sit, non oportet peccantem peccata corrigere*; trans. Barlow, *IF1*, p. 66.

[85] Eutrop. Val., *De dict.*, at pp. 20-1: *ille in hoc dicto tenetur obnoxius qui non vitio, quod est in homine malum, sed naturae ipsi humanae quam deus utique bonam condidit irae voluerit praerogare stimulum*.

Like Seneca, he positioned himself as a therapist of emotion.[86] His advice was quasi-medical, dealing with a vice which, though in the soul, was like an illness infesting the body:

> Just as there is one course to preserve health of body, another to restore it, and another to heal bodies corrupted with disease; so also is it one thing to prevent anger from arising, another to put it down once it has arisen.[87]

He aimed to make the reader adopt the same calm, neutral observational position with regard to things that, wrongly judged, might spur anger: these 'are looked upon by the wise man as calmly as the doctor sees his patients'.[88] Behind the snippets of advice about lessening anger, the fundamental lesson Martin drew from Seneca's *De ira* was how to position himself on the consensual, neutral ground of 'nature' rather than controversial doctrinal or theoretical points. Martha Nussbaum has argued that Seneca's therapeutic method in *De ira*, written for someone who was not a committed Stoic, was not to immediately present dogma or philosophical distinctions, but to try to argue from basic facts of nature and from experiences and *exempla*.[89] Martin's *De ira* might be taken in the same light. Universal claims take precedence over any specific doctrine.

Though the therapeutic notion of the ethical guide was drawn from ancient philosophy, it found ample expression in Christian discourse. This included Martin's explicitly Christian moral works, where vices (*uitia*) were described as wounds (*uulnera*).[90] Medical imagery was particularly prominent in discussions of sin and penance. Sin might be seen as an illness infecting the human person, which repentance and moral self-transformation might help assuage. Pacian of Barcelona, preaching in the later fourth

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[86] On the idea of philosopher as therapist: M.C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (2nd edn, Princeton, 2009).
[87] Mart. Brac., *De ira*, 4.1, p. 112: *Nam sicut in corporum cura alia de conservanda sanitate, alia de restituenda praecepta sunt, ita aliud est iram cohibere ne insurgat, aliud conpescere iam erectam*; trans. Barlow, *IF1*, p. 62.
[88] Mart. Brac., *De ira*, 7.1, p. 124: *Furta, fraudes, infitiationes et si qua sunt alia omnia ista tam propitius aspicit sapiens quam medicus aegros suos*; trans. Barlow, *IF1*, p. 66.
[89] Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*, pp. 402-38.
[90] Mart. Brac., *Pro rep.*, 1.

century, spoke in this manner to his congregation.[91] Isidore spoke of penance as 'medicine for wounds' and as a 'medicinal remedy'.[92] The bishop might be seen as a kind of spiritual doctor, healing souls, as Gregory the Great and Isidore expressed it; the abbot could occupy the same role for those placed under their care.[93]

These authors' treatment of moral correction were different to Martin's in one crucial way: they were rooted in questions of sin and salvation, of the pastoral care of souls, in a way alien from Martin's view in the Senecan works. Martin's Senecan treatises were not framed within salvation history nor rooted in an account of a distinctly fallen human nature. The traditions Martin was channelling in *De ira* and *Formula vitae honestae* relied on different visions of the ethical subject than much subsequent Christian thought. They stood apart from the process which Peter Brown has termed the 'peccatisation du monde'—the emergence of sin, salvation, and penance's dominating presence in Christian culture.[94] Instead of peering into the conditions of human life under the condition of fallenness, Martin wished to give more optimistic accounts of human perfectibility through ethical self-improvement. This becomes clearer when we turn to *Formula vitae honestae*.

IV. MARTIN AND MIRO: THE *FORMULA VITAE HONESTAE*

Martin's *Formula uitae honestae*, composed in the 570s for the Suevic king Miro, was, in the circumstances of its composition, his most unambiguously political work. Like *De ira*, however, it addressed authority not through explicit political theory, but by addressing the ethics of the office holder as an individual. The *Formula uitae honestae* is not a treatise on

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[91] Pacian, *De paen.* 9.

[92] Isid., *De eccl.* II.17(16).2, p. 80: *est autem paenitentia medicamentum uulneris*; II.17(16).5, p. 81: *medicinali remedio paenitentiae*.

[93] Gr. Mag., *Reg. past.*, I.1; Isid. *Sent.* III.43.2, III.46.10; *RComm.*, 19.

[94] P.R.L. Brown, 'Vers la naissance du purgatoire. Amnistie et pénitence dans le christianisme occidental de l'Antiquité tardive au Haut Moyen Age' *Annales HSS*, 52/6 (1997), pp. 1247-61, p. 1260.

kingship or one tailored to a specific type of office or political formation, and in this it differs from that anterior tradition of Stoic political thought that concerned itself with ideas of republic or kingship, as well as from traditions of Christian thought on kingship which drew on Old Testament models.[95] It also differs substantially from the thought on Christian kingship offered by Isidore of Seville, for example, in that Martin was not concerned with kingship as a particular office—as a particular duty, with its own distinctive position—and still less, in this treatise, with Christian justifications for rule. The focus was resolutely on the individual, framed as a universal ethical subject. It is not really a *speculum principis*, then, but is better understood as a 'lay mirror'. Martin's flattering preface tells Miro that the treatise will be more useful to his courtiers than to him, since he already possesses the 'sagacity of natural wisdom'.[96] In subsequent centuries it was taken as a more general guide for laypeople. As we will see in Chapter 3, two copies of Martin's text appear in the will of the Carolingian lay official, Eberhard of Friuli, where it was shelved alongside Alcuin's 'lay mirror', *De uirtutibus et uitiis*, Isidore's auto-confessional *Synonyma*, and Augustine's handbook, the *Enchiridion*.[97] Martin's text could easily be read by a wider lay audience, since nothing in it was specific to kingship.

The *Formula* was organized around the four 'cardinal virtues', given as *prudentia*, *magnanimitas*, *continentia*, and *iustitia*. This quartet, established at least as far back as Plato, had a rich tradition in the Middle Ages, both in classicizing forms and, crucially, in Christian moral thought.[98] For many Christian writers, the four virtues were understood as a notion at once drawn from a non-Christian philosophical heritage, yet perfectly consonant with

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[95] M. Reydellet, 'La Bible miroir des princes du IVe au VIIe siècle', in J. Fontaine and C. Petri (eds), *Le monde latin antique et la Bible* (Paris, 1985), pp. 431-53.
[96] Mart. Brac., *Form. uit.*, 1, p. 170: *naturalis sapientiae sagacitas*.
[97] Below, p. 142.
[98] I.P. Bejczy, *The Cardinal Virtues in the Middle Ages: A Study in Moral Thought from the Fourth to the Fourteenth Century* (Leiden, 2011); R. Newhauser, *The Treatise on Vices and Virtues in Latin and the Vernacular* (Turnhout, 1993). For Visigothic attestations: Isid. *Diff. (II)*, 40; Taio, *Sent.*, III.20.

Christian thought.[99] For others, like Ambrose, the virtues were in fact manifested first in certain Old Testament figures, and copied from there by philosophers.[100] The Christian transfiguration of the virtues usually entailed deriving them from the more fundamental virtues of *fides* or *caritas* (along with *spes* these were the 'theological virtues'). A sixth-century Iberian sermon, describing forms of monastic excellence as a model for its lay audience, rooted *fides*, *caritas*, and *spes* in Christ, identifying him as the necessary foundation of any triumph over vice.[101] In contrast, Martin dealt with his cardinal virtues much as he did with anger in *De ira*, remaining faithful to a non-theologized and non-scriptural understanding of them as aspects of human nature. Indeed, it is in the preamble to *Formula uitae honestae* that Martin's most explicit statement of ethical method is found:

> The title of this small work is, moreover, 'Rules for an Honourable Life'—on which account I wanted it written above in so many words—because it institutes not those towering and perfect rules which are accomplished by a few distinguished lovers of God, but rather it reminds the larger group that, even without the precepts of the divine scriptures, these rules might be fulfilled by lay people, living rightly and honourably, by the natural law of human intelligence (*naturali* […] *humanae intelligentiae lege*).[102]

Moreover, Martin's account of ethical improvement, made without reference to scripture and open to laypeople, was not supposed to be understood as an account of a basic moral minimum but of a true standard of excellence: 'By these principles these four forms of virtue will make of you a perfect man, if you keep them righteously and in due measure and set proper bounds to your life'.[103]

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[99] E.g. Julianus Pomerius, *De vita contemplativa*, II.18.2, ed. Migne, PL, 59 (Paris, 1847), cols. 415-520, at cols. 501-2; Isid., *Etym.*, II.24.5.

[100] Ambrose, *De officiis*, I.133, ed. and trans. I.J. Davidson, 2 vols (Oxford, 2001), pp. 194-5.

[101] *De mon. perf.*, at p. 80. On the sermon's provenance see below, pp. 250-1. For later Iberian discussions of theological virtues: Isid. *Sent.*, II.2-4, II.36.7; Taio, *Sent.*, II.27-9.

[102] Mart. Brac., *Form. uit.*, 1, p. 170: *Titulus autem libelli est Formula uitae honestae, quem idcirco tali uolui uocabulo superscribi, quia non illa ardua et perfecta quae a paucis et egregiis deicolis patrantur instituit, sed ea magis commonet quae et sine diuinarum Scripturarum praeceptis naturali tantum humanae intelligentiae lege etiam a laicis recte honesteque uiuentibus ualeant adimpleri.*

[103] Mart. Brac., *Form. uit.*, 6, p. 196: *His ergo institutionibus hae quattuor uirtutum species perfectum te facient uirum, si mensuram rectitudinis earum aequo uiuendi fine seruaueris*; trans. Barlow, *IF1*, p. 95.

Staying at a more general level of analysis, the first thing that strikes the reader is the claim that these virtues are independent of the 'precepts of the divine scriptures'. A number of Christian authors had argued that the cardinal virtues were not only derivative of *caritas* or *fides*, but were rooted in them in such a way as to make it impossible for non-Christians to truly exhibit true virtue.[104] Martin, of course, speaks of laypeople rather than non-Christians, but, in his discussion of the first three virtues, at least, he gives no reason to think that his advice was predicated on Christianity. Despite a change of tack in the discussion of the fourth virtue, *iustitia*, the treatise remains, like *De ira*, remarkably bereft of specifically Christian arguments—enough so that for centuries medieval readers encountering it under Seneca's name did not doubt its authenticity.

By positioning himself as the philosopher, and grounding himself in an understanding of nature, Martin followed well-trodden paths in dealing with political power. In Stoic thought, the ethical and the political had long been bound up inextricably with one another. Brad Inwood has reminded us that the Stoic notion of 'natural law' was derived from the prior idea of human-instituted law.[105] Moreover, Malcolm Schofield has argued that the later Stoic focus on ethics derived from a particular trajectory of thought on the *polis*—one which transcended the limits of the *polis* to conceive its field of enquiry as the whole *cosmopolis* (the 'cosmic city'). With a scope this universal, unmoored from any bounded community or particular institutional context, what mattered were universal laws of nature and the individual ethical subject's relationship to these. Stoic thought suited a vast imperial world, ruled by increasingly distant authorities.[106] As Peter Brown has put it, writing of late antique society more generally: 'in a world without a written constitution, the deportment of the governing classes (both in public and in the extensive world of their households) was the

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[104] Bejczy, *The Cardinal Virtues*, p. 65.
[105] B. Inwood, 'Natural law in Seneca', in *idem*, *Reading Seneca*, pp. 224-48.
[106] M. Schofield, *The Stoic Idea of the City* (Chicago, IL, 1991); cf. B.D. Shaw, 'The divine economy: Stoicism as ideology', *Latomus*, 64 (1985), pp. 16-54.

"unwritten constitution" on which the elites and their subjects places their hopes of justice and protection.'[107] The same was true long after the decline of Roman political structures. Rachel Stone, for example, has shown how far moral discourses aimed at laypeople formed and guided the governing classes of the Carolingian Empire.[108]

The theme, both 'political' and ethical, that appears with most persistence through the *Formula* is that of flattery and counsel. This is particularly indicative as to the work's function, given its royal and court audience. Flattery was discussed most extensively under the heading of *prudentia*. Indeed, *prudentia* essentially consisted of the ability to make firm and accurate judgements, unmoved by the vagaries of others' opinions. It taught one to 'judge and weigh everything in advance and place a value upon things from their own natural worth rather than from what most people think of them'.[109] Attending to *prudentia* was a way of cultivating oneself as someone who was not too credulous, of creating a faculty of judgement which saw past mere appearances, for appearances could themselves flatter and drag one into falsehood: 'Just as a friend sometimes wears a stern countenance and a flatterer a pleasant expression, so verisimilitude puts on ornaments and makes itself attractive in order to deceive or rob'.[110] More surprising is that flattery appears prominently in Martin's treatment of *continentia*. Martin began by espousing the value of moderation in all things: food and drink, speech, laughter, moral criticism. He was on the traditional ancient ground, mandating moderation as the means of decorous and proper comportment. Tellingly, sexuality is not even mentioned—this matter acquired no priority in his accounts of pleasures, as it would in much Christian thought on *continentia*. Yet Martin soon returned to

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[107] P.R.L. Brown, 'Review of *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* by Richard Sorabji', *Philosophical Books*, 43/3 (2002), pp. 185-208, at p. 189; cf. *idem*, *Power and Persuasion*, pp. 35-70.

[108] R. Stone, *Morality and Masculinity in the Carolingian Empire* (Cambridge, 2012).

[109] Mart. Brac., *Form. uit.*, 2, pp. 172-4: *omnia prius aestimes et perpenses et dignitatem rebus non ex opinione multorum, sed ex earum natura constituas*; trans. Barlow, *IF1*, p. 88.

[110] Mart. Brac., *Form. uit.*, 2, p. 176: *Nam sicut aliquotiens tristem frontem amicus et blandam adulator ostendit, sic uerisimile coloratura et ut fallat uel subripiat comitur*; trans. Barlow, *IF1*, p. 89.

the theme of flattery and its effects on the rational mind. Flattery was itself a dangerous pleasure amongst others. In fact 'the most difficult task of continence is to ward off the pleasantries of flatterers, whose words loosen (*resoluunt*) the mind with a certain pleasure (*uoluptate*)'.[111] Martin goes on to counsel Miro to take advice willingly and patiently, and to welcome criticism if it comes from a helpful place. 'It is not harsh, but soft words that you will fear'.[112]

Here, Martin is writing to Miro as a counsellor, claiming the traditional privilege of frank speech—of *parrhesia*, as it is often known. Martin's frankness was not grounded on a particularly Christian rationale—that of the bishop's duty to speak freely on matters of faith, or to correct moral failings as part of their pastoral responsibilities—but on more traditional philosophical grounds. Martin's *parrhesia* was that of the expert philosopher, accomplished enough in self-mastery to speak truth to power without prejudice or favour.[113] We can understand why counsel and flattery were such central matters for him. Martin was positioning himself before the king as a prudent, salutary counsellor, in contradistinction with the unstable, mercenary advice of 'flatterers'. Martin implored Miro to judge things according to their natural value rather than 'the opinion of the many', and to separate his judgements out from others' shifting advice. Yet there is no doubt that Martin was excluding himself from the untrustworthy 'many'—he reserved for his own advice an exceptional solidity and validity, grounded in a certain ethical expertise, itself grounded in 'nature'. This was a powerful rhetorical position. Martin evidently saw the apparently neutral ground of nature as a more powerful position from which to argue than that of contested Christian doctrine.

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111 Mart. Brac., *Form. uit.*, 4, pp. 186-8: *Difficillimum continentiae opus est adsentationes adulantium repellere, quorum sermones animum quadam uoluptate resoluunt*; trans. adapted from Barlow, *IF1*, p. 93.
112 Mart. Brac., *Form. uit.*, 4, p. 188: *Non acerba, sed blanda uerba timebis*; trans. Barlow, *IF1*, p. 93.
113 On the late antique philosophical tradition: Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, pp. 61-70; I. van Renswoude, *The Rhetoric of Free Speech in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2019), pp. 63-86.

It is because of this 'neutral' ethical self-positioning that it is difficult to pin down Martin's precise sense of 'natural law'. It may remind us of the idea that people who lived before the Mosaic Law lived under an innate 'natural law'. The fourth-century Roman cleric Ambrosiaster, for example, identified this *lex naturalis* with 'uera et Christiana prudentia'. But Ambrosiaster's *prudentia* was not like Martin's account of rational judgements, in harmony with nature: it denoted, rather, the innate and universal capacity to discern that there was a creator, due honour by the rational beings he created.[114] It was a common move to interpret *prudentia* as the faculty that allowed one to understand one's proper place in the created natural world and the celestial hierarchy. Thus, for Ambrose, Abraham exemplified *prudentia* by recognizing God and rejecting the inferior things of the created world.[115] Martin's 'natural law of human intelligence' also differs sharply from the Pauline 'natural law written on the heart' which was often taken to be innate and associated with conscience.[116] Martin's notion was not a moral sense of right and wrong so much as an innate capacity to make judgements in harmony with the laws and bounds of nature. It was for the most part discussed completely apart from *fides* or *caritas*, or from any distinctly Christian entity. For this, it was all the more universal, and all the more uncontroversial ground for speaking to a powerful lay audience.

The key question for any notion of 'natural law' espoused by a Christian authority is how it relates to God's law. Martin gives us some rare clues into his inexplicit understanding of this in his treatment of the final of his four virtues, *iustitia*. Here he breaks into Christian language in a way not seen in the prior three virtues:

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[114] Ambrosiaster, *In epistulam ad Romanos*, 5.13.4, ed. H.J. Vogels, CSEL, 81 (Vienna, 1966), p. 169. For Ambrosiaster on law (natural and otherwise): S. Lunn-Rockliffe, *Ambrosiaster's Political Theology* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 50-7.

[115] Ambrose, *De officiis*, I.25.117, ed. Davidson, p. 184.

[116] Augustine, *Confessiones*, II.4.9, ed. J.J. O'Donnell, 3 vols (Oxford, 1992), i, pp. 18-19; Ambrosiaster, *In epistulam ad Romanos*, 2.15, ed. Vogels, pp. 75-7. See R. Sorabji, *Moral Conscience Through the Ages* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 30-3.

> For what is justice if not the tacit covenant (*conuentio*) of nature, devised for the aid of many? And what is justice unless it is *not* our regulation (*constitutio*), but a divine law (*lex*) and the bond (*uinculum*) of human society?[117]

Martin was not interested in speaking about human institutions, but in the virtue of justice which is rooted in nature and is equivalent to *diuina lex*. The idea of nature—of the created order—being in some sense divine, and reflecting divine rationality, was well-represented in Stoic and Ciceronian thought, and saw an important, if equivocal, Christian restatement in the works of Ambrose of Milan, among others.[118] Indeed, Ambrose identified *iustitia* with the offering of *pietas* to those to whom it was due—God, one's parents, the *patria*, and so on—and grounded all of this in 'nature's teaching'.[119] Martin's further comments make clear that he was thinking of the loving Christian God here, rather than some general god of the philosophers: 'If any of you desire to observe justice, first fear God and love God, that you may be loved by God'.[120]

Here Martin is sure to place the Christian God at the heart of his discussion of natural law. It is difficult to believe that this notion of a loving God, who was themself to be feared and loved, came from a prior Senecan text, even if later medieval readers accepted the whole as Senecan. Martin clearly thought that fear—long condemned as an emotion in Stoic thought—could be a good thing. This had precedent in Augustine, who spoke of a *timor castus* which preserved virtue without disrupting the mind, and in Julianus Pomerius, who

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[117] Mart. Brac., *Form. uit.*, 5, p. 192: *Iustitiae post haec uirtus est. Quid est autem iustitia nisi naturae tacita conuentio in adiutiorum multorum inuenta? Et quid est iustitia nisi non nostra constitution, sed diuina lex, et uinculum societatis humanae?* [my trans.]. Note that the double negative is not present in Barlow's text or translation, but was affirmed as the correct reading in the discussion of S. Kuttner, 'A forgotten definition of justice', repr. in his *The History of Ideas and Doctrine of Canon Law in the Middle Ages* (2nd edn, Ashgate, 1992), pp. 75-109.

[118] B. Maes, *La loi naturelle selon Ambroise de Milan* (Rome, 1967). Colish, *The Stoic Tradition*, ii, pp. 300-1 argues for Ambrosian influence over Martin's definition.

[119] Ambrose, *De officiis*, I.27.127, ed. Davidson, i, pp. 190-1: *Iustitiae autem pietas est: prima in Deum, secunda in patriam, tertia in parentes, item in omnes: quae et ipsa secundum naturae est magisterium*. See Maes, *La loi naturelle*, pp. 134-5.

[120] Mart. Barc., *Form. uit.*, 5, p. 192: *Quisquis ergo hanc sectari desideras, time prius Deum et ama Deum, ut ameris a Deo*; trans. Barlow, *IF1*, p. 94.

argued that such a kind of fear would, alongside the virtues, be intrinsic even to the beatific state of the resurrected life.[121] Here we see Martin showing more explicit awareness of the analogues between his position as philosopher-guide, speaking from a position of understanding universal matters of nature, and a more clearly Christian form of guidance, rooted in understanding God's creation and the exigencies of salvation. This is more fully manifest in Martin's other works—particularly those in which he drew on John Cassian's thought. Martin was able to use different sources for moral guidance, while retaining a stable position as a moral expert counselling authority figures on their conduct.

V. MARTIN, CASSIAN, AND COUNSEL

The short trio of treatises which Martin based on ideas from John Cassian is made up of *Pro repellenda iactantia*, *De superbia*, and *Exhortatio humilitatis*. They bear no preface identifying a recipient, and so various interpretations of their function have been advanced. In this they contrast to *De ira*—written for Vittimer of Ourense—and the *Formula*—written for King Miro. Like these texts, however, they addressed the ethical conduct of authority figures.[122] On this understanding, Cassian's spiritual thought was used by Martin to produce works of moral guidance which approximated the function of the 'secular' Senecan treatises. As Chiara Torre has said (speaking here of the possible influence of Cassian on *De ira*), Martin was engaged in 'a laicization of [Cassian's] moral message', pushing it 'beyond the walls of the monastery'. This is all the more apt for the moral trio with which we are presently concerned.[123] It is well known that ascetic thought flowed over the walls of the monastery and into wider political life in late antiquity, and studies of ascetic bishops and lay authorities

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121 Augustine, *De ciu.*, XIV.9; Julianus Pomerius, *De vita contemplativa*, III.32-3, ed. Migne, cols. 517-18.
122 *Pace* Barlow, *Martini opera omnia*, p. 4, who places them in a monastic context.
123 Torre, *Martini Bracarensis* De ira, p. 39: 'una laicizzazione del messaggio morale, quasi un'esportazione della letteratura sui vizi e sulle virtù fuori dale mura del monastero'.

have abounded.[124] Yet, against this familiar picture, Martin's vision still stands apart. His works did not exactly give ascetic, spiritual rationales to the exercise of power, but drew ascetic ideas away from the sphere of interiorized self-mastery, recasting them for the world of face-to-face political activity.

Unlike Seneca, Cassian was read widely in the Iberian Peninsula.[125] It has been hypothesized that Martin first encountered his works here, on the grounds that his early translations of *apophthegmata* show no signs of having appropriated Cassian's vocabulary and knowledge.[126] Like Martin, Cassian had travelled in the east before settling in the west. In Cassian's case his experiences of eastern ascetic culture were extensive, and he wrote about them in detail, especially in his later work, the *Conlationes*, which record dialogues between various elders and a less senior ascetic.[127] Cassian positioned himself as a moral expert, well-trained and educated in the rigours of eastern ascetic discipline, who could transmit such rigour to a western context. He was, in Conrad Leyser's formulation, the purveyor of a 'moral science' of asceticism.[128] Before the *Conlationes* he wrote a work known as the *Institutiones*, which gave ascetic guidance tailored toward the cenobitic set up increasingly common in his adopted home of southern Gaul. After four books covering the details of daily life in the monastery, with guidance about food and drink and clothing and so on, he presented a highly influential eight-part account of the struggles the ascetic would undergo with vice when trying to reach perfection.[129] These eight vices were taken from the eight

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[124] P. Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian* (Oxford, 1978); C. Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000); R. Whelan, 'An ascetic state? Fashioning Christian political service across the early sixth-century Mediterranean', *Studies in Late Antiquity*, 2/3 (2018), pp. 385-418.

[125] J.C. Martín-Iglesias, 'La biblioteca cristiana de los padres hispanovisigodas (siglos VI-VII)', *Veleia*, 30 (2013), pp. 259-88, at p. 265-6. Cf. below pp. 238-41.

[126] Do Espírito Sancto, 'Sententiae patrum Aegyptiorum'.

[127] C. Stewart, *Cassian the Monk* (New York, NY, 1998), pp. 133-40.

[128] Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, pp. 33-61.

[129] On Cassian: O. Chadwick, *John Cassian* (2nd edn, Cambridge, 1968); Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*.

thoughts of vice elaborated by Evagrius. It is typically Evagrius, or else his predecessor Origen, who is seen as the vector of ancient moral psychology into Christian asceticism.[130]

The three Cassian-derived works had people of governing power as their recipients. In the words of the opening of *Exhortatio humilitatis*, the audience was 'whoever you are that excel in dignity of some office through the will of God and rank above other men in the useful service of provident governance'.[131] Like *Formula uitae honestae*, we can presume that it was aimed at a wider group while still having a primary dedicatee. The use of second person singular at times suggests this. Significantly, the *Exhortatio* addresses the reader on one occasion as *Caritas tua*.[132] Elsewhere in his oeuvre, Martin uses *Caritas* only to address bishops.[133] It could well be that the primary recipient was a bishop. On the other hand, Chiara Torre has argued for Miro as the dedicatee, and this thesis finds some corroboration in Martin's allusion to the enjoyment of flattery as a *regium uitium*.[134] But in the *Formula* Martin never refers to Miro as *Caritas tua*, and the different tone of the Cassian-derived treatises fits with a different dedicatee. In either case, the actual audience was a wider group of people involved in government (whether 'secular' or ecclesiastical).

This is all to speak of *Exhortatio humilitatis*, which gives the most clues about audience. There are question marks over the unity of the treatises which threaten to make conclusions drawn for one inapplicable for the others. Since Caspari's brief arguments over a century ago, it has been common to argue the unity of the three works, in the order in which

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130 Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, pp. 343-71; C. Stewart, 'Evagrius Ponticus and the Eastern monastic tradition on the intellect and the passions', *Modern Theology*, 27/2 (2011), pp. 263-75.
131 Mart. Brac., *Ex. hum.*, 1, p. 208: *Quisquis nutu Dei cuiuslibet officii dignitate praecelles ac prouidae gubernationis utilitate ceteris praecedis hominibus*; trans. Barlow, *IF1*, p. 51.
132 Mart. Brac., *Ex. hum.*, 8.
133 Mart. Brac., *De ira*, 1; *De corr.*, 1.
134 Mart. Brac., *Ex. hum.*, 2, ed. Berthet and Sabbah, p. 210: *Adulanti siquidem adgaudere regium uitium est; adularia uero servile est*. C. Torre, '*Regium vitium*: Martino di Braga sui rischi del potere (*Pro repellenda iactantia, Item de superbia, Exhortatio humilitatis*)', in M. Giovini and C. Mordeglia (eds), *'Tenuis scientiae guttula': Studi in onore di Ferruccio Bertini in occasione del suo 65o compleanno* (Genoa, 2006), pp. 269-300.

they appear in all but one of the (few) manuscripts.[135] This would give a logical structure whereby two vices—vainglory and pride, the crowing vices in Cassian's schema—were discussed, before humility was offered as a curative. Yet, recent scholarship has been more sceptical, and the most recent edition has broken with the convention of printing them together.[136] Without going into too much philological detail, we can affirm some basics. The unity of *Pro repellenda iactantia* and *De superbia* is assured by the linking passage at the end of the former:

> There are many things that might be said of this contagious affliction [*iactantia* or *uana gloria*], but since its manifold subtleties may already be clear to the wise man from these few descriptions, I shall pass on now to the remaining points and explain what worse vice is produced from this one'[137]

The worse vice, of course, is *superbia*, which Martin explains derives from unchecked vainglory. *Exhortatio humilitatis* may be separate to these two, or have originally been separate then tagged on, since it seems to have a prefatory statement of its own (this is the passage that describes the audience of people in government). Yet the audience for all three seems roughly the same. In the *Exhortatio*, Martin remarks: 'when I speak of vainglory or pride, there is none to whom I could more suitably address my words than to you who are in charge of many'.[138] That all three were intended for people in positions of power is evident, and we need not concern ourselves too much with their formal unity or separation. Their

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135 C.P. Caspari, *Martin von Bracara's Schrift* De correctione rusticorum (Christiania, 1883), pp. xxx-xxxii. For the MS. traditions: Barlow, *Martini opera omnia*, pp. 52-63; A. Fontán, 'La tradición de las obras morales de Martín de Braga', *Boletín de la Universidad de Granada*, 23 (1951), pp. 73-86.

136 Berthet and Sabbah, *Martin de Braga*, see esp. pp. 22-30.

137 Mart. Brac., *Pro rep.*, 7, p. 92: *Multa sunt quae de hac contagione dicantur, sed quia iam multiformis subtilitas eius potest sapienti uiro etiam his paucis indiciis perlucere, nunc ad reliqua transeam, et quid aliud peius ex hoc malo generetur expediam*; trans. Barlow, *IF1*, pp. 40-1.

138 Mart. Brac., *Ex. hum.*, 4, pp. 216-18: *Non enim ad alium mihi de uana gloria aut superbia rectius uisum est loqui, nisi ad te quicumque prior es aliis*; trans. Barlow, *IF1*, p. 54.

thematic proximity suggests, to me at least, that they were eventually pulled together as one work, but my argument does not depend on this.[139]

The central concern that marks *Pro repellenda iactantia* and *Exhortatio humilitatis*—and to a lesser extent the intervening treatise *De superbia*—is, perhaps unexpectedly, the problem of praise and flattery. This recalls *Formula vitae honestae*. Martin's treatment of the ethics of power was often particularly concerned with the taking of counsel and response to others' words. In the Cassian-derived trio of works, the problem of praise was, in the first place, a problem of self-knowledge. One who is flattered may come to believe their flatterer's words, to seek more praise, and so to lose sense of their true state. Flattery is a problem because it is empty and false: it deprives one of a solid basis on which to judge (*aestimare*) oneself. *Iactantia* (which is equated with *vana gloria* and thus Cassian's *cenodoxia*) is the vice that comes from seeking and delighting in praise and flattery. *Superbia* is the sin that springs from this source, leading one to commit sacrilege by attributing the responsibility for such glories to oneself rather than God. Vainglory is the *pes superbiae*: it is the initial motion which sets one on the path to the grave sin of pride.[140] There are specifically Christian problems with these vices. Pride, especially, is offensive to God because it denies him those things which are his and constitutes a human usurpation of credit for the good things in life. Humility is the safeguard against this. Yet the problem of how to make good judgements, and stick fast to the true measure of things, is an equally prominent, and very familiar theme which shares much with Martin's discussion of virtue with Miro. Flattery is the focus because it is this which deprives the powerful person of the capacity to make good judgements.

Flattery is a political problem inasmuch as flattery attaches to the powerful and its management is a key skill of rule. The problem is about how a powerful person can attain

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[139] Torre, '*Regium vitium*', is another recent proponent of their unity, though she argues this through seeing them as a *speculum principis* for Miro.
[140] Mart. Brac., *De sup.*, 2.

truth in a world in which they are confronted with myriad opinions which derive from a desire to please and not to instruct. Flatterers lack constancy and cannot be trusted: 'so the mind of the flatterer is carried back and forth, just as a ship is tossed by the blasts of changing winds, because it has no way to get out.'[141] The problem with praise is that it is empty (*inanis*). It is false and misleading: 'everyone wants to be praised, however falsely they are praised'.[142] It leads people to think that they are things that they are not and thereby disrupts the natural, ordered hierarchy of society. The young think they are mature, the old think they are still living their past glories, women think they are manly, rural dwellers think they are urban, judges think they are kings, and kings think they are God. Ultimately, in the case of kings, this becomes sacrilege against the divine hierarchy of God and man: 'the human race has exceeded its measures'.[143] This passage on hierarchy is Martin's own and has no parallel in Cassian; it is reminiscent more of the notion of natural limits and capacities adduced in the Senecan works. The problem of flattery is not just that it can lead to vices which offend God, but also that it draws one away from a sense of one's natural and proper place in the world. It offends nature and its immutable hierarchy.

As in the *Formula*, Martin is appealing to the image of the philosopher-guide, with their privileged access to frank speech: 'If I happen to appear to say anything harsh, this is the fault of truth rather than my own. […] I shall speak the truth freely: there is no-one who should more reasonably be told the truth than one who is in charge of many people'.[144] The ground of moral expertise was no longer 'natural law', but Christian virtues, expounded according to scripture. On occasion, Martin also claims a distinctly ascetic expertise. When

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141 Mart. Brac., *Ex. hum.*, 2, pp. 210-12: *Atque ita inter hos tales adulati animus fertur, tamquam nauis inter uarios aurarum flatus, quia non habet quo exeat, fluctuantur*; trans. Barlow, *IF1*, p. 52.

142 Mart. Brac., *Pro rep.*, 2, p. 78: *omnes laudari uolunt, quamuis false laudentur* [my trans.].

143 Mart. Brac., *Pro rep.*, 2, p. 80: *excessit mensuras suas genus humanum*. See also *Ex. hum.*, 3, p. 212: *adulationum nimietas etiam terminos hominis competentes excessit.*

144 Mart. Brac., *Ex. hum.*, 1, pp. 208-10: *Et si forte dure aliquid uideor loqui, ueritatis hace culpa, non mea est.* […] *ueritatem libere tamen loquar: nemini uerius debere aliquid dici quam ei qui oraesidet multis*; trans. Barlow, *IF1*, p. 51.

he did so, however, this should not be interpreted as an attempt to speak directly to ascetics, but rather to claim an ascetic expertise which was relevant and useful to guidance for holders of office and power. In *De superbia*, where ascetic excellence is explicitly brought up, Martin is clear that its pitfalls parallel those of power: pride attacks 'those who have reached the perfection of virtues spiritually (*spiritaliter*), or copious riches and the highest offices in a fleshly manner (*carnaliter*)'.[145] The remedy of humility, given in the next treatise, was framed mainly around its effect on authorities, again through the theme of praise and counsel. Humility guaranteed a stable and firm mind that would judge correctly—that would hold fast to the truth, unmoved by the fluctuating opinions of the crowd of flatterers that encircled the powerful: 'Humility will tell you just how much of the things that men ascribe to you in praise is really yours and how long it will last. Humility does not allow you to hear with placid ears that which is false.'[146] Humility is the safeguard of one's sense of natural limits and proper bounds—of one's very self-knowledge. It is a way of governing oneself so that one is not corrupted by other people and, as such, it provides a solid basis for the government of others.

That Martin could make ascetic Christian source material speak of similar themes and functions in similar ways to the Senecan works is less surprising than it may at first seem. Certainly, Cassian, like Evagrius and other ascetic authors, was imbued with elements of the Stoic tradition. Pierre Hadot and Richard Sorabji have shown how deep the intellectual debt of ascetic thought was to Stoic though on emotion, *apatheia*, and self-transformation.[147] In some ways, the ascetic conception of temptations, flowing through the dark paths of the

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145 Mart. Brac., *De sup.*, 8, p. 110: *his qui aut spiritaliter ad perfectionem uirtutum aut carnaliter ad diuitiarum copiam et summos honorum titulus peruenerint*; trans. Barlow, *IF1*, p. 47.

146 Mart. Brac., *Ex. hum.*, 3, p. 214: *Haec tibi si uolueris dicit quota portio ex his quae homines adlaudando tribuunt, uel quanto tempore tua sit. Haec te non permittit placidis auribus audire quae ficta sunt*; trans. adapted from Barlow, *IF1*, p. 53.

147 P. Hadot, 'Exercises spirituels antiques et "philosophie chrétienne"' in *idem*, *Exercises spirituels et philosophie antique* (rev edn., Paris, 2002), pp. 75-98.

mind, was a newly introspective, newly sin-centric version of the Stoic 'first movements'—those involuntary spurs which, with the mind's assent, might trigger disruptive emotions.[148] Yet early Christianity is usually understood to have brought a fuller and more complex account of the self—something which, in schematic treatments of the history of 'selfhood' is often illustrated by the vivid interiority of Augustine's *Confessiones*.[149] Martin displayed brief flashes of this new sensibility. He referred to the 'abyssus humanae conscientiae' laid bare 'ante oculos Dei', in direct citation of Augustine; he described the 'humanae mentis arcana' in the same manner as texts discussing models of ascetic excellence.[150] Yet in most of Martin's ethical works, the obscure corners of the interior life received comparatively little attention. This is instructive.

Martin was much more interested in people's dealings with others than their dealings with their own thoughts. Cassian had memorably described the mind as like a millstone turned by the endless stream of thoughts, and presented the ascetic's discernment of their thoughts' origins as like a money-changer sorting through coins to establish provenance and authenticity.[151] Martin did not think about the stream of thoughts in this way, his ethical works did not involve any consideration of the devil's involvement (even if such ideas were vaguely apparent in his translations of Greek *apophthegmata*).[152] Instead, he thought about the

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148 Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, esp. pp. 343-71.

149 E.g. in C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 111-42. On Seneca's sense of 'self': Inwood, 'The will in Seneca'; 'Seneca and self-assertion' in *idem*, *Reading Seneca*, pp. 132-56, 322-52 (with Augustine at pp. 346, 352). Michel Foucault contrasted Seneca and Cassian in works like 'About the beginnings of the hermeneutics of the self (1980)', repr. in J.R. Carrette (ed.), *Religion and Culture* (Manchester, 1999), pp. 158-81 and *idem*, *Histoire de la sexualité, IV: Les aveux de la chair*, ed. F. Gros (Paris, 2018), pp. 106-45. For critique of Foucault: Veyne, *Life of a Stoic*, pp. ix-xi; P. Hadot, 'Réflexions sur la notion de "culture de soi"', in *idem*, *Exercises spirituels*, pp. 324-32.

150 Mart. Brac., *Ex. hum.*, 5, p. 218; Augustine of Hippo, *Confessiones*, X.2.2. ed. O'Donnell, i, p. 119. Mart. Brac., *De sup.*, 9, p. 114; cf. *De mon. perf.*, at p. 80: *mentis humanae arcano*. See also Mart. Brac., *Sent. patr.*, 3-4, where there are mentions of inner struggles against the *cogitatio fornicationis* and *cogitatio passionum*.

151 John Cassian, *Conlationes*, I.18-20, ed. É. Pichery, SC, 42 (Paris, 1955), pp. 99-105.

152 Mart. Brac., *Sent. patr.*, 15.

stream of spoken words with which an authority figure was faced—advice, rebukes, flattery, requests, and so on. The introspective discernment of the ascetic tradition was recast back into a world of practical life. Instead of carefully sifting over fleeting *cogitationes* which may or may not be demonically inspired, Martin's therapeutic patient was taking in and assessing the fluctuations of others' words and statements, discerning between empty flattery and solid counsel. Martin articulated his authority through a notion of expertise focussed on the effective activity and judgements of an individual ensconced in the world of politics and power, transfiguring ascetic thought for this purpose where that was expedient. In this distinctive fusion of Senecan and ascetic thought, Martin positioned himself such that he could appeal even to people with little interest (or respect) for asceticism, or perhaps even Christianity, itself. This marks him out as unique in the post-Roman Iberian literary record and gives a distinctive profile to Suevic court Christianity. We are certainly not in the world of Visigothic sacral rule, but one in which the boundaries between sacred and the secular were negotiated differently.

VI. CONCLUSION

Venantius Fortunatus' wrote to Martin of Braga that 'you please [us] not so much by the pomp of dogma as by the norms of virtue'.[153] This is an astute comment on Martin's whole oeuvre. Emphasizing the moral works, we have seen that Martin's engagement with the monarchy, with high-ranking laypeople, and with certain bishops, was to espouse a model of guidance which was largely unconcerned with doctrinal orthodoxy. In two cases, this ethics was elaborated in line with the thought and—more importantly—the self-positioning of Seneca the Younger. Martin presented himself as a philosophical guide, drawing on an understanding of the universal facets of human nature. In some cases, Martin did so in an

[153] Venantius Fortunatus, *Carminum libri*, V.1.7, ed. Leo, pp. 102-3: *non oblectamini tam pompa dogmatum quam norma virtutum.*

explicitly scriptural mode, drawing on ascetic thought and the central Christian dichotomy of pride and humility. In the case of the Senecan works, however, Martin could present his ethical guidance as standing entirely apart from scriptural precepts. There were natural laws, he suggested, which allowed ethical excellence—even perfection—in laypeople who lived in accordance with their natural intelligence. On various points, Martin stood apart from his peers in Christian writing. He was not interested in anterior controversies, but in claiming as neutral a grounding as possible for his authority. This extended even to addressing laypeople in terms which were not identifiably Christian. In doing so, he gave the most strikingly de-theologized account of lay life in post-Roman Iberian writing.

Martin's Senecan forays were not indicative of a general view that Martin had of the laity. He wrote on Seneca for bishops, too. He also treated the lay congregations for whom *De correctione rusticorum* was intended in a very different way. Martin was not ignorant of the wider trends that marked post-Roman Christian thought. He was hostile to that which he saw as 'pagan' when it was practiced in rural areas, and he showed no desire to position the bishop in a non-doctrinal, philosophical manner when he was thinking about preaching. His ethical writings, whether based on Seneca or Cassian, were distinct from this. Martin's works tell us less about wider Christian pastoral care than they do about the way in which a bishop could seek to claim authority and credibility before various authority figures and patrons. What this does tell us about, then, is the political and religious culture of the Suevic court during their long and uncertain period of 'conversion'. Martin found it expedient to downplay doctrinal strife. His deflationary judgements in *De trina mersione* on the issues around liturgical difference made by the bishop Boniface is further evidence of this.[154] We are not before a world in which the state was conceived of as a salvific community or the king as a divinely ordained *pastor*. That is, we are not in the kind of world which, only a short

[154] Mart. Brac., *De trin.*

time later, was inaugurated, at least in assertion, by the Visigothic Third Council of Toledo. If we are to detach Suevic 'conversion' from assumptions flowing from this council's historiographical dominance, we would do well to understand the kind of political and ethical advice Martin produced for the Suevic elite. This speaks of a different relationship between ecclesiastical and royal power, and a different kind of expertise and authority claimed by a leading bishop.

Chapter 2:

THE VISIGOTHIC SIXTH CENTURY

I. INTRODUCTION

Like the Suevic kingdom, the Visigothic kingdom of the sixth century tends to linger in the shadow of the Nicene Visigothic polity announced at the Third Council of Toledo in 589.[1] According to its own rhetoric, this was a strong and unified polity, governed under a glorious and newly orthodox king. The Nicene contemporary John of Biclarum described Reccared's appearance at the council as:

> reviving in our own times the image of the ruler Constantine the Great, whose presence illumined the holy synod of Nicaea, or that of the most Christian emperor Marcian, in whose presence the decrees of Council of Chalcedon were established.[2]

Imperial models may well have been in the king's mind: the idea of *imitatio imperii* has often been deployed to explain Visigothic state-formation in the latter decades of the sixth century.[3] Reccared appeared at the council as the leader of Visigoths and he led them, as his people, to abjure their former Arianism and embrace the Nicene faith that had long been predominant in the prior ecclesiastical establishment of the Iberian Peninsula. In doing so he brough the Nicene ecclesiastical establishment into the service of the kingdom and, like certain Roman emperors, granted himself and his successors a role in matters doctrinal and pastoral.[4]

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[1] On the conciliar tradition: R.L. Stocking, *Bishops, Councils, and Consensus in the Visigothic Kingdom, 589-633* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2000).

[2] J. Bicl., *Chron.*, 91, quote at p. 81: *renouans temporibus nostris antiquum principem Constantinum magnum sanctam sinodum Nichenam sua illustrasse presencia, nec non et Marcianum christianissimum imperatorem, cuius instancia Calcidonensis synodi decreta firmata sunt*; trans. Wolf, *Conquerors*, p. 65.

[3] Mª.R. Valverde Castro, *Ideología, simbolismo y ejercicio del poder real en la monarquía visigoda: un proceso de cambio* (Salamanca, 2000), pp. 181-95. See also J.N. Hillgarth, 'Coins and chronicles: propaganda in sixth-century Spain and the Byzantine background', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 15/4 (1966), pp. 483-508.

[4] J. Raaijmakers and I. van Renswoude, 'The ruler as referee in theological debates: Reccared and Charlemagne', in R. Meens *et al.* (eds), *Religious Franks: Religion and Power in the Frankish Kingdoms: Studies in Honour of Mayke de Jong* (Manchester, 2016), pp. 51-71.

It has been argued that, following this council, a new unity was formed in ethnic as well as confessional terms, with the separate identities of the *gens Gothorum* and the Hispano-Romans superseded by a unifying Visigothic identity predicated on Nicene faith.[5] Thus, the conciliar *acta* have been read in Spanish nationalist historiography as constituting the foundation document of Catholic Spain, or by the French historian Suzanne Teillet as witnessing the emergence of the idea of the 'nation' in Europe.[6] Such breathless claims can be easily critiqued—'volontairement anachronique' was Walter Pohl's response to Teillet—but the Third Council's overshadowing of the prior century remains a persistent problem.[7] This is especially true in regard to the discussion of religious identity and confessional conflict, much of which sits on a teleology heading to the unity of the Third Council.

In terms of narrative history, there is little to say about Visigothic Arianism until the 580s. Alaric II (d. 507), ruling the Visigothic kingdom of Toulouse, enjoyed sanguine and politically useful relationships with the Nicene ecclesiastical establishment in southern Gaul, all the while remaining Arian. Alaric had even sponsored a church council at Agde in 506, headed by Caesarus of Arles.[8] After the Visigothic kingdom moved south following defeat by the Franks at Vouillé in 507, there do not seem to have been considerable flashpoints between the Arian monarchy and Nicene episcopate, though there is also little evidence of

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[5] See esp. E. Buchberger, *Shifting Ethnic Identities in Spain and Gaul, 500-700: From Romans to Goths and Franks* (Amsterdam, 2017), pp. 37-100. For further discussions of ethnic identity, see the essays in J.A. Quirós Castillo and S. Castellanos (eds), *Identidad y etnicidad en Hispania: Propuestas teóricas y cultura material en los siglos V-VIII* (Bilbao, 2015).

[6] On nationalist historiography see P. Linehan, *History and the Historians of Medieval Spain* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 22-50. On the idea of a Visigothic 'nation' see S. Teillet, *Des Goths à la nation gothique. Les origenes de l'idée de nation en Occident du V^e^ au VII^e^ siècle* (Paris, 1984), with more recent discussion in T. Deswarte, 'Une nation inachevée: le royaume de Tolède (VI^e^-VII^e^ siècle)', in *Nation et nations au Moyen Âge: XLIV^e^ colloque de la SHMESP (Prague, 23-26 mai 2013)* (Paris, 2014), pp. 63-78.

[7] W. Pohl, 'Aux origines d'une Europe ethnique: transformations d'identités entre Antiquité et Moyen Âge', *Annales HSC*, 60/1 (2005), pp. 183-208, at p. 191: 'volontairement anachronique'.

[8] H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, trans. T.J. Dunlap (rev. edn, Berkeley, CA, 1988), pp. 193-202; R.W. Mathisen, 'The "Second Council of Arles" and the spirit of compilation and codification in Late Roman Gaul', *JECS*, 5/4 (1997), pp. 511-54; B. Dumézil, *Les racines chrétiennes de l'Europe. Conversion et liberté dans les royaumes barbares V^e^-VIII^e^ siècle* (Paris, 2005), pp. 245-60.

active engagement. This changed in Leovigild's highly consequential reign.[9] When in 579 his son Hermenegild revolted from the south against his father, the kingdom embarked on a period of bitter civil war. Hermenegild converted to the Nicene faith at some point in the rebellion, under the influence of Leander of Seville, lending the conflict a doctrinal element.[10] During this time, Leovigild began to vigorously promote 'Arianism', hoping to make it the single confession of a doctrinally unified kingdom. He pursued measures divisive enough that at least two Nicene historians remembered them as persecution.[11] John of Biclarum and (perhaps) Leander of Seville were exiled, and there is evidence that Nicene properties were confiscated.[12] Whether or not this really constituted a widespread persecution, such episodes deeply mark the extant historical record. He won the war with Hermenegild but failed to unify the polity under Arianism. Official religious unity came in his successor Reccared's reign under a Nicene settlement. It is through the lens of these events that we usually see the earlier part of the sixth century.

This high-level narrative history tells us much about Visigothic political ideology, but relatively little about the manner in which Christianity was practiced in the period before (or for that matter after) the Third Council of Toledo.[13] In this chapter I aim to explore the religious life of the sixth century detached, as far as is possible, from teleologies of state formation and religio-ethnic unification. Doing so requires not only an inquiry into the basic issues of the Nicene-Arian division—those familiar questions of baptism and rebaptism, of liturgical differences, and of doctrinal argument. It also requires us to question more

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[9] For the events of his reign: R. Collins, *Visigothic Spain, 409-711* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 50-63.
[10] See below, pp. 116-17.
[11] Gr. Tur. *DLH*, V.38; Isid., *Hist.,* 50, both discussed in K. Schäferdiek, *Die Kirche in den Reichen der Westgoten und Suewen bis zur Errichtung der westgotischen katholischen Staatskirche* (Berlin, 1967), p. 158.
[12] Isid., *De viris*, 28, 31. On confiscations see Asán chart., 4: a letter from Reccared, dated 13 Dec. 586, restoring confiscated property to the monastery of Asán.
[13] On the history of conversion see esp. J. Fontaine, 'Conversion et culture chez les Wisigoths d'Espagne', in *La converversione al cristianesimo nell'Europa dell'alto medioevo*, Settimane, 14 (Spoleto, 1967), pp. 87-147; R. Collins, '¿Dónde estaban los arianos en el año 589?', in *Concilio III de Toledo. XIV Centenario, 589-1989* (Toledo, 1991), pp. 211-22.

fundamentally what is meant by the 'Nicene church' or 'Arian church'—that is, it calls into question the second word of these couplets as well as the first. The image of two grand 'churches' in conflict often leaves unexamined what exactly a 'church' constitutes in this period. I begin, therefore, with issues that have little to do with the questions of heresy which fill the latter half of the chapter. Understanding the basic structure and nature of Christian organization in the sixth century is the preliminary task. We will see that laypeople continued to hold significant power in a Nicene church which was highly decentralized and often still very informally organized. Though this period is one in which canon law and conciliar traditions picked up after a fifth-century hiatus, it is important not to presume too great a degree of institutionalization. This nuances our sense of how doctrinal difference played out on the ground.

II. 'THE CHURCH' IN THE EARLY SIXTH CENTURY: LAITY AND HIERARCHY

Among the various churches, clerics, monasteries, martyr shrines, individual believers, what unified some into a 'church'? The ecclesiology of Nicene writers like the mid sixth-century bishop Justus of Urgell offered a simple and abstract answer. In his *Explanatio in Cantica Canticorum*, he outlined a universalist ecclesiological vision.[14] While living under an Arian monarchy, Justus had no place within its structures of thought for different 'churches': there was simply the universal *ecclesia*, the mystical body whose head was Christ. This *ecclesia* had existed from the time of Christ's teaching, and extended throughout the world without distinction in peoples or regions. Against this universal body, heresies were marginal, splintered phenomena—impurities or dangers which threatened the integrity of the pure

[14] Justus, *Expl.* For Justus' biography: Isid. *De viris*, 21. For his attendance at councils: II Toledo, *subscriptiones*; Lérida, *subscriptiones* (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 356 and 309, respectively).

ecclesia but were emphatically not on a conceptual par with it.[15] Similar ideas would be picked up in Leander of Seville's sermon given as the Third Council of Toledo.[16]

This ecclesiological discourse was, of course, very old. In the fourth century, Gregory of Elvira composed series of commentaries on the Song of Songs, seemingly derived from sermons, which are known collectively as *Tractatus de epithalamio*.[17] Enmeshed in the disputes over the Trinity that followed the Council of Nicaea, Gregory elaborated an ecclesiology that gave significant attention to the danger of heresy. Heretics were alien to the true nature of the *ecclesia* yet they had breached its boundaries as wolves in sheep's clothing, ready to devour simple and unsuspecting Christians. Some of these were clerics: Gregory spoke of *pseudoapostoli* and denounced *falsi sacerdotes*.[18] As Gregory's own life shows, however, the application of these stark divisions between the *ecclesia* and its enemies was far from clear. Gregory was staunchly Nicene in his position, but he lived in a period in which the boundaries of orthodoxy were ambiguous and shifting. He broke with the many bishops who accepted the Homoian formula of Rimini in 359, convened by the emperor, Constantius II.[19] Among the bishops who were drawn into Constantius' credal settlements were Ossius of Córdoba, the erstwhile convenor of Nicaea, and Potamius of Lisbon, both of whom were involved with Constantius' council of 357 which produced the Second Sirmium Creed.[20] Gregory, who came to prominence in later decades, was himself accused of errors

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[15] On heresies see e.g. Justus, *Expl.*, I.13-14, II.26, II.51; for the *ecclesia* and *Christianus populus* as the body of Christ see e.g. II.53, III.60.

[16] See below, pp. 84-5.

[17] The best commentary is K. Shuve, *The Song of Songs and the Fashioning of Christian Identity in Early Latin Christianity* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 79-106, esp. pp. 99-101 on heresy.

[18] Gregory of Elvira, *Tractatus de epithalamio*, II.11-16, ed. J. Fraipont, CCSL, 69 (Turnhout, 1967), pp. 169-210, at pp. 183-5.

[19] On Constantius II and Latin Arianism: M. Meslin, *Les Ariens d'Occident, 335-430* (Paris, 1967), pp. 29-44.

[20] R.P.C. Hanson, *The Search for a Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318-381 AD* (Edinburgh, 1988), pp. 334-8, 343-7.

and schismatic activity by opponents—particularly of being a Luciferian.[21] The staunch binaries of the ecclesiological imaginary tell us much about how the participants in these disputes understood their relationship to the *ecclesia* and to their opponents, but they also stand as a stark reminder of the gap between such thought and the complexities of very messy and shifting reality.

This is to speak, of course, on a highly general and abstract plane. What I want to do in this section is come from the other direction, examining ecclesiastical structures in their fragmented and messy reality on the ground before speaking of wider abstractions. The sources make this a very difficult task for the Arian case, but we can see Nicene ecclesiastical structures more clearly. From this will emerge a less uniform and institutionalized vision of ecclesiastical life upon which to base our later considerations around ritual and doctrine. The period following the breakdown of Roman power in the Iberian Peninsula seems to have been one which was marked by weak ecclesiastical institutionalization. Sabine Panzram has argued that regional factionalism and local structures of power in late- and post-Roman Hispania precluded the emergence of the clear structures of hierarchy and practice of regular regional synods envisaged at the Council of Nicaea.[22]

Tarraconesis provides particularly rich evidence for the fifth and sixth centuries. Firstly, there are the well-known letters of the Balearic layman Consentius to Augustine of Hippo, which detail factional disputes in Tarraconesis in the years preceding 420. These bitter disputes Consentius glosses with the notion of 'Priscillianism', though the reality may

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[21] K. Shuve, 'The episcopal career of Gregory of Elvira', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 65/2 (2014), pp. 247-62.

[22] S. Panzram, 'La formación del orden metropolitan en la Península Ibérica (siglos IV a VI)', *Pyrenae*, 49/1 (2018), pp. 125-54. Cf. P. Ubric Rabaneda, 'La organización de la Iglesia hispana en los siglos VI-V', *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, 49/2 (2019), pp. 41-75. The relevant canon is Nicaea, c. 5 (for the *Hispana* text: Coll. Hisp. III, p. 69).

be more complex.[23] Less well known are the letters between Hilary, bishop of Rome, and Ascanius, the metropolitan of Tarragona, which detail further factionalism in the 460s. These have recently been discussed by Sabine Panzram.[24] Ascanius complained to Hilary that he was unable to stop Silvanus, the bishop of Calagurris (Calahorra), from making ordinations without metropolitan consent. Yet Ascanius was himself implicated in an uncanonical process in Barcelona, involving the construction of a new see within Barcelona's diocese and the transfer of a bishop from one see to another.[25] Canonical norms seem to have been applied in highly partial ways. Hilary rejected the situation in Barcelona and, remarkably, absolved Silvanus of wrongdoing. What is particularly significant about the latter case is that Hilary stated that he had followed the testimony of certain lay landowners ('honoratorum et possessorum') in Silvanus' region.[26] It is clear that in the factional disputes of the time, laypeople played significant roles and could carry significant weight in informal, non-institutional ways—even before the bishop of Rome. The attempts of metropolitans to assert hierarchical authority met with opposition in certain places, and central ecclesiastical authorities could be outweighed by local aristocratic power.

The sixth century saw a flurry of conciliar activity in the same province—the most seen anywhere in Hispania before the Nicene period. Councils were held in Tarragona (516), Gerona (517), Barcelona (540), and Lérida (546), all in Tarraconensis, as well as in adjacent provinces, as with Toledo (531) and Valencia (549). These give us a relatively hierarchical and institutionalized account of ecclesiastical life in the region. The Council of Tarragona,

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[23] Esp. Augustine, *Ep.* 11*, ed. J. Divjak, CSEL, 88 (Vienna, 1981), pp. 51-70. For discussion: R. Van Dam, '"Sheep in wolves' clothing": the letters of Consentius to Augustine', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 37/4 (1986), pp. 515-35.

[24] Panzram, 'La formación', pp. 133-41.

[25] Ascanius' two letters are printed as Hilary, *Epp.* 13-14, ed. A. Thiel, *Epistolae romanorum pontificum genuinae et quae ad eos scriptae sunt, a s. Hilario usque ad Pelagium II, Tomus I* (Braunsberg, 1868), pp. 155-8. Moving sees was prohibited by e.g. Nicaea, c. 15 (*Hispana* text in Coll. Hisp. III, p. 74).

[26] Hilary issued three responses: *Epp.* 15-17, ed. Thiel, *Epistolae Romanorum pontificum*, pp. 159-70. Quote at *Ep.* 16.1, p. 165.

for example, gave considerable attention to issues of metropolitan authority. All bishops ordained outside the metropolitan city were to be presented to the metropolitan within two months; bishops were to attend all councils called by the metropolitan; metropolitan bishops were to visit each church once a year.[27] The following year, a council in Gerona required that all bishops in the province follow the formula for mass given by their metropolitan.[28] This speaks of an ordered hierarchy, but it is not clear how rigorously this ideal was enforced in reality—particularly given the evidence for failures of enforcement in the preceding century. There were doubtless still many centrifugal forces at work, and many reasons for disunity and for the dispersal of power away from higher authorities. The growth of formal, legalistic episcopal and metropolitan power could co-exist with a continuity in lay power and a persistence of informal means of asserting institutional power. Evidence from Toledo shows this more clearly.

In 531 a council was held in Toledo under the authority of the metropolitan, Montanus. Two letters by Montanus are appended to the conciliar *acta* in the *Collectio Hispana*. They were perhaps included to buttress later claims to Toledan primacy in the region of Carthaginiensis, which it seems was only decisively asserted over Cartagena, the historical capital of the province, in the seventh century.[29] Toledo's primacy grew slowly and unevenly during a period of transformation wrought by the city's shifting royal fortunes, and the Byzantine annexation of Cartagena in the middle of the sixth century.[30] The Second Council of Toledo, occurring twenty years before the Byzantine incursion, reflects a different

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[27] Tarragona, cc. 5-6, 8, 13 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 274-7, 279).
[28] Gerona, c. 1 (Coll. Hisp. IV, p. 285).
[29] *Decretum Gundemari* and *Concilii Toletani anno 610 celebrati constitutio* (Coll. Hisp. VI, pp. 205-12). The text appears out of chronological sequence in an appendix to XII Toledo (the so-called *Appendix toletana*) present in only a small subset of manuscripts of the *Juliana* recension of the *Collectio Hispana.* On the transmission F. Rodríguez, 'Introducción' (Coll. Hisp. VI, pp. 30-52); for historiography on the material's contested authenticity: Stocking, *Bishops, Councils, and Consensus*, p. 121, n. 13.
[30] I. Velázquez and G. Ripoll, '*Toletum*, la construcción de una *urbs regia*', in G. Ripoll and J.M. Gurt (eds), *Sedes regiae (ann. 400-800)* (Barcelona, 2000), pp. 521-78.

ecclesiastical geography. When the *acta* of the Second Council of Toledo refer to 'coepiscopus noster Montanus, qui in metropoli est', it likely that this metropolitan authority was not exercised over Carthaginiensis but over the newly established province of Carpentania-Celtiberia, mentioned in one of Montanus' letters.[31] The letters show Montaus reaching out to figures in the region of Palencia, some 240km north of Toledo, on the frontier with Suevic Gallaecia.

Montanus' letters shed fascinating light onto the fragile and complex nature of religious authority, as Céline Martin has shown.[32] The second of the two letters is most interesting for our present purposes. It gives a fascinating but enigmatic account of a layperson, Turibius, living in the region of Palencia.[33] He was, it seems, involved in both combatting 'Priscillianism' and, perhaps, in founding his own monastery.[34] Montanus' letter speaks not only of the way in which metropolitan power would stretch into the far reaches of the province, but also of how far lay agency in religious matters was essential to episcopal government. It challenges highly institutionalized accounts of territorial episcopal rule at the same time as providing evidence for such pretentions. This complexity is instructive. To be sure, the assertion of hierarchy and order is the theme of Montanus' first letter, addressed to presbyters in the region of Palencia. Montanus upbraided them for various uncanonical acts which bypassed episcopal authority: for consecrating their own chrism, and for reaching out to bishops from a neighbouring (perhaps Suevic) province for church consecrations. He also charged them with heterodox practice, namely honouring Priscillian as a martyr.[35] The layman Turibius was active in the same region, and was appealed to as an authority of some

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[31] II Toledo (Coll. Hisp. IV, p. 365). On Carpentania-Celtiberia: Codoñer, *El 'De viris illustribus' de Ildefonso de Toledo*, pp. 58-64; Velázquez and Ripoll, '*Toletum*', pp. 536-8.

[32] C. Martin, 'Montanus et les schismatiques: la reprise en main d'une périphérie hispanique au début du VI[e] siècle', *Médiévales*, 51 (2006), pp. 9-19.

[33] Not to be confused with the Gallaecian Turibius of Astorga, who wrote to Leo I in the mid-fifth century. See above, p. 35.

[34] Montanus, *Ep.* 2 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 363-6).

[35] Montanus, *Ep.* 1 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 356-63, quote at p. 361). Cf. above, p. 34.

kind, though he was seemingly not someone with formal, hierarchical office. Montanus attacked clerics who did not respect bishops, but his major ally—even in matters of orthodoxy—may not have been ordained at all.

Montanus speaks of Turibius as a 'distinguished lord' and 'special lord of the worshippers of Christ'. He addressed him as *filius* and did not give any clerical or monastic rank.[36] The most natural reading of this is that Turibius was a powerful lay figure. This would fit with the language of the Council of Tarragona, where a canon referred to bishops as *fratres* while speaking of laypeople as *filii*.[37] Indeed, Montanus praised Turibius explicitly for having lived both a religious and 'secular' life successfully:

> We have become acquainted with and commended you, a nursling (*alumnus*) of the Catholic faith and friend of holy religion yet also [a man] living powerfully in worldly activities. Indeed, although flourishing in the *saeculum* until recently, so much has the life of your renown been manifest that, following the judgement of the Lord, you both refuse to deny to Caesar those things which are Caesar's and you render to God those things which are his with devoted mind.[38]

His praise centred on Turibius' balancing of obligations and ties to worldly life and to religious impulses. There is no sense that they should be thought of as in contradiction or that one should entirely reject the *saeculum* so as to be truly faithful. On the contrary, Montanus praises the combination of roles. While Montanus was insistent on matters of canonical discipline and ecclesiastical order, he was able to praise lay agency. This was true even in the realm of doctrine, where Turibius had been active in attacking both 'idolatry' (presumably 'paganism') and 'Priscillianism'.[39]

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[36] Montanus, *Ep.* 2 (Coll. Hisp. IV, p. 363): *Domino eximio praecipuoque Christicolae domno et filio Toribio.*
[37] Tarragona, c. 13 (Coll. Hisp. IV, p. 279).
[38] Montanus, *Ep.* 2 (Coll. Hisp. IV, p. 363): *Alumnum te fidei catholicae et sanctae religionis amicum etiam in actis mundialibus conuersantem ualde et nouimus et probauimus. Cum enim adhuc floreres in saeculo, ita claritudinis tuae uita perpatuit ut secundum sententiam Domini et quae sunt Caesaris Caesari non negares et Deo quae sua sunt deuota mente persolueres.* Cf. Matt. 22:21.
[39] Montanus, *Ep.* 2 (Coll. Hisp. IV, p. 363).

The institutionally unclear nature of religious authority in this case is instructive. The administrative point of the letter is to name Turibius as the authority (*auctor*) for the divine cult in the region. It is not at all clear what this atypical term means, but it did not regularly refer to an ordained ecclesiastical authority.[40] There is no reason to assume that laypeople were excluded from ecclesiastical matters—indeed, they were present at church councils, long before the Nicene Visigothic state granted a particular political purpose to this. The Council of Tarragona (516) stated that when bishops attended councils at their metropolitan's request they should not only bring themselves and their cathedral clergy but also lower clergy from rural churches ('de diocesanis') and certain laypeople ('aliquos de filiis ecclesiae secularibus').[41] It is well established that this was the case in the seventh century, when councils became implicated with matters of royal government, but it is less well appreciated that laypeople already had a role in the sixth century in the absence of any overarching statist rationale.

Many historians, unable to believe that Turibius could have been a lay authority of some kind, have assumed he was a bishop.[42] This is partly on the strength of the phrase *uester coepiscopos*, which Montanus used to denote to Turibius alongside the bishops of Carpetania and Celtiberia. It is also partly on the pervasive assumption that a layperson would not be called upon to exercise such authority in the religious sphere. Céline Martin has given a plausible destruction of this case.[43] The phrase *uester coepiscopos*, which seems to contradict the content of the letter, can be explained away as a scribal corruption of *noster coepiscopos*—that

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[40] Montanus, *Ep.* 2 (Col.. Hisp. IV, p. 363): *Iure etenim auctorem te diuini cultus in hac praesertim prouincia nominabo.*

[41] Tarragona, c. 13 (Coll. Hisp. IV, p. 279).

[42] E.A. Thompson, *The Goths in Spain* (Oxford, 1969), p. 33, n. 5; H. Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila: The Occult and the Charismatic in the Early Church* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 222-3; A. Isla Frez, 'Desde el reino visigodo y la ortodoxia toledana: la correspondencia de Montano', *Studia Historica—Historia Medieval*, 18-19 (2000-1), pp. 41-52; Velázquez and Ripoll, '*Toletum*', p. 537.

[43] Martin, 'Montanus et les schismatiques'.

is, as Montanus calling the other bishops *coepiscopos* of himself.[44] This may seem like convoluted reasoning, but it makes good sense of the evidence adduced above. Writing over a century later, Ildefonsus of Toledo referred to Turibius as a *religiosus*, suggesting he at some point acquired an ascetic vocation.[45] Indeed, Montanus praised Turibius for bringing 'the wild souls of those cohabiting with you to a salutary rule and norm of regular discipline'.[46] While some scholars have interpreted this to mean that Montanus had been involved in converting local Visigoths ('wild souls') to the 'salutary rule' of Nicene faith, the ascetic (or monastic) interpretation seems more natural.[47] Either way, it makes for a remarkable career for someone who—as Montanus suggests in the earlier quotation—did the bulk of their religious labours as a layperson. What kind of ascetic life Turibius lived in his later life is entirely unclear. It could have been formally monastic, but it might equally have been something closer to the ascetic discipline of landowners like Prudentius in a prior era.[48]

That a layperson could be entrusted with authority in religious matters should not strike us as too surprising. We have noted that laypeople attended councils; we have seen the Roman see accept the testimony of lay landholders over the word of the metropolitan of Tarragona. Evidence from after the Third Council of Toledo chimes with this picture, too. When Gregory the Great sent his legate, the abbot Cyriacus, to the Visigothic kingdom in 599, he commended this man not to a bishop but to the *dux* of Lusitania, Claudius.[49] John of Biclarum, Gregory of Tours, and Isidore all recalled Claudius as a military hero, noting his

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[44] Montanus, *Ep.* 2 (Coll. Hisp. IV, p. 365). See Martin, 'Montanus et les schismatiques', p. 12.
[45] Ildef., *De viris*, 2, at p. 120.
[46] Montanus, *Ep.* 2 (Coll. Hisp. IV, p. 364): *Cui ita tuum impendisti laborem ut feroces cohabitantium tibi animos ad salubrem regulam et normam regularis disciplinae perduceres.*
[47] Martin, 'Montanus et les schismatiques', p. 12. *Pace* Thompson, *Goths in Spain*, p. 33, n. 5; M. Koch, 'Arianism and ethnic identity in sixth-century Visigothic Spain', in G.M. Berndt and R. Steinacher, *Arianism: Roman Heresy and Barbarian Creed* (Farnham, 2014), pp. 257-70, at p. 266. A. Isla Frez, 'Desde el reino visigodo y la ortodoxia toledana: la correspondencia de Montano', *Studia Historica—Historia Medieval*, 18-19 (2000-1), pp. 41-52, at p. 43 argues that the 'barbarians' in question are Sueves.
[48] See above, pp. 2-3.
[49] Gr. Mag., *Reg. epist.*, IX.230, with discussion in T. Deswarte, *Une Chrétienté romaine sans pape: l'Espagne et Rome (586-1085)* (Paris, 2010), pp. 213-16.

for his victories against the Franks.[50] The hagiographical *Vitas sanctorum patrum Emeretensium*, however, memorialized him as a pious Nicene Christian and opponent of Arianism, crediting with dealing with the Arian revolt which arose in the early days of Reccared's reign.[51] There was no contradiction between lay political office and a role in matters of the faith, even in the eyes of a seventh-century hagiographer of bishops.

The question of Turibius' ascetic household or monastery takes us to another key issue, which challenged the reification of 'the church' as a unified entity: that of property and lay patronage. When we focus in on lay-founded entities, like rural churches or monasteries, it becomes harder and harder to see where autonomous lay religiosity ends and the organized ecclesiastical hierarchy begins. While we cannot know much about Turibius' own situation, we can observe wider trends in the lay foundation of churches and monasteries. The early sixth century was a different world to that of late Roman Hispania, but the contrast should not be exaggerated, nor should the existence of a distinctly medieval monasticism be presumed as normative. Despite the collapse of rural villa life in the fifth century, the canonical evidence—as well as the evidence for figures like Turibius—leaves open to a wide scope of plausibility for substantial lay agency in founding religious institutions with private property in subsequent centuries. This includes monasteries and was true right through the Suevic and Visigothic periods.[52]

As I have argued at length elsewhere, lay foundations have significant consequences for how we conceptualize 'the church' and the power of bishops.[53] While the Iberian councils were concerned with strengthening episcopal authority in certain spheres and establishing jurisdictions, they were also deeply concerned to limit episcopal power where

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[50] J. Bicl. *Chron.*, 90; Isid. *Hist.*, 54; Gr. Tur., *DLH*, IX.31.

[51] *VSPE*, V.9-10, esp. V.10, at p. 83: *existebat prossus fide catholicus et religionis uinculis fortiter adstrictus, in preliis strenuous, in timore Dei ualde promtissimus, in bellica studiis eruditis, in causis bellicis nicilominus exercitatus.*

[52] On monastic property, see below, pp. 255-66; on villas, see above, pp. 14-15, esp. n. 54.

[53] D. Addison, 'Property and "publicness": bishops and lay-founded churches in post-Roman Hispania', *EME*, 28/2 (2020), pp. 175-96.

appropriate. This latter fact is underappreciated. The figure of the corrupt, immoderate bishop who despoils the churches of their diocese haunts the canons, as does the figure of the ruined, neglected church building.[54] The Council of Tarragona, bemoaning the presence of 'ecclesias destitutas', limited episcopal exactions from dependent churches to a customary third of the incomes.[55] Later councils would defend foundations from the avarice (*avaritia* and *cupiditas*) of acquisitive bishops.[56] Canons set limits on bishops' power over the patrimonies of dependent and lay-founded institutions in order to make episcopal authority appear a legitimate, bounded power, acceptable to laypeople and their interests. There was no attempt to assert a monarchical notion of episcopal power in the diocese, but always an attempt to negotiate between different actors, clerical and lay.

Again, we need to be cautious of thinking of 'the church' as an undifferentiated entity. It had a much more fragmented structure then is often appreciated, and this was by canonical design, not by sheer force of circumstance in tumultuous times. None of this directly impinges on the question of the ecclesiastical distinction between the Nicene and Arian churches, but it does give an important warning against presuming that any one 'church' constituted a coherent institutional body with clear bounds. Much was devolved to lay people and local clergy who may have thought very differently to their bishops. Once we move away from urban bishops, and towards the world of rural Christianity, we are not as far from the world of the late Roman villa church as we may think.

III. CONFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES: UNITY AND DIVERSITY

It is possible to speak of clear institutional separation between Nicenes and Arians at the episcopal level. Leovigild's council of 580 makes clear that there was an Arian episcopate

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[54] D. Fernández, 'Property, social status, and church building in Visigothic Iberia', *Journal of Late Antiquity*, 9/2 (2016), pp. 512-41, at p. 513.
[55] Tarragona, c. 8 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 276-7, quote at p. 276).
[56] Addison, 'Property and "publicness"', pp. 191-5.

capable of acting as a corporate body. While there are no explicit references to Arian bishops before this time, it is pushing scepticism too far to argue—as Ralph Mathisen has—that the Arian episcopate was formed only in Leovigild's reign, as a consequence of his religious policy.[57] There were earlier disputes over liturgical formulae and baptism which all suggest an organized church with recognized clerical authorities throughout the sixth century. There is no reason not to think these authorities were bishops or their functional equivalent. That said, the evidence for the Arian episcopate, even in the 580s, suggests it was a relatively small body. Only eight Arian bishops are recorded renouncing their former faith at the Third Council of Toledo, and only five of their sees are named. These are Viseo, Tuy, Lugo, Porto, and Tortosa—hardly the ecclesiastical centres of the kingdom.[58] There were other Arian bishops—we know of Vincent in Zaragoza, Sunna in Mérida, and others who revolted rather than reneged—but we have no evidence of there ever being an Arian bishop in such major sees as Sevilla, Córdoba, Tarragona, and Valencia. Many Nicene Christians would never have come across organized Arian religiosity. Nonetheless, there was an Arian clergy with some kind of institutional structure.

Arian churches in post-Roman successor states have often been understood as ethnically grounded religious communities, not least in the Visigothic case. Such claims mirror, to some extent, claims put forward by Reccared himself at the Third Council of Toledo. He presented conversion less as one of a religiously-defined group of 'Arians' to the Nicene faith, and more as the calling of a *gens*—an ethnically-conceived group of Goths—to the 'Catholic' truth.[59] Having been misled by corrupt teachers, the Goths were now recalled to the one true faith by their king.[60] Similar claims to the ethnic basis of faith have been

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[57] R.W. Mathisen, 'Barbarian "Arian" clergy, church organization, and church practices', in Berndt and Steinacher (eds), *Arianism*, pp. 145-92, at pp. 159-62.
[58] III Toledo, *Gothorum professio fidei*, (Coll. Hisp., V, pp. 95-8).
[59] III Toledo, *prooemium*, (Coll. Hisp., V, p. 50).
[60] III Toledo, *regis professio fidei* (Coll. Hisp., V, p. 57). On *gens* and King: Teillet, *Des Goths à la nation gothique*, pp. 435-9.

extrapolated from Leovigild's speech, as reported by the hostile source John of Biclarum, at the Arian council held in Toledo in 580: Leovigild allegedly called the Nicene faith *Romana religio* while denoting his own position *nostra catolica fides*.[61] The idea that Arianism was a distinctly Gothic matter crystallized in the Nicene historical memory. While Isidore accepted in the *Historia Gothorum* that the Roman emperor Valens bore some responsibility for converting the Goths to the Arian confession, he nonetheless figured Arianism as the faith of the *Gothi* and placed Ulfilas' Gothic translation of the Bible at the heart of his account of their faith.[62]

Many recent scholars have called the ethnic basis of faith into question.[63] We can easily find evidence of people claiming their own catholicity while denigrating opposing doctrinal positions as partial, ethnically rooted phenomena. This was the ecclesiology articulated by Leander of Seville at the Third Council of Toledo when he contrasted the 'Catholic' church, extended throughout the whole world according to the natural unity of people, with heresies, which could only ever be regional perversions of this universal order.[64] Leander did not utilize much ethnic language (he never mentioned Goths or Sueves by name) but preferred, rather, to speak in more transcendent ecclesiological terms. As well as familiar sources like the Song of Songs, Leander alluded to the Old Testament story of the

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[61] J. Bicl., *Chron.*, 57, p. 71: *Leovigildus rex* […] *dicens de Romana religione ad nostram catolicam fidem venientes non debere baptizari.*

[62] Isid. *Hist.* 7-8 [long redaction]. Cf. Isid. *Hist.* 53 [long redaction]. On Isidore's historic view of Arianism: J. Wood, *The Politics of Identity in Visigothic Spain: Religion and Power in the Histories of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden, 2012), pp. 219-21. Eug. II, *Carm.* 39-40 remembered Ulfilas as the founder of the Gothic alphabet.

[63] Notably, R. Whelan, 'Ethnicity, Christianity, and groups: Homoian Christians in Ostrogothic Italy and Visigothic Spain', in Y. Fox and E. Buchberger (eds), *Inclusion and Exclusion in Mediterranean Christianities, 400-800* (Turnhout, 2019), pp. 141-64. For the Ostrogothic context see also P. Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489-554* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 236-76.

[64] Leander of Seville, *Homilia in laude sanctae ecclesiae* (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 148-59, at p. 151): *Haereses uero et diuisiones a fonte emanant uitiorum, unde quique ad unitatem uenit, ex uitio ad naturam redit, quia sicut naturae est fieri ex pluribus unitatem, sic est uitii fraternitatis declinare dulcedinem.* See also Isidore's remarks on heresy in the following century: *Sent.*, I.16.6-7.

Tower of Babel to explain the division of humanity into different *gente*: these, he argued, derived from *superbia* and *linguarum diuersitas*.[65] The universal church was defined precisely in opposition to this lamentable diversity: it prefigured the pre-Babel community, uniting people according to the natural bond of human sociability that was implanted in human nature and lost only by sinful perversion. Here, Leander was in dialogue especially with the ideas of Christian community and linguistic diversity elaborated in Augustine's *De civitate Dei*.[66] He was not articulating a vision of Visigothic identity which was coterminous with orthodoxy—he was espousing a universal *ecclesia* against sectional identities. We are not able to draw out intellectual genealogies in the same way for Arian thought, but we know that Arians also had a sense of 'catholicity'. Leovigild's remarks suggest this, and some earlier texts from outside the Iberian Peninsula show that Arians thought their positions were more in accordance with the tradition and scripture of the one true church than were their opponents'.[67] Nowhere do we find Arian writers arguing from the basis of ethnicity.

This is not to say that there was no correlation between Gothic identity and Arianism, or Nicene faith and Hispano-Roman identity. Rather, it is to make the subtler point that ethnic identity was not the ecclesiological foundation of either church. There was, of course, a Latin tradition of Arian thought, running right back to the fourth century. Potamius of Lisbon is a notable and complex example from fourth-century Hispania. Arian works continued to be written in Latin in Italy, long after Ulfilas, though we have no equivalent evidence for Hispania.[68] There is no reason to presume that Arianism as a

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[65] Leander of Seville, *Homilia in laude sanctae ecclesiae*, (Coll. Hisp., V, p. 154): *quia superbia linguarum diuersitate ab unione gentes separauerat*. See J. Fontaine, 'La homília de San Leandro ante el Concilio III de Toledo: temática y forma', in *El Concilio III de Toledo. XIV Centenario, 589-1989* (Toledo, 1991), pp. 249-70.

[66] See Aug., *De ciu.*, XVI, and wider discussion in T. Denecker, *Ideas of Language in Early Latin Christianity from Tertullian to Isidore of Seville* (Leiden, 2017), esp. pp. 96-149.

[67] On Arians' sense of their own universality, see the texts discussed in Whelan, 'Ethnicity, Christianity, and groups', pp. 149-52.

[68] Meslin, *Les Ariens*, with Potamius at pp. 31-4 and the wider Latin tradition *passim*.

doctrine was the preserve of a particular ethnic or linguistic tradition. This does not mean, however, that the Arian ecclesiastical establishment and its congregants were not predominantly Gothic. In Hispania, there is no evidence of a distinct Arian ecclesiastic structure (as opposed to individual bishops, moving with their own inclinations or imperial policy) before the arrival of the Visigoths. The institutional makeup of Iberian Arianism may well have been predominantly Gothic, then, as is usually supposed. Its clergy certainly were, as the names of those denying their Arian faith at the Third Council attests.[69]

It does not follow from this, however, that the *basis* of the Arian church was ethnicity—merely that historical contingency and inertia made it predominantly Gothic. There is no evidence of the Gothic language being used in Hispania, unlike in Ostrogothic Italy.[70] Even in the Italian case, the equation of language and confession can be problematized. Patrick Amory has provocatively argued that in Italy, where the Gothic language was most prevalent, it quickly became a specialized, arcane liturgical language, understood only by a narrow priestly class—a subset even within the wider Arian clergy.[71] Returning to Hispania, there seems to have been some fluidity in the relationship between ethnic identity and confession by the sixth century. The successive attempts at religious unification undertaken by Leovigild and Reccared show that there was an impetus toward unifying identity groups—religious policy was precisely not about maintaining the integrity of supposedly well-defined ethnic groupings. There is no need to think that it was earlier in the century, either. In Manuel Koch's words, the detachment of religious and ethnic identity was 'not the aim but the basis' of their respective policies.[72]

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[69] III Toledo, *Gothorum professio fidei* (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 95-8). The names were *Vgnas*, *Murila*, *Vuiligisclus*, *Sunnila*, *Gardingus*, *Beccila*, *Aruittus*, and *Fruisclus*.

[70] R. Wright, 'Linguistic and ethnic identities in the Iberian Peninsula (400-1000AD)', in W. Pohl and B. Zeller (eds), *Sprache und Identität im frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna, 2012), pp. 99-108.

[71] Amory, *People and Identity*, pp. 236-76.

[72] Koch, 'Arianism and ethnic identity', p. 269.

With the ethnic paradigm rejected, the question of what separated out the two churches on the ground presents itself with new urgency. What separated the Nicene and Arian Christianity in practice? Writing in the Suevic kingdom, Martin of Braga gave a minimalist answer—'besides the diminishment of the divinity of the Son of God and the Holy Spirit, the remaining things are kept by them [the Arians] just as they are by us'.[73] For Martin it did not matter whether the same rituals were kept by both churches—Nicene practice need not change in response to the heretics. Yet for others, the extent to which the two churches closely paralleled one another in their external aspects and rituals caused a great deal of anxiety. Molly Lester has illuminated much of this both before and after 589.[74] To use the words of Robin Whelan, writing of a similar situation in Vandal Africa, the source of this angst was the extent to which the 'two sets of churches and communities might seem interchangeable'.[75] The line between the two churches in ritual and liturgical terms could be thin, if not non-existent, and clerics had to work hard to assert it where they could.

One reason for a lack of clear distinction on the ground was that, at least in the 580s, Arians and Nicenes were fighting over the same external things. Arians sought to appropriate and use Nicene churches—they did not try to design their own, architecturally distinct buildings. In archaeological terms, churches cannot be identified as Arian or Nicene.[76] Even in areas with better-documented Arian churches like Ostrogothic Italy, no typological criteria can be established to distinguish church buildings according to the

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[73] Martin of Braga, *De trina*, p. 290: *praeter minorationem deitatis Filii Dei et Spiritus Sancti, cetera ita penes se retinenent sicut nos.*

[74] M. Lester, *The Word as Lived: The Practice of Orthodoxy in Early Medieval Iberia. c. 500-711* (Ph.D. thesis, Princeton University, 2017), pp. 19-87.

[75] R. Whelan, *Being Christian in Vandal Africa: The Politics of Orthodoxy in the Post-Imperial West* (Oakland, CA, 2018), p. 32.

[76] R. Bockmann, 'The non-archaeology of Arianism—what comparing cases in Carthage, Haïdra and Ravenna can tell us about "Arian" churches', in Berndt and Steinacher (eds), *Arianism*, pp. 201-18. On the sparse archaeology of Iberian 'Arianism' see A. Chavarría Arnau, 'Finding invisible Arians: an archaeological perspective on churches, baptism and religious competition in 6th century Spain', *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 23/2 (2017), pp. 675-86.

confession of their builders or occupiers.[77] In Hispania we only know of one church built to be Arian. This is the church located in Leovigild's newly founded city of Reccopolis.[78] Rather than new building, occupation and re-consecration was common. We know more about this from the 'conversion' of Arian-held churches after 589, but it shows the same point. When the Third Council of Toledo declared that all Arian-held churches would be put into Nicene control it did not suggest that the buildings required any significant modification.[79] At least one inscription survives which can be interpreted as commemorating a re-consecration of a formerly Arian church as Nicene early in Reccared's reign. This pertains to the church of Santa Maria in Toledo which, the inscription states, was consecrated 'in catolico' on 13 April 587.[80] A further inscription from the church at Mijangos (Burgos) probably shows the same process.[81] Before Reccared, churches doubtless changed hands the other way, too.

An example from the mid-seventh-century *Vitas sanctorum patrum Emeretensium* is illustrative. It describes the Arian bishop Sunna trying to acquire the main church of Mérida, the basilica of St. Eulalia, in the 580s.[82] He sought to take over the most prestigious holy site, and utilize its already existing status. It was built on the site of Eulalia's earlier *martyrium*, and already had high-status burials *ad sanctos* by the end of the fifth century.[83] A high-status cult site like this would not necessarily be considered part of an exclusively 'Nicene' heritage (though, as we will see below, there were attempts to make them so). 'Arians' believed that they could take over these sites without disrupting their power and centrality. As part of this,

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[77] Bockmann, 'The non-archaeology of Arianism', p. 218: 'In the strict sense of the term, 'Arian churches' did not exist at all, but churches could have Arian bishops.'
[78] A. Chavarría Arnau, *A la sombra de un imperio. Iglesias, obispos y reyes en la Hispania tardoantigua (siglos V-VII)* (Bari, 2018), p. 62.
[79] III Toledo, c. 9 (Coll. Hisp. V, p. 116).
[80] I. Velázquez Soriano, 'La inscripción de consagración de la Catedral de Toledo', in M. Almagro-Gorbea, J.-M. Barranco Ribot, and M. Gorbea, *Excavaviones en el claustro de la Catedral de Toledo* (Madrid, 2011), pp. 261-80, with the text ed. at p. 272.
[81] Chavarría, *A la sombra*, p. 41.
[82] *VSPE*, V.5, at p. 58.
[83] P. Mateos Cruz, *La basílica de Santa Eulalia. Arqueología y urbanismo* (Madrid, 1999), pp. 159-63.

they sought to take over relics. The *VSPE* narrates a long dispute in which Leovigild called the Nicene bishop, Masona, to Toledo and demanded Eulalia's tunic. He refused.[84] Relics were indeed competed over. A provincial council held in Zaragoza shortly after the Third Council of Toledo dealt with what should be done with relics from Arian churches, concluding that they should be tested in fire.[85] This shows not only that Arian churches held relics but, more significantly, that they were considered, at least in theory, to be potentially authentic and 'un-Arian'. There is no evidence for specifically Arian martyrs celebrated in Hispania.[86]

Martyrs and saints are good examples of how precious cultural resources were not necessarily tied into a specific confessional identity. It is far from clear that ordinary Christians venerating Eulalia of Mérida would have ceased to do so if the Arian bishop took over the shrine. Its strains belief, too, to think that Vincent, bishop of Zaragoza, reneged allegiance to the city's prominent martyr cults when he went to the Arian church.[87] The congregations who venerated him may well have continued to do so without any obvious change. One piece of evidence points in the other direction. Martyr passions often put doctrinal formulae out in the mouths of their martyrs. Both Eulalia's and Vincent's passions attest this. In Vincent's case this is true even of a version of the passion dated to the fifth century. 'I confess Christ, son of God; and I testify that he is the only one (*unicum*) of the highest Father—he is God, with the Father and the Holy Spirit.'[88] Does this mean that Vincent's cult was specifically Nicene? This pushes the evidence too far. The passions all come down to us in Nicene redactions, but this is not to say that other formulae could not

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[84] *VSPE*, V.6.

[85] II Zaragoza, c. 2 (Conc., p. 154).

[86] Some standard saints seem to have been particularly favoured by 'Arians' elsewhere, and some specifically Arian martyrs were known, though we have no evidence of them in Hispania. See Amory, *People and Identity*, pp. 244-5; Mathisen, 'Barbarian "Arian" clergy', p. 181.

[87] Isid., *De viris*, 30; Isid. *Hist.*, 50.

[88] *PVinc.* [brève], 2, p. 138: *"Christus fateor Dei filium; Patris altissimi unicum cum Patre et cum Spiritu sancto protestor esse Deum!* C.f. *PVinc.* [comm.], 11; *PEulE.*, 12.

have very easily been put the place of the Nicene ones. The trinitarian formulae extant in the texts reflect Nicene authors stamping their creed onto these popular and important texts, using them for doctrinal teaching and communal boundary setting—for trying to diminish the extent to which martyrs could be 'interchangeable' with the Arian church.[89] That so many passions acquired Nicene formulae at some point in their transmissions is, perhaps, testament to anxieties over their potential confessional fluidity, which doctrinal statements were designed to shut down.[90]

Other issues show a similar tension between the interchangeability of each church's rituals and practices, and the clerical desire to draw hard lines. The two issues that we know were brought up at Leovigild's Toledan council were baptism and the formula of the doxology. These were both concerns in Nicene literature too. The two key Nicene sources on baptism are Pope Vigilius' letter to Profuturus of Braga (538) and the canons of the Council of Lérida (546). Both show that there were pastoral problems around the issue of rebaptism. Vigilius' letter was sent in response to enquiries from the bishop of Braga, then in the Suevic kingdom. Among the issues discussed was that of those who 'having received the grace of saving baptism, have been baptized again by the Arians'—that is, Nicene Christians who had converted to 'Arianism' but who sought to enter the Nicene community again.[91] The 'Arian' church in this period demanded rebaptism while the Nicene church usually prescribed only the laying on of hands, following penance. It is important to note that this dichotomy had not always been in force. Marta Szada has shown that, as in so many aspects of the Nicene-Arian difference, clarity and uniformity of position among Nicene ecclesiastics emerged slowly. That said, it seems that as early as the end of the fourth century the Nicene

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[89] On doctrinal teaching and martyr cult: J. Maxwell, 'Popular theology in late antiquity', in L. Grig (ed.), *Popular Culture in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 277-95.
[90] Cf. *PMant.*, 3, discussed below, pp. 197-9.
[91] Vigilius, *Ep. ad Profuturum*, 3, ed. J.P. Migne, PL, 69 (Paris, 1862), cols. 15-19, at col. 18: *baptismatis gratis salutaris accepta apud Arianos iterum baptizati.*

prohibition on rebaptism of 'heretics' was well established.[92] Vigilius' response to Profuturus' question, refusing rebaptism and demanding penance of those who had been rebaptized, was entirely conventional.[93] The Council of Lérida gave similar instructions, mandating seven years among the catechumenate and two among the 'catholicos', with no admittance to communion until these seven years were up.[94]

At the same council a more complex case was presented: that of Nicene parents who had their children baptized as Arians. It was ruled that their oblations were no longer welcome.[95] This case is particularly illustrative of the permeability of confessional boundaries. These parents seem to have tried to hedge their bets—to have a foot in each camp, or at least try to allow their children the opportunities that would come with access to the Arian community. The parents who baptized their children in the Arian church presumably did not think they were damning them to eternal punishment, nor that they had crossed a perilous boundary between two different and opposed communities. It speaks, rather, of the kind of strategizing that occurs when communities are mixed and boundaries permeable. Discussing the more abundant polemical literature from Vandal Africa, Robin Whelan has argued that ethnic markers were most often used as polemical terms to disparage, stereotype, or mock one church. They were terms and identities which had 'salience' in certain contexts, and could deployed as such, but much of the time people did not primarily identity as one or the other. Some social groups would have been based on other logics and involved the mixing of ethnicities and confessions. The evidence of baptismal issues suggests that people did move between the confessional communities, and that they did so irrespective of ethnic identity.[96]

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[92] M. Szada, 'The debate over the repetition of baptism between Homoians and Nicenes at the end of the fourth century', *JECS*, 27/4 (2019), pp. 635-63.
[93] Vigilius, *Ep. ad Profuturum*, 3, ed. Migne, PL, 69, col. 18.
[94] Lérida, c. 9 (Coll. Hisp. IV, p. 304).
[95] Lérida, c. 13 (Coll. Hisp. IV, p. 305).
[96] Whelan, *Being Christian in Vandal Africa*, pp. 165-94.

Another issue which appears repeatedly in the sparse evidential record is that of the form of the doxology. While this may seem like a minor point, it, like baptism, seems to have been a major concern. This is perhaps because it was something used liturgically (including in baptism) and had a particularly congregation-facing aspect. John of Biclarum tells of only two measures taken at the Arian council of 580. The first was that it ceased to mandate re-baptism; the second was that it defined a new form of the *Gloria patri* for use in mass: *Gloria patri per filium in spiritu sancto*.[97] This was by no means a trivial statement. It differed from the Nicene formula *Gloria patri et filio et spiritui sancto*, given in all Nicene sources in Hispania and Gaul in the period.[98] This latter creed, with the addition of *honor* alongside *gloria*, was mandated at the Third Council of Toledo. Anyone who refused to glorify and honour (*glorificandos et honorandos*) both the Son and Holy Spirit was considered anathema, as was anyone who used the traditional Arian formula.[99] That the matter of the *gloria* was a real bone of contention is indicated by Gregory of Tours' report that the Arian ambassador for the Visigoths, Oppila, whom he met in 584, affirmed the equal power (*virtus*) of the persons of the Trinity, but refused to grant *gloria* to the Son or the Holy Spirit in the mass, preferring the formula *Gloria dei patri per filium*.[100]

This contention had a long history. The 'prepositional' formula, with 'per' and 'in' was initially a standard formula, backed by a long tradition. As Trinitarian arguments raged on, however, it came to be associated with Arian positions, perhaps because it was used by some to differentiate the nature and role of the different persons of the Trinity.[101] In Auxentius' explanation of Ulfilas' faith—to give just one example—the Holy Spirit was

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[97] The *Gloria patri*, used in mass, baptism, and other liturgies, is also known as the 'minor' or 'lesser doxology'.

[98] Avitus of Vienne, *Contra arrianos*, 11, ed. R. Peiper, MGH, Auct. ant., 6/2 (Berlin, 1883), pp. 1-15, at pp. 5-6; Gr. Tur., *DLH*, VI.40, ed. Krusch and Levison, pp. 310-13.

[99] III Toledo, *Gothorum professio fidei*, *anathemae* 13 and 14 (Coll. Hisp. V, p. 82). Cf. IV Toledo, c. 15 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 204-5).

[100] Gr. Tur., *DLH*, VI.40, quotes at p. 311.

[101] U. Heil, 'The Homoians', in Berndt and Steinacher, *Arianism*, pp. 85-115, at pp. 105-8.

considered to have been made *a patri per filium*.[102] In a probably fifth-century text preserved in the Bobbio fragments, the notion that the Holy Spirit should be worshipped (*colendus*) or adored (*adorandus*) was directly attacked by an Arian writer.[103] The *gloria* was clearly an important issue on both sides. Indeed, as Molly Lester has shown, the prepositional formula likely appeared to Nicene observers as frankly Arian by the later sixth century, whatever its actual origin.[104] An anti-Arian miracle story in Victor of Tunnuna's *Chronicon* saw a Vandal bishop try to baptize someone 'in nomine patris per filium in spiritum sanctum', before finding the water had vanished from the font.[105] Isidore would repeat this story (a rare miraculous occurrence in his writings) in his own *Chronica maiora* some decades after Leovigild's council.[106] If this form of the *Gloria patri* was clearly interpreted as Arian by its opponents, it is harder to see Leovigild's council as offering a compromise with Nicene Christianity. It is common to interpret Leovigild's reforms as essentially political, bereft of any particular interest in doctrinal matters. It pays, however, to take more seriously the doctrinal side of the equation.

This is not to counter the evidence for fluidity evinced above and re-instate a sharply doctrinal dichotomy between the Arian and Nicene communities. It is important, however, to demonstrate that doctrinal conflict was one part of the wider context, and that doctrinal matters were not only matters of arcane clerical theorizing. There is evidence that preachers sought to inculcate doctrinal arguments into laypeople, and that certain laypeople were themselves interested in such matters. That said, there is also wider evidence of doctrinal

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[102] *Letter of Auxentius*, quoted in Maximinus's *Dissertatio*, in *Scholia in Concilium Aquileiense*, 30, ed. R. Gryson, CCSL, 87 (Turnhout, 1982), p. 162.
[103] *Instructio uerae fidei* [=*Fragmenta theologica arriana*, frag. 21], ed. Gryson, CCSL, 87, pp. 261-2, at 262: *Hic spiritus sanctus non deus neque dominus, non creator neque factor, non colendus neque adorandus*.
[104] Lester, *The Word as Lived*, pp. 46-7.
[105] Victor of Tunnuna, *Chronicon*, 82, ed. C. Cardelle de Hartmann, CCSL, 173A (Turnhout, 2001), p. 26.
[106] Isidore of Seville, *Chronica maiora*, 393 [both redactions], ed. J.C. Martín Iglesias, CCSL, 112 (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 190-1.

issues that had little to do with trinitarian thought. We cannot reduce all doctrinal conflict to the Arian-Nicene split, but more nor can we ignore the way in which this divide made contact with at least some laypeople. Doctrine deserves serious attention.

IV. DOCTRINAL DEBATE

We know very little about Arian doctrine in Hispania before the 580s when the religious situation was radicalized by Leovigild's policies. John of Biclarum tells us that when Leovigild convened his council in Toledo in 580, he 'emended the ancient heresy with a new error'.[107] He goes on to name two measures, both of which we have already discussed: removal of the demand for rebaptism and mandating of the prepositional formula of the doxology. The Third Council of Toledo mentioned that a 'detestable little book' was produced at the council, and stated these same two measures.[108] The standard historical account goes much further than these two issues, however, and identifies the 'new error' with a completely revised doctrinal position. This is justified by drawing on Gregory of Tours' claim that Chilperic's ambassadors, returning from royal business in Hispania, had come to the impression that Leovigild accepted the equality of Father and Son, but not the Holy Spirit.[109] The 'new error' was thus a new faith—that which standard heresiological taxonomy would call Macedonianism. A number of historians have labelled it as such, considering it a substantial doctrinal change mandated by Leovigild as part of his overarching project to create a politically and confessionally unified polity.[110] Bruno Dumézil writes of a 'nouvelle religion fondée par Léovigild', and regards it as created *ex nihilo* for political ends.[111]

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[107] J. Bicl., *Chron.*, 57, p. 71: *antiquam heresem nouello errore emendat* [my trans.].
[108] III Toledo, *Gothorum professio fidei, anathemae*, 16 (Coll. Hisp. V, p. 82): *libellum detestabilem.*
[109] Gr. Tur., *DLH*, VI.18. The ambassadors report Leovigild as saying 'Manefeste cognovi, esse Christum filium Dei aequalem Patri; sed Spiritum sanctum Deum penitus esse non credo, eo quod in nullis legatur codicibus Deus esse' (p. 287).
[110] E.g. Thompson, *Goths in Spain*, p. 85; Collins, '¿Dónde estaban los arrianos?', pp. 216-18.
[111] Dumézil, *Les racines*, pp. 264-8, quote at p. 266.

Yet, as Molly Lester has recently noted, the evidence for a doctrinal shift of this scale is severely lacking. It receives no explicit mention in any Iberian evidence—indeed, Gregory's second-hand report is the sole piece of evidence on which it hangs.[112] We know equally little about the Visigothic Arianism before 580. It is hard to know what to contrast such a supposedly new position with. The common assumption is that Gothic Arianism was 'Homoian'—that is, that it related to the position developed at Sirmium, Rimini, Seleucia, and Constantinople between 359 and 360 and adopted as orthodoxy by the Roman emperor Constantius II.[113] This doctrine was an attempt to forge a compromise position satisfying to those who rejected the Nicene language of the Son being *homoousios* with the Father (that is, 'of the same substance'). The Homoian position hinged on a concept of 'likeness' rather than oneness of substance. The standard narrative takes this to define Ulfilas' theology, passed thence to the Goths, who saw no reason ever to modify it until Leovigild's innovations. A number of historians have argued that 'Homoian' is a preferable term of art for referring to Arians, given that Arian was always a polemical term used only by opponents.[114] The latter point is undoubtedly true—no-one called themselves Arian, and no-one in our period saw themselves as a follower of Arius—but it does not follow that the Visigoths' theology can be narrowed down to a specifically Homoian position.

Indeed, as Sara Parvis has forcefully argued, the case for Homoian continuity assumes too much on all counts.[115] There is no particular reason to see the Homoian compromise, among the myriad shifting doctrinal positions which proliferated in the fourth

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112 Lester, *The Word as Lived*, p. 45.

113 For an overview, see U. Heil, 'The Homoians'.

114 E.g. K. Schäferdiek, 'Ulfila und der sogenannte gotische Arianismus', in Steinacher and Brendt (eds), *Arianism*, pp. 21-44, at pp. 22-3. In the Vandal case, 'Homoian' terminology is defended by Whelan, *Being Christian in Vandal Africa*, pp. 10-14, where there is more evidence of conscious adherence to the position of Rimini.

115 S. Parvis, 'Was Ulfila really a homoian?', in Steinacher and Brendt (eds), *Arianism*, pp. 49-65.

century, as normative for Gothic Christianity or even for Ulfilas' himself.[116] The evidence we have for Ulfilas' views give no evidence of a precise language of 'similarity', nor can we find evidence of this in the Visigothic case.[117] Assumptions of doctrinal stasis after the fourth century run counter to evidence of active and varied theological controversies adduced below.[118] The actual confession of the Arian Visigoths is deeply unclear. I preserve the term 'Arian', then, to signal that we are talking about an institution without a known creed. I use it to mean no more than 'the church which was called "Arian" by the sources'. Its obviously polemical origins are a salutary reminder of the provisional nature of all our doctrinal vocabulary.[119]

The ambiguity on doctrinal matters derives from the almost total lack of positive evidence for Visigothic Arianism. Nicene clerics in Iberia gave only stereotyped and non-specific accounts of what Arianism was. Isidore's fullest account of what he thought Arian theology was came in the longer redaction of the *Historia Gothorum*, produced around 625.[120] Here he identified Gothic Arianism with Ulfilas' doctrine, and gave this as follows: the Son was lesser in majesty than the Father and was subsequent to him in existence; the Holy Spirit was not from the *substantia* of the Father but was created through the Son and was in *obsequium* to both.[121] Isidore, of course, was writing long after events, but sources from the sixth century are no more forthcoming. Unlike in Vandal Africa, no polemical doctrinal material has survived in the Visigothic kingdom. That there was such a body of polemical

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116 On these shifting doctrines, the fundamental work remains: Hanson, *The Search for a Christian Doctrine of God.*

117 For Ulfilas' doctrine see esp. the description in the letter of Auxentius preserved in Maximinus' *Dissertatio*, itself part of the *Scholia in Concilium Aquileiense*, 24-40, ed. Gryson, CCSL, 87, pp. 160-6, with Ulfilas' creed at section 40, p. 166. On the broader context of Maximinus' work, see N. McLynn, 'From Palladius to Maximinus: passing the Arian torch', *JECS*, 4 (1996), pp. 477-94.

118 For assumptions of continuity, Thompson, *Goths in Spain*, p. 39.

119 For the emergence of 'Arian' as a polemical term in the fourth century see esp. L. Ayers, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford, 2004).

120 On the redactions: Wood, *Politics of Identity*, pp. 72-4.

121 Isid., *Hist.*, 8 [long redaction]. Cf. the barer treatment in Isid., *Etym.*, VIII.5.43.

literature is attested by Isidore in the early seventh century, but it seems to have been either lost or deliberately supressed. Fredegar says that Reccared demanded all Arian books be burned, and the Third Council of Toledo anathematized anyone who possessed the *libellus* written at the Arian council held in Toledo in 580.[122] It is harder to imagine the intentional destruction of Nicene polemical literature—especially given that it was known to and celebrated by Isidore—though we can imagine why a Visigothic monarchy positioning itself as defender of orthodoxy might have not wished to allow literature prosecuting embarrassing past conflicts to circulate widely.[123]

Either way, the surviving indications of sixth-century doctrinal literature give the impression of an active debate between competing theological positions. Isidore notes that Licinianus of Cartagena and Severus of Málaga wrote a *libellum* against Vincent, bishop of Zaragoza, 'who had fallen from Catholicism to the Arian depravity'.[124] He also notes two works by his own brother Leander. The first consisted in 'two books against the dogmas of the heretics, very rich in the erudition of the sacred scriptures, in which he struck down and laid bare the depravity of the Arian impiety in vehement style'; the second was 'a short work against the institutes of the Arians in which, after he had set forth what they had said, he counterposed his responses'.[125] The latter work's format is particularly interesting. Set up as a mock-debate, with questions and responses, it followed an established genre of polemical literature in the period: the staging of imaginary debates with heresy so that orthodoxy could

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[122] *Fredegarii chronica*, IV.8, ed. J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar with its Continuations* (London, 1960), p. 7; III Toledo, *Gothorum professio fidei*, *anathemae*, 16 (Coll. Hisp. V, p. 82-3).

[123] Collins, *Visigothic Spain*, p. 158 suggests that they were simply not copied because the conflict had been won by the Nicenes.

[124] Isid., *De viris*, 30, p. 151: *qui ex catholico in arrianam prauitatem fuerat deuolutus*. The same episode appears in *Hist. Goth.*, where it is clarified that the conversion happened after 580.

[125] Isid., *De viris*, 28, pp. 149-50: *Hic namque in exilii sui peregrinatione composuit aduersus haereticorum dogmata libros, reuditione sacrarum scriptuarum ditissimos, in quibus uehementi stilo arrianae impietatis confodit ac detegit prauitatem.* […] *eius opusculum aduersus instituta arrianorum, in quo propositis eorum dictis, suas responsiones opponit.*

be taught.[126] We should not presume that the Arians were simply rhetorical, however: there is reason to believe that there was a genuine intellectual culture of Arianism to which such dialogues were responding.[127] Debates were not just literary forms. The *Vitas sanctorum patrum Emeretensium* records a debate between the Nicene and Arian bishops of Mérida, Masona and Sunna, held in a church before an audience.[128] Gregory of Tours claims that Reccared presided over a disputation between Nicene and Arian clerics at the beginning of his reign. Though the details of Gregory's account are uncertain, the basic fact that Reccared convened a meeting of Nicene and Arian bishops to discuss matters of doctrine is assured by Iberian sources.[129] The different confessions certainly came into contact and competition at particular flashpoints. How common these were before Leovigild's reign is harder to assess.

It is tempting to use the better-preserved polemical literature of Vandal Africa to fill in the blanks, but it would be a mistake to jump to conclusions without examining other influences. Historians have long established how important the influence of North African Christianity was on the cultural vitality of Hispania in the later sixth and seventh centuries.[130] The bitter disputes over Vandal Arianism produced both a large number of works of anti-Arian polemic and a steady stream of migrants and exiles, both of which flowed from Africa into the Iberian Peninsula.[131] After Justinian's reconquest, the Three Chapters controversy drove yet more Nicene Christians, hardened by doctrinal and ecclesiological conflict, into

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126 On the wider genre, R. Whelan, 'Surrogate Fathers: imaginary dialogue and patristic culture in late antiquity', *EME*, 25/1 (2017), pp. 19-37.

127 On surviving hints of Arian intellectual culture see M. Mülke, "'Isidorische Renaissance" - oder: über die Anbahnung einer Wiedergeburt', *Antiquité Tardive*, 23 (2015), pp. 95-107, esp. pp. 99-101.

128 *VSPE*, V.5.

129 See Raaijmakers and van Renswoude, 'The ruler as referee', pp. 56-60.

130 Esp. J. Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture Classique dans l'Espagne wisigothique*, 2 vols (Paris, 1959), ii, pp. 854-9, who particularly emphasizes the African origin of much of Isidore's classical grammatical knowledge; also Collins, *Visigothic Spain*, pp. 147-61.

131 On conflict in Africa: Whelan, *Being Christian in Vandal Africa*.

Iberia. The monk Donatus, founder of Servitanum, was among them.[132] There were, of course, influences from Constantinople through John of Biclarum and Leander of Seville, who both resided there for some time. We may also be able to identify lines of transmission linking Italy and Hispania.[133] Regarding Arianism, however, the most instructive link is that with southern Gallic intellectual culture. If we want to understand the culture of a Baetican intellectual like Isidore, Africa is crucial, but if we want to understand the Visigothic monarchy and its ideas, the Gallic culture may be more important—not least because the Visigothic monarchy was based in southern Gaul until 507. This applies to various cultural questions, but particularly to that of Visigothic Arianism.

A little-read sermon on the Holy Spirit from the so-called *Homiliae Toletanae* collection gives us a way in. The sermon in question is *Sermo in diem sanctum Pentecosten*, the forty-fourth in the collection.[134] The sermon is invaluable evidence for the way in which doctrinal dispute was presented to the laity—and evidence that doctrinal matters were not irrelevant to laypeople.[135] Its use has been hindered by its ambiguous provenance, however—a fate it shares with the wider *Homiliae Toletanae* collection. It survives in full in the single eleventh-century manuscript of the *Homiliae Toletanae*, hailing from the monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos, and in another eleventh-century Silos manuscript, which may well be dependent on the first.[136] As discussed in the Introduction, the *Homiliae Toletanae* collection

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[132] Ildef., *De viris*, 3, with chronology in R. Collins, *Early Medieval Spain: Unity in Diversity, 400-1000* (London, 1983), pp. 79-80. On the African situation: Y. Modéran, 'L'Afrique reconquiste et les Trois Chapitres', in C. Chazelle and C. Cubitt (eds), *The Crisis of the Oikoumene: The Three Chapters and the Failed Quest for Unity in the Sixth-Century Mediterranean* (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 39-82.

[133] J. Fontaine, 'Les relations culturelles entre l'Italie byzantine et l'Espagne visigothique: la présence d'Eugippius dans la bibliothèque de Séville', *Estudios Clásicos*, 26/88 (1984), pp. 9-26.

[134] *Hom. Tol.*, 44, ed. Grégoire, pp. 207-11.

[135] For the involvement of laypeople in doctrinal matters elsewhere: M.-Y. Perrin, 'À propos de la participation des fidèles aux controverses doctrinales dans l'Antiquité Tardive: considerations introductives', *AT*, 9 (2001), pp. 179-99.

[136] Paris, BN, NAL, 2176 (beginning fol. 361r). This manuscript augmented another Silos collection—Paris, BN, NAL, 2177—with additional sermons, a number of which are shared with

was a copy of an earlier compilation of sermons arranged according to the Mozarabic liturgical cycle, the latest datable component of which is attributable to Gregory the Great (d. 604). The collection probably does not reflect a Toledan exemplar made for general circulation in the Visigothic kingdom, as has often been supposed, but a compilation made elsewhere in Iberia, on the basis of anterior collections from southern Gaul and elsewhere—most notably collections deriving from Caesarius of Arles and his milieu.[137] The collection also evinces African material—from Augustine of Hippo, for example—and Italian and Iberian materials. The exact provenance of the *Sermo in diem sanctum Pentecosten* is not known for certain, but the fact that it is attested in solely Iberian manuscripts has led to the presumption that it was an Iberian composition. Though this may well be the case, the sermon is notable for its dependency on Provençal thought, and it is important for our purposes for the way in which it shows doctrinal material passing over the permeable membrane of the Pyrenees.

The sermon consists of two parts: a doctrinal discussion, and a prayer addressed to the Holy Spirit. The second part appeared separately in manuscripts from the late eleventh or twelfth century onwards, with the incipit *Veni ad nos*. It is present in this form in two Catalan manuscripts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, for example, both of which may have been dependent on a manuscript of the *Homiliae Toletanae* collection for this and other contents.[138] *Veni ad nos* has been edited twice in this form, without the longer doctrinal part which precedes it in the text in the *Homiliae Toletanae* manuscript.[139] It is this first part, however, that interests us here. It used the occasion of Pentecost to engage in a lengthy

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(and probably derive from) the *Homiliae Toletanae* collection. See R. Étaix, 'Homiliaires wisigothiques provenant de Silos à la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris', *Hispania Sacra*, 12/23 (1959), pp. 213-24.

[137] See below, pp. 172-9.

[138] R. Étaix, 'Quelques homéliaires de la région catalane', *Recherches Augustiniennes*, 16 (1981), pp. 333-98, with *Veni ad nos* catalogued at pp. 367, 375.

[139] H. Leclercq, 'Une homélie-prière sur la Saint-Esprit', *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*, 24 (1948), pp. 80-6, with the text at pp. 84-6; J. Lemarié (ed.), *Le Brévaire de Ripoll. Paris, B.N. lat. 742. Étude sur sa composition et ses textes inédits* (Monserrat, 1965), with text edited at pp. 165-7.

instruction on how congregants should argue against those with heretical views on the Holy Spirit. It walks its audience through arguments they might hear and counsels how to respond. The sermon identifies its opponents as 'blasphemers' (*blasfemates*) or the 'malign tongue' (*lingua maligna*), but does not call them Arian, Macedonian, or give them any other heresiological label.[140] Thus, while Jocelyn Hillgarth has regarded it firmly as an anti-Arian work, Francisco Tovar Paz has preferred to position it as more generically anti-heretical.[141] The imagined argument of the sermons' interlocutors is perfectly clear, however. It is that the Holy Spirit is not the creator but a created thing (a 'creature', *creatura*). In not being the creator, it is thus not God.

The idea that the Holy Spirit was a created thing is common to both those considered Arians and those called Macedonians. There is evidence for this in earlier Arian writings from outside Hispania. The author of a probably fifth-century Arian text preserved in the 'Bobbio fragments' remarked, while polemicizing against Macedonians, that the two doctrines shared an account of a created and subordinate Holy Spirit: 'The Macedonians, however, defend a Holy Spirit created at the command of the Father through the Son, and teach that it is both messenger and servant of the Father, just as we do.'[142] Most tellingly of all, Avitus of Vienne informs us that in the opening years of the sixth century, Arian priests at the court of the Burgundian king Gundobad were arguing about whether the Holy Spirit must be a created thing.[143] This linkage points to a connection between the Arian discourse

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[140] *Hom. Tol.*, 44, ed. Grégoire, p. 208.

[141] J.N. Hillgarth, 'Popular Religion in Visigothic Spain', in E. James (ed.), *Visigothic Spain: New Approaches* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 3-60, at pp. 9-10; F.J. Tovar Paz, *Tractatus, sermones atque homiliae: el cultivo de género literario del discurso homilético en la Hispaña tardoantigua y visigoda* (Extremadura, 1994), pp. 250-1.

[142] *Adversus orthodoxos et Macedonianos* = *Fragmenta theologica arriana*, 7, ed. Gryson, CCSL, 87, p. 241: *macedoniani autem spiritum sanctum iussu patris per filium creatum defendant et nuntium et ministrum patris eum esse praedicant, sicut et nos.*

[143] Avitus of Vienne, *Contra arrianos*, 30, ed. Peiper, pp. 12-15, at p. 13.

on the Holy Spirit in Gaul around the year 500 and that attributed to Leovigild in the 580s. It is in this strand of dispute that the sermon should be situated.

The sermons' sources connect it to Faustus of Riez, a fifth-century Provençal bishop. The sermon takes a curious line of argumentation, resting on the assertion of a hard dichotomy between the creator and created. It imparted this argumentative strategy to its audience, staging an imaginary dialogue to edify the congregation:[144]

> The blasphemers are accustomed to saying: 'The Holy Spirit is not God'. Say to them: 'If it is not God, what therefore is it?' They will respond, in any case: 'It is a created thing'. To which it is to be said: 'Where is it written in the canonical books, new or old, that the Holy Spirit is a created thing?' And when they are not able to find it anywhere, the result is that that which has not been created is not doubted to be the creator.[145]

There are two key points in this passage: firstly, that the idea of a created Holy Spirit lacks scriptural basis, and, secondly, that everything that is not created is thereby the creator—that is, God. This logic undoubtedly derives from Faustus of Riez's *De spiritu sancto*. Compare the following passage from Faustus:

> You say it [the Holy Spirit] is a created thing (*creaturam*) more excellent than all creatures. Show [us] in what books you might have read these words about the Holy Spirit. Not, I believe, in the Old [Testament]—nor will you show it in the New. When, therefore, you are not able to bring forth [anything], while you do not explain your [position], you confirm ours; while you prove that [he] is not a created thing, you demonstrate—while we remain silent—that he is the creator.[146]

This is undoubtedly the source text for the Iberian sermon. It is both remarkable and instructive that points from a theological treatise made their way into a text intended for preaching to laypeople. We should not presume that such issues were arcane matters only of

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144 On the edificatory use of imagined dialogues: Whelan, 'Surrogate Fathers', esp. pp. 31-3.

145 *Hom. Tol.*, 44, ed. Grégoire, p. 208: *Solent enim blasfemantes fari: Spiritus sanctus deus non est. Quibus et uos dicite: Si deus non est, quid ergo est? Responsuri sunt utique: Creatura est. Quibus dicendum est: Ubi scribtum est in canonicis libris nouis siue ueteribus quia creatura sit spiritus sanctus? Et cum nusquam inuenire potuerint, restat ut qui creatus non est, creator non esse dubitetur.*

146 Faustus of Riez, *De spiritu sancto*, II.3, ed. A. Engelbrecht, CSEL, 21 (Vienna, 1891), p. 135: *Creaturam dicis excellentiorem omnibus creaturis. Ostedende, in quibus libris haec de spiritu sancto legeris uerba. Non, opinor, in ueteribus, non in nouis docebis. Cum ergo proferre non ualeas, dum tua non explicas, nostra confirmans, dum creaturam non conprobas, etiam nobis tacentibus creatorem ese demonstras.*

interest for a small class of intellectuals. The sermon reworked Faustus' material to make it accessible and, moreover, to show how it could be used in the real world, should one find oneself in direct dispute with the other side.[147]

The Pentecostal sermon addressed the view that the Holy Spirit is a created thing and not the creator. The sermon differed subtly in its phrasing and emphasis to Faustus' treatise. Faustus was arguing against the precise contention that the Holy Spirit is 'a created thing, more excellent than all created things'. He seemingly regarded this position as Macedonian, though it is also attested in avowedly anti-Macedonian Arian texts like the Bobbio palimpsest. Here, one text has Christ espousing the almost identical position that he 'created' the Holy Spirit but that it is 'greater (*maior*) than all created things'.[148] The emphasis on the distinction of creator and created was not confined to Faustus' thought, however, and there is no need to presume that Faustus was the author. Around 500, when Avitus of Vienne was contending with Arian clergy around the Burgundian king Gundobad, he encountered arguments for Holy Spirit's createdness from clergy he considered Arian. He responded with the familiar dichotomy: 'It has often been stated that nothing else can exist other than these two: creator and creature. The spirit of God ought to be taken as one than makes, the spirit of man as one that is made.'[149]

It is not likely that Faustus himself was the author of the sermon. The sermon does not appear in any Gallic collection. A sermon on Pentecost from the *Eusebius Gallicanus* collection has been attributed to Faustus, but it does not raise any of the issues dealt with in

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147 On lay engagement with doctrine: Perrin, 'À propos de la participation'; Maxwell, 'Popular theology', pp. 292-3.

148 *Adversus orthodoxos et Macedonianos* = *Fragmenta theologica arriana*, 7, ed. Gryson, pp. 239-40: *sed et ipsum spiritum sanctum, qui est ante omnia et maior omnibus creationibus, et cetera caelestia et terrestria, uisibilia et inuisibilia, tempora et saecula uolente patre et iubente ego creaui.*

149 Avitus of Vienne, *Contra arrianos*, 30, ed. Peiper, pp. 12-15, quote at p. 13: *Nihil omnino esse praeter duo, id est creatorem creaturamque, saepe definitum est. Dei porro spiritus factor, hominis vero factura accipi debet*; trans. D. Shanzer and I. Wood, *Avitus of Vienne: Letters and Selected Prose*, Translated Texts for Historians, 38 (Liverpool, 2002), pp. 182-6, at p. 184.

the Iberian sermon or Faustus' *De spiritu sancto*.[150] Some scholars have connected the whole of the *Eusebius Gallicanus* collection—which, like the *Homiliae Toletanae*, exists only in later manuscripts—to Faustus of Riez.[151] The *Homiliae Toletanae* contains some sermons shared with *Eusebius Gallicanus*, but these are relatively few, and for the most part the two collections reflect quite different lines of transmission. Our Pentecostal sermon's manuscript tradition—admittedly late and sparse—is entirely Iberian, and this should incline us cautiously toward Iberian composition. Either way, it circulated in the Visigothic kingdom and thus must have been seen to apply to doctrinal arguments in a way relevant to this context. While the sermons of the *Homiliae Toletanae* are hard to locate in time and space, this sermon fits neatly into a world of anti-Arian doctrinal argument known from southern Gaul in around 500—when the Visigoths were based in the region—to the 580s when Leovigild pursued his aggressive religious policy. The sermon belongs to this broad context—one of Arianism, but where the Holy Spirit had a particular pre-eminence in the doctrinal controversy.

The court of the Burgundian king Gundobad (d. 516) offers the best parallel for Leovigild's reported 'pseudo-Macedonian' views on the Holy Spirit. This suggests that Leovigild did not make a sea-change in doctrinal terms by accepting the full equality of the Father and Son. Rather, debate simply came to focus in more on the Holy Spirit. Uta Heil has argued that southern Gallic Arianism of the later fifth and sixth centuries already shows this trait.[152] Throughout this time, the Visigoths were a major presence in the region, meaning that writers like Faustus and Avitus encountered Visigothic Arianism. In *De spiritu sancto* Faustus may have been directly engaging with ideas articulated in the Visigothic

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150 L.A. Van Buchem, *L'homélie pseudo-eusébienne de Pentecôte: l'origine de la confirmatio en Gaule Méridionale et l'interprétation de ce rite par Fauste de Riez* (Nijmegen, 1967).

151 For the *status questionis*: L.K. Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success: The Eusebius Gallicanus Sermon Collection and the Power of the Church in Late Antique Gaul* (Notre Dame, IN, 2010), pp. 29-38.

152 U. Heil, 'The homoians in Gaul', in Berndt and Steinacher, *Arianism*, pp. 271-96, at pp. 283-4.

kingdom of Toulouse, as Heil has suggested.[153] He certainly had fraught relations with the Arian Visigothic kingdom. In 474 Faustus was part of a group of clerics sent to negotiate with the Nicene-persecuting Visigothic king Euric.[154] Faustus was later exiled by him.[155] The relevant institutional context in the later fifth and sixth centuries was that of a conflict between a Nicene church and one called 'Arian' by its opponents, and fine-grained theological distinctions between Arian and Macedonian positions were far less important than is implied by heresiological discourse or the polemics of earlier times. The doctrinal questions through which conflict was pursued could be far more varied than the basic view of 'Arianism' known in heresiological catalogues. Leovigild was heir to these multifaceted and overlapping debates, not an innovator moving from one fixed doctrine to another.

Finally, we should note that, in addition to the varied disputes associated with the distinct Arian and Nicene ecclesiastical establishments, there were a host of other important issues which did not map onto this ecclesiastical distinction. In the middle of the sixth century, the Three Chapters controversy split Latin Christianity in various ways—with particularly long-running schismatic complications in northern Italy and particularly harsh persecution in Byzantine North Africa, a bastion of staunch opposition to imperial policy.[156] Hispania itself, however, seems to have been unified in opposition to imperial policy—the controversial Council of Constantinople in 553 never entered the conciliar record, nor was it ever included among the ecumenical councils by Iberian authors.[157] The issues we can see emerging within Hispania itself were chiefly of a more regional kind. In at least two cases they linked to disputes also attested in Gaul.

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153 He certainly wrote against both Arians and Macedonians in a now-lost work described in Gennadius*, De viris*, 15: *Legi eius et* Adversum Arianos et Macedonianos *parvum libellum, in quo coessentialem praedicat Trinitatem.*

154 Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* VII.6.10, ed. and trans. W.B. Anderson, *Sidonius Apollinaris, Poems and Letters*, Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols, 296, 420 (Cambridge, MA, 2014), ii, pp. 312-23, at pp. 322-3.

155 Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, pp. 197-202, esp. p. 199.

156 For an overview: Chazelle and Cubitt (eds), *The Crisis of the Oikoumene.*

157 See the preface to the *Collectio Hispana* (Coll. Hisp. III, pp. 43-6); Isid. *Etym.* VI.16.

One of these surrounded the question of the soul's corporeality or incorporeality. In the second half of the sixth century, two bishops from the Byzantine enclave of Hispania, Licinianus of Cartagena and Severus of Málaga composed a letter on the incorporeality of the Holy Spirit, arguing against an unnamed bishop who had 'supposed that there are no created things which could be granted the name "spiritual", and that every nature which is not that of God's is to be understood in a corporeal manner.'[158] Licininaus and Severus knew the work of the key Gallic Augustinian, Claudianus Mamertus, and cited him along with Augustine himself.[159] In doing so, they made clear that they viewed the doctrinal dispute they were engaging in as of a piece with that which had occurred in Gaul in the previous century. There, Claudianus Mamertus' assertion of the incorporeal nature of the human soul ran contrary to the pervasive corporealist views of figures as influential as John Cassian, Julianus Pomerius, and—notably—Faustus of Riez.[160] The latter was the main theological representative of the mainstream Provençal view on the soul, as well as on the issues of sin and free will which historians later misleadingly placed under the heading of the 'semi-Pelagianist' controversy.[161] Incorporealist views eventually won out, as they always seem to have done in Hispania. From a seventh-century vantage-point, Isidore reprimanded Julianus Pomerius and Faustus for their views.[162] But clearly, their positions had their supporters in Iberia, even as late as the sixth century. Moreover, their works continued to circulate among theological opponents. Julian of Toledo incorporated fragments of Pomerius' now-lost

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158 Lic. Cart., *Ep.* 2, pp. 97-124, quote at 2.1, pp. 98-9: *creaturarum nihil esse quod spirituali nomine censeatur, omnemque naturam que non est quod deus est, corporali tantum finiri.*

159 Lic. Cart., *Ep.* 2.19-20, pp. 120-2.

160 R.W. Mathisen *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Washington, DC, 1989), pp. 235-72 judged the corporealist position mainstream in the fifth century (see esp. pp. 241-4). See also E.L. Fortin, *Christianisme et culture philosophique au cinquième siècle. La querelle de l'âme humaine en Occident* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1959).

161 For critical accounts: R.A. Markus, 'The legacy of Pelagius: orthodoxy, heresy, and conciliation', in R. Williams (ed.), *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 214-34, and C. Leyser, 'Semi-Pelagianism', in A.D. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopaedia* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1999), pp. 761-6.

162 Isid., *De viris*, 12, 14, quote at 14, p. 142: *pelagianae prauitati consentienti.*

treatise on the soul into his *Prognosticon futuri saeculi*, presenting them within an orthodox incorporealist framework.[163] There is no reason to think that there was any interdiction against reading Faustus' works either—the Pentecostal sermon is good evidence of his thought's transmission.

Another interesting case is that of the little-known 'Bonosiacs', who appear in Iberian and Gallic sources from the fifth century onwards.[164] The mid-sixth-century bishop of Valencia, Justinian, is said to have written against them.[165] Though Justinian's treatise does not survive, Jacques Fontaine has suggested that it should be considered as part of the disputes with 'Arians'.[166] This is highly uncertain. There is some evidence for the elision of 'Arians' and Bonosiacs in Avitus of Vienne's writing, but the views attached to Bonosiacs by the western critics were usually specifically adoptionist—that is, they were said to believe that Christ was the Son of God by adoption rather than nature.[167] The label of 'Bonosiac' derived from the Illyrian bishop Bonosus, who formed a schismatic church in the 390s, but the label shifted meaning until it was almost exclusively connected with the adoptionist views of Photinus.[168] Already, by the fifth century, Gennadius could write that the Photinians had become known as Bonosiacs.[169] It is easy enough to see how these Christological considerations could dove-tail with Arian arguments, but we have no strong evidence that

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163 Julian of Toledo, *Prognosticon futuri saeculi*, II.1, 10, ed. J.N. Hillgarth, CCSL, 115 (Turnhout, 1976), pp. 44, 49.

164 On the Gallic context: Y. Fox, "'Sent from the confines of Hell': Bonosiacs in early medieval Gaul', *Studies in Late Antiquity*, 2/3 (2018), pp. 316-41; D. Aupest-Conduché, 'L'hérésie bonosienne ou photinienne dans la Gaule du V^e^ au VII^e^ siècle et ses rapports avec le paganisme finissant', in *Actes du 99^e^ Congrès National des Sociétés Savantes, Besançon, 1974: Section de philologie et d'histoire jusqu'à 1610* (2 vols, Paris, 1977), i, pp. 321-31.

165 Isid., *De viris*, 20.

166 Fontaine, 'Conversion et culture', pp. 97-9.

167 Avitus of Vienne, *Ep.* 31, ed. Peiper, p. 62, with commentary in Fox, "'Sent from the confines of Hell'", pp. 325-7. Rossana Guglielmetti makes the suggestion that Justus of Urgell was attacking Bonosiac adoptionist views in his commentary on the Song of Songs. See Justus, *Expl.* II.27, p. 38: *Illi etenim adoptione, hic natura est filius*; with discussion at p. xli.

168 For understanding of the doctrine in Hispania see Isid., *De viris*, 20; Isid., *Etym.*, VIII.5.52.

169 Gennadius, *De viris*, 14, p. 66: *Photinianos, qui nunc Bonosiaci dicuntur.*

they were elided in Hispania. Indeed, Iberian adoptionism far outlasted the live debate on 'Arianism', emerging into the historical record again at the end of the eighth century.[170] We would do better to appreciate the variety of heresiological labels and the richness of doctrinal debate in Hispania, rather than seek to reduce everything to the Nicene-Arian binary. We can recapture something of the wide range of doctrinal and theological issues that marked sixth-century Iberian culture if we set aside the presumed ubiquity of Arianism as an issue.

V. CONCLUSION

The Third Council of Toledo was a significant watershed in Iberian history, and its central place in narratives of Visigothic state-building and identity-formation is warranted. Yet it also contributes to a certain retrospective interpretation of the conflicts and developments of the sixth century. The unificatory projects of Leovigild and Reccared claimed to resolve the divides between Arian and Nicene faiths, and between Goths and Hispano-Romans. Both claims were politically expedient, but both threaten to narrow our view of religious life in the sixth century. I have argued that the Nicene church—the only one for which there is adequate source material—was not a clearly unified and coherent entity through the sixth century, such that it could be directed—as a single institution—from above. Rather, it was a patchwork of different authorities and institutions. Figures like Turibius, initially a prominent layman in the peripheral region of Palencia, could hold significant *de facto* power via personal links to bishops, including in matters of heresy and orthodoxy. We know that Reccared's policy's ended the existence of a separate 'Arian' episcopate and handed over certain churches to Nicene clerics. Yet formerly 'Arian' bishops could serve as Nicene bishops if they accepted conversion, and it may be that for individual 'Arian' churches, very little of any external substance changed either side of the Third Council.

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[170] J.C. Cavadini, *The Last Christology of the West: Adoptionism in Spain and Gaul, 785-820* (Philadelphia, PN, 1993).

After the Third Council, few issues of domestic heresy appear in the Visigothic record. Instead, a discourse of anti-Judaism comes to the fore, crowding out almost all concerns over other elements of religious diversity. In the following chapters I turn to the period of Nicene Visigothic rule. It was in the interest of the architects and beneficiaries of this politico-religious settlement to view the Third Council as a watershed in Iberian history, utterly transforming the divided kingdom into a unified, organic community, the only disruptive element of which were Jews. This analysis has the consequence of simplifying the sixth century, as we have seen. But it also radically simplifies the seventh century. By acquiring a more diverse and complex picture of sixth century religious life, we find reasons to be sceptical of the supposed unity that was established by Reccared. The divide between Nicene and Arian confessions fell from salience, but religious life remained a relatively decentralized, varied, and locally differentiated matter, in spite of vigorous attempts at unification from the political centre.

Chapter 3:

AN ISIDORIAN RENAISSANCE? BISHOPS AND LAYPEOPLE IN THE VISIGOTHIC SEVENTH CENTURY

I. INTRODUCTION

If the Third Council of Toledo overshadows accounts of the sixth century, the political order of the seventh is dominated by the Fourth. Held in 633 under Isidore of Seville's leadership, it was opened by King Sisenand, who had recently acquired the Visigothic throne through violent usurpation.[1] He arrived in an elaborate performance of penance, prostrating himself before the assembled bishops and weeping profusely.[2] Political instability may have been the immediate spur for the meeting—no general council had been held since the Third Council, forty-four years earlier—but the agenda far exceeded short-term interests. The Fourth Council laid out an extensive set of measures aimed at making ecclesiastical life uniform across the kingdom, raising the educative level of the clergy, and upholding Christian orthodoxy—particularly against the Jews, a number of whom had undergone forced baptism under Sisebut and now required to be held to their Christian promises, as the bishops determined.[3] It defined the very form of councils and mandated their regular convocation.[4] Its seventy-five canons closed with an elaborate Christian oath of allegiance to the king—a *sacramentum* which fused the idea of *fides* to the orthodox Christian faith with that of political

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[1] On the council and its circumstances: R.L. Stocking, *Bishops, Councils, and Consensus in the Visigothic Kingdom, 589-633* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2000), pp. 145-73.

[2] IV Toledo, *Prooemium* (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 178-81, at p. 180): *primum coram sacerdotibus Dei humo prostratus cum lacrimis et gemitibus pro se interueniendum Domino postulauit.*

[3] IV Toledo, cc. 57-66 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 235-42). For analysis: W. Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour: The Jew in the Thought of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 201-305.

[4] IV Toledo, cc. 3-4 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 184-9).

loyalty. This has been read as the fundamental religio-political statement of the Nicene Visigothic order.[5]

Isidore of Seville presided over the council, which occurred only three years before his death in 636. The programme of reform set out at the council has often been associated with Isidore himself—indeed, its ideals have been connected to those espoused in Isidore's *Sententiae* by Pierre Cazier, in particular.[6] Isidore is now rarely seen as the rarefied but dusty encyclopaedist he once was, holding up classical learning against the onset of the darker medieval ages. Delivered from the status of a more-or-less depersonalized funnel through which the ancient cultural inheritance flowed into the medieval, Isidore is now more commonly read as a pivotal political figure in his own day: 'la conscience de l'Espagne nouvelle et renaissante', as Marc Reydellet has put it.[7] The central achievement of Jacques Fontaine, whose works underpin this new appreciation, was to reframe Isidore's varied literary and scholar activities as a politically and religiously interested project of renewal, bound up with the emergence and institutionalization of the Nicene Visigothic state. This project was a veritable 'Renaissance Isidorienne', in Fontaine's phrase, anticipating the better-known Carolingian Renaissance that surrounded Charlemagne.[8] This paradigm

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[5] IV Toledo, c. 75 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 248-60). For discussion: I. Velázquez Soriano, '*Pro patriae gentisque Gothorum statu* (4th Council of Toledo, canon 75, A. 633)', in H.-W. Goetz, J. Jarnut, and W. Pohl (eds), *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World* (Leiden, 2003), pp. 161-217.

[6] P. Cazier, 'Les Sentences d'Isidore de Séville et le IVe Concile de Tolède. Réflexions sur les rapports entre l'Église et le pouvoir politique en Espagne autour des années 630', in *Los Visigodos. Historia y civilización. Actas de la Semana Internacional de Estudios Visigóticos, Madrid, Toledo, Alcalá de Henares, 21-25 octubre de 1985* (Murcia, 1986), pp. 373-86; *idem*, *Isidore de Séville et la naissance de l'Espagne catholique* (Paris, 1994).

[7] M. Reydellet, *La royauté dans la literature latine de Sidoine Apollinaire à Isidore de Séville* (Rome, 1981), p. 509.

[8] J. Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture Classique dans l'Espagne wisigothique*, 2 vols (Paris, 1959), esp. ii, pp. 863-88.

remains popular, even if the full-scale notion of 'Renaissance' is commonly replaced with a vaguer, less classicizing notion of 'project' or 'efflorescence'.[9]

The Isidore-centred paradigm of renaissance has the benefit of granting a unified interpretation to a wide range of Isidore's productions, which range from histories to exegesis, from literary biography to natural philosophy, and from ethical reflection to anti-Jewish polemic.[10] With Isidore figured as the focal point of a veritable cultural renaissance, his oeuvre could be identified with a project of education and cultural efflorescence aimed chiefly at bishops and other clergy, trickling down from there to the wider Christian *populus* through well-trained priests, with their liturgical competency and renewed sense of vocation.[11] Here, the notion of 'Isidorian Renaissance' parallels its historiographically anterior Carolingian counterpart, where *correctio* has long been understood to have manifested itself not only in Latin learning but in liturgy, canon law, and wider issues of church discipline, order, and pastoral care.[12] On this understanding, ecclesiastical discipline, clerical education, and lay religiosity were inextricably linked.

Analyses of Isidore along these lines tend toward the highly clericalizing—Isidore comes out of them as a great institution-builder and ecclesiological thinker. To quote the recent words of Céline Martin:

> The most basic dimension of the vertical structuring of the Church involves first of all distinguishing the flock from the shepherds, that is, defending and justifying the

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[9] For recent appeals to an 'Isidorian Renaissance': Y. Hen, *Roman Barbarians: The Royal Court and Culture in the Early Medieval West* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 124-52; J. Wood, *The Politics of Identity in Visigothic Spain: Religion and Power in the Histories of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden, 2012), p. 56; A. Fear and J. Wood, 'Introduction', in *iidem* (eds), *Isidore of Seville and his Reception in the Early Middle Ages: Transmitting and Transforming Knowledge* (Amsterdam, 2016), pp. 11-30, at pp. 18-19.

[10] For an overview: J. Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité de la culture hispanique au temps des Wisigoths* (Turnhout, 2000).

[11] For his educative functions: J. Fontaine, 'Fins et moyens de l'enseignement ecclésiastique dans l'Espagne wisigothique', in *La scuola nell'Occidente latino*, Settimane, 19 (Spoleto, 1972), pp. 145-202.

[12] For overviews: J.J. Contreni, 'The Carolingian Renaissance', in W. Treadgold (ed.), *Renaissances Before the Renaissance: Cultural Revivals of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Stanford, CA, 1984), pp. 59-74; G. Brown, 'Introduction: the Carolingian Renaissance', in R. McKitterick (ed.), *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 1-51.

> dominant position of the clergy over laypeople. Isidore was profoundly convinced of the superiority and the responsibility of the former over the latter.[13]

Behind this stark dichotomy of cleric and layperson lies the idea, recently in vogue, that Isidore's intellectual project constituted a sustained attempt to discipline and order language, and thereby contribute to a highly ordered vision of Christian society. Eleonora Dell'Elicine has given the fullest statement of this idea, putting considerable emphasis on the liturgy. The disciplining of language and knowledge, Dell'Elicine argues, was a means of controlling legitimate expression, ritual form, and access to the holy. The clergy were the privileged mediators between God and humanity, and their education was dedicated to their essential distinction from the laity. The governing politico-religious class formed and fortified itself in the kind of learning exemplified by Isidore.[14]

This picture can be questioned. It is possible to read Isidore in a less clericalizing manner, less focussed on the political project with which he found himself and his works involved. We know surprisingly little about the Visigothic reception of his works, but internal evidence suggests that it is wrong to presume a solely clerical readership. This pervasive assumption is, as Graham Barrett has put it, the 'get-out-of-jail-free-card' of Isidorian scholarship.[15] It occludes more wide-ranging inquiries into the way his thought relates to that of other post-Roman authors. Paying more attention to the ethical side of his oeuvre, particularly as manifest in the *Synonyma* and *Sententiae*, we can recapture a far less institutional Isidore—one which, like his model Gregory the Great, can be understood within wider late antique strands of philosophical and religious thought, the reception of

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[13] C. Martin, 'Isidore of Seville's theories and practices of pastoral care and church organization' in A. Fear and J. Wood (eds), *A Companion to Isidore of Seville* (Leiden, 2020), pp. 279-300, at p. 280.
[14] E. Dell'Elicine, 'Trabajando para el pueblo de Dios: palabra, ley y clero en el pensamiento de Isidoro de Sevilla (600-636), *História Revista*, 17/2 (2012), pp. 51-68; *eadem*, *En el principio fue el Verbo: políticas del signo y estrategias del poder eclesiástico en el reino visigodo de Toledo (589-711)* (Cadíz, 2013), with liturgy at esp. pp. 73-104.
[15] G. Barrett, 'God's librarian: Isidore of Seville and his literary agenda', in A. Fear and J. Wood (eds), *A Companion to Isidore of Seville* (Leiden, 2020), pp. 42-100, at p. 42.

which was not confined to clerical or monastic readerships. He needs to be understood within this wide Mediterranean intellectual context, and its particular expression in Baetica, before he is placed as the spokesperson for the Visigothic court at Toledo.

Again, it pays to examine the more fluid domain of ethical thought. Isidore's ethical reflections can be used to shed light on the presentation of episcopal authority in the canons and elsewhere. His forays into matters of ecclesiastical discipline highlight the extent to which a moral discourse of office underlay episcopal claims to power. This was a discourse partaken in by laypeople as well as clerics, thus opening bishops to accusations, allegations of scandal, and the dangers of ill-repute. In short, episcopal authority was wielded in public, and had to be constantly performed before a lay audience. If we are to understand how the clergy was disciplined in the seventh century, we have to think as much about this more diffuse sense of accountability, rooted in local societies and their moral expectations, than we do about legal principles of hierarchy. Neither Isidore's works nor the canons intend to speak of this informal accountability to lay expectation, but both have much to say, in spite of themselves. Read against the grain, they reveal a very different picture of the relationship between the clergy and laity in Isidore's time.

II. ISIDORE, BAETICA, AND BYZANTINE HISPANIA

The first step to extricating Isidore from a highly centralizing interpretation is to place him back in his particular environment in Seville, paying due regard to the regional diversity of the Iberian Peninsula. Isidore's family were originally based in Carthaginiensis but moved, in difficult circumstances, to Seville in Baetica shortly before Isidore's birth. His elder siblings, Leander, Florentina, and Fulgentius (all ecclesiastical figures of some kind in later life) were born in Carthaginiensis and knew their traumatic displacement from their former *patria* first-

hand.[16] Leander would reminisce about his former home to Florentina, then a consecrated virgin, at the end of *De institutione uirginum et contemptu mundi*, a guide to the ascetic life which he composed for her. We have only an oblique view of this family trauma, interpreted through Leander's memories.[17] What we do know is that the family left their *patria* around the time of the bitter civil war between the Visigothic rulers Agila and Athanagild which occurred between 549 and 555.[18] As part of this conflict, Byzantine forces were invited in by Athanagild, whose base of support was in the Romanized cites of the south, and they occupied an enclave in the south-east of the peninsula running, roughly, from Cartagena to Málaga. A portion of Carthaginiensis, including the historic capital Cartagena, was thus sundered from the Visigothic kingdom, and would remain a hostile presence on the peninsula until it was completely reconquered by the Visigoths in the 620s.[19] Historians differ in their opinion as to which group the family fell afoul of, though the most common and plausible hypothesis is that they were forced out during Agila's Gothic expansion into the once quasi-independent south.[20] Either way, Isidore, while born in Seville, was intimately connected to the world of the south eastern coast.

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16 That Carthaginiensis was their former home is indicated by Isid., *De uiris*, 28. R. Collins, *Visigothic Spain, 409-711* (Oxford, 2004), p. 154, gives a revisionist interpretation, suggesting an African origin for the family. I am less convinced.

17 Leand., *De inst. uirg.*, 31. See: J. Fontaine and P. Cazier, 'Qui a chassé de Carthaginoise Sévérianus et les siens? Observations sur l'histoire familiale d'Isidore de Séville', repr. in J. Fontaine, *Tradition et actualité chez Isidore de Séville* (London, 1988), ch. I, pp. 349-400, at pp. 353-69; G. Kampers, 'Isidor von Sevilla und seine Familie. Überlegungen zu "De institutione virginum et de contemptu mundi" c. 31', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 52/1 (2018), pp. 43-58.

18 For the war: Isid. *Hist.*, 45-7. For discussion: M.R. Valverde Castro, *Ideología, simbolismo y ejercicio del poder real en la monarquía visigoda: un proceso de cambio* (Salamanca, 2000), pp. 131-7; Collins, *Visigothic Spain*, pp. 46-9.

19 On the Byzantine enclave see esp. the extensive survey of J. Vizcaíno Sánchez, *La presencia bizantina en Hispania (siglos VI-VII). La documentación arqueológica* (Murcia, 2009).

20 Fontaine and Cazier, 'Qui a chassé', pp. 379-87; Cazier, *Isidore de Séville*, pp. 32-5; Kampers, 'Isidor von Sevilla', p. 47. Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité*, pp. 90-1 returns to a more agnostic position.

Southern Hispania after Byzantine invasion was a place of some danger and conflict, yet one with rich connections both between the Visigothic and Byzantine regions and between Hispania and the culture of the wider Mediterranean. Licinianus of Cartagena, the metropolitan of the Byzantine region, not only worked with Severus of Málaga—the second most important city in the Byzantine territory—but was said to have corresponded frequently with Eutropius of Valencia, then abbot of the monastery of Servitanum in the Visigothic kingdom.[21] He also corresponded with Gregory the Great, who had may have had particular interests in the Byzantine territory of Hispania.[22] Perhaps most remarkable of all, however, is Licinianus' epistolary treatise on the incorporeality of the soul. This work, attacking the views of an unnamed cleric who had espoused a corporeal vision of the soul, explicitly echoed debates from fifth-century Gaul involving Claudianus Mamertus and the contested legacy of Augustine of Hippo.[23] Licinianus' was a wide field of vision. There were certainly still contacts, physical as well as literary, between the Byzantine and Visigothic territories of Hispania. Licinianus reported that Leander passed through Cartagena on his way back from Constantinople.[24] Leander mentioned to Florentina that their brother Fulgentius (later the bishop of Écija in Baetica) had been sent to their old home, presumably now in the Byzantine enclave. Leander feared for him: this was perhaps a dangerous trip, but a possible one.[25] When Isidore accounted for the intellectual culture of later sixth-century Hispania in his *De viris illustribus*, he portrayed a vibrant and interconnected culture.[26]

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[21] Isid. *De viris*, 29-30, 32.
[22] For an overview of Gregory's contacts with Hispania: T. Deswarte, *Une Chrétienté romaine sans pape: l'Espagne et Rome (586-1085)* (Paris, 2010), pp. 207-19.
[23] Lic. Cart., *Ep.* 2. See above, p. 106.
[24] Lic. Cart., *Ep.* 1.6.
[25] Leand., *De inst. uirg.*, 31.5.
[26] See esp. M. Mülke, "'Isidorische Renaissance" – oder: Über die Anbahnung einer Wiedergeburt', *AT*, 23 (2015), pp. 95-107.

Isidore certainly knew conflict, however. Civil war broke out again in Hispania under Leovigild when his son Hermenegild revolted in Baetica.[27] The struggle took on a confessional edge when Hermenegild declared himself a Nicene Christian. Leander was doubtless involved in this conversion. Gregory the Great describes Leander as the motive force in Hermenegild's and Reccared's conversions and says that Leander was in Constantinople as Hermenegild's legate.[28] It was here that Leander befriended Gregory the Great. Gregory would go on to dedicate the *Moralia in Iob* to Leander and write extensive, notably personal letters to him after rising to the Roman see.[29] Gregory the Great would also remember Hermenegild as a Nicene martyr, as would Gregory of Tours. This idea was consigned to oblivion in subsequent Visigothic historical memory, however, other than in the idiosyncratic work of Valerius of Bierzo, writing in distant Gallaecia at the far end of the seventh century.[30] Isidore lived through all of this. If we assume a conventional date of birth around 560, he was in his mid-twenties for the civil war. He was perhaps in Seville during its lengthy siege. Isidore's family were survivors, however. Leovigild won the civil war and sought to unify the kingdom under the Arian religion, but it was his son Reccared who would achieve religious unity, and he did so under the Nicene confession. Leander rose to especial prominence under Reccared, leading the proceedings at the Third Council of Toledo, along with Eutropius of Valencia (then still abbot of Servitanum). Isidore would have been around thirty at the time. He would go on to play his own role in the justification of the Visigothic royal tradition, celebrating his brother's work with Reccared while

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[27] On the narrative history: E.A. Thompson, *The Goths in Spain* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 64-73; Collins, *Visigothic Spain*, pp. 56-9.

[28] Gr. Mag. *Dial.*, III.31; Gr. Mag., *Reg. epist.*, V.53a [=the epistolary preface to the *Moralia in Iob*], at pp. 353-4: *et te illuc iniuncta pro causis fidei Wisigotharum legatio perduxisset.*

[29] Gr. Mag., *Reg. epist.*, I.41, V.53, V.53a, IX.227. See J. Wood, 'A family affair: Leander, Isidore and the legacy of Gregory the Great in Spain', in Fear and Wood (eds), *Isidore of Seville*, pp. 31-56.

[30] Valerius, *De uan.*, 6. See J.N. Hillgarth, 'Coins and chronicles: propaganda in sixth-century Spain and the Byzantine background', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 15/4 (1966), pp. 483-508.

contributing to the *damnatio memoriae* of his former ally Hermenegild.[31] Not all the figures of this time were such survivors as Isidore's family. Isidore remarks obliquely of the death of Licinianus in Constantinople, poisoned after being recalled for one reason or another.[32]

The vitality of this wider south-eastern ferment did not last through the seventh century. This much is clear from the literary record, which shows a marked involution and Toledo-centricity to the latter half of the seventh century. It is also evident in the archaeological data regarding trade and material culture. Hispania long knew a significant difference in material culture and connectivity between its interior and its coastal regions. After the Roman state fell away, the interior became increasingly characterized by localized, small-scale production in ceramics, for example, while littoral zones continued to be embedded in Mediterranean and Atlantic trade.[33] Maritime trade was less affected by the end of the Roman state than was production in the interior: indeed, Iberian trade with North Africa actually increased during the later fifth and early sixth centuries, under Vandal rule.[34] Mediterranean trade was enhanced by Justinian's attempts at reconquest. When Byzantine forces settled in major Iberian port cities like Cartagena and Málaga, along the southern and eastern coast, there were large-scale, state-directed attempts to re-model certain districts for heightened commercial activity, particularly with other Byzantine-held ports in North Africa and the Balearic Islands.[35] Byzantine strategic needs (relating to the army and the civil

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[31] Isid. *Hist.*, 49, at p. 254: *Hermenegildum deinde imperiis suis tyrannizantem obsessum exsuperauit.*
[32] Isid. *De viris*, 29, at p. 151. On changes post 589: L.A. García Moreno, 'The creation of Byzantium's Spanish province: causes and propaganda', *Byzantion*, 66/1 (1996), pp. 101-19, at pp. 118-19.
[33] On the interior: C. Tejerizo García, 'Cerámicas altomedievales en contextos rurales del centro y noroeste peninsular: secuencia cronotipológica, tecnológica y regionalización productiva', *Archivo Español de Arqueología*, 93 (2020), pp. 275-301; J. Martínez Jiménez, I. Sastre de Diego, and C. Tejerizo García, *The Iberian Peninsula between 300 and 850: An Archaeological Perspective* (Amsterdam, 2017), pp. 119-20.
[34] P. Reynolds, *Hispania and the Roman Mediterranean, AD 100-700: Ceramics and Trade* (London, 2010), pp. 91-105.
[35] S.F. Ramallo Asensio, '*Carthago Spartaria*, un núcleo bizantino en *Hispania*', in G. Ripoll López and J.M. Gurt Esparragueta (eds), *Sedes regiae (ann. 400-800)* (Barcelona, 2000), pp. 578-611; I. Navarro Luengo, *et al.*, 'Comercio y comerciantes en la Málaga bizantina', in F. Wulff Alonso, G. Cruz

administration) underlay certain trade routes, for example that between Cartagena and Carthage.

This had consequences for the wider coastal economy of Iberia and elsewhere, with the Visigothic port of Tarragona, the Gallic port of Marseilles, and the Suevic port of Vigo all benefitting from this enhanced connectivity, without being implicated in the Byzantine administrative system. The consequences of this trade also permeated across the border between Byzantine and Visigothic Hispania, as is evident from finds at *Eio* and *Reccopolis*.[36] Furthermore, a whole network of smaller Iberian ports and settlements, many of which were likely not under direct Byzantine control, flourished during the period of the Byzantine enclave's state-led prosperity. Settlements around Alicante, on the eastern coast, come under this category, as do settlements like *Baelo Claudia*, directly south of Seville. The latter was a former Roman city which had shrunk, prior to the sixth century, into a small settlement dedicated exclusively to trade, dependent on Byzantine networks.[37] Byzantine settlement in southern Spain had wide-ranging consequences for the Peninsula, in trade and connectivity, as well as in economic vitality for certain southern towns.[38]

In the seventh century, however, much of this south-eastern world fell into sharp decline. The immediate cause was the Visigothic conquest of the Byzantine enclave, accomplished at huge cost to the settlements involved by Swinthila in the 620s.[39] In the major Byzantine cities of Málaga and Cartagena, Visigothic reconquest was marked by

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Andreotti and C. Martínez Maza (eds.), *II Congreso de Historia Antigua de Málaga: Comercio y comerciantes en la Historia Antigua de Málaga (siglo VII a.C. – 711 d.C.)*, (Málaga, 2001), pp. 681–700.

[36] P. Reynolds, 'Material culture and the economy in the age of Isidore of Seville: the 6th and 7th centuries', *AT*, 23 (2015), pp. 163-210, at pp. 190-1.

[37] J. Martínez Jiménez and J.M. Moreno Narganes, '*Nunc autem a Gothis subversa*: the province of Alicante and the Spanish Mediterranean towns between the Byzantine and Visigothic periods', *EME*, 23/3 (2015), pp. 263-89; L. Brassous, '*Baelo Claudia* dans l'Antiquité tardive. L'occupation du secteur sud-est du forum entre les IIIe et VIe siècles', *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, 47/1 (2017), pp. 167-200.

[38] For an overview: Reynolds, *Hispania*, pp. 120-35.

[39] Isid., *Hist.*, 62 [longer redaction].

destruction of the urban fabric, rendering them unable to continue as commercial hubs. Isidore's claim that Cartagena was razed to the ground is borne out by archaeological evidence, and similar evidence exists for the Byzantine quarter of Málaga, which was destroyed earlier by Sisebut.[40] Both were substantially weakened and, in large sections, abandoned after incorporation to the Visigothic kingdom. This had a knock-on effect on many smaller settlements, including those outside of Byzantine control, which depended on these larger entrepôts for their prosperity. In a number of these settlements, occupation ended abruptly.[41] There was a wider pattern of depopulation in coastal areas already underway: flourishing commercial ports were already the outliers, and Visigothic conquest removed their purpose.[42] The short, sharp shock of Visigothic conquest had long term consequences which dovetailed with existing processes of involution. The basic foundations of the world in which Licinianus of Cartagena, Severus of Málaga, and others operated no longer existed. The region as a whole did not recover before the end of the Visigothic kingdom.

I draw out this economic picture for two reasons: firstly, to give a sense of the diversity and complexity of the political geography of the kingdom; secondly, to indicate that this geography shifted over time—that the world in which Isidore was shaped was not the world in which he died. It is easy to foreshorten the cultural world of Visigothic Hispania, particularly in the seventh-century heyday of the 'Isidorian Renaissance'. Yet, any sense of a highly institutionalized and unified episcopate must be tempered by the basic structural limitations that marked the Iberian Peninsula. The Visigothic councils were performances of unity and common purpose. But, as Stocking notes, their unanimity was asserted over a

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[40] Isid. *Etym.*, XV.1.67.

[41] Martínez Jiménez and Moreno Nargantes, '*Nunc a Gothis subversa*', pp. 284-5; Martínez Jiménez *et al.*, *The Iberian Peninsula*, pp. 185-6.

[42] See e.g. A. Gómez Bercerra, 'El poblamiento altomedieval en la costa de Granada', *Studia Historica—Historia Medieval*, 13 (1995), pp. 59-92.

diverse and locally rooted episcopate.[43] It is important to recognize that most bishops were rooted in their local societies. Isidore, of course, came from a prominent family with many ties to the episcopate and to monasteries, as did Braulio of Zaragoza.[44] Others, like Justus of Urgell, Justinian of Valencia, and their brothers, obtained numerous northern and eastern sees in the sixth century.[45] These local societies were themselves highly heterogeneous. Isidore's Baetican ferment was one particular world, defined by historic Romanization, proximity to the coast (navigable on the Guadalquivir river), and a complex relationship to Byzantine trade and North Africa. Zaragoza, inland in the north-east, was quite a different matter.

This affects how we understand the idea of 'Visigothic culture' or of a centralized 'Isidorian project'. Braulio of Zaragoza can, with some justice, be seen as the key disciple of Isidore's project. He edited the *Etymologiae* after Isidore's death, and his *Renotatio*, which lists Isidore's many works, gives the canonical description of Isidore's project of classicizing cultural renewal.[46] In spite of this cultural affinity, we should exercise caution in understanding how close such people, in distant parts of the peninsula, could really be. To travel the more than 600 kilometres that separate Seville from Zaragoza would require several days overland travel.[47] In the correspondence between Isidore and Braulio we find a genuine warmth, expressed in the classical language of *amicitia*. Isidore once sent two gifts—a ring and a cloak (*amictus*)—glossing the latter as the etymological root of *amicitia*.[48] Yet their correspondence also shows the tyranny of distance that could reign even between two such

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[43] Stocking, *Bishops, Councils, and Consensus*, pp. 114-17.
[44] On clerical families and the aristocracy: D. Claude, *Adel, Kirche und Königtum im Westgotenreich* (Sigmaringen, 1971), p. 108-11.
[45] Isid. *De viris*, 20-1.
[46] Braulio, *Renotatio*. For Braulio and the *Etym.*, see Isid., *Epp.* 10-13.
[47] For general discussion of the speed of travel in the Roman and post-Roman worlds: M. McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, AD 300-900* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 469-500.
[48] Isid., *Ep.* 2 [to Braulio], p. 18: *Direximus tibi annulum propter nostrum animum, et pallium pro amicitiarum nostrarum amictu, unde antiquitas hoc traxit vocabulum.*

well-connected figures. In the longest letter between the two, Braulio implored Isidore to send the *Origenes* (that is, the *Etymologiae*), noting that seven years have passed since he first requested them. He chided Isidore for withholding his intellectual gifts—gifts which should be held in common, not in private.[49] In their letters, Isidore comes across less as an energetic disseminator of learning to all the kingdom's clergy and more as a distant scholar, beset by the weight of finishing his enormous work, delaying sending drafts, neglecting friendly promises. Long-distance intellectual projects had their tensions and difficulties. The closeness of bonds can be overestimated.

Another overinterpreted relationship is that of Isidore and the Visigothic king Sisebut. Sisebut may well have been an exceptional king in his forthright willingness to intervene in ecclesiastical affairs: he certainly was a king of exceptional literary and religious ambitions.[50] He leaves to posterity a classicizing poem on the nature of eclipses, a hagiographical text on the sixth-century Frankish bishop and martyr Desiderius, and a handful of letters, one of which was lengthy doctrinal piece exhorting the Lombard monarchy to convert from Arianism.[51] No other king in the post-Roman Latin world—never mind Hispania—matches this range. For those who have a strong conception of the royal-ecclesiastical alliance constitutive of the 'Isidorian Renaissance', the literary exchange between King Sisebut and Isidore is emblematic, not least because Isidore dedicated his natural philosophical work *De natura rerum* to Sisebut: this was the occasion for Sisebut's astronomical poem.[52] It is possible to assume too much in the relationship between the two

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[49] Isid., *Ep.* 12.5 [from Braulio], p. 60: *et vestrum est, et nostrum commune est, non privatum.*

[50] See his letters browbeating clerics: *Ep. Wis.*, 1, 6.

[51] Sisebut, *VDes.*; *Ep. Wis*, 8.

[52] For both texts: J. Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville, Traité de la nature* (Bordeaux, 1960). See Y. Hen, 'A Visigothic king in search of an identity—*Sisebutus Gothorum gloriosissimus princeps*', in R. McKitterick, I. van Renswoude, and M. Gillis (eds), *Ego Trouble: Authors and their Identities in the Early Middle Ages* (Vienna, 2010), pp. 89-99; *idem*, *Roman Barbarians*, pp. 124-52. D. Ungvary, 'Clarifying the eclipse', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 73/5 (2019), pp. 531-63 has interpreted these literary exchanges in a more antagonistic way.

men, however. As Roger Collins has noted, we are biased by the survival of Isidore's works—we know very little about Helladius of Toledo, the metropolitan who resided in the royal city at the same time.[53] Furthermore, Sisebut was something of a maverick, exceeding the bounds of proper kingly conduct as envisaged by someone like Isidore. Sisebut's attempt to forcibly baptize the kingdom's Jews, which may have been made under an acute (and un-Isidorian) sense of eschatological expectation, is well known.[54] This occasioned subtle rebuke from Isidore, even as he and his fellow bishops solidified the consequences of forced conversion in their resolutions on baptized Jews at the Fourth Council of Toledo.[55] The hagiographical side of Sisebut's literary interests has no parallel in Isidore, who had a consistently muted position on contemporary saints and miracles, out of step with many of his contemporaries.[56] It would be a mistake to see Isidore and Sisebut as a closely aligned centre of power, still less as driving a project of 'Renaissance'. Tension, as much as co-operation, emerged from the religious initiative taken by rulers. This was true even for figures like Isidore who saw a strong role for kings in matters of faith, as we will see.

The world in which Isidore was formed, with its Mediterranean connectivity, its reliance on the cultural and economic links of the southern and eastern coasts, and its connections to Rome and Constantinople was not the world in which he died in 636. He was an early ideologue of the kingdom of Toledo, with its staunch assertion of Visigothic identity and territorial uniformity, but he was a product of a more mixed and fractured world.[57] When a later bishop like Ildefonsus of Toledo wrote his own *De viris illustribus* as a catalogue of Toledan bishops and assorted monks, he did so not just as a transparent attempt to shore

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[53] R. Collins, *Early Medieval Spain: Unity in Diversity, 400-1000* (London, 1983), p. 62.
[54] On eschatology: J. Gil, 'Judíos y cristianos en la Hispania del siglo VII', *Hispania Sacra*, 30 (1977), pp. 9-110.
[55] Isid., *Hist.*, 60; IV Toledo, cc. 57-66, esp. c. 57 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 235-42, esp. pp. 235-6). For Isidore and anti-Judaism: Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour*.
[56] Isid., *Sent.*, I.24.1-4b. On Isidore and his contemporaries: Dell'Elicine, *En el principio*, pp. 197-222.
[57] Isidore as ideologue: Wood, *Politics of Identity*.

up Toledan prestige (though it was this, too), but also because the political and cultural geography of the kingdom really had shifted. If the later seventh century saw the emergence of Toledo as the undisputed cultural centre of the kingdom, this was not just because the long rise to prominence of Toledo as a see had finally been accomplished, but also because regional centres and coastal zones had declined, and the wider human geography of the Mediterranean had shifted. The Visigothic elite grew more ideologically articulate through the seventh century, but also more involuted and narrowly focussed on its capital. The Toledo-centricity of its later years are at least as much evidence for the loss of connection to the peripheries as they are evidence for effective centralization. Ildefonsus and Julian of Toledo lived in a different world to Isidore.

III. THE INSTITUTIONAL ISIDORE: HIERARCHY AND OFFICE

Isidore was, like other bishops, interested in affirming the hierarchy of ranks within the ecclesiastical structure. This involved differentiating bishops, for example, from other, lower clergy. Bishops had certain exclusive prerogatives which were to be jealously guarded from those who would usurp them, or those bishops who would delegate them away. Thus, at the Second Council of Seville (619), over which Isidore presided, the former bishop of Córdoba, Agapius, was upbraided for allowing presbyters to set up altars and consecrate churches without his intervention. The canon goes on to enumerate a number of other competencies that were reserved for the bishop: the laying on of hands, the preparation of chrism, baptism, the public reconciliation of penitents at mass, and so on.[58] Agapius, we are told, had come to the episcopate 'a saeculari militia' and was inadequately prepared for the task, lacking knowledge of ecclesiastical discipline ('ecclesiasticis disciplinis ignarum').[59] Here, a number of

[58] II Seville, c. 7 (Conc., pp. 167-8).

[59] II Seville, c. 7 (Conc., at p. 167). On Agapius, see the hypotheses of P. Castillo Maldonado, '*Inventiones reliquiarum* en la Hispania tardoantigua: análisis de sus actores', *Polis*, 16 (2004), pp. 33-60, at pp. 35-44.

the concerns typically attributed to Isidore and his 'project' converge: the demand for rigorous hierarchy and discipline within the clergy; the necessity of clerical education; and, most importantly for our theme, the drive to set the clergy, as a group, apart from lay authorities. Isidore doubtless was interested in all these things: in his more schematic statements he opposed the presence of *saeculares uiri* in the *ecclesia*, distinguishing their *administratio saecularis potestatis*, bound up in the vices of pride and vainglory, from the *ministerium humilitatis* that defined the episcopate's difference.[60] But there is a danger in seeing Isidore only through the lens of institutional ecclesiastical life or presuming that all his works are best understood against this backdrop. He remained always bound up in ancient discourses of office-holding far less institutional in their basis.

The most schematic Visigothic account of the ecclesiastical hierarchy comes in a pseudonymous letter, purporting to have been written by Isidore for a certain bishop Leudefredus of Córdoba. This letter outlined, very briefly, the hierarchy of grades in the Iberian ecclesiastical structure, with particular emphasis on the division of duties between different people. There is little pastoral theory, and no tracing of offices back into their scriptural precedents. For Justo Fernández Alonso, the letter was a perfect encapsulation of the practical structure of the *ecclesia*'s officers, as understood by and lived in by Isidore.[61] This letter knew post-Visigothic transmission, where it was picked up by pseudo-Isidore's augmenters and by Gratian in the *Decretum*. While the pseudonymous nature of the letter has recently been called into question by Thomas Deswarte and others, who argue for its genuine Isidorian provenance, Roger Reynold's assessment—that it was a forgery, but one datable to the later seventh or eighth centuries—remains the most plausible assessment. Deswarte notes that the hierarchy of orders coheres with that which Isidore gives in *De*

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[60] Isid., *De eccl.*, II.5.12, p. 60.

[61] J. Fernández Alonso, *La cura pastoral en la España romanovisigoda* (Rome, 1955), pp. 19-20, with a wider discussion of clerical grades at pp. 20-42.

ecclesiasticis officiis.[62] Be this as it may, there is nothing incontestably 'Isidorian' about the letter: indeed, Isidore's account of the precise ranks of the clergy varies between *De ecclesiasticis officiis* and the *Etymologiae*, and both differ in minor ways to the letter in question. The letter, then, cannot be used to assess his particular view of the *ecclesia* in its institutional form. The best evidence for Isidore's own ecclesiology—and particularly for his own understanding of the different ranks and functions of the clergy—continues to be *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, a work about which there is no doubt of its authenticity. This work was incredibly widely disseminated in the Carolingian period, which doubtless contributed to the rigidly institutional, legalistic idea of Isidore that we sometimes have today.[63]

In *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, Isidore seeks the origins of offices—both in terms of liturgical observances and the different stations within the clergy and laity—and explains and fixes their proper nature by this genealogy. As Christopher Lawson has shown through the manuscripts, the work was originally called *De origine officiorum*.[64] This is also how Isidore explains it in the dedicatory letter to his brother, the bishop Fulgentius of Écija ('Quaeris a me originem officiorum quorum magisterio in ecclesiis erudimur') and how Braulio later understood the work in the *Renotatio*.[65] As well as cohering with his understanding of the revelatory power of language as expressed in the *Etymologiae*, it also, of course, relates to the specifically ecclesiastical notion of unbroken apostolic tradition, ensuring orthodoxy and uniformity. Indeed, most of Isidore's genealogies go back to the apostolic period, or the Old Testament. Thus, the class of the penitents is traced back to Job and David.[66] Sometimes

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[62] T. Deswarte, 'Isidore of Seville and the Hispanic order of grades: considerations on the *De ecclesiasticis officiis* and the *Epistola ad Leudefredum*', *Sacris Erudiri*, 58 (2019), pp. 361-75, esp. pp. 366-8; cf. the brief remarks of Barrett, 'God's librarian', p. 56. For the conventional case: R.E. Reynolds, 'The "Isidorian" *Epistula ad Leudefredum*: an early medieval epitome of clerical duties', *Medieval Studies*, 41 (1979), pp. 252-330.

[63] On the dissemination of *De eccl. off.*: C.M. Lawson, CCSL, 113 (Turnhout, 1989), pp. 146*-159*.

[64] C.M. Lawson, CCSL, 113, pp. 14*-15*, 119*-121*.

[65] Isid., *De eccl.*, p. 1; Braulio, *Renotatio*, p. 201.

[66] Isid., *De eccl.*, II.27(26).1.

transformations are traced from the old to the new dispensation. Almost all these accounts are grounded in a specifically sacred history.

Of all Isidore's works, it is therefore the one in which the *ecclesia* appears most clearly as a distinct institution, and in which its hierarchy is the most schematically articulated. That it was essentially a manual for bishops is a plausible reading, borne out by internal evidence.[67] Isidore's *officia* are, firstly, liturgical and calendrical observances and, secondly, the different ranks within the church, running from bishop down to married laypeople and those awaiting baptism. *De ecclesiasticis officiis* takes as its central aim to give a genealogy to these elements—the institutions—of the church as a structure with a specific history in the world. An example makes this institutional and historical focus clearer. Take Isidore's gloss of *sacerdos*. He traces the idea back to Aaron in the Old Testament—'the first in the Law to accept the name of *sacerdos*' and then to be 'the highest priest, that is the *episcopus*'—then has a new notion emerging with the apostle Peter under the new dispensation—'to him was first given the *pontificatum* in the *ecclesia Christi*.'[68] *De ecclesiasticis officiis* is interested in tracing a specific strand of history which gives the *ecclesia* its particular form and legitimacy. The institutional view is always central. Aaron was not the first to sacrifice, but his predecessors cannot be called priests because they sacrificed 'spontanea uoluntate, non sacerdotali auctoritate'.[69] It is legitimate 'priestly authority' that makes a priest. That Aaron was a priest *in lege,* as well as meaning 'the Law' in the sense of the Old Testament, conveys this sense of priestly authority deriving from its relationship to a particular legalistic dispensation.

When the Petrine priesthood emerges, institutionalization is ever more present. Peter is the rock (*petra*) on which the *ecclesia* (in the singular) is built, following the image of

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[67] Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville*, p. 201; Martin, 'Isidore of Seville's theories and practices of pastoral care', p. 292.

[68] Isid., *De eccl.*, II.5.1-2, 5, pp. 56-7: (1) *Ceterum Aaron primus in lege sacedotale nomen accepit*; (2) *Quo loco contemplari oportet Aaron summum sacerdotem, id est episcopum fuisse*; (5) *Ipsi enim primum datum est pontificatum in ecclesia Christi.*

[69] Isid., *De eccl.*, II.5.1, p. 56.

Matthew 16:18-19.[70] The priesthood of the *ecclesia* is different from earlier priests in two key respects: firstly, it is spread through the whole world by evangelism; secondly, its members are chosen not by blood relation—as it was in Aaron's time—but according to the merit bestowed on them by divine grace. It is now a body universal in scope, and divorced from relationships of kin.[71] As we have seen, Isidore's own experience of family and priesthood hardly bears this out. Later in the chapter, we will see how the role of bishops and other clergy as family men continued to cause problems for their authority. The point here, however, is to see Isidore at his most self-consciously institutional, working to account for the church and its offices in a specific way, set apart from wider society. It is here that we see Isidore most unequivocally and institutionally set clerics apart from and above the laity. Isidore did not derive from the Petrine foundation of the *ecclesia* any implications regarding Roman primacy in the present—he did not discuss the papacy in any of his works as a distinct office within the *ecclesia*. This reflects a wider Visigothic estrangement from the Roman see.[72] Isidore was a highly hierarchical thinker, but his purview, when explicit, was usually the Visigothic kingdom.

That clerics were part of an ordered hierarchy was, for Isidore, part of what rendered them distinctive within wider society. In *De ecclesiasticis officiis* he contrasted two types of clerics—true clerics 'sub regimine episcopali', and false ones deserving of the term 'acephalites' (*acefali*). The latter, 'ignorant of who they follow', are thus 'sine capite' (the literal meaning of the Greek 'acephalite'). They follow their own wills, wandering around without fixity, and succumbing to all their basic desires like *animalia bruta*. As priests they hold *signum religionis*, yet they scorn the accompanying duties (*religionis officium*). Compounding the

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[70] Isid., *De eccl.*, II.5.5, pp. 56-7: *Hactenus de primordiis sacerdotalibus in ueteri testamento; in nouo autem testamento post Christum sacerdotalis ordo a Petro coepit.* A standard idea: cf. *Ep. Wis.*, 18, p. 48: *sancta ecclesia catholica, que est in sancto Petro fundata.*

[71] Isid., *De eccl.*, II.5.6.

[72] Deswarte, *Une Chrétienté romaine*, pp. 231-6.

previous animalistic and monstrous imagery, Isidore likens them to Vergil's image of the centaur as a 'mixed breed and hybrid offspring'.[73] His language makes this kind of priest grotesque—not only undisciplined but in some sense also contrary to nature and to the proper order of the world. Moreover, Isidore's use of the term 'acephalite' connected them to a heretical religious movement in Byzantium of the same name. This formed when a group of Christians refused to follow their leader, the bishop of Alexandria, Peter Mongus, in accepting the emperor Zeno's *Henotikon* of 482. Isidore knew this history, at least in outline.[74] Isidore also had more direct experience. At Second Council of Seville, he critiqued the views of a Syrian man who had been claiming to be a bishop in Baetica. This man's doctrine was characterized as 'acephalite'.[75] Using the word in *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, Isidore was doubtless trying to associate unattached priests with dangerous doctrinal error.

Isidore's insistence on hierarchy and order was evident when he turned to ascetics and monastics, as we will see in Chapter 5, but it was also evident when he discussed laypeople. Laypeople appear in *De ecclesiasticis officiis* as administrative categories of the *ecclesia*: penitents, widows, catechumens, and so on. Isidore never discusses lay life *qua* lay life—indeed, as I have argued, Isidore had remarkably little use for 'lay' as a structuring category in his ecclesiological imagination—but he does discuss the married as a rank within the ecclesial structure.[76] Isidore's treatment of 'the married', in these ambivalent but ultimately accepting remarks, are some of the only material about marriage that survives, outside the law codes, from Visigothic authors.[77] Isidore was not an anti-marriage partisan on the level of Jerome, whose works against Jovinian were key statements of hard-line ascetic contempt for the

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[73] Isid., *De eccl.*, II.3.1-2, p. 54: *"mixtumque", ut ait poeta, "genus prolisque biformis"*; trans. Knoebel, p. 70.
[74] See esp. Isidore of Seville, *Chronica maiora 2*, 385, 386a, 389a, ed. J.C. Martín Iglesias, CCSL, 112 (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 185, 187. On the wider history: L.S.B. MacCoull, 'Isidore and the *akephaloi*', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 39/2 (1998), pp. 169-78.
[75] II Seville, c. 12 (Conc., pp. 171-2).
[76] See above, p. 18.
[77] Eug. II, *Carm.*, 26, an epitaph for Recciberga, the late wife of Reccesuinth, tells us sadly little about ideals of marriage or wifely conduct.

mediocrity of married life.[78] Indeed, Isidore made use of a curious fifth-century text known as the *Consultationes Zacchaei et Apollonii* for much of his opening material on marriage.[79] Dated to around 410, this apologetic dialogue between a 'pagan' and a Christian ascetic was devoted in large part to justifying asceticism. It also, however, justified marriage, and as such has been understood within the vanguard of Christian defences of marriage offered around this time by writers of an ascetic background like Augustine of Hippo.[80] Yet, Isidore's overall treatment of marriage is somewhat negative, even while accepting it as a legitimate state. Isidore prefaced his remarks—and the long quotation from the *Consultationes* on Adam and Eve—with the claim that, regarding marriage, 'the law of its nature is of the *saeculum*'.[81] The implication here may be that marriage—at least in the precise sense of *coniugium*—was not an element of the prelapsarian order but a consequence of the Fall. The text is equivocal.

It bears saying that these remarks on marriage are some of the only comments Isidore ever makes about specifically lay states of being, aside from his reflections of kingship and royal agents in the *Sententiae*. Isidore did not devote time to thinking about the specificity of lay life unless it pertained to political authority. *De ecclesiasticis officiis* shows that he could, in one particular work, see the whole Christian community according to the different categories within the *ecclesia*. *De ecclesiasticis officiis* is by far the most schematic and institutional view we have of Christian life in the Visigothic period. Yet Isidore's comments are not indicative of a wholesale attempt to construct an account of society along the lines of the *ecclesia*. Rather, the work was an attempt to grant a genealogical explanation for various elements of ecclesiastical life, as they might need to be known by clerics.

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[78] See esp. D.G. Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity: The Jovinianist Controversy* (Oxford, 2007); more generally: P.R.L. Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York, NY, 1988).

[79] Isid., *De eccl.*, II.20(19).1-2, following *Consultationes Zacchaei et Apollonii*, III.5.4-5, ed. Feiertag and Steinmann, SC, 402 (Paris, 1994), p. 196.

[80] Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, pp. 243-84, esp. pp. 250-6. See also R.A. Markus' review of Feiertag and Steinmann edition of the *Consultationes* in *JThS*, 47/2 (1996), pp. 336-7.

[81] Isid., *De eccl.*, II.20(19).1, p. 89: *De coniugatis lex naturae a saeculo est.*

Certain structural principles stand out across his understanding of the clergy, religious, and laity, not least his rigid emphasis on hierarchical authority—on the need for orders and groups to be under a *caput*, fitting thereby into discrete categories. The emphasis on hierarchy is evident, too, when he speaks of marriage. Man is the *caput* of woman, following the Pauline image, and this immutable order is rooted in God and nature. Any subversion of patriarchy was an affront to both God's law (*dei lex*), and to nature's law (*lex naturae*) known even to the 'pagans' (*gentiles*): 'if a woman should desire to rule (*imperare*) against a man, the order of nature (*ordo naturae*) is corrupted and the home (*domus*) will be called wretched and perverse'.[82]

In *De ecclesiasticis officiis* we see Isidore at his most rigidly hierarchical. This concern for order and hierarchy would be persistent throughout his oeuvre and comes across in the canons produced at councils over which he presided. Yet, it also points to a wider understanding of authority. Turning to Isidore's ethical thought, we see ideas closer to those we encountered in Martin of Braga's Christian works—appeals to nature, to the philosophical legacy of the ancient world, and to the moral psychology of the ascetic tradition. This shows a different side of Isidore's thought, with different implications for the divides between laypeople, ascetics, and clerics. In ethical discourse, office and order fades into the background, and more universal facets of the fallen human condition come to the fore. This has implications for how Isidore conceives of lay authority as well as the spiritual lives of religious professionals. It also gives us a sense of the kind of moral discourse through which authority could be criticized from below.

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[82] Isid., *De eccl.*, II.20(19).15, p. 95: *at contra si illa uiro imperare desiderat, et ordo naturae corrumpitur et domus illa misera et peruersa uocantur.*

IV. ETHICAL THOUGHT AND PASTORAL AUTHORITY

Isidore's thought was far from uniformly ecclesiastical in its purview. Indeed, much of Isidore's thought was characterized less by a clear, institutional function than by a rootedness in more abstract ethical considerations. These were bought into conversation with ideas of episcopal authority—the ideal bishop was a moral exemplar whose essential role was to correct souls—but Isidore's ethical thought cannot be reduced to this clerical application. I will turn to the dynamics of Isidore's moral account of office in due course. Before this, it is necessary to explore Isidore's thought on ethical and political matters in a way which does not reduce them to narrow issues of the clergy. In its institutionally vague scope, Isidore's moral thought was heavily dependent on that of Gregory the Great, and particularly to his *Moralia in Iob*. Gregory is another figure whose thought, often seen as particularly clerical or monastic in scope, actually had a much wider purview.[83] Gregory's *Regula pastoralis* is typically identified as a handbook for bishops, yet it also has a curious abstractness attributed to it, and rarely roots itself in the actual institutional circumstances of the ecclesiastic world Gregory knew in Rome. Conrad Leyser has described the *Regula*'s 'context' as 'the nebulous but well-trodden space of ancient philosophical dialogue'.[84] Gregory's *rector*—the very subject of the work—is often identified as a bishop, but it has been noted by Robert Markus that kings could also understand themselves as *rectores*, exercising pastoral authority over their people.[85] Isidore attests this idea, too: in the *Sententiae*, he referred to both bishops and kings as *rectores*.[86] Pastoral authority was institutionally fluid.

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[83] See esp. Reydellet, *La royauté*, pp. 462-79.

[84] C. Leyser, 'Pope Gregory the Great: ego-trouble or identity politics?', in R. Corradini *et al* (eds), *Ego-Trouble: Authors and their Identities in the Early Middle Ages* (Vienna, 2010), pp. 67-78, at p. 73.

[85] R.A. Markus, 'Gregory the Great's *rector* and his genesis', in J. Fontaine, R. Gillet, and S. Pellistrandi (eds), *Grégoire le Grand. Chantilly, Centre Culturel Les Fontaines, 15-19 septembre, 1982: actes* (Paris, 1986), pp. 137-46.

[86] Respectively, Isid. *Sent*. III.48.11 and III.39.3, pp. 299, 281.

Regarding the *Regula pastoralis* itself, we have intriguing evidence that it was received in Hispania as a work on virtue, following the ancient ethical tradition, as much as a handbook for a particular ecclesiastical office. When Licinianus of Cartagena wrote to Gregory in the early 590s he praised the *Regula* (which he calls the *Liber regularum*) in terms which positioned it squarely within the tradition of moral advice literature.[87] He called the work 'medicine for the soul', evincing the commonplace notion of moral and spiritual literature as therapeutic, and went on to discuss it within the framework of ancient moral thought on spiritual exercise and the cultivation of the virtues. He termed the work an *aula virtutum*. Remarkably, he used this as a pretext to discuss the cardinal virtues, despite their absence from the *Regula pastoralis*:

> There prudence fixes the limits between good and bad; there justice gives to each person what is theirs, while it subjects the soul to God, and the body to the soul. There fortitude, too, is found always equanimous in bad times and the good, neither vanquished in bad times nor exalted in the good. There temperance vanquishes the frenzy of desire and discretely imposes a bound to pleasure.[88]

Licinianus was explicit that the *Regula* is to be read not just as pertaining to priestly discipline but also to laypeople. Their basic rule of moral life ought to be the same: 'You comprehend all of that which pertains to participation in the eternal life, and you not only describe the rule of living for pastors, but you also give a rule of living for those who have no duty of government (*regiminis officium*)'.[89] Further on, he discussed more clearly institutional matters pertaining to the office of the bishop, which he fully acknowledged, yet continued to classicize, reforming Gregory's distinction between the *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa* as one

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[87] Lic. Cart. *Ep.* 1 [=Gr. Mag., *Reg. epist.*, I.41a].

[88] Lic. Cart., *Ep.* 1.1, p. 85: *Illic prudentia inter bonum et malum discretionis limitem figit, illic, iustitia unicuique sua tribuit, dum deo animam, corpusque anime subdit. Illic fortitudo etiam in adversis et in prosperis repperitur semper equalis, que nec in contrariis frangitur nec in prosperis exaltatur. Illic temperantia furorem libidinis frangit discreteque voluptatibus modum inponit.*

[89] Lic. Cart., *Ep.* 1.1, p. 85: *Illic cuncta que ad vite eternae participium pertinent comprehendis. Et non solum pastoribus regulam vivendi describis, sed etiam his, qui regiminis officium nullum habent, vivendi regulam tribuis.*

between *negotium* and *otium*—those two durable poles of the imagination in the late Roman elite's mentality.[90]

Taio of Zaragoza, a Visigothic bishop writing over half a century later, also gave a classicizing, philosophical gloss to Gregory's work, claiming panegyrically that neither Socrates, Plato, Cicero, nor Varro would have been his equal, were they to have been his contemporaries.[91] This claim came in the dedicatory letter to Eugenius II of Toledo, with which Taio prefaced his edition of Gregory's *Moralia in Iob*.[92] This was the first full edition of Gregory's *Moralia* to be produced in Hispania, and it was assembled only after Taio had travelled to Rome in the 640s to obtain missing Gregorian books.[93] Taio had a particularly close relationship to Gregory's work and, moreover, one particularly consequential for the Visigothic reception of Gregory's *Moralia* in the latter half of the seventh century. Taio's praise of Gregory invoked a host of specifically Christian and ecclesiastical virtues, but like Licinianus, he also invoked the cardinal virtues (which were in fact discussed in the *Moralia*): 'For he stood out as so adorned with the virtues of the mind (*animus*), namely prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice, that he was reckoned not as a human being, but an angel among people'.[94]

I will return to the view of pastoral authority that Isidore inherited from Gregory. Firstly, I want to focus on Isidore's relationship to the kind of Christian ethical thought

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[90] J.F. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court, A.D. 364-425* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 1-31.
[91] Taio of Zaragoza, *Epistola ad Eugenium*, ed. M.C. Díaz y Díaz, *Libros y librerías en la Rioja altomedieval* (Logroño, 1979), pp. 342-6, at p. 344.
[92] The epistolary preface transmits as part of a distinctive Riojan edition of the *Moralia*, to which was added various other items of *Gregoriana*. For these texts: Díaz y Díaz, *Libros y librerías*, pp. 333-50.
[93] For Taio's journey see: *Chronica anni 754*, 23, ed. J.E. López Periera, *Crónica Mozárabe de 754. Edición crítica y traduccíon* (Zaragoza, 1980), pp. 38-44, at p. 40, with discussion in J. Madoz, 'Tajón de Zaragoza y su viaje a Roma', in *Mélanges Joseph de Ghellinck, S.J.,* 2 vols (Gembloux, 1951), i, pp. 345-60. On the *Moralia*'s dissemination: P. Meyvaert, 'The enigma of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*: a response to Francis Clark', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 39/3 (1988), pp. 335-81, at pp. 349-51, 361-2.
[94] Taio, *Epistola ad Eugenium*, ed. Díaz y Díaz, p. 344: *Quattuor namque uirtutibus animi, prudentia scilicet, temperantia, fortitudine atque iustitia ita extitit perornatus, ut non homo, sed angelus inter homines putaretur.*

alluded to above. Isidore took an interest in the moral psychology that Christian authors drew from Stoic and Christian ascetic sources. This is particularly evident in his early works like *De differentiis rerum*, where Isidore showed considerable interest in virtues and vices, both in their classical and Christian forms.[95] Another Isidorian text with an interest in virtues and vices is the *Synonyma*. This is an acutely understudied text, little integrated into the wider study of Visigothic culture and society. It exists in two redactions, which are now believed to reflect two versions composed by Isidore himself.[96] The *Synonyma* are usually interpreted as an early work of Isidore's, composed around the time of the *Differentiae*: the *Synonyma*'s most recent editor, Jacques Elfassi, has placed their initial composition between 604 and 617.[97] Sometimes subsumed under the heading of Isidore's 'grammatical' works alongside the *Differentiae* and *Etymologiae*, the *Synonyma* is remarkable partly for its 'synonymous' mode of expression.[98] Isidore's synonymous technique involved expressing the same thought in numerous different ways, deploying different words and syntax, which leant the text a meditative yet insistent rhythm. This style was taken up by Ildefonsus of Toledo in *De virginitate sanctae Mariae*, and later came to be christened the *stilus Isidorianus*.[99] The *Synonyma* cannot be reduced to linguistic experimentation, however, nor yoked to a presumed project of grammatological training: its substantive contents deserve their due.

The *Synonyma* is an inner dialogue between *homo* and *ratio* in two books. The first book is largely taken up by the long penitential lament of *homo*, expressing the suffering of

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[95] Isid., *Diff. (II)*, 40-1. On the textual history: M.A. Andrés Sanz, 'Relación y transmission manuscrita de los tres libros de *Differentiae* editados en *P.L.* 83 (Isidoro de Sevilla)', *Revue d'Histoire des Textes*, 30 (2001), pp. 239-62.

[96] J. Elfassi, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Synonyma*, CCSL, 111B (Turnhout, 2009), pp. lviii-lxv and *passim*. For discussion see J.C. Martín Iglesias' review in *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi*, 68 (2010), pp. 368-71, and Elfassi's response in his 'Une nouvelle hypothèse sur les deux recensions des *Synonyma* d'Isidore de Séville: quelques remarques critiques', *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi*, 69 (2011), pp. 197-201.

[97] Elfassi, CCSL, 111B, pp. xi-xvi, at p. xii.

[98] Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité*, pp. 167-82.

[99] See esp. C. Di Sciacca, *Finding the Right Words: Isidore's* Synonyma *in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto, 2008), pp. 23-31.

one who recognizes their own irrevocable sinfulness in vivid language ('Melius est bene mori quam male uiuere, melius est non esse quam infeliciter esse'; 'melius mihi fuerat non esse ortum, melius non fuisse gentium').[100] The language of lamentation draws particularly on the Old Testament, not least the psalms. The second part sees *ratio* act as an ethical guide, instructing *homo* in how to reform their dispositions and conduct. This constitutes as *norma uiuendi* with a strong basis in the introspective moral psychology of the ascetic tradition. The sinner is implored to constantly examine their heart, peering into the shadowy corners of the self in search of hidden dangers.[101] *Ratio* speaks less of particular sins, in concrete context, than of the psychological processes that underlie sin. *Homo* is enjoined to examine the mind's quotidian motion, discerning any titillating *cogitationes* or *suggestiones* which pass through: sin comes about when the will gives consent to them. Moral agency lies in the discretion of a will standing in judgement over the stream of idle thoughts.[102] The form of the *Synonyma* and the guidance given by *ratio* emphasize self-reflexivity and inwardness. Isidore understands the self-inquiry of the sinner by analogy with one person judging another: 'In lingua aliena conscientiam tuam interroga'.[103] The influence of Gregory the Great's *Moralia* is clear, as is that of Cyprian of Carthage, Ambrose of Milan, and other Christian thinkers imbued with ancient (particularly Stoic) ethical thought.[104] Isidore's indebtedness to ancient thought is manifest: the introspective self-reform of the sinner is framed as an attempt to follow the Delphic maxim: 'know thyself'.[105]

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[100] Isid., *Syn.*, I.21, I.65, pp. 18, 52.
[101] Isid., *Syn.*, II.5.
[102] Isid., *Syn.*, II.6-7.
[103] Isid., *Syn.* II.42, p. 96. R. Sorabji, *Moral Conscience Through the Ages* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 2, 11-15, suggests that this notion of self-splitting was essential to ideas of conscience from Greek antiquity onwards. B. Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (Berkeley, CA, 1993), pp. 75-102, 219-23. has conceived of shame as a phenomenon based on the projection of an imagined, internalized witness.
[104] For Isidore's patristic and philosophical influences see esp. J. Fontaine, 'Isidore de Séville auteur "ascétique": les énigmes des *Synonyma*', *Studi Medievali*, 6/1 (1965), pp. 163-95; Di Sciacca, *Finding the Right Words*, pp. 20-2, 31-2. Isidore evinces the influence of Cicero's *Tusculanae disputationes*, but seemingly via the intermediary of Lactantius' *Institutiones diuinae*.
[105] Isid., *Syn.*, II.2, p. 63: *Scito, homo, temetipsum*.

The second of Isidore's redactions was titled *Soliloquia*—a rare Latin word, denoting an inner dialogue, drawn undoubtedly from Augustine's work of the same name.[106] Composed among the so-called Cassiciacum dialogues, Augustine's *Soliloquia* dramatized a dialogue between himself and his own *ratio*. In Catherine Conybeare's reading, Augustine's figure of *ratio* stood for something like a *ratio* of the philosophers—a specialized, disciplinary *ratio* which, despite its pretentions, was incapable (for Augustine) of encompassing the whole of what really matters. Augustine's inner dialogue split this faculty from its interlocutor, rendering it just one participant, itself insufficient.[107] Isidore's *ratio* is very different. On one level his *ratio* functions as a protreptic guide of the kind familiar from the philosophical tradition. Yet, on another level, Isidore's *ratio* is profoundly different to any ancient notion. Far from counselling the transcendence of disruptive emotion, *ratio* is itself an emotional, empathetic entity. Feeling the distress of *homo* alongside them, *ratio* draws *homo* to a better way of life by guiding them through a necessarily painful and tearful journey of penitential self-reform. Following the long lament of *homo* that fills the first book, *ratio* states: 'Commotus sum ad lacrimas tuas, ad fletus tuos conpunctus sum. Lamentatio tua me resoluit, lamentatio tua lacrimas mihi exegit'.[108] The role of *ratio* here is closer to the empathetic pastor of souls than to the austere Stoic guide.[109] The ultimate solution to sinfulness does not lie in any intrinsic goodness within the person, as *ratio* well knows, but in God's grace: 'Deus tibi ueniam tribuat, Deus culpas tuas parcendo ignoscat, peccata tua Deus a te suspendat'.[110]

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[106] Isid., *Syn.*, *titulus* [second recension only]. On the notion of *soliloquia*: B. Stock, *Augustine's Inner Dialogue: The Philosophical Soliloquy in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2010). Isidore defines *soliloquia* at *Etym.*, II.21.47. The Latin term was Augustine's coinage.

[107] C. Conybeare, *The Irrational Augustine* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 141-72.

[108] Isid., *Syn.*, I.75, at p. 61.

[109] See Isid., *Sent.*, III.46.6-8 on the ideal pastor. Augustine defended *misericordia* and *compassio* against Stoic attacks, claiming, *contra* Stoicism, that it was essential for the correction of sinners: Aug., *De ciu.*, IX.5.

[110] Isid., *Syn.*, I.75, pp. 60-1.

The *Synonyma*, then, must be understood within both a tradition of ancient moral psychology and a distinctly Augustinian account of the fallenness of the human being and their dependence on grace. This affects how we should understand the penitential language of the work. Penance was originally a drastic canonical act, a kind of recapitulation of baptism, which allowed one to re-enter the Christian community after mortal sin.[111] We see this ideal laid out programmatically by Pacian of Barcelona in his late fourth-century preaching.[112] The idea of penance became much broader, however, through late antiquity and came to acquire many meanings within the realms of sin and expiation, most of them unrelated to any formal canonical process.[113] Augustine, deeply committed to an idea of the human person in which sinlessness was impossible, emphasized the need for each person to watch over, lament, and atone for their sins as a quotidian practice.[114] His thought on sin and expiation is often thought to mark a watershed in Christian thought on penance—the moment at which the notion of penance as an exceptional and drastic one-time repetition of the atonement of baptism was reconfigured into an everyday practice, repeated endlessly through post-baptismal life.[115] Isidore took on much of this, particularly as it was filtered through Gregory the Great's *Moralia*.[116] In Jacques Fontaine's words, Isidore understood Christian life as a 'conversion continuée qui définit l'attitude chrétienne fondamentale de

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111 G.G. Stroumsa, 'From repentance to penance in early Christianity: Tertullian's *De paenitentia* in context', in J. Assmann and G.G. Stroumsa (eds), *Transformations of the Inner Self in Ancient Religions* (Leiden, 1999), pp. 167-78.

112 Pacian, *De paen.*

113 M. de Jong, 'Transformations of penance', in F. Theuws and J.L. Nelson (eds), *Rituals of Power: From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2003), pp. 185-224; A. Firey (ed.), *A New History of Penance* (Leiden, 2008), pp. 97-120; R. Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe, 600-1200* (Cambridge, 2014).

114 On the ideal of sinlessness: W. Löhr, *Pélage et le pélagianisme* (Paris, 2015), pp. 201-14.

115 É. Rebillard, *In hora mortis. Évolution de la pastorale chrétienne de la mort aux IV^e et V^e siècles* (Rome, 1994), esp. pp. 145-67; P.R.L. Brown, 'Vers la naissance du purgatoire. Amnistie et pénitence dans le christianisme occidental de l'Antiquité tardive au Haut Moyen Age' *Annales HSS*, 52/6 (1997), pp. 1247-61; *idem*, *The Ransom of the Soul: Afterlife and Wealth in Early Western Christianity* (Cambridge, MA, 2015), pp. 57-82.

116 On Gregory see the excellent C. Straw, *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection* (Berkeley, CA, 1988).

l'homme pécheur et sauvé, comme la respiration naturelle de l'existence chrétienne'.[117] Sin and penance were universal themes, at the heart of Christian moral thought and practice.

This should encourage us to leave open the question of who the *Synonyma*'s moral guidance applied to. It discussed universal matters of moral psychology—sin, introspective self-inquiry, expiation. This is worth emphasizing, because the text has often been seen as 'ascetic' in an exclusive sense. Jacques Fontaine's influential view was that the work should be considered an 'ascetic' but not monastic text: this was, in his much-quoted words, 'the least improper' designation for the work.[118] This is far from certain, if by 'ascetic' we denote a special category of persons (rather than a facet of all Christian moral thought). Overall, it is the studious non-specificity of Isidore's reflections that strike one more than his occasional appeals to more concrete contexts. We should not pick out individual passages and argue for a particular audience. Vagueness is not always to be effaced—the lack of specificity in Isidore's guidance was intentional. His ethical and spiritual thought tended toward the universalizing.

For some Christians, becoming a penitent in the formal, canonical sense, was desirable. One might seek out the life of a penitent as a particularly esteemed, holy state, which granted one a special place in the Christian community. One might have one's status as a penitent carved proudly on one's tombstone.[119] Kevin Uhalde has discussed the emergence of the religious vocation of penance through the fifth century.[120] In the seventh, when Isidore discussed canonical penitents in *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, he placed them between

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[117] J. Fontaine, 'Pénitence publique et conversion personnelle: l'apport d'Isidore de Séville a l'évolution médiévale de la pénitence', repr. in *idem*, *Tradition et actualité chez Isidore de Séville* (London, 1988), ch. VI, pp. 141-56, at p. 154.

[118] Fontaine, 'Isidore de Séville auteur "ascétique"', p. 173: '"ascétique" serait bien l'adjectif le moins impropre'.

[119] K. Uhalde, 'Judicial administration in the church and pastoral care in late antiquity', in Firey (ed.), *A New History of Penance*, pp. 97-120, at p. 104, n. 22, lists the following: *ICERV*, no. 42, 44, 66, 142, 178.

[120] K. Uhalde, *Expectations of Justice in the Age of Augustine* (Philadelphia, PN, 2013), pp. 107-34.

monks and virgins. Like virgins and widows, canonical penitents were a distinct order within the *ecclesia*, not fully monastic but not lay. The lives of penitents could seem very close to those of monastics—they might be tonsured, be clothed in *religiosus habitus*, fast, and avoid worldly business.[121] That such people had ceased to be normal laypeople is made clear by a canon of the Fourth Council of Toledo which denounced as 'apostates' those penitents who reverted to lay life ('et rursus praevaricantes laici effecti sunt'). Significantly, the same measure was enjoined by the canon on people tonsured for religious life, widows, virgins, and female penitents.[122] All of these latter categories were special orders within the church, whose separation from lay life was a matter for royal law as well as the canons.[123] Things, however, were not always as cut and dried as this: categories abounded, without any clear coherence.[124] There were many shades of grey between ordinary lay life and formal monasticism, right through the Visigothic period.

Penance was preached as a spiritual ideal from the pulpit, as we will see in the next chapter.[125] We have no evidence for Isidore's preaching, but we do have an interesting account of the penance he undertook at the end of his life, which involved him performing before a crowd. Redemptus, a priest of Seville, wrote this up as a kind of exemplar for the pious episcopal death.[126] He tells us that Isidore was taken before the altar of the Basilica of St. Vincent, where he could lament his sins in public before a large, mixed crowd ('tanta agmina pauperum, clericorum, religiosorum omnium cunctarum que huius ciuitatis plebium').[127] Isidore declared himself a sinner, in need of God's grace, exclaiming that his

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121 I Barcelona, c. 6-8 (Conc., p. 53); III Toledo, c. 12 (Coll. Hisp. V, p. 119).
122 IV Toledo, c. 55 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 233-4).
123 *LV*, III.5.3.
124 See above, pp. 18-19.
125 Below, pp. 180-6.
126 Redemptus, *Obitus beatissimi Isidori Hispalensis episcopi*, ed. J.C. Martín Iglesias, CCSL, 113B (Turnhout, 2005), pp. 379-88; for discussion: P. Castillo Maldonado, 'La muerte de Isidoro de Sevilla: apuntes de crítica histórico-hagiografica', *Habis*, 32 (2001), pp. 577-96.
127 Redemptus, *Obitus Isidori*, 2, ed. Martín Iglesias, p. 381.

sins number 'more than the sands of the sea'.[128] The penitential self-awareness he was said to model was not just an awareness of particular sins, but of the universal state of sinfulness and fallenness *per se*. In its universality, this penitential confession spoke to a sensibility applicable to human beings as such, and not just to the specifics of episcopal power. Such performances were at once about projecting a certain holiness and rooting this within a frame of reference that encompassed all. Isidore's performance was presumed to be comprehensible to the audience—its power came not from a show of separation but from the bishop partaking in the universal situation of fallen human beings facing God's judgement.

This is not to say that ordinary Christian laypeople were encountering the detailed penitential thought of the *Synonyma*, but it is to show that the ethical thought of such texts was embedded in a wider problematic of sin, expiation, and salvation which resonated with the wider concerns of the laity. Penitential thought was as rooted in pastoral need as in top-down clerical imposition. As Lisa Bailey has argued of the *Eusebius Gallicanus* sermons, issues of quotidian penance served to devolve inquiry, confession, and punishment to the individual, without involving direct contact with the bishop. Techniques of auto-confession and auto-correction granted a certain amount of autonomy to laypeople—they were, in their own way, techniques which permitted religious autonomy.[129] In preaching, of course, the bishop's authority was manifest, but in texts like the *Synonyma*, where the pastor was a figure of the mind, the relations of power were quite different.

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[128] Redemptus, *Obitus Isidori*, 3, ed. Martín Iglesias, p. 383: *qui peccaui super numerum harenae maris*. Cf. Job 6:3.

[129] L.K. Bailey, "'Our own most severe judges": the power of penance in the Eusebius Gallicanus sermons', in A. Cain and N. Lenski (eds), *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Farnham, 2009), pp. 201-11.

The reception history of the *Synonyma* shows that it was popular in monasteries in the Carolingian and Anglo-Saxon worlds, but also found lay readers.[130] The noblewoman Dhuoda cited it by name in the *Liber manualis*, a moral handbook she wrote for her lay son.[131] Perhaps most strikingly, three copies of the *Synonyma* were inventoried in the will of the Carolingian margrave Eberhard of Friuli. This is the same will which listed copies of Martin of Braga's *Formula vitae honestae*, alongside Alcuin of York's *De uirtutibus et uitiis* and Augustine's *Enchiridion*. The latter was a catechetical text written for a layman. Alcuin's treatise, written for a count of the Breton march, addressed a lay governing elite.[132] Martin's *Formula*, as we saw in Chapter 1, was a précis of the cardinal virtues dedicated to King Miro and intended for a wider audience of powerful laypeople. While Isidore's *Synonyma* was certainly not a 'lay mirror', in the manner of Martin's or Alcuin's, it was susceptible to reading by laypeople, just as it was also susceptible to monastic use. It was an institutionally undetermined text, read heterogeneously. Its Visigothic reception, unknowable as it is, should not be presumed to be any less diverse. There is strong evidence for elite lay literacy in the Visigothic kingdom, as well as more equivocal evidence for literacy further down the social scale in legal documents and administrative texts.[133] Literary works should by no

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130 On reception: J. Elfassi, 'Les *Synonyma* d'Isidore de Séville: un manuel de grammaire ou de morale? La reception médiévale de l'oeuvre', *Revue d'études augustiniennes et patristiques*, 52 (2006), pp. 167-98.
131 Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, 4.1, ed. and trans. M. Thiebaux, *Dhuoda, Handbook for her Warrior Son* Liber Manualis (Cambridge, 1998), p. 126: *Scriptum est in Sinonima* (citing Isid., *Syn.*, I.7). Another Frankish laywoman, Ragyntrudis is known to have requested a copy of the *Synonyma* from Lull of Mainz: see V.L. Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture in the Carolingian World* (Ithaca, NY, 2009), p. 144.
132 For Alcuin's work: R. Stone, *Morality and Masculinity in the Carolingian Empire* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 1-2, with wider discussion of 'lay mirrors' at pp. 27-68.
133 R. Collins, 'Julian of Toledo and the education of kings in late seventh-century Spain', and 'Literacy and the laity in early medieval Spain', repr. in *idem*, *Law, Culture, and Regionalism in Early Medieval Spain* (Ashgate, 1992), chs. III, XV, pp. 1-22, 109-33; N. Everett, 'Lay documents and archives in early medieval Spain and Italy, c. 400-700', in W.C. Brown, *et al.* (eds), *Documentary Culture and the Laity in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 63-94; Barrett, 'God's librarian', pp. 44-53; more broadly: G. Barrett, *The Written and the World in Early Medieval Iberia* (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2015).

means be confined to clerical or monastic readerships, unless further evidence points in that direction.

The institutional vagueness of Isidore's moral thought was not just a matter of early works like the *Synonyma*. It can be seen at the heart of Isidore's Gregorian account of pastoral authority, including in Isidore's *magnum opus*, the *Sententiae*. Once considered a relatively early work, following the presumption that Braulio's *Renotatio* gives Isidore's works in rigorous chronological order, Pierre Cazier has since argued that the *Sententiae* were in fact the late summation of Isidore's thought, roughly contemporary, and intellectually of a piece with the Fourth Council of Toledo.[134] The third book of Isidore's *Sententiae*, long mined for a doctrine on Christian kingship as well as for material on the ethics of the episcopal office, considers monastics, clerics, and lay authorities in one sweeping motion, all prefaced by the same basic problematic of fallenness, sin, and correction. Isidore's thought here needs to be understood in the light of Gregory's de-institutionalized thought on authority. This provides us with a contrast to the more ecclesiastical vision of *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, one which, as we will see, has more to tell us about how power worked in Visigothic society than we may think.

Isidore utilized Gregorian moral thought to think in ways unbound by the specific structures of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Even when Isidore was speaking about episcopal authority, as in *De ecclesiasticis officiis* or the third book of the *Sententiae*, he did so in ways which overlapped heavily with his non-institutional discussions elsewhere. Bishops were to be moral exemplars, ruling by example as well as doctrine. Their conduct grounded their authority and capacity to correct others. They were to have distinguished themselves in the manner appropriate to all, living the virtues they sought to cultivate in their congregants.

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[134] Cazier, 'Les Sentences de Isidore'; *idem*, *Isidore de Séville*. This idea has been challenged in J.C. Martín Iglesias, 'Une nouvelle édition critique de la *Vita Desiderii* de Sisebut, accompagnée de quelques réflexions concernant la date des *Sententiae* et du *De uiris illustribus* d'Isidore de Séville', *Hagiographica*, 7 (2000), pp. 127-80, at pp. 134-45. I find the challenge inconclusive.

Their legitimacy was often framed in moral rather than in legalistic terms.[135] They were sometimes referred to as *episcopi* or *sacerdotes* in the *Sententiae*, but more often used vaguer descriptors: *santus uir*, *praepositus*, *doctor, rector*. The ideal Christian leader was someone who led by example, living an exemplary moral life that granted weight to their *doctrina* and attempts at moral correction.[136]

The third book of the *Sententiae* hinged on the Gregorian distinction between the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*. Like Gregory, Isidore saw the *vita contemplativa* as a basic ideal in Christian spirituality. It was not narrowly identified with the monastic life (though the monastic environment was the institutional context in which it could be most fully realized) but seen as the ground upon which a good *vita activa* could be lived. The ideal bishop was someone who aimed at a *vita contemplativa* but who accepted, with due reluctance and humility, the demands of the *vita activa*—the task of which was 'making good use of the things of the world'.[137] While there were tensions between the contemplative and active lives, they can and indeed should be unified in one individual in mutually reinforcing ways. Thus, 'one who first succeeds in the active life ascends well to contemplation'; likewise, 'holy men' can 'pass from the mystery of contemplation to the "publicity" of action (*ad publicum actionis*),' just as others 'turn from the "manifest-ness" of action (*ab actionis manifesto*) to the mystery of intimate contemplation, so that they might praise God within.'[138] The difference between those holy people who have taken on pastoral responsibilities is that they bear responsibility for the sins of others—they will have to answer for them before God at the end of time.[139] This, as Isidore had it, should be thought a heavy weight, borne with humility and constancy.

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135 Isid., *Sent.*, III.33.1-46.23; both moral and institutional: Isid., *De eccl.*, II.5.8-17.

136 Isid., *Sent.*, III.36.1-38.5.

137 Isid., *Sent.*, III.15.1-2, at 2, p. 241: *Activa uita mundanis rebus bene utitur.* On reluctant authority: Isid., *Sent.*, III.33.3, p. 273: *timentes occultam dispensationem Dei, suspiciunt quod fugiunt.*

138 Isid., *Sent.*, III.15.3a, 6, p. 241: *Qui prius in actiua uita proficit, ad contemplationem bene conscendit*; and p. 242: *Viri sancti, sicut a secreto contemplationis egrediuntur ad publicum actionis, ita rursus ab actionis manifesto ad secretum contemplationis intimae reuertuntur.*

139 Isid., *Sent.*, III.46.1.

Ascetics and clerics are distinct by the manner in which the latter bear this weight, but the underlying spiritual ideals are the same.

In Isidore's third book of *Sententiae*, the formation and conduct of monks, clerics, kings, and judges were given in a smooth, all-encompassing panorama. Isidore noted differences, to be sure, but he set up his discussion to show the connections between different forms of authority and correction—between the self-transformation of the ascetic and the moral self-policing of the bishop; between the pastoral responsibility of the bishop and that of the king. On kings, Isidore was particularly expansive.[140] All power, Isidore said, came from God—good kings and bad kings alike were ordained by God, whether for the profit or the punishment of the people.[141] In the latter case, the people's sin was to blame. Indeed, all social hierarchy and subjection was a consequence of original sin. That some human beings were subject to others, that some ruled while others were to be led—this was all part of God's dispensation after sin. Sinful human beings need to be led and punished; they need to be constrained by terror if they are to bend away from sin. Structures of royal power can help the ecclesiastical structures in their salvific work: 'often the heavenly kingdom profits through the earthly kingdom'.[142] Bishops teach, but kings can back this up with terror for those matters which require it: inspiring fear, their laws coerce people away from sin.[143] Kings are subject to the demands of religion, just as they are subject to their own laws, but they have a clear and divinely ordained place in the immutable order of things which extends to functions that other ages would deem to fall within the sphere of 'the Church'.[144] Isidore's vision of social order served to naturalize the society created by the Visigothic state, as well as longstanding institutions like slavery, and to grant the king a

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[140] For a thorough account of his views: Reydellet, *La royauté*, pp. 505-97.
[141] Isid. *Sent.* III.48.10-11.
[142] Isid. *Sent.* III.51.4, p. 304: *saepe per regnum terrenum caeleste regnum proficit*.
[143] Isid. *Sent.* III.51.3, p. 304.
[144] Isid. *Sent.* III.51.2-3, pp. 303-4.

considerable religious role. This sits neatly alongside the organic and salvific visions of social and political order espoused by later Visigothic texts.[145]

By contrast, Taio rigorously separated out different kinds of authority.[146] The structure of his *Sententiae* is eloquent testimony to his clericalizing transformation of Gregorian pastoral thought. Clerics and monks were treated concurrently but they were rigorously segregated from worldly powers of any kind. The former two were discussed in Book II, a sprawling book which begins with Christ's life, passion, and resurrection and goes on to describe, in more or less historical terms, the emergence and history of the *ecclesia* from the apostles onwards. Both clerics and monks emerge from this exclusive ecclesiological history.[147] Worldly powers are not addressed until Book V, where they sit alongside discussions of sin, the dangers of power and wealth, and Judgement and the afterlife. The *principes* of the world are addressed in a far more brief and conventional fashion than in Isidore's expansive work.[148] Taio clearly had no particular interest in the theme, and absolutely no desire to bring worldly authority into dialogue with the pristine history of the *ecclesia* and its offices. In spite of his deep commitment to the transmission of Gregory's works, his own ecclesiology broke with the more radical de-institutional perspective of Gregory's pastoral vision.

Isidore's ethical works have a universalizing scope which was unconnected to particularly worldly institutions or offices. The ethical discussions of *De differentiis rerum* and *Synonyma* were not relevant only to clerics or monastics but to Christians as such. While a work like the *Synonyma* was not aimed at laypeople specifically—it did not address the ethics of marriage or secular office-holding—it was a work with a wide relevance. Rooted in the

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145 E.g. *LV*, II.1.1(2), II.1.3(4).
146 See J. Batany, 'Tayon de Saragosse et la nomenclature sociale de Grégoire le Grand', *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi*, 37 (1970), pp. 173-92.
147 Taio, *Sent.*, II, with clerics at II.31-45 and monks at II.45-9.
148 Taio, *Sent.*, V.9-10.

penitential imagination, it dwelt on matters of universal significance—sin, shame, expiation, moral reform—and did so in a way which was not rooted in the relationship between priest and congregant, but in ancient traditions of ethical self-improvement. The *Sententiae*, a more mature Isidorian work, contains similar material in its second book, but also has a more explicit discussion of offices in the third book. Here, the connections between monastic, clerical, and royal offices are drawn out. All are subsumed under the totalizing framework of pastoral authority inherited from Gregory the Great.

Turning now to think more specifically about the ways in which bishops articulated their authority *vis-à-vis* the laity, we will see that the moral discourse on office presented opportunities for critique from outside the clergy. Direct textual evidence of this is hard to come by. We have letters from King Sisebut in which he shows himself adept at manipulating a pastoral language of office. He upbraided the bishop Cicilius of Mentesa for attempting to leave his office to become a monk—charging him with abandoning wandering sheep to the jaws of wolves—and accused Eusebius of Tarragona of being in thrall to the empty games of the theatre so as to browbeat him into selecting his royal-favoured candidate for the vacant bishopric of Barcelona.[149] Royal appointments to major episcopal sees were clearly relatively common in the seventh century.[150] The extent to which 'popular' involvement in episcopal elections remained possible is impossible to determine—despite the commonplace language of election by the clergy and 'people', we lack narrative evidence for any actual lay engagement outside of the royal court.[151] We can, however, move beyond this high-political critique to uncover the wider ways in which a moral notion of office made bishops and other clerics vulnerable to critique from below.

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[149] *Ep. Wis.*, 1, 6. The practice of selecting royal-chosen lay candidates as bishops was condemned, two decades earlier, at II Barcelona, c. 3 (Conc., pp. 159-60).

[150] See Braul., *Epp.*, 31-3 and Ildef., *De viris*, 13 on Chindasuinth's selection of Eugenius (II) as bishop of Toledo. Cf. Braul., *Ep.* 35 for royal pressure to ordain a priest.

[151] P. Norton, *Episcopal Elections, 250-600: Hierarchy and Popular Will in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2007), esp. pp. 52-80. Cf. J. Leemans *et al.* (eds), *Episcopal Elections in Late Antiquity* (Berlin, 2011).

To be sure, Isidore did have a propensity for rigidly hierarchical thinking, and this shows throughout his oeuvre. In the *Sententiae*, Isidore rejected the idea that *plebs* could critique their *rector*, or even that lower clerics could critique their superiors (aside from in the unique case of heresy).[152] He argued staunchly against any attempt to bring authorities' faults out into public view: 'one who exhibits the faults of their leader (*praepositum*) in public, is condemned to the sentence of Ham, son of Noah'.[153] Yet, in spite of himself, he gives us some sense of how priestly authority existed in its local context, where communal judgement and reputation mattered. It is to this we now turn.

V. BISHOPS AND THEIR 'PUBLIC': HONOUR, SHAME, AND REPUTE

The informal accountability of bishops to their congregations derives from the fact that their moral suitability had to be performed in public. This was something that Isidore was well aware of, whatever his commitment to hierarchy. Moral pre-requisites to episcopal office-holding were long-established, with 1 Timothy 3 often standing as the scriptural reference point.[154] This dovetailed with a classical inheritance. Indeed, 1 Timothy and the other 'pastoral epistles' have been understood as early second-century attempts to shape nascent Christianity to the structures of Graeco-Roman society—particularly to the order of the household.[155] Ancient understandings of proper deportment in public life also had their influence. Isidore repeated the common-sense of late antiquity when he linked mind and body inextricably: 'for the *animus* is made visible through the body's deportment, [and] the body's motion (*gestus*) is a sign of the mind (*mens*)'.[156] Isidore's keen interest in the proper

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152 Isid., *Sent.*, III.39.1b-3.

153 Isid., *Sent.*, III.39.4-6, quote at p. 281: *Sententia damnatur Cham filii Noe, qui suorum praepositorum culpas in publico produnt.*

154 See C. Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley, CA, 2005), pp. 32-41.

155 Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy*, pp. 92-6.

156 Isid., *Syn.* II.43, at p. 97: *Animus enim in corporis habitu apparet, gestus corporis signum est mentis.* Cf. Eug. II, *Carm.*, 81, p. 269: *Frons hominis mentem proprio depromit amictu:/ qualis uultus erit, talia corda gerit.*

speech of the ideal bishop was rooted in this rhetorical inheritance, with its linked understanding of well-honed speech, self-control, and suitability for power.[157] As interiorizing as was at times, Isidore was also anxious to ensure that clerics cultivated the 'public persona of the priestly body', as Lynda Coon has put it.[158] The control of language, like that of gesture and public comportment, was the heart of this. Bishops and other clerics operated in a society in which public repute and embodied performance mattered.

This was not incompatible with one in which the pastor's moral accountability was seen, in theory, to relate only to God. Scholars have sometimes contrasted 'shame societies'—rooted in external public repute and considered less sophisticated—from 'guilt societies'—based in an interior sense of moral accountability.[159] Besides the fact that this is irrevocably tied into a teleology dedicated to privileging Christian interiority over an earlier situation presumed to be 'primitive' and morally deficient, this dichotomy also manifestly separates two phenomena which often go together and need to be understood in tandem. In short, we can—like the sources discussed below—speak of *conscientia* and *fama* in the same breath. The Graeco-Roman economy of honour and shame was not devoid of interiority, nor was the Christian account of guilt and conscience unconcerned with external, social judgements. A turn toward the dynamics of shame, repute, and public authority is not a turn away from the more interiorizing accounts of moral life discussed above but an exploration of a further aspect of the same cluster of ethical ideas, inherited from the same late antique world.[160]

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[157] Isid. *De eccl.* II.5.17, at p. 62. For background: R. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, CA, 1988); P.R.L. Brown, 'The saint as exemplar in late antiquity', *Representations*, 2/1 (1983), pp. 1-25. Disordered speech could be compared to the braying of animals: see Eug. II, *Carm.*, 41.

[158] L.L. Coon, 'Gender and the body', in T.F.X. Noble and J.M.H. Smith (eds), *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Vol. 3: Early Medieval Christianities, c. 600-c. 1100* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 433-52, quote at p. 433.

[159] For a much-discussed example: E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, CA, 1951), pp. 28-63.

[160] On these issues: Williams, *Shame and Necessity*; C.A. Barton, *Roman Honor: The Fire in the Bones* (Berkeley, CA, 2001); V. Burrus, *Saving Shame: Martyrs, Saints, and Other Abject Subjects* (Philadelphia,

Even in formal processes of ecclesiastical discipline, the importance of honour and shame is clear. One precious testimony comes in a letter from Isidore to Helladius, the bishop of Toledo. This was written in advance of a hearing at which the lapsed bishop of Córdoba (perhaps Agapius, the bishop whose episcopate was denounced at the Second Council of Toledo) was to be judged formally before Helladius and certain other bishops following a fall into sexual sin.[161] Recommending the Córdoban bishop's deposition and penance, Isidore expressed his condemnation in pastoral terms, highlighting the state of the bishop's soul and his prospects of salvation more than matters of legal process:

> Let him forever deplore with the lamentation of repentance the sins he has committed, let him mourn the honour (*cultus*) of the priesthood which he has lost by living evilly; let him mourn the condition of his soul which he defiled with such filth of putridity; perhaps the Holy Spirit shall extend to him a hand some time so that he may obtain remission of sins through worthy satisfaction.[162]

There are two key elements to Isidore's remarks that are worth highlighting. Firstly, *pace* his own frequent Augustinian claim that the episcopate is 'a work not an honour', Isidore here speaks a conventional ancient language of shame and honour. The Córdoban bishop has fallen 'de altitudine honoris' into sin; he now resides in *ignominia*. Honour here doubles for 'office', as it did in the Roman civic and imperial vocabulary.[163] Secondly, the remedy Isidore suggests is penance. This is framed less as a punishment handed down for legalistic reasons but as an act of pastoral care (*sollicitudo pastoralis*) of behalf of the bishops—they are called to help him reform his soul, bearing present shame as means of seeking expiation in the next

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PA, 2008); R. Palmén, 'Out inner custodian: shame and moral agency in late antiquity and the Middle Ages', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 50/2 (2020), pp. 199-231.

161 Castillo Maldonado, '*Inventiones reliquiarum*', pp. 35-44 argues that the bishop in question is Agapius.

162 Isid., *Ep.* 5.2, p. 28: *poenitentiae perpetim flagitia perpetrata lamentatione deploret; plangat sacerdotii cultum, quem male vivendo perdidit; lugeat animae suae statum, quem tanto putredinis coeno coinquinavit; fortasse porriget illi manum quandoque Spiritus sanctus, ut per dignam satisfactionem mereatur peccatorum remissionem*; trans. Ford, p. 29.

163 On honour and office in the Roman world: J.E. Lendon, *Empire of Honour: The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford, 1997).

life. As Isidore put it: 'Easier for him are the ignominies of the present time than the future torments of hell'.[164]

The relation of penance to honour is an interesting case, and one which shed important light on the importance of public repute to bishops.[165] In penance, clerics were thrust into the world of public honour and shame—that is, they were ensconced in social judgements which did not necessarily obey the dictates of institutional hierarchy.[166] We see this clearly in canons which discuss the eligibility of penitent laypeople for ordination to the clergy. Various canons from the late Roman period onward forbade those who had undergone public penance from rising to the clergy.[167] The Fourth Council of Toledo placed penance alongside legal *infamia* and physical disfigurement as moral and physical injuries that fatally negated one's suitability for episcopal office.[168] Yet, as Mayke de Jong has shown, the Visigothic canons also show the emergence of less 'public' forms of penance—ones which did not render the penitent ineligible for office.[169] Thus, the Council of Gerona permitted people who had received penance to rise to the clergy providing they did not 'confess publicly that they have perpetrated any mortal sin'. The language of publicness—of *manifesta scelera* and public confession—highlights that repute before others was what mattered above

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[164] Isid., *Ep.* 5.2, p. 28: *Levior est illi praesentis temporis ignominia, quam futura gehennae tormenta*; trans. Ford, p. 29. On ecclesiastical discipline as a matter of *pastoralis sollicitudo* see *Iudicium inter Marcianum et Habentium episcopos*, 6, ed. J.C. Martín-Iglesias, 'El *Iudicium inter Marcianum et Habentium episcopos* (A. 638): estudio, edición y traducción', *Habis*, 49 (2018), pp. 203-31, at p. 219. The judgement, written up in 638 after Isidore's death, also discusses clerical penance. For context: R.L Stocking, 'Martianus, Aventius and Isidore: provincial councils in seventh-century Spain', *EME*, 6/2 (1997), pp. 169-88.

[165] On penance and *infamia*: Petit, *Iustitia Gothica*, pp. 94-114.

[166] On shame, conscience, and penance in a later period: A. Firey, 'Blushing before the judge and physician: moral arbitration in the Carolingian Empire', in *eadem* (ed.), *A New History of Penance*, pp. 173-200.

[167] I Toledo, c. 2 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 328-9); Gerona, cc. 9-10

[168] IV Toledo, c. 19 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 206-11, at pp. 207-8).

[169] M. de Jong, 'What was public about public penance? *Paenitentia publica* and justice in the Carolingian world', in *La giustizia nell'alto medioevo*, Settimane, 44, 2 vols (Spoleto, 1997), ii, pp. 863-902, esp. pp. 871-3.

all.[170] Reputation in the eyes of others overshadowed more legalistic considerations. Other ways of conducting less shaming and less public forms of penance was to locate them in monasteries.[171] Potamius of Braga underwent monastic penance after confessing sexual sin.[172] This practice spread throughout the Mediterranean world from around the sixth century onwards.[173] As a less shaming form of penance, it could be undertaken without losing eligibility for office.[174] This adds further corroboration to the idea that eligibility for office was understood to rest in part on what was known publicly about one's moral suitability.

Perhaps the most significant way in which the moral state of the bishop was present before the judgement of a wider public was through the state of the episcopal household. It is instructive to compare the grand episcopal household, with its simultaneously 'public' nature and its 'private' household structure, to its precursors from the late Roman world. Kate Cooper has written of the 'closely-watched households' of this world, in which the aristocrat's residence was at once a 'private' home and an index of their capacity to perform effectively in 'public' life. Here, elite men were judged on the order and hierarchy of their *domus*, and the home was a site of display and of gained and lost honour as much as it was one of private reclusion.[175] We are not in a radically dissimilar world in Visigothic Hispania. Indeed, the connection of the episcopal household, and the bishop's role as *paterfamilias*, to late Roman aristocratic precursors has been drawn out by Kristina Sessa for even such a bureaucratic and institutionally central see as that of Rome.[176] Bishops and the wider clergy continued to be family men, in many cases, throughout the Visigothic period. Even those

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170 Gerona, c. 10 (Coll. Hisp. IV, p. 289): *aliquod mortale peccatum perpetrasse publice fateantur.*
171 Monastic penance was attested in royal law, too: e.g. *LV*, III.5.1, III.5.3.
172 X Toledo, *Item decretum pro Potamio episcopo* (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 537-44).
173 J. Hillner, *Prison, Punishment and Penance in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2015).
174 See Lérida, c. 8 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 303-4); Narbonne, c. 8 (Conc., p. 148).
175 K. Cooper, 'Closely watched households: visibility, exposure, and private power in the Roman *domus*', *Past & Present*, 197 (2007), pp. 3-33.
176 K. Sessa, *The Formation of Papal Authority in Late Antique Italy: Roman Bishops and the Domestic Sphere* (Cambridge, 2012).

who did not themselves have wives and children were in charge of the episcopal household and could be judged for apparent scandal and disorder. A man's capacity to govern a well-ordered household remained tied into their suitability for office—not least because episcopal authority (like other forms of authority) could be presented as fatherly in expression.[177] When Ildefonsus of Toledo reflected on the virtues of his early seventh-century predecessor Aurasius, he referred to him as both 'regiminis auctoritate praeclarus' and 'domesticis rebus bene dispositus'.[178] Andy Fear has interpreted the word 'domesticis' as 'the affairs of the church', and Carmen Codoñer as 'asuntos internos', but a more literal rendering ('domestic matters'—that is, affairs of the episcopal household) is plausible, given the wider context outlined above.[179] As in the late Roman world, conduct in the household continued to be the subject of public praise or censure.

A canon from the Fourth Council of Toledo discussed the issue of episcopal repute in particularly clear terms. It ruled that each bishop should have in his household certain trustworthy witnesses who could attest before others to the probity of his life:

> As much as it is proper that we have a pure conscience before God, it is fitting, however, that we also preserve *optima fama* before human beings. And, in accordance with the apostolic precept, let us have a *testimonium* of life "not only before (*coram*) God but also before (*coram*) humans" [2 Cor. 8:21].[180]

With such *testimonia*, bishops could avoid any 'deplorable suspicion': in this way not only would their *bona conversatio* please God, but their *optima fama* would please the *ecclesia*. An explicit parallel is drawn between *conscientia* as moral probity before God, and *fama* as the

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[177] See *Ep. Wis.*, 17, at p. 45, where the monk Mauricius refers to the bishop Agapius as *verum etiam quod patrem familias omnis sexus omnisque etas, uidue, orfani, exules et reliqui conclamat uulgi caterba*. In a royal context, the *comes* Bulgar likewise called King Gundemar a *pater familias cunctis* in *Ep. Wis.*, 15, ed. Gil, pp. 42-3, at p. 43.

[178] Ildef., *De viris*, 4, p. 122: *Vir bonus, regiminis auctoritate praeclarus, domesticis rebus bene dispositus, aduersitatibus infixis constanter erectus*.

[179] Fear, *Lives*, p. 113; Codoñer, p. 123.

[180] IV Toledo, c. 22 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 213-14, at p. 213): *Quamuis conscientiam puram apud Deum nos habere oporteat, tamen et apud homines famam optimam custodire conuenit, ut iuxta praeceptum Apostolicum "non tantum coram Deo sed etiam coram hominibus" uitae sanctae testimonium habeamus*. Cf. 2 Cor. 8:21.

same before human beings. Here, in this canon from the Isidorian council *par excellence*, is some recognition that the *ecclesia* depends in part on the probity of its officers, as judged in the court of public opinion—indeed, what was explicitly feared was that suspicion and disparagement would come from laypeople.[181] As much as bishops were accountable before God for their weighty office, they were held accountable, albeit in informal terms, to those under their care.

The idea that a bishop should have a *testimonium* is first attested at the Council of Gerona in 517, over a century earlier. Here, it was ruled that any cleric, from subdeacon up to bishop, who came to the episcopate as a married man ought to have a *testimonium* to his good life in the household.[182] The fear was clearly that allegations of sexual misconduct will surface for those who live with their wives. The use of *testimonia* appears in a canon from the Suevic kingdom, too, for clerics who face sexual allegations.[183] The policing of morality in the episcopal household by witnesses had various levels. The household contained not just the bishop's own immediate family but also a host of others, including young boys training for future clerical vocations.[184] These, it was ruled, required a *senior* who could act as their 'magistrum doctrinae et testem uitae'.[185] The moral order of the household, for which the bishop as householder would be judged, was a matter of overseeing the lives of a variety of people, both cleric and lay. In their management of this complex domestic world, the bishop could demonstrate, in a traditional manner, their probity and suitability for office.

The use of *testimonia* as a defence against scandalous accusation first appears in the Iberian canonical record at the First Council of Toledo (400), where it was ruled that *puellae*

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[181] IV Toledo, c. 22 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 213-14): *Vt igitur excludatur deinceps omnis nefanda suspicio aut casus, et ne detur ultra saecularibus obtrectandi locus, oportet episcopos testimonium probabilium personarum in conclavi suo habere, ut et Deo placeant per conuersationem bonam et ecclesiae per optimam famam.*
[182] Gerona, c. 6 (Coll. Hisp. IV, p. 287).
[183] II Braga, c. 8 (Conc., p. 84). Cf. III Braga, c. 4 (Conc., p. 375).
[184] II Toledo, c. 1 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 347-9, at p. 348)
[185] IV Toledo, c. 24 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 214-15, quotations at p. 215).

Dei who wished to spend time with *confessores* or laypeople to whom they were not related should have a respectable senior or widow present as a witness to their good conduct.[186] The idea appears in various monastic writings. Leander's *De institutione uirginum*, written in the later sixth century for his sister Florentina, ruled that individual virgins should speak to others in their community only in the presence of two or three *testimonia* to avoid giving rise to false rumours.[187] Scriptural precedent was provided: when Christ wished to speak with Moses and Elijah on the Mountain of Transfiguration, he did so before (*coram*) three witnesses (*testes*), Peter, Jacob, and John.[188] The Second Council of Toledo (619), presided over by Leander's successor and brother Isidore, made similar regulations for male monastics.[189] It was no great jump to apply these kinds of ideas to the episcopal household.

The notion of *testimonia* as witnesses also, of course, had a legal use, well attested in the Visigothic law.[190] Royal legislation required two or three freeborn witnesses to, for example, legally record certain kinds of donation or to call into question the validity of a document.[191] As Damián Fernández has argued, the ability to bear witness—to be a trustworthy participant in legal processes—was core to social standing in local societies. Being branded with *infamia*, making one ineligible to offer testimony, was a serious disability both in legal and social terms. It bore a heavy weight of social exclusion and illegitimacy: the decision by a judge as to whether a person could validly give testimony was, in the words of Fernández, 'a moment of brutal reckoning of a person's standing within and outside their community'.[192] Religious and legal dishonour were increasingly related in the Visigothic

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186 I Toledo, c. 6 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 330-1).
187 Leand., *De inst. uirg.*, 17.2, p. 146: *ut falsi rumoris non daret occasionem.*
188 Leand., *De inst. uirg.*, 17.1. See Matt. 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36. Cf. *De inst. uirg.*, 30.
189 II Seville, c. 11 (Conc., pp. 170-1, at p. 170). Cf. Isid. *Reg.* 13, 15.
190 On witnesses see esp. *LV*, II.4.
191 *Codex Euricianus*, 307, ed. Á. D'Ors, *El Código de Eurico. Edición, palingenesia, índices* (2nd edn, Madrid, 2014 [1960]), p. 33; *LV*, II.4.3.
192 D. Fernández, 'Trial witnesses, social hierarchies, and state building in the Visigothic kingdom of Toledo', *Early Medieval Europe*, 28/4 (2020), pp. 509-31, at p. 511. On *infamia* more specifically: J.

period. When a monk, Tarra, was ejected from the monastery of Cauliana, near Mérida, on the charge of visiting prostitutes, he appealed to King Reccared to contest his newfound *infamia*. Unable to obtain three witnesses to attest to the unjustness of the allegation, he offered the three persons of the Trinity as witnesses in their place![193] The outcome of Tarra's strange appeal is unknown, but it has been shown that his letter, a formally structured *suggerendum*, followed the process for overturning false accusations defined in the *Lex Visigothorum*.[194] His plaint is a rare (if unusual) real-life example of the way in which sexual allegation and *infamia* were contested through witnesses.

Returning to bishops, it is evident that, while ill repute could take many forms, issues of sexual probity were the most prominent in canonists' minds. Scrutiny of the moral condition of the episcopal household often centred on the presence of women and the ways bishops related to them. These concerns found even found expression in the royal law.[195] It is important to recall that women were not excluded from the episcopal household. The ability of married men to become bishops and other clerics was never called into question in the Visigothic period. Isidore himself accepted that it was permissible for a bishop to be, in the words of 1 Timothy 3:2, 'the husband of one woman': chastity could be preserved within marriage.[196] Though the canons ruled, from as far back as the fourth century, that the

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Bowman, 'Infamy and proof in medieval Spain', in T. Fenster and D. Lord Smail (eds), *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY, 2003), pp. 95-117.

193 *Ep. Wis.*, 9. On Cauliana see below, p. 251.

194 I. Velázquez Soriano, 'El *Suggerendum* de Tarra a Recaredo', *AT*, 4 (1996), pp. 291-8, identifies the process with *LV*, VI.1.(5)6.

195 *LV*, III.4.18.

196 Isid. *De eccl.* II.2.3, II.5.11, quote at II.5.11, p. 60: *Vnius uxoris uirum*. For an overview of clerical marriage D.G. Hunter, 'Married clergy in Eastern and Western Christianity', in G. Peters and C.C. Anderson (eds), *A Companion to Priesthood and Holy Orders in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2015), pp. 96-139; on Gaul: B. Brennan, '*Episcopae*: bishops' wives viewed in sixth-century Gaul', *Church History*, 54/3 (1985), pp. 311-23.

marriages of higher clergy had to be continent, it is evident that a number of clerics had children.[197]

At the opening of the fifth century, the First Council of Toledo demanded continence of presbyters and bishops, but accepted that some presbyters already had children from before this was laid down.[198] The overall intent was tolerance of existing arrangements, while attempting to apply stricter norms to promotions.[199] The council went on to discuss the daughters of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, who had been consecrated to the religious life.[200] Upper clergy did not cease to have children. A law in the late fifth-century *Codex Euricianus* addressed property issues concerning the children of bishops and other clergy, and a similar measure, mentioning the children and widows and clerics, was included in Reccesuinth and Ervig's codes in the seventh century.[201] Even in canonical theory, there is nothing to suggest that bishops and other clerics could not continue to live with their wives, providing they avoided sexual contact. An exception is found in the Third Council of Toledo, where married former Arian bishops were forbidden from living in the same house as their wife. The clear specification of former Arian bishops seems to suggest, however, that this was an exceptional measure, intended to assuage suspicion of a controversial group of bishops, rather than a general rule laid down for all. Here, as ever, the fear was of public judgement—their unchastity threatened to generate *infamis suspicio*.[202]

What was attacked, from the fourth-century canons of Elvira onwards, was the presence of *extraneae feminae* in the episcopal household.[203] These maligned, though never

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197 On marital continence: Elvira, c. 33; I Toledo, c. 1 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 253, 328); Siricius, *Ep.* 1.7, ed. J.P. Migne, PL, 13 (Paris, 1845), col. 1138; VIII Toledo, c. 5 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 416-18).
198 I Toledo, c. 1 (Coll. Hisp. IV, p. 328).
199 Second marriages were treated more severely: I Toledo, c. 3-4 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 329-30).
200 I Toledo, c. 19 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 336-7).
201 *Codex Euricianus*, 306.2, ed. D'Ors, p. 33; *LV*, V.1.4.
202 III Toledo, c. 5 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 112-14, quotation at p. 113).
203 Elvira, c. 27 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 250-1). Cf. Nicaea, c. 3—the Latin of the *Hispana* text condemned the presence of 'mulierem extraneam nisi forte mater aut soro aut thia, id est amita uel matertera, sit'

tightly defined, figures haunted the canons on the household and the bishop's conduct there. Women's presence was a consequence of the fact that the episcopal household was a household, not a monastery or bureaucratic institution made up solely of male office-holders. When the Council of Gerona (517) distinguished between those who came to the episcopate married and those who came unmarried, it noted that the latter might need assistance in running their household, mandating that they enrol the assistance of their sisters or mothers (or else a male cleric) rather than using the services of any other woman.[204] The Second Council of Toledo (531) made a similar ruling, expressly noting that it was legitimate for female relatives to provide assistance in the household, while prohibiting the use of female servants or slaves.[205] Female domestic servants were certainly considered a threat to chastity. In the late Roman world, male householders were legally unconstrained in their sexual contact with slaves, and this seems to have continued in Visigothic law, despite the greater weight that Christianity put on male sexual self-control.[206] The episcopal household appears, therefore, as a domestic space in which wives, sisters, and mothers might legitimately play a crucial role, though the presence of other women was held to be deeply suspicious.

This is to speak of the household in relatively abstract terms. We are not in a position to know much about the architectural nature of the episcopal household in Seville, where little archaeological evidence of the intramural zone is known, but we have better evidence from other cities.[207] Episcopal residences were usually parts of 'episcopal groups', involving the central cathedral, administrative buildings, and sometimes privileged burial sites. In the

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(Coll. Hisp. III, p. 68). The canons of Elvira do not necessarily all predate Nicaea: see above, p. 19, n. 71.

[204] Gerona, cc. 6-7 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 287-8).

[205] II Toledo, c. 3 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 350-1).

[206] K. Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman World, AD 275-425* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 281-325; P.D. King, *Law and Society in the Visigothic Kingdom* (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 234-5.

[207] J. Sánchez Velasco, *The Christianization of Western Baetica: Architecture, Power, and Religion in a Late Antique Landscape* (Amsterdam, 2018), pp. 193-208.

well-excavated case of Valencia, the episcopal group, which was constructed in the sixth century during a grand project of episcopal building, was overlaid onto the former heart of the Roman city, the forum.[208] In other cases, like Barcelona, the episcopal group grew up around Roman buildings in the northern corner of the city, away from the heart of Roman monumentality. The original episcopal residence here was in a re-used Roman peristyle *domus*. Spaces for episcopal representation lay nearby but were spatially distinguished until the sixth century remodelling of the complex, when a grander episcopal palace was constructed.[209]

In other cases, like the city of *Eio* (El Tolmo de Minateda), re-established by Leovigild after having been abandoned, we see episcopal complexes built with minimal basis in anterior Roman structures. Here it is presumed that the grand palace next to the church had both domestic and representative functions for the bishop. Various sites within the complex—a porticoed *atrium*, the structured outside space—may have been used for representation before audiences, or may have been linked to the public cult and ceremonial of the adjacent cathedral.[210] While these three cases show the heterogeneity of episcopal complexes and bishops' residences,[211] they all contribute to the idea that the bishop's domestic space and spaces of representation (spaces for meeting people, appearing before audiences, meeting with clergy) were relatively closely connected, much in the manner of Roman elite houses in prior centuries. There may have been increasing separation between the bishop's living quarters and the episcopal see's administrative and ceremonial functions,

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208 A.V. Ribera i Lacomba, 'El grupo episcopal de Valencia', *Association pour l'Antiquité Tardive: Bulletin,* 21 (2012), pp. 24-39.

209 C. Bonnet and J. Beltrán de Heredia Bercero, 'El primer grupo episcopal de Barcelona', *Memorias de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona*, 25 (2000), pp. 467-90.

210 S. Gutiérrez Lloret and J. Sarabia Bautista, 'The episcopal complex of *Eio*-El Tolmo de Minateda (Hellín, Albacete, Spain). Architecture and spatial organization. 7th to 8th centuries AD', *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 19 (2013), pp. 267-300.

211 Heterogeneity is emphasized in the overview of J.M. Gurt i Esparraguera and I. Sánchez Ramos, 'Episcopal groups in Hispania', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 30/3 (2011), pp. 273-98.

as has been argued for late antique Italian examples, but the fact remains that the bishop's household was usually elided, to some extent, with the administrative and religious centre of the see.[212]

There is also textual evidence for the functioning of episcopal complexes. The *Vitas sanctorum patrum Emeretensium*, tells us about the see of Mérida. This hagiographical text, dating to the seventh century, describes events in Mérida in the later sixth century, including the building projects of a succession of Méridan bishops. The hagiographer states that the episcopal palace (here *atrium*) was rebuilt after it collapsed during the episcopate of Fidelis.[213] Fidelis inherited the enormous wealth of his predecessor (and uncle) Paul who, after carrying out medical treatment on a 'senatorial' woman, had acquired riches which made the see of Mérida the richest in the peninsula (or so we are told).[214] Fidelis rebuilt the episcopal palace with renewed grandeur, commissioning long colonnaded halls, marble flooring and walls, and elaborate ceilings.[215] The picture we get of the space is coherent with the aesthetics of power from late Roman elite buildings, though unfortunately the site has not been definitely identified or excavated. The episcopal *atrium* was the site of administrative and political power. Established close by the residence of the Hispano-Roman *dux* Claudianus, it was a place in which the bishop would find himself surrounded by clerics and ecclesiastical administrators, and where they would receive and redistribute the revenues from the diocesan patrimony.[216] It was also a place in which the bishops could meet royal officials or

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[212] Y.A. Marano, '*Domus in qua manebat episcopus*: episcopal residences in Northern Italy during Late Antiquity (4th to 6th centuries A.D.)', *Late Antique Archaeology*, 3/2 (2006), pp. 95-129, suggests increasing specialization and separation of domestic and official spaces in Italian episcopal complexes.

[213] On the term *atrium*: C. Godoy Fernández and F. Tuset Bertrán, 'El *atrium* en las *Vitas sanctorum patrum Emeretensium*. ¿Una formula de la llamada arquitectura de poder?, *Archivo Español de Arqueología*, 67 (1994), pp. 209-21.

[214] For discussion: R. Collins, 'Mérida and Toledo: 550-585', in James (ed.), *Visigothic Spain*, pp. 189-219.

[215] *VSPE*, IV.6,

[216] For the proximity of Claudianus' *domus*: *VSPE*, V.10, at p. 83; for ecclesiastical revenues: *VSPE*, V.3, at p. 51.

inter prisoners.[217] It could even be the site of an organized public debate, as occurred when the Nicene bishop Masona debated with his Arian counterpart Masona. This latter function highlights the publicness of at least some the episcopal palace's grand spaces. We are told that the debate occurred before judges and crowds of Christian spectators.[218]

The crucial question that this architecture of power raises is whether the apparent structures of accountability I have traced were simply a relic of an older rhetoric, suitable to the times in which Christian communities were smaller and less stratified, but inapplicable to the world of the sixth and seventh centuries. There certainly is evidence for an increasingly untouchable episcopate, on the level of public ceremonial. The *Vitas sanctorum patrum Emeretensium* approvingly recalled Masona dressing ecclesiastical slaves in fine silks and having them parade with him on Easter Sunday, as if he were a king.[219] This kind of display was not uncontested: a provincial Bragan council in 675 condemned bishops who adorned themselves with the relics of the saints and surrounded themselves with richly-dressed clerics when they paraded on saints' days, calling it 'vanity alone, disguised under the image of sanctity'.[220] Conspicuous episcopal display of this kind may well have been common, however. Regarding the better documented case of Merovingian Gaul, Jamie Kreiner has characterized episcopal power as a potent spectacle, replete with large retinues, which distanced bishops from their congregations.[221] Episcopal retinues were, indeed, a figure of Visigothic ecclesiastical life, in Mérida and elsewhere.[222] A canon of the Seventh Council of Toledo (646) saw clerics from Gallaecia complain that bishops had brought retinues of over

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[217] See e.g. *VSPE*, V.10-11, ed. Maya Sánchez, pp. 81-92, where plots on Masona's life are attempted and dealt with at the palace.
[218] *VSPE*, V.5, at pp. 58-62.
[219] *VSPE*, V.3, at p. 53: *quasi quoram rege incederent.*
[220] III Braga, c. 5 (Conc., pp. 375-6, quote at p. 376): *sub sanctitatis specie simulate vanitas sola.*
[221] J. Kreiner, 'About the bishop: the episcopal entourage and the economy of government in post-Roman Gaul', *Speculum*, 86/2 (2011), pp. 321-60.
[222] For Masona's retinue: *VSPE*, V.8, at p. 75.

fifty people to their churches for the episcopal visitation, expecting hospitality, and that this presented an unacceptable imposition on local funds.[223]

It may be no coincidence that the regal ceremonial of the Méridan episcopate was described as coming into being around the time when Leovigild, Masona's enemy, enhanced Visigothic court ritual in Toledo in imitation of Byzantine ceremonial.[224] As Michael McCormick has it, this royal ceremonial was a performance of distinction aimed at a relatively narrow class of Gothic nobles.[225] The bishop's audience was doubtless wider, but we might wonder whether it is better to see their visibility before crowds as something reflecting what Jürgen Habermas has called the 'representative publicness' of the medieval authority—that is, the need for authorities to project an impression of unassailable authority to those over whom they rule in visible ritual—rather than any more reciprocal relationship of authority and judgement.[226] Either way, there are strong reasons to see Visigothic royal ceremonial, with its urban setting and inherent 'publicness', as a direct descendant of the urban ceremonial of the later Empire.[227] Bishops, too, existed against a civic backdrop inherited from the Roman world, though, as pastoral authorities and representatives, they articulated their power within it in a manner rooted less in the ideology of unassailable imperial power than in the traditional idea of the proper, self-controlled Roman 'public' man. Overall, it is fair to say that in the canons episcopal authority seems more fragile than it does in the more programmatic statements of Isidore. It also seems more dependent on

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223 VII Toledo, c. 4 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 350-5). See R.A. Devlin, 'Separating the secular from the spiritual: wives, sons and clients of the clergy in late antique *Hispania*', *Sacris Erudiri*, 58 (2019), pp. 339-59, esp. pp. 348-54.

224 Isid. *Hist*., 51 [short redaction only].

225 M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 315-23.

226 J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. T. Burger (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 5-14.

227 McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, pp. 297-327; Valverde Castro, *Ideología*, pp. 181-95; H. Dey, *The Afterlife of the Roman City: Architecture and Ceremony in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 140-60.

reputation in a distinctly local context. Moral visions of office were necessarily like this—they related to the ancient world of civic honour and self-control as much as they did to novel Christian accounts of sexual purity.

VI. CONCLUSION

I have argued for the importance of taking Isidore's ethical and pastoral thought seriously. In each of these were find a discourse not confined to educating or disciplining the clergy, but applying to a wider constituency. In his ethical thought, Isidore was heir to a ferment of late antique Christian writing which combined ancient moral psychology with elements of the ascetic tradition. Gregory the Great is a prime example, but it should also be noted that Isidore's ethical thought bears interesting comparison to Martin of Braga's Cassian-derived treatises. Isidore did not have a specifically lay audience in mind for any of his works, as far as we can tell, but his purview tended to the universal rather than the narrowly clerical and this should give us pause before we confine his works to an apparently narrow, institutional project of educating, disciplining, and institutionalizing the clergy. Similar remarks can be made of Isidore's thought on political power which, in true Gregorian style, he discussed in de-institutionalized terms, setting it against the horizon of salvation history rather than institutional history.

Isidore's moral thought underlay part of his account of clerical office. Clearly, his was a language which could be used to serve clerical power clerical power. In works like *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, Isidore was committed to a view of rigid hierarchy and distinct roles in the clergy. In the *Sententiae* he was strongly opposed to the idea that accountability could come from below, counselling instead that people accept authorities as a gift or punishment from God. Yet, even in Isidore's accounts of clerical discipline, a more fragile and provisional account of clerical authority can be glimpsed—one rooted in the performance of moral probity before others, including lay congregants. According to Isidore's works and to the

canons of various councils, including many outside of Isidore's chronological reach, the moral authority of clerics was vulnerable to contestation from below. The language of moral critique was a consequence built into Isidore's notion of pastoral authority, and his universalizing account of ethics. Isidore may have had no desire to encourage or legitimate critique from below but, like the canons, he bears witness to its possibility. Clerics walked a tightrope between honour and shame, and this was decided in public. Understanding this helps us comprehend clerical authority—and its relationship to the laity—in a more provisional and decentred way. It draws us away from a legalistic account of institutions to something negotiated within the public world of civic communities. The Christianity of these communities is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 4:

A CHRISTIAN SOCIETY? PASTORAL CARE AND LAY RELIGION IN THE NICENE KINGDOM

I. INTRODUCTION

Investigating the religiosity of non-elite laypeople is a formidably difficult task, as historians have long recognized.[1] Much of our source material speaks only of the ideals of political authorities and bishops; very few texts say anything at all about the quotidian religious life of a Christian in a rural context. The vast majority of the kingdom's inhabitants dwelled in small rural settlements, and while something of their social organization and agrarian practices can be determined archaeologically, little is known about religious life at this level.[2] We are in a better position regarding the religious culture of the cities, where evidence for preaching, saints' cults, and episcopal activity shines light onto urban observances, though the sources, inflected with an idealized pastoral vision of civic Christian community, present their own problems of interpretation. Most tellingly of all, we have very little evidence for the kingdom's persecuted Jewish community besides the voluminous laws and canons enacting this persecution.[3] A handful of inscriptions from Jewish contexts survive, and some material has been uncovered archaeologically, but we see Jews almost entirely through the eyes of their persecutors.[4]

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[1] For an attempt: J.N. Hillgarth, 'Popular religion in Visigothic Spain', in E. James (ed.) *Visigothic Spain: New Approaches* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 3-60.

[2] M. Sotomayor Muro, 'Penetración de la iglesia en los medios rurales de la España tardoantigua y visigoda', in *Cristianizzazione ed organizzazione ecclesiastica delle campagne nell'alto medioevo: espansione e resistenze*, Settimane, 28, 2 vols (Spoleto, 1982), ii, pp. 639-70. On Visigothic village life see now J.A. Quirós Castillo, 'An archaeology of "small worlds": social inequality in early medieval Iberian rural communities', *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 12/1 (2020), pp. 3-27; more broadly: *idem* (ed.), *The Archaeology of Early Medieval Villages in Europe* (Bilbao, 2009).

[3] For royal law: *LV*, XII.2.3-17, XII.3.1-28

[4] *ICERV*, nos. 428-33; L.A. García Iglesias, *Los judíos de la España antigua* (Madrid, 1978), pp. 50-9.

This is illustrative of a wider problem. The ambitious statements of Christian unity and orthodoxy espoused by the political centre present a somewhat unreal discourse which is difficult to connect to what is known of Iberian reality.[5] Kings rooted their legitimacy in the defence of Christianity and the destruction of its enemies, which, after Sisebut's maverick edict of forced baptism, came increasingly to mean the Jews. Despite misgivings about coercive baptism, the Fourth Council of Toledo (633) upheld the validity of the sacrament, thereby forming a group of baptized 'Christians' whose Jewish practices constituted apostacy.[6] The Sixth Council of Toledo (638) defined an oath for kings to swear before accession to the throne, demanding that they forbid anyone to reside in the kingdom 'qui non sit catholicus' and that they suppress Judaism.[7] By the 650s it was asserted in royal law that all Christian heresies had fallen by the wayside, leaving only Judaism as a problematic non-Christian element in the kingdom.[8] The Christian faith of the majority of the kingdom's inhabitants appears in such laws in ideal terms—as a standard of observance to which Jews were to be held—but we hear little about Christian practice in its own right.[9] One gets the sense that legislators and canonists had little interest in probing the details of the laity's religiosity: the triumphalist rhetoric of the Nicene kingdom was not conducive to anxious examination.

The view from the political and religious centre is hard to avoid, even when scholars explicitly seek to investigate pastoral care and lay congregations. Students of lay religiosity

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[5] On Visigothic political theology: C. Martin, *La géographie du pouvoir dans l'Espagne visigothique* (Villeneuve d'Ascq, 2003), pp. 321-70.
[6] See above, p. 110, n. 3.
[7] VI Toledo, c. 3 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 304-7, quote at p. 305). See D. Claude, 'The oath of allegiance and the oath of the king in the Visigothic kingdom', *Classical Folia*, 30 (1976), pp. 3-26.
[8] *LV*, XII.2.3.
[9] See the stipulations regarding Christian observance in the *professio* demanded of Jews in *LV*, XII.3.14.

have increasingly turned to the liturgy as their key source.[10] In an Iberian context, liturgical texts are usually understood in relation to the Visigothic attempt to renovate and reform the Iberian church exemplified by the Fourth Council of Toledo. The bishops gathered there advanced a project of liturgical unification and strengthened vertical chains of authority, mandating, for example, that all local priests receive books of liturgy from their bishops and work to ensure ritual competency.[11] Here we see 'the church' appear as a hierarchical institution stretched out across the whole kingdom, and the idea that elite clerical ideas trickled down through these mechanisms to laypeople has been a tempting one. Parallel studies of lay Christianity in Carolingian world during the project of *correctio*, aided by richer documentary evidence, have led to remarkably maximalist accounts of the extent to which clerical ideals of Christianity were successfully disseminated to and instantiated in the congregations even of rural churches.[12] Caution, however, is required.

Opinions on the accessibility of the Iberian liturgy have varied, with some voices remaining sceptical about its comprehensibility to ordinary Christians.[13] Opinions also vary on the question of how far lay involvement in the liturgy was seen as desirable by clerics. The architecture of churches indicates a separation between clergy and laity, with little opportunity for direct participation by laypeople: 'mystery and transcendence rather than

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[10] A. Kurt, 'Lay piety in Visigothic Iberia: liturgical and paraliturgical forms', *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies*, 8/1 (2016), pp. 1-37; M. Lester, *The Word as Lived: The Practice of Orthodoxy in Early Medieval Iberia. c. 500-711* (Ph.D. thesis, Princeton University, 2017); R. Maloy, *Songs of Sacrifice: Chant, Identity, and Christian Formation in Early Medieval Iberia* (New York, NY, 2020). On other early medieval societies: Y. Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul, A.D. 481-751* (Leiden, 1995); J.F. Romano, *Liturgy and Society in Early Medieval Rome* (Farnham, 2014).

[11] IV Toledo, cc. 2, 5-18, 25-26 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 183-4, 189-206, 215-16).

[12] C. van Rhijn, *Shepherds of the Lord: Priests and Episcopal Statutes in the Carolingian Period* (Turnhout, 2007); S. Patzold, '*Pater noster*: priests and the religious instruction of the laity in the Carolingian *populus christianus*', in S. Patzold and C. van Rhijn (eds), *Men in the Middle: Local Priests in Early Medieval Europe* (Berlin, 2016), pp. 199-221.

[13] M.C. Díaz y Díaz, 'Literary aspects of the Visigothic liturgy', trans. R. Richman and S. Starling in James (ed.), *Visigothic Spain*, pp. 61-76.

participation', was Hillgarth's intuition of architects' intentions.[14] The laity were excluded from the holiest part of the church, the *chorus* or *sanctuarium*, and were to take liturgy outside of this exclusively clerical space, according to canons from the Suevic and Visigothic kingdoms.[15] As Lisa Bailey has noted, speaking of Merovingian liturgy, the experience of liturgical ritual can be construed in wildly different ways by different historians, depending on their different methodologies and suppositions. For some, liturgical cult was the clearest statement of Christian unity in the early medieval world, while for others the liturgy was a core site for the assertion of religious hierarchy, particularly that between the higher clergy and the laity.[16] Wherever one falls on this divide, it remains the case that using the books of the Mozarabic liturgy as an index of the religious experiences of Visigothic Christians is a difficult endeavour which does not take us far from clerical ideals and top-down visions of religion. While a host of studies have deepened our understanding of the Mozarabic manuscripts of the liturgy and their relationship to Visigothic history, we continue to know far more about the ideals of legislators and bishops than about lay experience.[17]

My intention in this chapter is to move away from paradigms which view lay Christianity in terms of a state-wide Visigothic project of renovation, and to turn instead to evidence for diversity and local specificity. I focus here on two neglected bodies of source material, namely sermons and martyr *passiones*.[18] These are difficult texts which present

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[14] Hillgarth, 'Popular religion', p. 23. On architecture: E. Carrero and D. Rico, 'La organización del espacio litúrgico hispánico entre los siglos IV y XI', *AT*, 23 (2015), pp. 239-48; C. Godoy Fernández, *Arqueología y liturgía. Iglesias hispánicas (siglos IV al VIII)* (Barcelona, 1995).

[15] I Braga, c. 13 (Conc. pp. 73-4); IV Toledo, c. 18, 39 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 206, 225). See Godoy Fernández, *Arqueología y liturgía*, pp. 49-65.

[16] L.K. Bailey, 'Liturgy and the laity', in B. Effros and I. Moreira (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Merovingian World* (Oxford, 2020), pp. 1031-49, esp. pp. 1032-3.

[17] P.C. Díaz Martínez, 'Monasticism and liturgy in Visigothic Spain' in A. Ferreiro (ed.), *The Visigoths: Studies in Culture and Society* (Leiden, 1999), pp. 169-99, at pp. 191-9. On the Mozarabic liturgy more generally: J. Pinell, *Liturgia Hispánica* (Barcelona, 1998); E. Hornby and R. Maloy, *Music and Meaning in Old Hispanic Lenten Chants* (Cambridge, 2013).

[18] For existing studies on these texts: F.J. Tovar Paz, *Tractatus, sermones atque homiliae. El cultivo del género literario del discurso homilético en la Hispania tardoantigua y visigoda* (Cáceres, 1994); C. García Rodríguez, *El*

substantial problems of attribution, dating, and contextualization, and a large portion of this chapter is necessarily devoted to these fundamental issues. There is a dividend to committing to such work, however. A closer attention to these texts shows that the texts used in public preaching and Christian festivals were of highly diverse origins, and that they show relatively scant influence from the political centre. Sermons from Provence circulated in abundance, perhaps outstripping Iberian compositions; martyr *passiones* emerged largely in local civic contexts, with strong dependencies on oral traditions and unclear relationships to the clerical hierarchy. We need to be able to think of the Iberian pastoral encounter in ways which do not reduce it solely to the top-down project of the Nicene Visigothic state or to an ideal liturgical unity. While these ideals existed *qua* ideals, they tell us less about lay religiosity than has often been hoped.

In what follows I do not claim to give a general panorama of lay Christianity or of the church' pastoral structure.[19] Rather, I draw out, in a necessarily critical and fragmentary way, a number of different ways in which laypeople and clerics related to one another in the pastoral encounter. I suggest that there was a spectrum of lay Christian positions, varying in their proximity to the clerical hierarchy and the ideals it espoused.[20] Some Christians partook in practices like penance which drew them into a view of sin and the self which mirrored those we encounter in the writings of elite episcopal authors. This maximalist notion of Christian observance is most evident in clerical sources like sermons. Other Christians, however, had very different ideas about what Christian life looked like to their prelates, and tensions can be drawn out. The question of where the boundary lay between 'Christian' and

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culto de los santos en la España romana y visigoda (Madrid, 1966); P. Castillo Maldonado, *Los mártires hispanorromanos y su culto en la Hispania de la antigüedad tardía* (Granada, 1999). Textual problems are discussed below.

[19] For the latter, J. Fernández Alonso, *La cura pastoral en la España romano-visigoda* (Rome, 1955) remains indispensable, if unduly credulous.

[20] I borrow the language of the 'spectrum' of Christianity from W.E. Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 181-8.

'pagan' practices or 'true religion' and 'superstition' was open to contestation and disagreement. This draws us into another strand of scholarship which has addressed lay religiosity: the much-questioned historiography of 'pagan survivals', 'magic', and the like.

Most importantly, I argue that lay Christians had agency in determining the religious lives they led. It is important to remember that the pastoral view of laypeople is only one amongst others, and it is one which implies power relations that were not always there. We should not think simply of powerful clerics ruling over a subordinate laity. Rather, we need to remain cognizant of the powers laypeople could have over churches they founded, which extended to choosing clergy, to give a salient example. When discussing martyr cult, the importance of lay patronage and oral traditions that emerged from outside the clergy have a particularly clear importance. This study, then, is one of an encounter between different people, clerical and lay, in local contexts—not of the slow trickle-down of authoritative dogma and ritual from the centre to the peripheries. This gives us not only a richer view of Iberian Christianity, but also a more contained and sceptical account of formal ecclesiastical structures, consonant with my analyses in the other chapters of this work.

II. SERMONS AND PREACHERS, TEXTS AND CONTEXTS

Our knowledge of the pastoral side of Visigothic ecclesiastics' activity is acutely limited by the source base. Visigothicists lack the rich sources furnished to students of John Chrysostom's Antioch, or the Provençal world of the *Eusebius Gallicanus* collection or Caesarius of Arles.[21] This is not, however, because Iberian bishops were not expected to preach. The Fourth Council of Toledo described bishops as 'those who have taken up the

[21] J. Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication in Late Antiquity: John Chrysostom and his Congregation in Antioch* (Cambridge, 2006); L.K. Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success: The Eusebius Gallicanus Sermon Collection and the Power of the Church in Late Antique Gaul* (Notre Dame, IN, 2010); Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*. On Caesarius see also the special edition of *EME* edited by Lucy Grig: *EME*, 26/1 (2018), esp. Klingshirn, 'The wartime and post-war reception of Caesarius of Arles', pp. 7-41 on the textual history.

duty of teaching the people', and took this to consist 'in praedicatione et doctrina'.[22] The only Visigothic canon to explicitly address preaching was given at the provincial Council of Valencia in 549. It, too, pulls us in two contrary directions. It accorded significance to preaching in the project of converting souls, and did so in order to justify its ruling that sermons should be heard not only by the *fideles* (the baptized faithful), but by the penitents, catechumens, and 'omnes qui e diuerso sunt'.[23] While it attests to and promotes the perceived function of preaching in bringing people to faith, it also suggests that sermons were hitherto relatively exclusive in their audiences—that is, that many categories of people were habitually excluded from hearing sermons. Ordinary preaching on Sundays may often have been a somewhat narrow affair, heard only by the community of the baptized who chose, of their own volition, to seek it out.[24] We have to balance this suggestion against the practice of more 'public' preaching of martyr festivals, however, which likely bore a different and larger audience. One bishop who attended the council, Justinian of Valencia, was remembered in his epitaph as one who 'furnished the festivals with words, preaching to the people'.[25]

Knowing exactly what was preached is difficult, however: very few securely identified sermons survive from sixth- and seventh-century Iberia. No sermons have successfully been attributed to such episcopal luminaries as Isidore, Braulio, or Julian. In fact, we have a far greater record for the late Roman period, when Gregory of Elvira, Potamius of Lisbon, Pacian of Barcelona, and Priscillian of Ávila were preaching to smaller communities.[26] The most famous and widely-studied Iberian sermon of the post-Roman period is doubtless Martin of Braga's *De correctione rusticorum*—a text intended as a model for occasional episcopal

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[22] IV Toledo, c. 25 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 215-16, quote at p. 215): *qui docendi officium in populis susceperunt*.
[23] Valencia, c. 1 (Coll. Hisp. IV, p. 314).
[24] For a minimalist view, regarding late Roman preaching: R. MacMullen 'The preacher's audience', *JThS*, n.s. 40/2 (1989), pp. 503-11.
[25] *ICERV*, no. 279: *ornabit festa dictis predica(n)s in populis*.
[26] For an overview: Tovar Paz, *Tractatus*, pp. 98-151.

preaching in rural areas. I will discuss this in detail in due course. As regards urban cult, the record is sparse. There are two sermons pertaining to the cult of Vincent of Valencia and Zaragoza, discussed below in the context of martyr cult.[27] An anonymous sermon on monks, *De monachis perfectis*, is preserved in the seventh-century ascetic Valerius of Bierzo's hagiographical collection. I discuss this in detail in Chapter 5.[28]

These rare and exceptional texts aside, we are largely reliant on the so-called *Homiliae Toletanae* collection for our sense of the contents of Iberian preaching. The collection survives in only a single eleventh-century manuscript, hailing from the monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos in northern Spain.[29] Organized according to the liturgical calendar of the Mozarabic liturgy, this large collection of sermons consists of a main run of ninety-two sermons along with an appendix of twenty-six further items, likely added later.[30] It is composed mainly of materials whose origins lie outside Hispania, and so does little to assuage our sense that few Iberian sermons were widely transmitted in the Visigothic period. It does, however, contain nineteen otherwise unattested sermons, which are typically presumed Iberian. These previously unedited texts were edited by Reginald Grégoire in 1966.[31] Together, this diverse and heterogeneous collection constitutes the largest corpus of likely Iberian sermons we have for the Visigothic period. I discussed one of these, *Sermo in diem sanctum Pentecosten*, in detail in Chapter 2, focussing on its Trinitarian theological content. Here, I turn to the collection as a whole, focussing on the textual difficulties that militate against its incorporation into the arsenal of Visigothicists.

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[27] Below, pp. 192-3.
[28] Below, pp. 250-1.
[29] London, BL, MS. add. 30,853, fols. 2r-307v. The most recent study is N. Chase, *The* Homiliae Toletanae *and the Theology of Lent and Easter* (Leuven, 2020).
[30] It has been catalogued in R. Grégoire, *Les homéliaires du Moyen Âge: Inventaire et Analyse des Manuscrits* (Rome, 1966), pp. 161-185. There is no complete edition, though various sermons have been edited elsewhere.
[31] Grégoire, *Les homéliaires*, pp. 197-230.

The *Homiliae Toletanae* manuscript gives us a sense of the kinds of sermons which circulated in early medieval Hispania. This is perhaps more representative than a focus on Iberian compositions. As Jocelyn Hillgarth has said, a Visigothic congregant was more likely to hear a work by Caesarius of Arles or Augustine of Hippo than by their own bishop.[32] It is difficult to know how representative the collection is, however, without knowing more about its provenance. According to Germain Morin's hypothesis of 1893, the extant Silos manuscript is a copy of an anterior homiliary assembled by Ildefonsus or Julian of Toledo for the general use of the Visigothic church. Morin notes that the Silos manuscript follows the Mozarabic rather than Roman liturgical cycle, and that it contains no securely dateable materials later than Gregory the Great (d. 604).[33] On Morin's reading, the collection promises to offer a representative glimpse into Iberian preaching at the end of the Visigothic period, at least as it was seen from the ecclesiastical centre. Morin's arguments are not watertight, but they have been accepted in the essentials in works by Francisco Javier Tovar Paz and, very recently, Nathan Chase.[34] Both authors adduce wider selections of manuscripts to contextualize the collection's contents, giving a richer and more detailed account of Morin's thesis. Both, however, remain mainly within his interpretative framework.

The idea that the *Homiliae Toletanae* reflects an authoritative seventh-century Toledan collection is not easy to sustain, but this does not render the collection useless for our purposes. Over half a century ago, Carmen García Rodríguez noted that the saints' days which it marks do not suggest a Toledan origin: it contains no sermon for the day of Leocadia of Toledo, for example.[35] Moreover, some of its contents, like the modified

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[32] Hillgarth, 'Popular religion', p. 24.
[33] G. Morin (ed.), *Liber commicus sive lectionarius missae quo Toletana ecclesia ante annos mille et ducentos utebatur* (Maredsous, 1893), p. 406-25. The authorship of Ildefonsus of Toledo (d. 667) has been attributed to some of the sermons (see Chase, *The* Homiliae Toletanae, p. 36) but there are considerable difficulties in establishing his corpus (on which Tovar Paz, *Tractatus*, pp. 208-20).
[34] Tovar Paz, *Tractatus*, pp. 236-74; Chase, *The* Homiliae Toletanae, pp. 22-44.
[35] García Rodríguez, *El culto*, pp. 64-5.

Caesarian *Sermones cotidiani beati Augustini*, discussed below, had been heavily edited and interpolated before inclusion in the collection, rendering them 'impossible to preach' in the words of one scholar.[36] This is perhaps hyperbole, but it certainly cannot be sustained that the collection was the work of the editorial hand of someone like Julian of Toledo, whose *vita* recorded him composing sermons and editing and correcting faulty liturgical materials.[37] Parts of it read more like the unedited, corrupted texts people like Julian were correcting than the finished products of Visigothic compilation. Nonetheless, while provenance of the collection *qua* collection has not been proven beyond all doubt to be Visigothic, the manuscript's contents do more certainly tell us of the materials which circulated in Visigothic Iberia.

In particular, it shows the heavy influence of Caesarius of Arles. Works composed or edited by him make up by far the largest single proportion of the Iberian manuscript's contents. Many were modified considerably from Caesarian exemplars, while others were transmitted more fully. One particularly illuminating case of reworking comes from *Homiliae Toletanae*, 37-39. These three sequential sermons were excerpted from a single Caesarian text, to which the shorter excepts can be compared. Each shorter sermon had its own thematic coherence and argumentative rationale: the first sermon discusses Christ's sacrifice, which paid off humanity's sin and opened a way to salvation; the next addressed the means of salvation, namely the confession of sins, almsgiving, and God's mercy; the latter closes with a dramatic evocation of the Final Judgement.[38] This succession of themes diverged in order from that in Caesarius' original sermon, but had its own evident logic. This indicates

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[36] M.A. Sánchez Sánchez, *La primitiva predicación hispánica medieval: tres estudios* (Logroño, 2000), p. 184: 'imposibles de predicar'. See below, p. 175.

[37] Felix of Toledo, *Vita Iuliani*, 6, 9, 11, ed. V. Yarza Urquiola, CCSL, 115B (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 9-14, at pp. 12-14.

[38] Caearius' sermon is edited in R. Étaix, 'Nouveau sermon pascal de saint Césaire d'Arles', *Revie Bénédictine*, 75/3-4 (1965), pp. 201-11, at pp. 204-10, with the Iberian extracts (=*Hom. Tol.*, 37-9) noted in the critical apparatus. See Grégoire, *Les homéliaires*, p. 169.

intentional and informed re-use, rather than faults of transmission or incomplete access to source material. It also indicates a taste for shorter sermons than Caesarius was prone to give.

With such unique reworkings, the collection gives us some sense of how the sermons had transmitted. Anterior collections can be detected within the mass of texts. A series of sermons on the plague, discussed below, are a notable and well-studied case.[39] Another is a set of sermons prefaced with the words 'Incipiunt sermones cotidiani beati Augustini'. This small collection was in fact edited mainly from Caesarius of Arles' sermons. A selection of seven of these modified sermons appear under the same heading in an additional manuscript, in this case from the monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla, whose relevant section perhaps dates as early as the ninth century.[40] The shared sermons, modified in highly distinctive ways, show clear signs of having derived from the same exemplar.[41] This anterior collection, edited from texts which circulated from Arles in the sixth century, therefore has a strong claim to a Visigothic date.[42] This provides some of the most difficult texts with which we have to contend. One, for example, reproduced only a single paragraph of Caesarius' sixteenth sermon, making a series of curt exhortations to moral reform and works of penance. Though it was duly bookended with an *incipit* and *excipit*, it is difficult to consider it a full sermon in any conventional manner.[43]

Another manuscript that parallels elements of the *Homiliae Toletanae* is that of the so-called *Collectio Durlacensis*, which was copied in the ninth or tenth centuries. Formerly edited

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[39] Below, pp. 180-6.

[40] Toledo, RAH, Cód. 60, fols. 67r-96v. The relevant sections were edited, along with later glosses, in S. García Larragueta (ed.), *Las Glosas Emilianenses: edición y estudio* (Logroño, 1984). pp. 130-62. On the manuscript's composite provenance see M.C. Díaz y Díaz, *Libros y librerías en la Rioja alto medieval* (2nd edn, Logroño, 1991), pp. 235-41. For a wider range of opinions: García Larragueta, *Las Glosas*, pp. 9-31.

[41] Argued in the invaluable study of Sánchez Sánchez, *La primitiva predicación*, pp. 163-220.

[42] Díaz y Díaz, *Libros y librerías*, p. 239.

[43] *Hom. Tol.*, 81, described by Grégoire, p. 177. It is edited from the San Millán MS (Toledo, RAH, Cód. 60) in García Larragueta (ed.), *Las Glosas*, pp. 146-7.

as a collection of Faustus of Riez's sermons, it is in fact more likely to derive from a Caesarian source.[44] It was judged by Morin to reflect an earlier collection anterior and contributory to the *Homiliae Toletanae*.[45] Several of its sermons entered the *Homiliae Toletanae*, including a distinctive reworking of Caesarius' sermon in honour of Honoratus of Arles (the founder of the monastery of Lérins and later bishop of Arles), which was augmented with generic remarks on sanctity and retitled (or rather mistitled) to pertain to the feast day of Felix.[46] In the *Homiliae Toletanae* it sits, in the exact same form as in the *Collectio Durlacensis*, next to an Iberian composition for Felix of Gerona.[47] Here, again, is strong evidence for the flow of smaller collections from Provence into Hispania in the Visigothic period. Overall, however, the *Homiliae Toletanae* must be treated with caution. Uncertainty remains over the provenance of many of the sermons in the manuscript, though there is nothing to suggest that any of the contents post-date the seventh century. The main run of sermons can cautiously be understood to reflect materials circulating in the Visigothic period.

Any estimation of these sermons' reach must be underwritten by an assessment of the comprehensibility of its language to ordinary Christians. Over recent decades, scholars of late antique and early medieval societies have tended toward more maximalist pictures of the

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[44] *Collectio Durlacensis* = Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, MS. 340. The MS is edited as Faustus of Riez, *Sermones*, 1-22, by A. Engelbrecht, CSEL, 21 (Vienna, 1891), pp. 223-313. For a Caesarian origin: G. Morin, 'Critique des sermons attribués a Fauste de Riez dans la récente édition de l'Académie de Vienne', *Revue Bénédictine*, 9/2 (1892), pp. 49-61; C. Stancliffe, 'The thirteen sermons attributed to Columbanus and the question of their authorship' in M. Lapidge (ed.), *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 93-202, *passim*. I owe my awareness of the MS and its parallels to Tovar Paz, *Tractatus*, p. 238.

[45] Morin, 'Critique des sermons'.

[46] The text from the *Collectio Durlacensis* is ed. Engelbrecht, CSEL, 21, pp. 259-62. This reworked Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo*, 214, ed. G. Morin, CCSL, 104 (Turnhout, 1953), pp. 853-4. The reworked text was edited, from the sole MSS of *Collectio Durlacensis* and *Homiliae Toletanae*, by Morin as Caesarius, *Sermo*, 215, *ibid.*, pp. 855-8, though it was clearly edited at some distance from Caesarius himself and does not belong to his authentic corpus.

[47] *Hom. Tol.*, 51, described in Grégoire, *Les homéliaires*, p. 171. The Iberian text in question is *Hom. Tol.*, 50, ed. Díaz y Díaz, p. 66.

lay comprehension of Latin, as well as more optimistic estimates of literacy.[48] Following the work of Marc Van Uytfanghe in particular, it now seems clear that the Latin of sermons and *passiones*, while representing a different register to more quotidian Latin, was comprehensible across social levels.[49] In Visigothic Iberia there is no evidence of the use of the Gothic language, unlike in Ostrogothic Italy, and it seems likely that we are dealing with a world in which a version of Latin remained the language of the laity (outside of the Basque region, that is, and some potential enclaves of Celtic usage).[50] Instances of more colloquial and atypical Latin preserved on slate texts shows a drift toward some romance forms, but not in such a way that we need to presume an unbridgeable cleft with the Latin of the clerical sources.[51] There is good reason to believe that the sermons we have were comprehensible by the laity.[52]

Granting that the Iberian sermons were comprehensible by a relatively broad audience, it remains difficult to place them into a concrete context. None can be placed for certain in a particular city; very few have anything other than the broadest of chronological determinations. None speak to us of social differentiation: we cannot begin to construct the social composition of the audience as Jaclyn Maxwell has for John Chrysostom's Antiochean congregation.[53] Instead, we find a rhetoric like that which Lisa Bailey has identified in the

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[48] M. Banniard, *Viva voce. Communication écrite et communication orale du IV^e au IX^e siècle en Occident latine* (Paris, 1992), pp. 181-251. For a wider overview: J.M.H. Smith, *Europe After Rome: A New Cultural History, 500-1000* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 13-50.

[49] M. Van Uytfanghe, 'Histoire du latin, protohistoire des langues romanes et histoire de la communication', *Francia*, 11 (1983), pp. 579-613 ; *idem*, 'L'Hagiographie antique tardive: une littérature populaire?', *AT*, 9 (2001), pp. 201-18.

[50] R. Wright, 'Linguistic and ethnic identities in the Iberian Peninsula (400-1000AD)', in W. Pohl and B. Zeller (eds), *Sprache und Identität im frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna, 2012), pp. 99-108.

[51] I. Velázquez Soriano, *Las pizarras visigodas. (Entre el latín y su disgregación. La lengua hablada en Hispania, siglos VI-VIII)* (Burgos, 2004). On literacy see above, p. 142, n. 133.

[52] Roger Wright provocatively claimed that ninth-century Carolingian *correctio* caused the divide between learned Latin and proto-romance: see his *Late Latin and Early Romance in Spain and Carolingian France* (Liverpool, 1982), esp. pp. 118-22, for its effects on preaching.

[53] Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication*, pp. 65-87.

Eusebius Gallicanus sermons, one where 'the model of community required the erasure of individual and class differences'.[54] Some sermons showed flashes of interest in gender. One anonymous Iberian text hinged on the question of why the resurrected Christ had shown himself firstly to women, whose weakness had been shown in Eve, rather than to more trustworthy men. Explaining that 'humanity (*homo*) fell through the feminine sex', the preacher argued that it was also restored through women, since Christ was born of the Virgin, and his resurrection was announced by women. Through women, the preacher underlined, humanity fell and was restored: 'through woman death, through woman life'.[55] This sermon is fascinating for its approach to gender in its theological implications, but we lack any text which speaks to more quotidian gendered expectations of conduct for lay women or men.[56] The same can be said for class. Preachers were accustomed to using the language of social bondage and freedom to think about sin—baptism could be a grant of freedom, framed as a manumission from the servitude to sin—but we find no discussion of Iberian social realities, or any sense of how such imagery was received by different people themselves enmeshed in forms of dependence.[57]

Our main finding is negative: there is no evidence that the sermons people heard in Iberian churches were closely related to any state-level project of renovation. The evidence of the *Homiliae Toletanae*, and of the other sermons we have, is testament to a context of preaching which reflects a wider context of textual circulation—one at once more local (in

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[54] Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, p. 51.

[55] *Hom. Tol.*, 32, ed. Grégoire, p. 206: *Nam quia per sexum femineum cecidit homo, ideo per sexum femineum reparatus est homo.* […]. *Per feminam mors et per feminam uita.* Cf. Augustine of Hippo, *De agone christiano*, 22.24, ed. J. Zycha, CSEL, 41 (Vienna, 1900), at p. 125: *per feminam nobis mors acciderat, uita nobis per feminam nasceretur.*

[56] Contrast the richer Gallic evidence: L.K. Bailey, '"These are not men": sex and drink in the sermons of Caesarius of Arles', *JECS*, 15/1 (2007), pp. 23-43.

[57] See esp. *Hom. Tol.* 26 [=*Homilia in vigilia pasche*], ed. Díaz y Díaz, at p. 70: *Servemus dignitatem nostrae redemptionis, amplectamur gloriam indultae libertatis; non pristina peccati servitus iam liberos premat, non quoinquinatio inmunda iam Christi sanguine mundatos adtingat.* Cf. *Hom. Tol.*, 40, ed. Grégoire, at p. 206: *Qui enim facit peccatum seruus peccati est.* On the Christian discourse of sin and slavery: C.L. de Wet, *Preaching Bondage: John Chrysostom and the Discourse of Slavery in Early Christianity* (Berkelely, CA, 2015).

the sense of not being centralized within the Visigothic kingdom) and more supra-local (in the sense of being tied into African, Italian, and especially Gallic predicatory culture). This is not to say that Iberian Christians never came into contact with the kinds of ideas characteristic of the Visigothic state. Kati Ihnat's work on the liturgy for feast of the Virgin Mary has suggested that anti-Jewish imperatives found liturgical expression in the mid-seventh century through Ildefonsus of Toledo's intervention, and that sermons were a part of this religious polemic.[58] It is telling, however, that even in this case—one where we have the unusual advantage of being able to attach the composition of liturgy to a place, a time, and a person—the sermon in question was not Iberian, but was an anonymous, perhaps Italian text called *Exhortatur*, which attacked Manichaeans and Jews.[59] The repurposing of non-Iberian sermons was very common, even in cases tied into local political expediency like this.

Perhaps, then, there should be no hard line between the idea of central pastoral direction and the wider circulation of patristic and southern Gallic texts. Even so, it remains impossible to trace out any project of top-down, Toledo-led ecclesiastical renovation through the sermons. We can think at the scale of the whole Latin Christian West, in which patristic and more recent sermons transmitted freely and widely, or at the scale of the city, where the preacher spoke before their congregation, but there is little that can usefully be said at the scale of the polity.

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[58] K. Ihnat, 'Liturgy against apostasy: Marian commemoration and the Jews in Visigothic Iberia', *Early Medieval Europe*, 25/4 (2017), pp. 443-65. Cf. M.E. Fassler, 'Mary in seventh-century Spain: the mass liturgy of Dec. 18', in I. Fernández de la Cuesta, *et al.* (eds), *El canto mozárabe y su entorno. Estudios sobre la música de la liturgia viejo hispánica* (Madrid, 2013), pp. 217-35.

[59] *Exhortatur*, [=*Hom. Tol.*, 4], ed. Migne, *PL*, 96, cols. 280-3 (printed here as pseudo-Ildefonsus, *Sermo*, 13). See H. Barré, 'Le sermon "Exhortatur" est-il de Saint Ildefonse?', *Revue Bénédictine*, 67 (1957), pp. 10-33.

III. PENANCE AND PLAGUE IN FOUR IBERIAN HOMILIES

What do the sermons tell us about Christianity in Iberian cities? The task of answering this question is made difficult by the anonymous and extra-Iberian nature of most of our source material, but a small collection of exceptional Iberian sermons on an outbreak of plague, preserved in the *Homiliae Toletanae*, allow us to conduct a focussed case study.[60] These sermons, which have (unusually for Iberian homilies) received prior scholarly attention, give us the most vivid account of civic preaching in the Iberian record, and also some of the most striking and ambitious discussions of civic Christian community.[61] They discuss the need for penance in anticipation of the plague's strike, using the coming tragedy as a peg upon which to hang a series of incisive and urgent reflections on such broad themes as sin, death, judgement, and the means of expiation. In spite of their *prima facie* directness, the sermons speak of ideals, not the social history of civic Christianity. Nonetheless, they are invaluable texts for understanding the most ambitious clerical views of lay piety because the kind of penitential view espoused by the preacher of these sermons is that which most closely approximates the ideals of Visigothic preachers as glimpsed through normative materials. These sermons are useful because they show us one extreme on a broad spectrum. I will discuss religious forms which diverged from clerical expectations in due course, but it is useful to chart out the maximalist position first, if only as a point of reference.

I define 'maximalist' here in terms of the ideals of Christian conversion presented in elite episcopal sources, without any prejudice to what 'full' or 'true' Christianity was or is (indeed, as will become clear later in this chapter, the very definition of 'Christianity' has

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[60] *Hom. Tol.*, 57-62, ed. Grégoire, pp. 214-23. I cite all translations from Anna Lagenwalter's translation of *Hom. Tol.*, 57-60, printed as an appendix to M. Kulikowski, 'Plague in Spanish late antiquity', in L.K. Little (ed.), *Plague and the End of Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 150-70, at pp. 160-70.

[61] J. Orlandis, *La vida en España en tiempo de los godos* (2nd edn., Madrid, 2006 [1981]), pp. 160-70; F.J. Tovar Paz, 'El ciclo "de peste" de las Homiliae Toletanae: contexto y traducción', *Anuario de Estudios Filológicos*, 16 (1993), pp. 373-90; Kulikowski, 'Plague in Spanish late antiquity'.

proven difficult for both medieval clerics and modern scholars).[62] The point here is to show how penitential preaching at least attempted to bridge divides between clerical ideals and the laity. Isidore of Seville, for example, regarded the ideal recipient of preaching as someone converted through penance from the corruptions of worldliness. Penance, as Isidore put it here, had a certain primacy, serving as the basic orientation to the world which opened one up to higher spiritual instruction:

> So also a vigorous teacher of the Church, unless he sees those whom he teaches become darkened by according to their own likeness by their confession of repentance and, leaving behind the brilliance of the world, put on the clothing of lamentation due to their remembrance of sin, does not uncover for them the profound mysteries of the spiritual intelligence to the extent that his hearers are still exterior, that is, in the fleshly realities, lest having heard them but not yet grasped them, they first begin to condemn rather than venerate the heavenly commands.[63]

The importance of penance—of the broad problematic of the expiation of post-baptismal sins in preparation for salvation—has been well recognized in Gallic sermons, as well as in Iberian texts.[64] Penance became a fundamental part of communal religiosity, worked into the liturgical cycle as well as into moments of danger. Nathan Chase has characterized the Lenten homilies in the *Homiliae Toletanae* collection as essentially penitential in nature, reflecting a shift whereby Lent had become a time of general repentance rather than a time focussed on the coming baptism of adult catechumens.[65] Regularized penance also occurred

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[62] For wider reflections on Christianity and the history of the idea of 'religion', I am indebted to: M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concept of Pollution and Taboo* (London, 2002 [1966]); J.Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago, IL, 1990); T. Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore, MD, 1993).

[63] Isid., *Sent.*, III.43.5, p. 286: *ita et ecclesiae doctor strenuus, nisi eos quos docet uiderit ad suam similitudinem paenitentiae confessione negrescere, et, nitore saeculari deposito, lamentationis habitum de peccati recordatione induere, utpote adhuc exteriores, hoc est carnalibus non aperit intelligentiae spiritalis profundiora mysteria, ne dum audita non capiunt, prius incipient contemnere quam uenerare mandata caelestia*; trans. Knoebel, pp. 192-3.

[64] R. Villegas Marín, 'Un episode méconnu de la "préhistoire" du purgatoire chrétien: Fauste de Riez, Césaire d'Arles et les "miséricordieux" gaulois', *Revue d'études augustiniennes et patristiques*, 59 (2013), pp. 299-335.

[65] Chase, *The* Homiliae Toletanae. For Lent as penitential: Isid., *De eccl.*, I.37(36).1; C. Carozzi, *Apocalypse et salut dans le christianisme ancien et médiévale* (Paris, 1999), pp. 63-7.

liturgically through the practice of rogations—in three-day periods of communal, episcopally led penance. Having originated in fifth-century Gaul, these were attested in Tarraconsensis by the early sixth century and were generalized in the Visigothic kingdom by the middle of the seventh century.[66] Penance was threaded through Christian spirituality as presented to the laity.

The plague sermons offer especial interest, however, because they show us issues of sin and penance at a time of acute emotional charge, when a disaster threatened to engulf the city. Here we see such matters at their most urgent and calls for lay response at their most wide-reaching and civically framed. Held sequentially in the *Homiliae Toletanae* manuscript as sermons 57 to 62, the sermons in question probably reflect a small pre-existing collection which pre-existed the wider *Homiliae*. The first four are anonymous compositions written by a single author (clearly a bishop) for successive days of a plague's approach to and striking of a city somewhere in the Iberian interior. The latter two sermons, compositions of Gregory the Great, include the famous sermon Gregory preached in 590 amidst floods and plague in Rome: these may have been appended later.[67] Tovar Paz hypothesizes a sixth-century date for the Iberian quartet, with the addition of *confirmationes* and Gregorian materials at a later date, some time before the compilation of the *Homiliae Toletanae*.[68] The city in which the Iberian quartet were initially preached remains unknown. Waves of plague are recorded striking Hispania throughout the sixth and seventh centuries, which helps little with the sermons' dating.[69] Whatever the case may be, plague was a frequent occurrence in Visigothic

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[66] N. Ristuccia, *Christianization and Commonwealth in Early Medieval Europe: A Ritual Interpretation* (Oxford, 2018), with the Iberian evidence discussed at pp. 35-7; Gerona, cc. 2-3 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 285-6); V Toledo, c. 1 (Coll. Hisp. V, 277-8).

[67] Gr. Mag., *Reg. Ep.*, XIII.2; Gr. Tur., *DLH*, X.1. The latter preserves the text and discusses its context. On Gregory's pastoral style: J.T. Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 57-68.

[68] Tovar Paz, 'El ciclo "de peste"', pp. 374-5, 378-9.

[69] For a summary of the evidence: Kulikowski, 'Plague'; with the addition of aDNA evidence for *Y. pestis* in Valencia in M. Keller, *et al.*, 'Ancient *Yersinia pestis* genomes from across Western Europe

Hispania, as elsewhere, clerics had every reason to take an interest in interpretation in a providential and penitential light.

The Iberian preacher's chief aim was to channel the communal fear about the plague into eschatological awareness. His sermons moved freely between the imminency of bodily death and the immanency of God's judgement. The plague offered a chance to quicken awareness of the stakes of salvation, awakening people from their ordinarily groggy grasp of matters of the soul: 'I can see divine judgement looming over us, and I am compelled to rouse you from bodily sleep.'[70] The response to this is penance—a process of introspection, self-inquiry, and self-reproach in which the penitent becomes deeply and sorrowfully aware of their sinfulness, and seeks God's forgiveness in lamentation. Penance was nothing less than a kind of 'conversion', wrought through the pain of self-examination and lamentation, which wrested one from ordinary life's unthinking drowsiness:

> Awake, I beg you! Awake from the sleep of the body and prepare yourselves to conquer the anger of divine punishment. May the sleep fly from your eyes, the torpor from your souls. May levity retreat, may joy flee. Let sadness alone possess your hearts, for behold, the fury of the wrath of God crashes upon us, for funebrial death now assaults our thresholds.[71]

This was bitter medicine: the preacher derived 'penance' from 'punishing', an etymology attested also by Isidore.[72]

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reveal early diversification during the First Pandemic (541-750)', *PNAS*, 116/25 (2019), pp. 12363-72. Plague has received considerable recent interest: for a synthesis: M. Eisenberg and L. Mordechai, 'The Justinianic plague: an interdisciplinary review', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 43/2 (2019), pp. 156-80.

[70] *Hom. Tol.*, 57, ed. Grégoire, p. 214: *Ecce quę a longe audiuimus, iam prope facta sunt nobis. Proinde uerbis uos propheticis a corporis sommo exitare conpellor, qui diuine ultionis sententiam super nos iminere persentio*; trans. Lagenwalter, p. 160.

[71] *Hom. Tol.*, 57, ed. Grégoire, p. 214: *Exurgite, rogo, exurgite a somno corporis et preparate uos ad uincendum diuine animaduersionis iram. Fugiat somnus ab oculis, torpor ab animis. Lętitia recedat, gaudium fugiat. Meror solus corda uestra possideat, quia ecce furor ire dei super nos concrepat, quia mors funerea iam nostra limina pulsat*; trans. Lagenwalter, pp. 160-1.

[72] *Hom. Tol.*, 57, ed. Grégoire, p. 215: *Penitentia enim a puniendo est dicta.* Cf. Isid., *De eccl.*, II.17(16).2.

Penance shows an interesting interplay between the inner and the outer, the personal and the communal. On the one hand, it is introspective. It requires looking inside oneself, discerning one's sinfulness, atoning for particular crimes. This could be framed as a private matter: 'Let us repent. Where? Where God can see. Where the bodily eye cannot perceive. "Let us rend our hearts and not our garments" [Joel, 2:13]'.[73] Yet, there were also communal elements built into it. The confession of sins required an idea of open disclosure: 'let us make crimes public (*publicemus*) by confession if we wish to temper the fury of the Lord that is coming upon us'.[74] Moreover, the inner movement of the soul was brought about in part through outer behaviours like almsgiving and fasting. One extracted oneself from the distracting lures of 'the world' through a particular embodied behaviours within it: 'Set aside all care for this world and turn to almsgiving, purge your sins, attest to fasting. Offer to God a sacrifice of tears'.[75] The basis of inner conversion on bodily discipline is perfectly familiar from the exercises and renunciations of ancient philosophical and Christian ascetic thought, though the emphasis on contrition and its somatic counterpart, weeping, gives a distinctly Christian emotional colouring. Bitter tears should flow; continence should be observed: thereby the mind's evil desires are curtailed.

Penance of this kind was both a form of inner conversion and a communal act, predicated on and constitutive of the ideal Christian community.[76] The discipline of penance, the preacher said, produced the kind of Christian individual that could live according to true *caritas*—an eminently social virtue. It produced subjects who could therefore be part of the ideal Christian community, founded on love. The virtue of *caritas* made a group of people a

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[73] *Hom. Tol.*, 58, ed. Grégoire, p. 219: *Agamus, agamus penitentiam. Ubi? Ubi deus uidet, ubi carnalis oculus intuere non potest.* Scindamus corda nostra et non uestimenta; trans. Lagenwalter, pp. 165-6.
[74] *Hom. Tol.*, 57, ed. Grégoire, p. 216: *Confessione crimina publicemus, si uolumus ut uenientem super nos furorem domini temperemus*; trans. Lagenwalter, pp. 162-3.
[75] *Hom. Tol.*, 57, ed. Grégoire, p. 216: *Deposita omni sollicitudine seculari elemosinis intendite, purgate peccata, sanctificate ieiunium. Lacrimarum hostiam deo offerte*; trans. Lagenwalter, p. 163.
[76] On penance and community in Gaul: Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, pp. 50-1, 91-3.

harmonious entity and allowed individual members to effectively appeal to God's mercy. Discord is the key obstacle to be overcome. Vices divide—particularly those like anger which cause bitterness and dissension—and they sunder the individual from God's mercy, since God accepts prayers given out in love ('cum karitate') but hates those made by people infected with rancour:

> For we do not deserve to be heard by God the Father if we are waylaid by fraternal hatreds. For just as evil lands overwhelm those united through love, likewise, from time to time, discordant people become the ruin of their homeland (*patria*). Therefore, among other evils, hatred and discord, which so divide quarrellers that they never make good supplicants, always have more weight. And what can I say? Sinners' prayers are always detestable to God, even if they pray for something good.[77]

It was not just that the social conduct of an individual affected their own moral state, but rather that dissension affected the community as such: 'for prayer mixed with discord is a great blasphemy, and thus the prayer of such people obstructs the prayers of others'.[78]

There is evidence that the preacher encountered expectations from his audience which jarred with the message he sought to convey. The preacher rebuked those in his audience who thought effective penance would necessarily deliver the city from plague, and that death by plague would indicate penance's failure.[79] This was seemingly a tension that emerged within the Christian community between some congregants' expectations of deliverance and the preacher's more Augustinian vision of sin and grace (where penance was a constant and humble conversion of the sinning self rather than a ritual ensuring worldly results).[80] These tensions had been explored by Augustine himself in a famous sermon on

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[77] *Hom. Tol.*, 57, ed. Grégoire, p. 216: *Neque enim a deo patre exaudiri meremur si fraternis odiis lacinemur. Sicut enim concordes per karitatem male terre operiunt, sic interdum discordes patrię suę perditio fiunt. Inter cetera ergo mala odium et discordia semper preponderat quę ita diuidit litigantes ut numquam eos bonos faciat precantes. Et quid dicam? Peccatores qui ętiam et si aliquid a deo pręcentur, orationes talium exsecrabiles deo sunt*; trans. Lagenwalter, p. 162.

[78] *Hom. Tol.*, 57, ed. Grégoire, p. 215: *Nam oratio discordie mixta, grandis est blasfemia. Oratio ergo talium orationibus inpedit ceterorum*; trans. adapted from Lagenwalter, p. 162.

[79] *Hom. Tol.*, 59, ed. Grégoire, pp. 219-21.

[80] See above, p. 138.

the Sack of Rome, preached before many émigrés of that event—how could God allow even good Christians to suffer in Rome's sack?[81] The Iberian preacher made considerable and acknowledged use of this text in his own preaching, centring the second of the plague sermons on material drawn from Augustine.[82] The preacher faced hostility or despair if the plague hit in spite of his counsels of penance. Hope in God's mercy had to be cultivated, but through appeals to the justice of the afterlife rather than by promising the actual deliverance of the community on earth. Penance and its associated communal rituals had to be presented as exercises in contrition and humility—in cultivating a kind of penitential self that would be worthy of God's freely given (and thus unpredictable) grace.

It is important to recall that sermons like the plague homilies show one side of dialogue. Though we can detect other voices within them through close reading, we cannot read lay religiosity unproblematically from their stipulations. The dissonant expectations in the plague sermons—texts which give us some of the most vivid and ambitious accounts of how close lay spirituality could be, at least in exceptional circumstances, to that of religious specialists of one kind of another—also show us tensions and clashes amidst the assertion of communality. On the one hand, it is clear that there were efforts to disseminate to the laity kinds of spirituality recognizable to lofty bishops like Isidore; on the other, it is not clear how far we should take the one-sided evidence of sermons and liturgical stipulations as evidence for the manner in which the laity received and experienced such things. These sermons, and their introspective, ascetic view of lay Christianity in a time of crisis, marks the end of the spectrum where clerical and lay spirituality were most closely aligned. Other sources take us in different directions, with clerical control less in evidence.

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[81] Augustine of Hippo, *De excidio urbis*, ed. and trans. M.V. O'Reilly, *De Excidio urbis Romae sermo: A Critical Text and Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Washington, DC, 1955), with discussion in T. De Bruyn, 'Ambivalence within a "totalizing discourse": Augustine's sermons on the sack of Rome', *JECS*, 1/4 (1993), pp. 405-21.

[82] *Hom. Tol.*, 58, ed. Grégoire, pp. 217-19.

IV. MARTYR CULT: BETWEEN LAY PIETY AND CLERICAL CONTROL[83]

We gain a somewhat different perspective on Christian cult from martyr *passiones*. These texts, which narrate the (frequently legendary) lives and deaths of the Roman martyrs, present a corpus similar in some ways to the sermons discussed above. Like the *Homiliae Toletanae*, they survive in a later liturgical collection—in this case the *Pasionario Hispánico*, transmitted in tenth- and eleventh-century manuscripts from the northern Iberian monasteries of San Pedro de la Cardeña and Santo Domingo de Silos.[84] The collected *passiones* include not only Iberian martyrs but myriad others from across the Latin and Greek worlds. *Passiones* are important texts because they shed light on the cult of the saints, and particularly on the kinds of materials heard on saints' days, a major part of the liturgical calendar. They stand as some of the most widely encountered texts we have in the Iberian record. Unlike sermons, however, which are unambiguously clerical texts, rooted in the pastoral encounter, *passiones* are composite texts offering windows onto a wider and more complex spectrum of situations, far outstripping the clerical monologue such texts are sometimes presumed to be. They drew on oral traditions and literary works by laypeople like Prudentius as well as clerical writings, and cults could be patronized by lay elites rather than subject to strong episcopal control. *Passiones* are important texts in the study of civic cult, but they require interpretation in ways which allow the complexities of their relation to lay agency to stand out undimmed.

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[83] For general surveys: García Rodríguez, *El culto*; P. Castillo Maldonado, '*Angelorum participes*: the cult of the saints in late antique Spain', in Kim Bowes and Michael Kulikowski (eds), *Hispania in Late Antiquity: Current Perspectives* (Leiden, 2005), pp. 151-88.

[84] On the MSS: Á. Fábrega Grau, *Pasionario Hispánico (siglos VII-XI)*, 2 vols (Madrid-Barcelona, 1950-3), i, pp. 25-57; P. Riesco Chueca, *Pasionario Hispánico (Introducción, edición crítica y traducción)* (Seville, 1995), pp. xv-xix.

Firstly, it is necessary to clarify some textual issues. These *passiones* are challenging sources not only because they are anonymous but because, like many of the sermons, they reflect snapshots of a living textual tradition marked by editorial interventions from subtle augmentation to wholesale rewriting. Popular and widely adopted cults like that of Vincent of Zaragoza provide the best examples of this process. Victor Saxer has distinguished successive redactions of his *Passio*, from a short fifth-century text ('version brève'), to a widely attested sixth century text ('version commune'—a example of which entered the *Pasionario*), all the way to a ninth-century *réécriture* from the Carolingian monastery of Saint-Germain-des-Prés.[85] The general corpus of *passiones* circulating in the Visigothic period can be ascertained with some certainty using extra-Iberian manuscripts and external evidence, as I have shown elsewhere.[86] The majority of these texts were Visigothic compositions, at least in the redaction in which they come down to us, but they had complex trajectories, sometimes incorporating oral as well as written traditions.

The writers and redactors of *passiones* were not necessarily clerics. In the Visigothic *Passio Felicis*, the only *passio* in which the author makes any kind of self-disclosure, the author is a deacon, but this is an exceptional admission.[87] The foundational Iberian martyr texts of the later Roman period are undoubtedly those composed by the lay poet Prudentius of

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[85] These successive texts are edited and discussed in V. Saxer, *Saint Vincent diacre et martyr. Culte et legends avant l'An Mil* (Brussels, 2002). See also S. Meyer, *Der heilige Vinzenz von Zaragoza: Studien zur Präsenz eines Märtyrers zwischen Spätantike und Hochmittelalter* (Stuttgart, 2012).

[86] D. Addison, 'Re-imagining Roman persecution in the Visigothic passions', in J. Wood, D. Fernández, and M. Lester (eds), *Rome, Byzantium, and the Visigothic Kingdom of Toledo* [forthcoming 2021/2]. Important reference points are: Fábrega, *Pasionario Hispánico*, i; B. de Gaiffier, '*Sub Daciano praeside*: étude de quelques passions espagnoles', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 72 (1954), pp. 378-96; M.C. Díaz y Díaz, 'Correcciones y conjeturas al pasionario hispánico', *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos*, 63 (1957), pp. 453-65; *idem*, 'Anotaciones para una cronología del pasionario hispánico', *Hispania Sacra*, 17/33 (1964), pp. 515-28.

[87] *PFel.*, 21, at p. 178.

Calahorra in his *Peristephanon*.[88] Living a life of ascetic retirement on estates in the Ebro valley, Prudentius offers an important insight into the relationship between liturgy and unofficial religious initiatives. He did not write his poetry for liturgical use, but he did offer accounts (or imaginings) of liturgical cult in Hispania and Italy: indeed, he presented some of his descriptions of Italian (and particularly Roman) observances as a guide and inspiration to his bishop, Valerian.[89] Prudentius, then, displays a late Roman permeability between the worlds of lay authors and clerical liturgy. Doubtless, the earliest *passiones* (many of which are lost in their original form) drew on heterogeneous oral traditions, developed at some distance from 'official religion', as well as writings of various kinds. The *passio* which is believed to be the earliest in Hispania is the *Passio Fructuosi, Augurii et Eulogii*, narrating the martyrdom of three Tarragonan martyrs. It has been suggested that the core of the text, thought later interpolated, may date back to the third century and could have been composed by a lay witness.[90]

The contents of the *Pasionario Hispánico*, as it comes down to us, were thus highly diverse, and sprung from divergent local contexts. We should not think of the *Pasionario* as an authoritative liturgical book compiled in Toledo, or any other ecclesiastical centre, and disseminated throughout the Visigothic kingdom. Indeed, even while many of the *passiones* were demonstrably in circulation in the Visigothic period, there is no strong evidence that the *Pasionario* existed as a collection until after the Visigothic period. Guy Philippart has argued convincingly that a core set of *passiones* can be dated as a collection to some time

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[88] A.-M. Palmer, *Prudentius on the Martyrs* (Oxford, 1989); M. Roberts, *Poetry and the Cult of the Martyrs: The* Liber Peristephanon *of Prudentius* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1993); P. Hershkowitz, *Prudentius, Spain, and Late Antique Christianity: Poetry, Visual Culture, and the Cult of Martyrs* (Cambridge, 2017).

[89] Esp. Prudentius, *Peri*, XI.231-46. The Italian poems are *Peri.*, II, IX, XII, XIV. On Prudentius' travels: Roberts, *Poetry*, pp. 131-87; Hershkowitz, *Prudentius*, pp. 123-59; on his liturgical influence: Palmer, *Prudentius*, pp. 255-68.

[90] P. Franchi de'Cavalieri, 'Gli atti di S. Fruttuoso di Tarragona', in *idem*, *Note agiografiche, fascicolo 8*, (Vatican City, 1935), pp. 129-81.

before the end of the eighth century, but this is as far back as we can go.[91] Regarding the liturgy, Rebecca Maloy has suggested that the sanctoral was one of the most regionally specific elements, finding codification much later than other elements.[92] Certainly, both the *Homiliae Toletanae* and the early eighth-century Verona manuscript of the so-called *Oracional visigótico* (believed to reflect the liturgy used in Tarraconsensis at the end of the Visigothic period) offer different, regionally varied selections of saints.[93] Local specificity is the rule: there is no evidence that martyrial observances were subject to top-down reform in the Visogothic period. Writers like Isidore of Seville seem to have been little interested in them.[94] Martyr texts take us to the local, and particularly to the civic: they show the centrifugal rather than the centripetal elements of early medieval Christianity.

Prominent cults generally followed the topography of important Roman cities rather than the new political geography of the Visigothic kingdom. A good index of this is the relatively slight dissemination of the cult of the Toledan martyr Leocadia. Leocadia was vigorously promoted within seventh-century Toledo: a basilica constructed in her honour, probably in the early seventh-century, was the venue for a number of general church councils, and a series of Toledan bishops buried *ad santos* by her tomb.[95] Her cult was seemingly late in its establishment, however, and it received little enthusiasm outside the royal city. Though she was commemorated in the *Oracional visigótico*, she received no sermon in the *Homiliae Toletanae*.[96] Her relics appear in a mid-seventh-century inscription recording a large relic collection in Acci (Gaudix, Andalucía), but nowhere else in the epigraphic record.[97]

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[91] G. Philippart, 'Les légendiers, des origins au début du IX^{e} siècle', in M. Goullet (ed.), *Le Légendier de Turin. MS. D.V.3 de la Bibliothèque Nationale Universitaire* (Florence, 2014), pp. 7-74, at pp. 42-8.
[92] Maloy, *Songs of Sacrifice*, pp. 28-33.
[93] J. Vives (ed.), *Oracional visigótico* (Barcelona, 1946): see hagiographical index, pp. 424-9.
[94] Isid., *De eccl.*, I.35(34).
[95] Summary in García Rodríguez, *El culto*, pp. 246-53; I. Velázquez and G. Ripoll, '*Toletum*, la construcción de una *urbs regia*', in G. Ripoll and J.M. Gurt (eds) *Sedes regiae (ann. 400-800)* (Barcelona, 2000), pp. 521-78, at pp. 554-8.
[96] *Oracional visigótico*, ed. Vives, nos. 121-49.
[97] *ICERV*, no. 307.

There is every sign that her cult was established—or else brought to prominence from humble, local beginnings—in order to remedy the royal city's embarrassing lack of a glorious martyrial heritage.[98] Her brief *passio*, which gives almost no discussion of her life and death, devotes considerable attention to tracing the legendary spree of persecution visited by a certain Roman governor, Datian: the *passio* is parasitic on the better-known and more popular Iberian cults, and works to fit Leocadia into a unified narrative sweep of Iberian persecution rather than to delineate her particular virtues.[99] Her *passio* represents a clear attempt, from the Toledan centre, to construct a new, unified history of persecution, supplanting the local specificity of different cults, and to place Leocadia seamlessly within this story. There is no compelling evidence that this attempt made an impact outside of Toledo itself, and every suggestion that the cults rooted in Mérida, Zaragoza, Valencia, Tarragona, and elsewhere continued to have considerably greater reach.

The city, rather than the kingdom, is the most useful unit for analysis of martyr cult. The martyr *passiones* were brought into liturgical use in the festivals of the martyrs in late antiquity, and were likely important elements of clerically led cult in the Visigothic period. The liturgical reading of *passiones* was attested in North Africa in Augustine of Hippo's time, including for Iberian saints like Vincent of Zaragoza.[100] There is Iberian evidence for this too, though curiously the clearest evidence comes not from a martyr *passio* but from the *vita* of a Visigothic confessor saint—namely from the dedicatory letter to Braulio of Zaragoza's *Vita Aemiliani*. Braulio sent the *vita* to the priest Fronimian along with a hymn, stating that the *vita* was to be read out during the saint's mass, and that this text would obviate the need

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[98] It has been suggested that Leocadia's cult was built up in explicit competition with Eulalia of Mérida, though I do not find this convincing: Martin, *La géographie*, pp. 225-6.
[99] *PLeoc.* Note that the introductory sections (2-3) are shared with *PVSC*: see below pp. 243-4. On the so-called 'cycle of Datian': B. de Gaiffier, '*Sub Daciano praeside*'; Addison, 'Re-imagining'.
[100] B. de Gaiffier, 'La lecture des actes des martyrs dans la prière liturgique en Occident. À propos du Passionaire Hispanique', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 72 (1954), pp. 134-66.

for a sermon.[101] The *vita* was a somewhat exceptional text, concerning a sixth-century holy man from La Rioja who, under Braulio's vigorous promotion, became the only non-martyr saint to attain liturgical cult in the Visigothic period.[102] The implication of the preface is wider, however, than this particular, newly promoted cult. Braulio gave no sense that such a reading was anything out of the ordinary—indeed, he was trying to integrate Aemilian's new cult into existing practices of martyr piety. Like sermons, then, *passiones* stake a claim to making contact with lay congregations in liturgical and festive contexts.

In this guise, *passiones* came to be consumed in a similar way to sermons. Indeed, the line between the two is not always clear. Sermons were composed and circulated for saints' days, and many of these depended on the texts of *passiones*. Some, like Augustine's famous martyr sermons, were intended for reading after the *passio*; others stood in place of the *passio* text, digesting and glossing its contents in a more manageable form. Two of the surviving sermons for Vincent of Zaragoza, each presumed Iberian, can exemplify the different logics.[103] The first is a sermon known by its incipit as *Gloriosissimi*, attributed varyingly to Justus of Urgell or Justinian of Valencia. Whatever its authorship, it is believed to have been preached in mid sixth-century Valencia.[104] The other is an anonymous sermon known as *Cunctorum*, which shares much with a mass in the Iberian liturgy and probably dates to the

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[101] Braulio, *VAem.*, 2. Cf. *Hom. Tol.*, 52, ed. Grégoire, p. 212, which mentions a just-read *passio* of the Roman martyr Lawrence. The provenance of this sermon is unfortunately unclear.

[102] A mass is contained in (later) Mozarabic manuscripts: *Liber missarum*, 149.1327-35, ed. J. Janini *Liber missarum de Toledo y libros místicos*, 2 vols. (Toledo, 1982-3), i, pp. 494-9. On Braulio's promotion of the cult: S. Castellanos, *Poder social, aristocracias y* hombre santo *en la Hispania Visigoda: La* Vita Aemeliani *de Braulio de Zaragoza* (Logroño, 2011). A basilica dedicated to Aemilian is described in Eug. II, *Carm.*, 11.

[103] On the wider corpus: B. de Gaiffier, 'Sermons latins en l'honneur de s. Vincent antérieurs au X^{e} siècle', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 67 (1949), pp. 267-86.

[104] *Gloriosissimi*, ed. J.C. Martín Iglesias and S. Iranzo Abellán, 'Justo de Urgel, *Sermo de S. Vincentio* (*CPL* 1092): estudio de su tradición manuscrita, edición crítica y traducción', *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 42/1 (2012), pp. 229-51, text at pp. 233-4. The editors defend Justus' authorship; for other views: A. Linage Conde, 'Tras las huellas de Justiniano de Valencia', *Hispania Antiqua*, 2 (1972), pp. 203-16; Saxer, *Saint Vincent*, pp. 159-63.

sixth or seventh centuries.[105] Sofia Meyer has suggested that *Gloriosissimi* was intended to complement a reading of the *passio*, while *Cunctorum*, with its greater narrative detail, might have stood in the *passio*'s place.[106] Moreover, some *passiones* were themselves composed (or re-written) for public preaching. The clearest example is the *Passio Innumerabilium Cesaragustanorum*, a lengthy and highly wrought text of the sixth or seventh century which celebrated the well-established cult of the 'Eighteen' or 'Innumerable' martyrs of Zaragoza.[107] The preacher indulged in an effusive *laus urbis* centred on the abundance of martyrs the city had provided. He spoke of frequent feasts for martyrs of all kinds, each a highly civic event that united the community with the saints: 'let us rejoice together through the course of the year at their festivals and triumphs, let us celebrate vigils with the highest devotion, so that we might be worthy to participate solemnly in their merits.'[108]

The historiography on martyr cult and lay religion, at least in its urban context, has frequently focussed on the manner in which local martyrs, as glorious, shared patrons, could be sources of civic unity. Peter Brown's influential work has placed saints at the heart of the construction of civic consensus: the civic rituals pertaining to saintly patrons were 'conceived as a moment of ideal consensus' in terms equally social and metaphysical.[109] We find

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[105] *Cunctorum*, ed. J.P. Migne, PL, 39 (Paris, 1865), pp. 2095-8.

[106] Meyer, *Der heilige Vinzenz*, pp. 141-9.

[107] For theories of the text's origin: Tovar Paz, *Tractatus*, pp. 200-2, 226-30. Their cult is attested as early as Prudentius, *Peri*, IV. A basilica dedicated to Encratia and the 'Eighteen' in Zaragoza is attested in the verse inscription: Eug. II, *Carm.*, 9.

[108] *PInnum.*, 14, p. 240: *annuo cursu eorum festis adque triumfis congaudeamus, cum suma deuotione excubies celebremus, ut eorum meritis rite participari mereamur.*

[109] P.R.L. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Late Antiquity* (London, 1981), pp. 96-100, quote at p. 100; cf. Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*, pp. 40-6. For discussion and critique of Brown's model see esp. P.A. Hayward, 'Demystifying the role of sanctity in western Christendom', in J. Howard-Johnston and P.A. Hayward (eds), *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 115-42. Hayward draws particular attention to Brown's debts to Mary Douglas' neo-Durkheimian account of religion. This account was elaborated partly as a defence of a notion of Catholic rituality and social structure she perceived as under threat from 'modernist' movements like that exemplified in the Second Vatican Council: see R. Fardon, *Mary Douglas: An Intellectual Biography* (London, 1999), esp. pp. 102-24, on Douglas' *Natural Symbols*.

abundant evidence for such ideals in Iberian texts, running all the way back to Prudentius and his thoroughly late Roman urban vision of martyrs and their cults. Describing the cult of the martyr Hippolytus as practiced in Rome, Prudentius emphasized the harmony wrought by martyr piety: identities melted into one—'the love of their religion masses Latins and strangers together in one general body'—and distinctions of social class were superseded by unity—'with equal ardour patricians and plebian host are jumbled together shoulder to shoulder, for the faith banishes distinctions of birth'.[110] Megan Welton has written of the way in which Prudentius personified cities, granting them a sense of individual personality and unity transcendent of their diverse parts.[111] Similar motifs appear in later martyrial texts.

The *passiones* themselves took the opportunity to imagine idealized civic consensus, and to project this into the present. There was much of the imagery of the spectacle to martyr's sufferings and passions. The martyr Eulalia's entrance into Mérida could be an *adventus*, as her Visigothic *passio* put it, performed before the whole citizenry:

> Then the rumour ran through the areas neighbouring the forum, and there assembled an innumerable crowd, vast beyond measure, such that there was no-one left in their house. Such was the fame of the sanctity and appearance of holy Eulalia that all the inhabitants of the city of Mérida came together for the arrival of the holy Eulalia, so that, attentive in love of her, they might see the young slave and noble inhabitant of this province contending with the governor.[112]

In the *Passio Innumerabilium Cesaragustanorum*, the martyrs were a large, mixed *multitudo* of men, women, and children, tempted outside the city gates by a ruse of the persecutors, 'such that you would suppose that the multitude of the whole people of the city had, in its entirety,

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[110] Prud., *Peri.*, XI.191-2, XI.200-2: *Conglobat in cuneum Latios simul ac peregrinos/ permixtum populous religionis amor./* […] *una et patricios ambitione pari/ confundit plebeian falanx umbonibus aequis/ discrimen procerum praecipitante fide*; trans. Thompson, ii, p. 319.

[111] M. Welton, 'The city speaks: cities, citizens, and civic discourse in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages', *Traditio*, pp. 75 (2020), pp. 1-37, at pp. 16-18.

[112] *PEulE*, 7, p. 54: *Tunc rumor cucurrit per uicinas fori partes et facta est turba innumerabilis, ingens nimis, ita ut in domo sua nemo remaneret. Talis enim erat fama sanctimonie et faciei sancta Eulalie, ut omnes Emeretensium urbis habitatores ad aduentum beate conuenierent Eulalie ut, in cuius amore pendebant, uere uernulam et prouincie ipsius senatricem atque habitatricem uiderent cum preside dimicantem.*

departed for the spectacle of the raging sword'.[113] Language of this kind mirrors the civic vision of different, non-*passio* texts like the *Vitas sanctorum patrum Emeretensium*, where the hagiographer positioned the bishops of Mérida and the patronage of the local martyr Eulalia as the foundations of a remarkable city-wide unanimity. Mérida's inhabitants were united in perfect *caritas* ('perfecta karitate repleti cuncti'), we are told, during the episcopate of the saintly Masona, such that even Jews and 'pagans' were brought into the joyous concord of the faithful.[114]

The Christian language of civic unanimity which pervaded martyr cult was derived (indeed, appropriated) from anterior Roman discourse around civic games, festivals, and judicial spectacles.[115] Both non-Christian and Christian civic language follows the tendency—inherited by much modern historical and social scientific work—to see community most perfectly and indicatively represented in festivals and ceremonial.[116] Yet, as Santiago Castellanos has incisively agued, ideals of civic consensus present in hagiography were often an 'ideological screen' used to elide divisions and exclusions—to assert a vision of harmony rather than genuinely reflect or enact one.[117] The very fact that we find this language so well formed in Prudentius suggests as much. Prudentius was a lay author writing chiefly for an audience of elite Christian readers at a time in which civic cult was little developed in Hispania.[118] The language of civic publicness to which martyrial texts lent themselves was as

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113 *PInnum.*, 9, quote at p. 236: *ita ut crederes totius funditus migrare multitude populorum ciuitatis ad spectaculum gladii furientis*.

114 *VSPE*, V.2-3, at V.2, p. 49-50.

115 On *passiones* and the language of spectacle see below, pp. 143-5. On ancient and medieval civic discourse: Welton, 'The city speaks'.

116 P. Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton, NJ, 2001), pp. 123-57, 214-23. For illuminating analysis of festivals in the sociology of religion: F.-A. Isambert, *Le sens du sacre: fête et religion Populaire* (Paris, 1982).

117 S. Castellanos, 'The significance of social unanimity in a Visigothic hagiography: keys to an ideological screen', *JECS*, 11/3 (2003), pp. 387-419.

118 For a survey of the textual and archaeological evidence: Hershkowitz, *Prudentius*, pp. 97-122.

much an imaginary and idealized one as it was real: this remains the case even in later centuries, when cults were better established and liturgical observances more widespread.

The *Vitas sanctorum patrum Emeretensium*'s claim that Jews and 'pagans' were brought seamlessly into Christian consensus is a good example of this process and its political stakes. The idea that martyr festivals were universal observances was espoused by the anti-Jewish legislation. A law of Ervig's required Jews to agree to engage 'in festivitatibus dominicis sive etiam in martyrum festis', according to the supposed custom of all pious Christians.[119] Church canons made similar demands, sometimes emphasizing the civic publicness of such events: Jews were, one canon ruled, to spend festival days before the eyes of bishops 'in civitatibus publicisque conventibus'.[120] Assertions of communal consensus should always be treated with a sceptical eye, whether in laws, *passiones*, or confessor hagiographies. They are not objective descriptions of social dynamics such as can provide the raw material for sociological analysis, but self-interested attempts to assert a particular clerical social imaginary onto the wider world. Carlo Ginzburg has eloquently shown how functionalist readings of martyr cult can efface the elements of violence and coercion that lay always behind the rhetoric of consensus.[121] Martyr cult was certainly an important site for the construction and dissemination of ideals of civic community, but this does not mean that they genuinely enacted it.

There is a wider point to be made here about how martyr cult and civic festivals are used as windows onto lay religiosity. A view which is resolutely pastoral—which frames laypeople as the crowd, or the community to which bishops minister—tells us only part of the story. Moreover, this story is one particularly dependent on the social imaginary of bishops and clerics themselves, which are far from a neutral report on the religious worlds

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[119] *LV*, XII.3.14, pp. 442-3. Cf. *LV*, XII.3.21.
[120] IX Toledo, c. 17 (Conc. p. 305).
[121] C. Ginzburg, 'The conversion of the Jews of Minorca (A.D. 417-18)', in *idem*, *Threads and Traces: True, False, Fictive*, trans. A.C. Tedeschi and J. Tedeschi (Berkeley, CA, 2012), pp. 25-33.

they purport to describe. Other sources make it clear that martyr cult was not dominated or controlled by clerics in all cases. We have seen how many martyr texts had an origin outside the clergy. Martyrial buildings, too, could have strong links to lay patronage. In the *Passio Vincentii, Sabine et Christeta*, for example, the building of the *martyrium* was explained by a story in which a Jew experienced a miracle by the martyr's bodies, precipitating his conversion and a vow to build a *martyrium* in gratitude.[122] In the different redactions of the *Passio Vincentii*, the earliest stages of cult are attributed to pious laypeople.[123] Only in the mid-sixth century, do we find the Visigothic *passio* indicating that Vincent's body has since been translated again, this time to the *ecclesia mater*—that is, to the intramural cathedral complex, where it would be under the power of the bishop.[124] These *passiones* show how cult could shift from lay to clerical control over time. This may have been the case for many prominent cults. Others, however, saw little ecclesiastical appropriation at all.

The text which most clearly shows the expansive role that laypeople could occupy in cult is undoubtedly the *Passio Mantii*.[125] Unlike all other Iberian *passiones* of the time, this unique text described the martyrdom of an early medieval slave at the hands of Jews. It was also exceptional in its discussion of lay patronage. I will discuss the anti-Jewish aspects of the text in more detail shortly, but here I want to draw out the account of lay agency it gives in its description of cult. The latter half of the *passio* discusses the *inuentio* of Mantius' body, which is left lying unburied in the countryside, and the monumentalization of his cult once he is interred. The *passio* never mentions urban cult or clerical involvement, but has his body discovered on a rural estate by a wealthy layperson ('pater familias quidam nobilis') who,

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122 *PVSC*, 11-12.
123 *Passio Vinc.* [brève], 4; *Passio Vinc.* [comm.], 26. On the chronology of his cult sites in Valencia: Saxer, *Saint Vincent*, pp. 4-8, 116-23.
124 *Passio Vinc.* [comm.], 26.
125 On which: M.C. Díaz y Díaz, 'La *Passio Mantii* (BHL 5219): unas consideraciones', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 100 (1982), pp. 334-9; J.M. Fernández Catón, *San Mancio: culto, leyenda y reliquias. Ensayo de crítica hagiográfica* (León, 1983); R. González Salinero, 'Perfiles de un debate sobre la *Passio Mantii*', *Hispania Sacra*, 70/141 (2018), pp. 185-210.

after having a revelatory dream, located it and constructed a small *martyrium*.[126] This was later extended by further lay munificence into a grand basilica complex, with a baptistry and vividly coloured mosaics. It was surrounded by walls with large towers in the corners such that from afar it looked, we are told, like a splendid city.[127] We have no idea who wrote this remarkable *passio*, but there is little reason to think it was an urban cleric, and it could well have been a lay composition.

The *Passio Mantii* also shows how *passiones* could be involved in religious polemic. *Passiones* were by no means all about espousing ideals of social unanimity, but were at least as much about policing the boundaries of Christianity and defining it against outgroups. This was most often against a historical idea of 'paganism', as we will see, but it could also be turned against Jews, as the *Passio Mantii* shows. Mantius was a slave or dependent labourer, brought to Hispania from Rome by Jewish landowners.[128] He is martyred as they pressure him to adopt their religion. The text has been well studied in the context of Visigothic anti-Judaism.[129] What is most interesting about the *passio* for our purposes, however, is the way in which anti-Judaism was folded into various other attacks on out-groups, including heretical Christians and 'pagans'. Consider the following speech of Mantius:

> 'I cannot listen to false gods; I must not be a false witness; I do not refuse supplications in any way; I prefer death, through which eternity of life might be brought to be. If you want a confession, I cannot confess otherwise than that the Father is ingenerate, the Son was generated from the Father, the Holy Spirit has proceeded, truly, from the one God and his Son, whence they are not three as parts

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126 *PMant.*, 6-7, quote at 6, p. 326.
127 *PMant.*, 8-10. The story involves a *homo nouilissimus* [*sic*] called Julian and a pious *senex* Julia.
128 *PMant.*, 2.
129 R. Guerreiro, 'La imagen del judío en los textos hagiográficos y patrísticos: siglos V al VIII', *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, *Serie II: Historia Antigua*, 6 (1993), pp. 543-50; R. González Salinero, 'Los judíos y la gran propiedad en la Hispania tardoantigua: el reflejo de una realidad en la *Passio Mantii*', *Gerión*, 16 (1998), pp. 437-50.

> nor one alone, and they are not three from which there are truly three, because they are one, and they are truly one, because three.'[130]

There are a number of striking elements: firstly, the plural 'gods', evoking the polytheistic context of the other passions and, secondly, the elaborate trinitarian statement which seems to take its aim at 'Arian' positions. All manner of out-groups are elided as part of one undifferentiated, fluidly conceived deviation from orthodox Christianity. While aimed at Jews, a traditional language of opposing the 'gods' of the polytheists was deployed; while naming Jews and polytheists as the enemies, the passion gives the most elaborate anti-Arian formula in the Visigothic martyr corpus.[131]

The *Passio Mantii* is an exceptional case, since it seems not to have been involved in public cult: there is no evidence of Visigothic cult outside the rural cult centre. Yet, anti-Jewish themes were also present in more conventional *passiones*, too, including those which received prominent public cult. In the *Passio Eulalie Emeritensis*, Eulalia is depicted as meeting a Jew on the way to the city, where she is to meet the governor Calpurnianus. In the *passio*, the Jew greets Eulalia with the following words: 'Welcome, daughter: go, offer incense to the gods so that you might live'.[132] Occurring on Eulalia's way to Mérida to contest with the governor, this episode has the Jew prefiguring the 'pagan' governor's entreaties to sacrifice to the imperial cult. The governor later invites her to sacrifice in exactly the same words.[133] As in the *Passio Mantii*, then, the Jew occupies an analogous role as the governor. The episode is also a conversion miracle. After Eulalia has rebuffed his offer to sacrifice she leaves and the Jew, turning back to look at her, sees a flash of lightning and is immediately granted the understanding that angels protected her 'and that the Lord wanted to exhibit this miracle to

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130 *PMant.*, 3, p. 324: *Falsos deos audire non possum; testis mendax esse non deueo; supplicia penitus non recuso; mortem magis quero per quam mihi uite eternitas conferatur. Si confessionem queritis, non possum aliut confiteri nisi Patrem ingenitum, Filium a Patre gentium, Spiritum uero Sanctum processisse ex uno Patre et Filio suo, unde non tres ut partes neque unum solitarium et non tres inde uero tres, quia unum sunt et uere unum, quia tres sunt.*

131 For more anti-'Arian' Trinitarian statements in the *passiones* see above, pp. 89-90.

132 *PEulE.*, 6. p. 53: *Bene uenisti, filia, uade, turifica, ut uiuere possis.*

133 *PEulE.*, 8, p. 56: *Considera infantiam tuam, aspice temedipsam, misere tui, uade, turifica, ut uiuere possis.*

the Jews so that the insensate hardness of their hearts might see the mighty works of Christ.'[134] Another conversion miracle occurs to a Jew in the *Passio Vincenti, Sabine, et Christete*, this time after the martyrs' deaths.[135] In both cases, the spiritual blindness and hardheartedness of the stereotypical Jew made these conversions not just normal conversions but miracles attesting to the martyrs' overwhelming power to make manifest the Christian truth to non-believers.[136]

Martyr cult was a highly multifaceted and complex phenomenon, and its texts can take the historian in various directions. Martyr cult was certainly an important element of civic religiosity, and martyr *passiones* were texts which often espoused vivid and idealized visions of Christian civic community. Unlike sermons, however, they were not always clerical texts, illustrative only of a pastoral encounter between preacher and audience: they were texts whose traditions reached back into late Roman piety, in some cases, and into oral traditions that were not subject to strict clerical control. Moreover, martyr cult offered an opportunity for lay patronage. The idea that martyr cult was chiefly an engine of Christian community building controlled by bishops is open to question, therefore. This is especially so when we think about the religious vision that *passiones* evince. They were stories of Christian religious difference as much as they were evocations of idealized unity. Aiming themselves against 'pagans' and, in some cases, Jews, *passiones* were part of the definition of Christian communities in exclusive as well as inclusive ways. It is to the wider question of religious boundaries that I now turn.

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134 *PEulE.*, 6, p. 53: *et ideo uoluit Dominus mirculum hociudeis ostendere, ut duritia cordis eorum insensata uideret magnalia Christi.*

135 *PVSC*, 11-12.

136 For the image of Jews as insensate and unbelieving: Isidore of Seville, *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos*, II.6, II.21-2, ed. J.-P. Migne, PL, 83 (Paris, 1862), cols. 510-12, 529-30.

V. DEFINING THE BOUNDARIES OF CHRISTIANITY: THE CONSTRUCTION OF 'PAGANISM'

It was undoubtedly the Jews who bore the brunt of the legislative onslaught against religious outsiders in the catholic kingdom. It is useful, however, to focus at this point on the less well-evidenced question of anti-'paganism'. This had nothing like the same political weight behind it as anti-Judaism but it remains an essential notion in any inquiry into what 'Christianization' entailed in a concrete, pastoral sense. There was, it is fair to say, no sense of a 'pagan' community practising a distinctive religion in opposition to Christianity. Indeed, the words *paganus* and *gentilis* never appeared in royal law and appeared in church canons very rarely. 'Idolatry' was a more common ecclesiastical charge, though this did not denote a religious identity as such. Anti-idolatry was in the late Roman period ensconced in the real work of Roman civic cult, with its sacrifices and idols, but by the Visigothic period it functioned more as a generic sin, typically presumed to be rural (the Twelfth Council of Toledo condemned 'uenatores lapidum, accensores facularum et excolentes sacra fontium uel arborum') and subject to extirpation in the same manner as other vices.[137] In this sense, the notion of 'paganism' functioned very differently from Judaism. Yet the language of anti-'paganism', like that of anti-Judaism, played a role in marking the boundaries of the Christian community, and by using sources that are not tied into central political power, with its self-interested tendency to assert a near-universal Christianity, we see the important work that the notion did in pastoral preaching and community definition.

In fact, the word *gentilis*, which was probably the most frequently used cognate of our 'pagan', was used in many cases precisely to denote those outside of the Christian

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[137] XII Toledo, c. 11 (Coll. Hisp. VI, pp. 181-4, quote at pp. 182-3). Cf. XVI Toledo, c. 2 (Conc. pp. 498-500), which adds 'auguratores quoque seu praecantatores' to the list (at p. 498). For discussion: C. Martin, '*De sacrilegiis extirpandis*. Interpretar la legislación contra el paganismo en la Hispania de los siglos VI-VII', in J. Fernández Ubiña, A.J. Quiroga Puertas, and P. Ubric Rabaneda (eds), *La Iglesia como sistema de dominación en la Antigüedad Tardía* (Granada, 2015), pp. 273-92.

community. It denoted those who were in the primal state of the fallen human being, unconverted from sin and fleshliness, and untouched by Christian religion. This was how Isidore glossed it in his *Etymologiae* and how it was used in *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, when Isidore remarked that people who come to the catechumenate to prepare for baptism did so 'de gentilitate'.[138] (Those occasions on which the word retained its scriptural sense as 'gentiles'—that is, non-Jews—were rare).[139] *Paganus* could be used in an analogous way, as when a remarkable canon, preserved in a seventh-century systematic compilation claimed that Jewish children whose parents had evaded their baptism remained 'paganos'.[140] Wolfram Drews has used this to argue for an elision between Jews and 'pagans' in much Visigothic rhetoric.[141] A certain notion of 'pagan-ness' was necessary to set the outer limits of Christianity, and to identify and characterize those who came to the faith from outside. It was thus core to the basic notion of Christian conversion on both a communal and an individual level. There are many more fleshed out senses of 'paganism'—particularly of the late Roman forms of cult which were remembered and abhorred in the *passiones*—but I want to begin with this minimal definition. It is with this that we can understand similarly minimal definitions of what Christianity was thought to entail—of what 'Christianization' meant for those drawn by preachers from their *gentilitas*.

The outstanding Iberian testimony to the Christian discourse of 'paganism' is undoubtedly Martin of Braga's model sermon, *De correctione rusticorum*. I have discussed its context and place within Martin's oeuvre in detail in Chapter 1.[142] This much-studied text

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138 Isid., *Etym.*, VIII.10.2; Isid., *De eccl.*, II.21(20).1, at p. 95.

139 Isidore, *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos* uses *gentes* for 'Gentiles', e.g. at II.7-8, ed. Migne, cols. 512-14.

140 *Excerptum canonicum*, 20 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 482-5). Drews argues that this canon probably derives from the now-lost *acta* of the Third Council of Toledo, held under Isidore in c. 624. On this council see R.L. Stocking, 'Martianus, Aventius and Isidore: provincial councils in seventh-century Spain', *EME*, 6/2 (1997), pp. 196-88.

141 W. Drews, 'Jews as pagans? Polemical definitions of identity in Visigothic Spain', *EME*, 11/3 (2002), pp. 198-207.

142 See above, pp. 38-40, for fundamental bibliography.

was written in the Suevic kingdom in the 570s at the request of fellow bishop Polemius of Astorga. Martin relies on the idea of idolatry more than the notion of the *paganus*. He sets everything within the narrative sweep of salvation history, from the origin of the devil to the end times. Within this totalizing narrative, idolatry is revealed as the religion of a fallen humanity, forgetful of its creator. This began, Martin claims, in the worship of the sun and moon, and quickly degenerated into more elaborate cults—including the cults of the Graeco-Roman gods—which flourished under the influence of the demons' trickery. In this way, human beings were lured into worshipping created objects as if they were divine, and to offering sacrifices to demons as if they were gods.[143]

For Martin, a highly diverse range of practices could be subsumed under the category of *cultura diaboli*:

> To light candles beside rocks and beside trees and beside fountains and at crossroads, what else is this but worship of the devil? To observe divinations and auguries and days for idols, what else is this but worship of the devil? To observe Vulcan's day and the Kalends, to set out tables, to put up laurel wreaths, to watch the foot, to pour fruit and wine on a log in the hearth, to throw bread into a fountain, what else is this but worship of the devil? For women at their weaving to call on the name of Minerva and to observe the day of Venus in weddings and to be careful about the day on which one commences a journey, what else is this but worship of the devil? To chant over herbs to make poisons (*ad maleficium*), and to invoke the names of demons in incantations, what else is this but worship of the devil?[144]

This ecumenical approach to the category of demon-worship was the sermon's central facet—it serves to dichotomize the world between Christian and demonic, making almost two parallel religions. Indeed, in *De correctione rusticorum*, we see Martin almost inventing rustic idolatry as a 'religion' opposed to Christianity, so that he can prove that the audience are

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[143] Mart. Brac., *De corr.*, esp. 6-8.

[144] Mart. Brac., *De corr.*, 16, at pp. 264-6: *Nam ad petras et ad arboles et ad fontes et per triuia cereolos incendere, quid est aliud nisi cultura diaboli? Diuinationes et auguria et dies idolorum obseruare, quid est aliud nisi cultura diaboli? Vulcanalia et Kalendas obseruare, mensas ornare, et lauros ponere, et pedem obseruare, et fundere in foco super truncum frugem et uinum, et panem in fontem mittere, quid est aliud nisi cultura diaboli? Mulieres in tela sua Mineruam nominare et Veneris diem in nuptias obseruare et quo die in uia exeatur adtendere, quid est aliud nisi cultura diaboli? Incantare herbas ad maleficia et inuocare nomina daemonum incantando, quid est aliud nisi cultura diaboli*?; trans. Barlow, pp. 81-2.

directly contravening their baptismal promises rather than just engaging in religiously neutral cultural traditions.

Martin did this by paralleling the 'superstitions' he outlined with fundamental aspects of Christianity. A Christian who indulgences in 'superstitions' has rejected the sign of the cross ('signum crucis') and replaced it with the signs of the devil ('diaboli signa'); they have abandoned the *symbolum* (that is, the *credo*) accepted in baptism—an 'incantationem sanctam', as he describes it—and turned instead to 'diabolicas incantationes et carmina'.[145] According to this vision of religious difference, Christianity and 'idolatry' were distinguished more by loyalty than by qualitative distinctions. Baptism was given a heavy legalistic flavour: it was a *pactum* with God, in which one binds oneself with one's 'cautio et confessio'.[146] This legalistic language was attested elsewhere—Isidore considered baptism to involve *pactiones*; Ildefonsus referred to the *symbolum* as a *foedus*—yet even compared to these sources, Martin's sermon gives us a particularly legalistic and narrow definition of Christian conversion.[147] The key question, then, was in the definition of this notion, and it was this which Martin sought to do in the sermon: to define as comprehensive as possible a notion of *cultura diaboli*, such that a large swathe of cultural life could be considered a violation of the minimal duties acquired in baptism.

Martin's pastoral position should be understood against a wider context in which religious boundaries were not self-evident, and the religious status of various practices and customs was ambiguous and contested. It is important to recall that the audience Martin imagined was baptized—they were not unaware of Christianity, living in a cultural world of 'indigenous' nature-worship, as has sometimes been presumed. The study of *De correctione rusticorum* has often been confused by the notion of 'pagan survivals'—a now widely rejected

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145 Mart. Brac., *De corr.*, 16, at pp. 266-8.

146 Mart. Brac., *De corr.*, 16, p. 264. *Cautio* can designate 'obligation', 'security', 'written bond', etc. in Roman legal language.

147 Isid., *De eccl.* II.25.5; Ildef., *De cog. bapt.*, 34.

concept, imbued with romantic, folkloric assumptions that ascribes an inertia to 'traditional' cultures which are imagined to persist untouched by the dynamic historical forces in society.[148] It is more accurate to see the world Martin was observing as one of persistent dynamism and fluidity, with pre-Roman, Roman, and Christian forms all part of the array of cultural elements that people had at their disposal and which they placed into new combinations, without this bearing in any simple way on their religious identity (if such a notion is appropriate). Indeed, as Jean-Claude Schmitt has argued, no cultural element merely 'survives'—each becomes part of a new structural whole, occupying an ever-new role relative to other elements, as those around them shift and change.[149] Apparent 'pagan' acts acquired a new and different salience in the eyes of bishops like Martin, as Christianity solidified itself as the religion of much of the ruling class and of urban society.

To understand this, David Frankfurter's account of 'syncretism' is useful.[150] Frankfurter follows recent anthropological work in distinguishing the much-maligned traditional notion of syncretism from a more critical contemporary one—a 'rectified' concept of syncretism that can be used to do useful clarifying work.[151] The former notion of syncretism refers to the combination of two or more religious traditions, each understood as self-standing, integral entities. On this understanding, new elements brought in are foreign bodies, corrupting the purity of original traditions. This notion of syncretism is bound up in polemical functions: an influential Protestant tradition of scholarship has sought to isolate an

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148 E.g. in S. McKenna, *Paganism and Pagan Survivals in Spain up to the Fall of the Visigothic Kingdom* (Washington, DC, 1938); V. Martínez, 'El paganismo en la España Visigoda', *Burgense* 13/2 (1972), pp. 489-508. For critique: J. de Pina-Cabral, 'The gods of the Gentiles are demons: the problem of pagan survivals in European culture', in K. Hastrup (ed.), *Other Histories* (London, 1992), pp. 54-61. The notion is defended as an academic shorthand in B. Filotas, *Pagan Survivals, Superstitions and Popular Cultures in Early Medieval Pastoral Literature* (Toronto, 2005), pp. 18-20.

149 J.C. Schmitt, '"Religion populaire" et culture folklorique', *Annales*, 31/5 (1976), pp. 941-53, at p. 946.

150 D. Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt: Syncretism and Local Worlds in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ, 2018), pp. 1-33, esp. pp. 7-20.

151 D. Frankfurter, 'Restoring "syncretism" in the history of Christianity', *Studies in Late Antiquity*, 5/1 (2021), pp. 128-38, at p. 129.

apparently pristine tradition of original Christianity from the 'syncretizing' effects of Hellenism and 'pagan' object-worship; Catholic scholars have sought to affirm a specifically Christian logic of sanctity to phenomena like the cult of relics, detached from 'pagan' precursors and rivals.[152] However, as Frankfurter glosses it, the new notion of 'syncretism' requires scholars to understand that all religions and cultures are inherently syncretic—that all traditions draw on a variety of phenomena, and interrelate in complex ways, irreducible to hermetically-sealed, pristine originals. Thinking through syncretism allows us to see the myriad borrowings and interrelations between different traditions and, crucially, to see when anxieties about this mixing arose, as they did in texts like Martin's *De correctione rusticorum*. With Martin we see a moment when the normal syncretism of religious and cultural traditions became problematic—that is, became seen as syncretic in the prior disparaging sense, with its implications of impurity and violation.[153] Discourses of purity co-existed with the troubling fluidity of syncretism.

Martin's text must be understood against a context of widespread fluidity and dynamism in religious life. Post-Roman Hispania was not one marked by a static indigenous rural culture merely 'surviving' against new cultural currents, but nor was it a place of monolithic Christianity. There is no reason to preclude the idea that baptized Christians felt perfectly able to judge, in ways different from their pastors, which elements of their wider culture were compatible with the faith of their baptism. Some of the practices Martin denounces merit cautious credence. In denouncing the practicing of resting on Thursdays (the *quinta feria*) in honour of Jupiter, Martin denounced a practice once widely attested across the Roman Empire, and which continued to find condemnation in the sixth century,

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[152] On the former: Smith, *Drudgery Divine*, pp. 7-26; for the latter: H. Delehaye, *Les origines du culte des martyrs* (Brussels, 1912), pp. 461-78, with contextual discussion in F.-A. Isambert, 'Religion populaire, sociologie, histoire et folklore. II: De Saint Besse à Saint Rouin', *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, 46/1 (1978), pp. 111-33, at pp. 114-16.

[153] Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt*, pp. 14, 18.

as the Council of Narbonne and the sermons of Caesarius of Arles attest.[154] Caesarius' attacks on the practice entered the *Homiliae Toletanae* in one of the bizarrely centoized sermons which transmitted in early medieval Iberia under the heading of *Sermones cotidiani beati Augustini*.[155] Martin's attacks on the observance of the Kalends of January also find corroboration elsewhere, including in sermons by Caesarius and Maximus of Turin.[156] One of the latter's sermons was excerpted and fused with anti-Jewish material in an interesting sermon preserved in the *Homiliae Toletanae* as a sermon for the feast day of Christ's circumcision (the Christian feast which overlayed the Kalends). Christians, the sermon argues, are not to be physically circumcised like Jews but to circumcise their hearts of vices. Having abandoned vices, they should not therefore revel in the immorality of 'pagan' festivities, with their dances and wantonness, but prefer the sobriety of Christian festivals.[157]

It can be argued, of course, that these 'corroborations' are simple literary borrowings, indicative of a tradition of 'anti-paganism' which had literary existence but made no contact with reality.[158] There is some force to this argument, but the fact that the sermons adduced above were not just transmitted but reworked suggests a more active engagement with tradition. More importantly, we have good evidence of real religious diversity and fluidity

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154 I. Bultrighini, 'Thursday (*dies Iovis*) in the Later Roman Empire', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 86 (2018), pp. 61-84. See Narbonne, c. 15 (Conc. p. 150).

155 *Hom. Tol.*, 78, described in detail in Sánchez Sánchez, *La primitiva predicación*, pp. 179-82. The composite text combines passages from Caesarius, *Sermo*, 13 and 46, ed. G. Morin, CCSL, 103 (Turnhout, 1953), pp. 64-8, 205-11. The text as preserved in the San Millán manuscript (Toledo, RAH, Cód. 60) is García Larragueta (ed.) *Las Glosas*, pp. 147-56: see esp. p. 155: *Isti enim infelices qui in honore Iobis quinta feria opera non faciunt non dubito quod ipsa opera facere die dominico nec erubescunt nec metunt.*

156 L. Grig, 'Interpreting the Kalends of January: a case study for late antique popular culture', in Grig, *Popular Culture*, pp. 237-56. She argues, at p. 247, that Pacian of Barcelona's now-lost work *Cervulus* (noted in Jerome, *De viris*, 106) may have concerned customs associated to the celebration of the Kalends.

157 *Hom. Tol.* 9, ed. Grégoire, pp. 197-9. Cf. the condemnation of dancing in III Toledo, c. 23 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 131-2).

158 For a nuanced attempt to move beyond this objection: R. Künzel, 'Paganisme, syncrétisme, et culture religieuse populaire au haut Moyen Âge: réflexions de méthode', *Annales*, 47 (1992), pp. 1055-69.

elsewhere in the Iberian record. Those who most radically reject the veracity of evidence for religious or cultural forms that were apart from the Christianity of the clerical sources can do so only by completely homogenizing religious life—by making the claim, as Yitzhak Hen does for Merovingian Gaul—that it was an entirely Christian society, in which all people lived more or less according to a Christianity defined by that of the clerical structure and its authoritative rituals.[159] A vast domain of possibility for diversity, complexity, and resistance is written off in this curt methodological statement. As Frankfurter has made clear, it is always necessary to understand a notion like 'Christianization' in relation to pre-existing elements of culture: religions are implanted into local cultures in dynamic processes, necessarily involving local agency, not simply imposed wholesale from above.[160] Any analysis which takes all culture as relating to some pure, clerical notion of Christianity perpetuates the incomprehension and contempt of medieval clerics before those cultural phenomena that they could not construe as part of orthodox Christianity.

On this account, it is worth considering the pre-Christian religious situation in the Iberian Peninsula. Across Hispania there is good evidence for Roman-era syncretism between pre-Roman and Roman cults, through the process known as *interpretatio Romana*, wherein pre-Roman deities and cults were identified with Roman equivalents.[161] The deity Ataecina was connected to the Roman goddess Proserpina in a number of inscriptions in Lusitania, for example.[162] There is also evidence of sub-official 'magical' forms entering the

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159 Y. Hen, 'Paganism and superstitions in the time of Gregory of Tours: *une question mal posée!*', in K. Mitchell and I.N. Wood (eds), *The World of Gregory of Tours* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 229-40; *idem*, *Culture and Religion*.

160 Frankfurter, 'Restoring "syncretism"', p. 131.

161 M. Beard, J. North, and S.R.F. Price, *Religions of Rome*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1998), i, pp. 313-63; C. Ando, *The Matter of the Gods: Religion and the Roman Empire* (Berkeley, CA, 2008), pp. 43-58. On Hispania: J.M. Blázquez Martínez, 'Los cultos sincréticos y su propagación por las ciudades hispanorromanas', repr. in *idem*, *Religiones, ritos y creencias funerarias de la Hispania Prerromana* (Madrid, 2001), pp. 223-41; B.M. Prósper, *Lenguas y religiones prerromanas del occidente de la Península Ibérica* (Salamanca, 2000), pp. 313-21.

162 Prósper, *Lenguas y religiones*, pp. 287-307.

peninsula. Curse-tablets known as *defixiones*—which bound a cursed person by appeal to a spirit or deity—and the physically similar 'judicial prayers'—which Henk Versnel distinguished according to their open-ended appeal to justice—spread widely in the peninsula.[163] These were typically inexpensive lead objects, by no means confined to elites, yet they drew on formulae and traditions which spread across the Graeco-Roman world.[164] Vernsel has shown that many of the Iberian examples derive directly from forms known otherwise only in Greek; similarly, Roger Tomlin has shown that Iberian and British examples parallel one another.[165] They appealed to a variety of deities. A tablet from Mérida addressed itself to the local deity Ataecina and the parallel Roman goddess Proserpina.[166] An Iberian tablet from Baelo Claudia (Baetica) invoked Isis 'Myrionyma', of pre-Roman Egyptian origins. This shows the spread of Graeco-Roman forms below the level of 'official religion'. Though the vast majority of these examples are from the Roman period, objects of this kind were known across a wider chronology. There are *defixiones* from Gallaecia dating as late as the fifth or sixth centuries, inscribed on slate.[167] Certain kinds of 'agrarian charms' echoing anterior Greek phylacteries were known in Christianized form even after the Visigothic period. One example found near Salamanca invoked a series of angels to keep

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[163] J.G. Gager, 'Introduction', in *idem* (ed.), *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 3-41; H.S. Versnel, 'Beyond cursing: the appeal to justice in judicial prayers', in C.A. Faraone and D. Obbink (ed.), *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion* (New York, NY, 1991), pp. 60-106.

[164] One Roman example from near Valencia concerned a dispute between slaves: J. Corell, 'Invocada la intervención de Iau en una *defixio* de Sagunto (Valencia)', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 130 (2000), pp. 241-7, with discussion and a different reading of the Latin in R.S.O. Tomlin, 'Cursing a thief in Iberia and Britain', in R.L. Gordon and F. Marco Simón (eds), *Magical Practice in the Latin West: Papers from the International Conference Held at the University of Zaragoza, 30 Sept.-1 Oct. 2005* (Leiden, 2010), pp. 245-73, at pp. 264-8.

[165] Versnel, 'Beyond cursing'; Tomlin, 'Cursing a thief'.

[166] *CIL*, II, no. 462, ed. E. Hübner, (Berlin, 1869), with discussion in Tomlin, 'Cursing a thief', pp. 247-53. On Ataecina and Proserpina: Prósper, *Lenguas y religiones*, pp. 287-307.

[167] *Pizarras*, nos. 151-2, ed. Velázquez, *Las pizarras visigodas*, pp. 458-62. See I. Velázquez, 'Between orthodox belief and "superstition" in Visigothic Hispania', in Gordon and Marco Simón (eds), *Magical Practice*, pp. 601-27.

away damaging hailstorms.[168] Such 'weather magic' is attested across the early medieval world, perhaps unsurprisingly given the intimate dependence of most people on the cycles of the natural world.[169]

Most interestingly of all, late antique examples of *defixiones* and judicial prayers from across the Roman world began to incorporate Christian elements. Only one certain example is known from Iberia, but others are attested in Gaul and Britain, where finds are more numerous.[170] The Iberian example is a fourth-century lead tablet discovered at Fernán Núñez (Córdoba), folded into an 'M' shape, and carrying a judicial prayer intended to stop a false allegation of guilt. Doing so, it invokes God as 'you, who freed Susanna from false accusation ('de falso crimine')' and mentions Saint Thomas.[171] The author of the inscription knew Daniel 13, in which the story of Susanna's false accusation appears, and seems to have known the *Acts of Thomas*—an apocryphal work which Turibius of Astorga accused 'Priscillianists' of reading in Gallaecia in the mid-fifth century.[172] The latter fact does not mean that the tablet came from 'Priscillianist' circles, as has been suggested, but it does highlight both that Christians by no means necessarily saw such objects as illicit 'magic' or distinctly 'pagan' forms, and also that Christianity was by no means a clearly bounded phenomenon at this time.[173] A particular form, like a *defixio* or a judicial prayer, could be

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168 The key example is *Pizarra*, no. 104, ed. Velázquez, *Las pizarras visigodas*, pp. 368-84, with extensive discussion in F.J. Fernández Nieto, 'A Visigothic charm from Asturias and the classical tradition of phylacteries against hail', in Gordon and Marco Simón (eds), *Magical Practice in the Latin West*, pp. 551-99. He gives an eighth century date; Velázquez, in her edition, places in in the late ninth or tenth century.

169 For Carolingian parallels: T. Kohl, 'Peasant agency and the supernatural', *Studia Historica—Historia Medieval*, 38/2 (2020), pp. 97-116, at pp. 105-8.

170 I. Velázquez, 'Intersección de realidades culturales en la Antigüedad Tardía: el ejemplo de defixiones y filacterias como instrumentos de la cultura popular', *AT*, 9 (2001), pp. 149-62.

171 *CIL*, II²/5, no. 510a, ed. A.U. Stylow (Berlin-New York, 1998), pp. 138-9, with discussion in Velázquez, 'Intersección de realidades culturales', pp. 158-9.

172 Turibius of Astorga, *Ep. ad Hydatium et Ceponium*, 5, ed. J.P. Migne, PL, 54 (Paris, 1846), cols. 693-5, at col. 694. Priscillian had defended the (critical) reading of apocryphal texts in Prisc., *Tract.*, III.

173 For the 'Priscillianist' reading: G. Fontana Elboj, 'Notas a una oscura inscripción de la Bética (*CIL* II²/5, 510A): una interpretación lingüística y religiosa', *Veleia*, 36 (2019), pp. 163-82.

placed by its local producer into dialogue with different religious traditions, gaining legitimacy from a wider religious system, even while not officially sanctioned by it.[174]

The question of 'magic' adds a further complication to matters. Few scholars agree on how 'magic' and 'religion' are to be distinguished, or whether such a distinction is even viable.[175] We are on more concrete ground, however, if we think about particular cultural forms, within identifiable traditions, which were condemned as 'magic' by authorities at one time or another: this roots our definitions in matters of social legitimation rather than scholarly categories. When Isidore gave a taxonomy of *magi* in the *Etymologiae*, he traced them back to Zoroaster, understanding them as practitioners of a bounded tradition of learned, though occult, *artes*.[176] Such *artes*, with their practitioners—the diviner, augur, and so on—were condemned at church councils, though it seems that not all bishops agreed on what illicit 'magic' entailed: a canon of the Fourth Council of Toledo specifically forbade bishops from consulting 'magos aut aruspices aut ariolos aut certe augures vel sortilegos, qui profitentur artem aliquam, aut aliquos eorum simila exercentes'.[177]

Many Christian authorities, however, had long understood 'magic' as something with a clear religious charge. For Martin of Braga, *maleficium* was a kind of *cultura diaboli*, associated with communication with demons.[178] This was the Christian understanding of 'magic'

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174 On this dynamic: D. Frankfurter, 'The great, the little and the authoritative tradition in magic of the ancient world', *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*, 16/1 (2015), pp. 11-30.

175 For the inseparability of notions of 'religion' and 'magic': Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, esp. pp. 72-90, and, in a different way, V.I.J. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1991). For a (not wholly convincing) defence of the distinction see H.S. Versnel, 'Some reflections on the relationship magic-religion', *Numen*, 38/2 (1991), pp. 177-97.

176 Isid., *Etym.*, VIII.9, with discussion in Flint, *Rise of Magic*, pp. 51-8 and W.E. Klingshirn, 'Isidore of Seville's taxonomy of magicians and diviners', *Traditio*, 58 (2003), pp. 59-90.

177 IV Toledo, c. 29 (Coll. Hisp. V, p. 218). Cf. Narbonne I, c. 14 (Conc. p. 149). For wider discussion see R. Sanz Serrano, *Paganos, adivinos y magos: análisis del cambio religioso en la Hispania Tardoantigua* (Madrid, 2003).

178 Mart. Brac., *De corr.*, 16, p. 266: *Incantare herbas ad maleficia et inuocare nomina daemonum incantando, quid est aliud nisi cultura diaboli?*

espoused by people like Augustine of Hippo.[179] The theory of magic as demonic communication gained wide currency in ecclesiastical circles, and even entered the Visigothic legal tradition. While the Visigothic codes treated *maleficium* apart from issues of *religio*, following the structural precedents of texts like *Codex Theodosianus*, the texts of the laws themselves referred to the agency of demons in cases of *maleficium*, echoing Christian ideas. One law against *maleficium* was directed at 'those who disturb people's minds through the invocation of demons or offer ('celebrant') nocturnal sacrifices to demons'.[180] The language of demons—and with it the demonic theory of 'magic'—first entered Visigothic law in *interpretationes* to Roman laws in Alaric II's *Breviarum*.[181] This compilation of Roman law, produced in the opening years of the sixth century in the Visigothic kingdom of Toulouse, was redacted with the assistance of local bishops, which may explain the novel entrance of this theory into legal provisions.[182]

The Iberian laws and canons on 'magic' do not speak of *defixiones* by name, but they were likely comprehended under the wider category of *maleficium*. A canon from the provincial Council of Mérida spoke of presbyters who accused their ecclesiastical slaves of bringing illness upon them through *maleficium*.[183] We might infer a fear of binding spells behind these accusations. Similarly, the 'agrarian charm' discussed above finds a negative echo in a Visigothic law which spoke of people using *maleficium* to bring down damaging

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[179] R.A. Markus, 'Augustine on magic: a neglected semiotic theory', *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, 40 (1994), pp. 375-88.

[180] *LV*, VI.2.4(3), p. 259: *qui per invocationem demonum mentes hominum turbant seu qui nocturna sacrificia demonibus celebrant.*

[181] The above law depends upon two *interpretationes* for late Roman laws in Alaric's *Breviarium*: IX.13.1, *interpretatio*: *Malefici vel incantores vel immissores tempestatum vel ii, qui per invocationem daemonum mentes hominum turbant, omni poenarum genere puniantur*; IX.13.3, *interpretatio*: *Quicunque nocturna sacrificia daemonum celebraverit vel incantationibus daemones invocaverit, capite puniatur*. Both are ed. G. Haenel, *Lex Romana Visigothorum* (Leipzig, 1849), p. 186.

[182] On bishops and the *Breviarum*: R.W. Mathisen, 'D'Aire-sur-L'Adour à Agde: les relations entre la loi séculière et la loi canonique à la fin du Royaume de Toulouse', in M. Rouche and B. Dumézil (eds), *Le Bréviaire d'Alaric: Aux origines du Code civil* (Paris, 2008), pp. 41-52.

[183] Mérida, c. 15 (Conc., p. 336).

hail.[184] Hail could destroy a harvest, as an anecdote from Valerius of Bierzo makes clear: he narrates with some satisfaction how two thieves who had tried to steal a horse returned to their lands to find their harvest annihilated by hail, leading to hunger and misery.[185] Valerius, of course, was not talking about 'magic'—he attributed the thieves' ruin to the just judgement of God. Yet, his story remains relevant. It shows how similar occurrences could be attributed to different divine or demonic actors. When, to give another example, Fructuosus of Braga was said to have stopped a storm, we are expected to see this as an expression of his sanctity, not of any contact with demons or manipulation of the physical world.[186] Whether something was 'magic', or else a saintly miracle or judgement of God was open to interpretation and contestation.

This ambiguity was well known to early medieval Christians themselves. Gregory of Tours recounts a story from the mid sixth century in which the inhabitants of Zaragoza processed the tunic of Vincent around the city in penitential lamentation to allay a Frankish siege. To the outside observer such acts may appear to be mechanistic—to imply that certain physical performances by humans will obtain a concrete divine reward; to suggest that human actions can manipulate the divine in some manner. The Frankish forces (presumably Christians themselves) initially suspected *maleficium*, but upon interrogating the participants they learned the Christian nature of the act. Gregory notes the scriptural precedent of the Ninevites: controlling the interpretation of these potentially ambivalent acts was essential.[187] Doubtless some external observers, not imbued with the interiorizing interpretation of penance as moral self-conversion, saw little difference between such rituals and non-Christian 'magical' forms.

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184 *LV*, VI.2.4.
185 Valerius, *Ordo quer.*, 24.
186 *VFruct.*, 7.
187 Gr. Tur., *DLH*, III.29.

The very boundaries of religion itself were unclear: allegations of 'magic' usually said more about the accuser than about the act itself. It is prudent to avoid distinguishing 'magic' and 'religion' on contemporary theoretical grounds, in order to preserve fidelity to the polemical language of the sources—however conceptually inconsistent they may be. Certainly, those Christians who cast agrarian charms into the earth or who believed that consulting a diviner was consistent with their faith should not be considered 'semi-Christian' or even less Christian, unless we are intentionally viewing them through clerical eyes. As David Frankfurter has shown in Egypt, and as Julia Smith has recently shown in Rome, the lived Christianity of most people involved a complex tangle of different practices, ideas, traditions, and materials.[188] It is not useful to categorize each element as Christian or non-Christian or as orthodox and aberrant: rather, we should concern ourselves with the ways in which certain elements could be problematized by clerical authorities in the process of defining clerically sanctioned Christianity. This process was always ongoing, and texts like *De correctione rusticorum* are precious windows onto the views of those undertaking the task. Most of all, however, we need to recall how much of the basic religiosity of people in early medieval societies is hidden from view. The clerical sources give us hints of a wider world beyond their categories, glimpsed only in material fragments.

VI. CONCLUSION

Despite the unfavourable source material, it is possible to examine the pastoral encounter between clerics and laypeople in ways which do not identify it solely with the top-down imposition of uniformity idealized in the seventh-century canons. I have argued that sermons and *passiones* provide a window, albeit an oblique one, onto the ways in which clerics sought

[188] Frankfurter, *Christianizing Egypt*; J.M.H. Smith, 'Cursing and curing, or the practice of Christianity in eighth-century Rome', in R. Balzaretti, J. Barrow, and P. Skinner (eds), *Italy and Early Medieval Europe: Papers for Chris Wickham* (Oxford, 2018), pp. 460-75.

to engage with their congregations. These do not present only a clerical monologue. Some sermons preserve elements of the dialogue that existed between clerics and congregations. We saw this most explicitly in the case of the plague sermon which addresses lay anxiety over penitential action that fails to achieve concrete goals in the here and now. The *passiones*, too, when understood in a predicatory civic context, help us understand the ways in which certain visions of community were espoused and asserted. In some cases we can use these materials to think about specific local communities, but in many cases we have to understand our sources' scope more broadly. In Hispania we find more evidence for the circulation of southern Gallic sermons that we do for the content of locally produced sermons. Through sermons, we see Hispania either as a collection of local civic spheres or as part of a much wider Latin world, not as a society whose religious life was directed by the ecclesiastical or political centres in Toledo.

Most importantly, I have argued that detaching our analysis from a distinctively Visigothic project of pastoral organization, we must take account of religious conflict and polemic. In definitions of Christian community the definition and exclusion of certain outside groups was inherent. In many cases, these 'others' can be understood primarily rhetorically. Yet, while there is no credibility to the idea that there were self-identified practitioners of 'Roman religion' in the sixth or seventh centuries, society was not uniformly Christian either. In addition to the Jewish minority, who faced the bulk of political opprobrium, 'Christianity' was itself a broad spectrum, including many people who practiced in ways that clerics like Martin of Braga did not recognize as legitimately Christian. Certainly, the manner in which Christianity defined itself against religious 'others' was nothing new: a contrast with Roman 'paganism' was utterly intrinsic to martyr texts, as such, for example. My argument is not that we need to understand lay religiosity in terms of the repressive rhetoric of orthodoxy that flourished at the seventh-century Visigothic court, however. On the contrary, both lay religious diversity and clerical attempts at suppressing fluidity by

defining outgroups were persistent features of religious life, irrespective of what was going on, according to its own logic, at the political centre.

Chapter 5:

VALERIUS OF BIERZO AND ASCETIC INDEPENDENCE

I. INTRODUCTION: BRAGA AND SEVILLE

At the beginning of the *Vita Fructuosi*, a late-seventh-century *vita* for the influential monk-bishop Fructuosus of Braga, the hagiographer juxtaposed the *vita*'s protagonist with Isidore of Seville. This was a subtly polemical move. They were 'two glorious lamps of outstanding brightness', but their accomplishments were different in kind.[1] Isidore was granted his due for 'shining with the splendour of his mouth', for reanimating the learned achievements of the past, and for 'bringing back (*reciprocauit*) the gleaming doctrines (*dogmata*) of the Romans'.[2] Fructuosus, on the other hand, was 'set alight by the flame of the Holy Spirit in his most sacred vocation of a religious life'; he 'excelled so perfectly in every spiritual discipline and all his holy works that he easily made himself equal in merit to the Theban Fathers'.[3] The virtues of Isidore were those of the worldly authority and scholar, while Fructuosus' were those of the ascetic. From this flowed a series of binaries: Isidore led an *activa uita*, while Fructuosus pursued a *contemplativa uita*; Isidore educated *Spania* in external things (*extrinsecus*), while Fructuosus 'illuminated the innermost secrets of the heart';[4] Isidore left learned books, Fructuosus left an *exemplum* of how to live; Isidore was Rome, and Fructuosus Egypt. It was

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[1] *VFruct.*, 1, p. 80: *praespicuae claritatis egregias diuina pietas duas inluminauit lucernas*; trans. Fear, *Lives*, pp. 123-44, at p. 123. On the wider passage see P.B. Dias, 'L'idéal monastique, les moines et les monastères du monde wisigothique selon Isidore de Séville', *AT*, 23 (2015), pp. 143-54, at pp. 143-4. For Isidore on monasticism see, in addition, P. Castillo Maldonado, 'Living a Christian life: Isidore of Seville on monasticism, teaching, and learning', in A. Fear and J. Wood (eds), *A Companion to Isidore of Seville* (Leiden, 2020), pp. 301-31.

[2] *VFruct.*, 1, p. 80: *Ille autem oris nitore clarens, insignis industriae, sophistae artis indeptus praemicans dogmata reciprocauit Romanorum*; trans. Fear, *Lives*, p. 123.

[3] *VFruct.*, 1, p. 80: *in sacratissimo religionis propositu spiritus sancti flamma succensus ita in cunctis spiritalibus exercitiis omnibusque operibus sanctis perfectus emicuit ut ad partum se facile quoaequaret meritis Thebaeorum*; trans. Fear, *Lives*, p. 123.

[4] *VFruct.*, 1, p. 80: *intima cordium inluminauit arcana*; trans. Fear, *Lives*, p. 123.

not stated outright that there was a hierarchy to these binaries, but the implications seem clear: while Isidore was useful for the church as an institution, it was Fructuous who constituted the real *exemplum* of holiness.

The *vita* is anonymous. Formerly attributed to Valerius of Bierzo, it has long since been extricated from his oeuvre.[5] It was likely composed by a monk of one of the many communities Fructuosus left behind in Gallaecia. The *vita* discusses Fructuosus' monastic foundations in Gallaecia and Baetica at length, as well as his periods of eremitic reclusion, yet we hear close to nothing of his prominent episcopal career, which saw him occupying first the monastic see of Dumium, and latterly the metropolitan see of Braga. Fructuosus was an exceptionally wealthy Gothic aristocrat, 'sprung from most glorious royal stock, the son of a man of highest rank, a Duke of the Spanish Army'.[6] It has been suggested that Fructuosus was connected to the family of King Sisenand, whose stock had abruptly fallen under the new regime inaugurated by Chindasuinth.[7] Around 652, while bishop of Dumium, he wrote to Chindasuinth's son and successor, Reccesuinth, imploring him to exercise the virtue of *clementia* over those who had been marginalized in his father's reign.[8] By the time Fructuosus was metropolitan of Braga he was the most powerful ecclesiastic in Gallaecia. Of all this the *vita* says almost nothing. Only one brief chapter mentions his episcopate, giving no account of his two different sees; instead, we find the rhetoric of *nolo episcopari* and an assurance that he did not change his way of life when power irresistibly grasped him—a standard

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[5] M.C. Díaz y Díaz, *La Vida de San Fructuoso de Braga. Estudio y edición crítica* (Braga, 1974), pp. 15-20. Curiously, a version of the *Vita Fructuosi* was interpolated into some redactions of the *Vitas sanctorum patrum Emeretensium*: *VSPE* [appendix], ed. Maya Sánchez, pp. lxxxvii-xcv; cf. A. Maya Sánchez, 'La versión primitiva de la *Vita Fructuosi*', *Habis*, 9 (1978), pp. 169-96.

[6] *VFruct.*, 2, p. 82: *Hic uero beatus ex larissima regali progenie exortus, sublimissimi culminis atque ducis exercitus Spaniae prolis*; trans. Fear, *Lives*, p. 124.

[7] S. Castellanos, *La hagiografía visigoda. Dominio social y proyección cultural* (Logroño, 2004), pp. 263-82; F. Riess, *Narbonne and its Territory in Late Antiquity: From the Visigoths to the Arabs* (Farnham, 2013), pp. 176-80

[8] *Epistulae Wisigothicae*, 19, ed. W. Gundlach, MGH, Epp. 3 (Berlin, 1892), pp. 688-9.

hagiographical trope.[9] This *Vita Fructuosi*, then, gave a highly partial view not only of Isidore but of Fructuosus himself, transparently preferring the monastic to the clerical, and wary of admitting any taint of 'worldly' affairs.

This chapter investigates the various competing ideas around asceticism, with a particular focus on the way in which different notions of ascetic excellence understood clerical office and lay authority. Gallaecia constitutes the focus, since it provides an unrivalled abundance of ascetic and monastic texts in the Visigothic period. In addition to the *Vita Fructuosi* there are monastic rules like the *Regula Fructuosi* and the *Regula communis*, and a host of other, more atypical texts, such as the *Consensoria monachorum* and the works of Valerius of Bierzo. The latter author offers a particularly rich account of ascetic life in late Visigothic Iberia, and his works constitute the backbone of this chapter. Despite this regional focus, it is crucial that Gallaecian asceticism is not unreflectively contrasted with apparently more 'worldly' forms of Christianity elsewhere. The rhetorical conflict over the 'worldliness' of certain clerics and the superiority of the contemplative life was an ubiquitous one, as present in Isidore's Baetica and Ildefonsus' Toledo as in Fructuosus' Gallaecia. There were monk-bishops throughout the kingdom, and ascetic ideals pervaded Christianity as such. We are dealing with different understandings of asceticism and office, not distinguishing between 'asceticism' and its worldly discontents. My conclusions will therefore extend beyond regional matters in the north-west.

Isidore, as much as Fructuosus, was a bishop who negotiated between ascetic and 'worldly' justifications for power. Following Gregory the Great, he saw the *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa* as complementary, not opposed, elements of Christian life. For Isidore, episcopal office was ideally held by someone who had reluctantly foregone the stillness of

[9] *VFruct.*, 18; cf. Braulio, *VAem.*, 12-13. For context: R. Wiśniewski, 'Clerical hagiography in late antiquity', in C. Gray and J. Corke-Webster (eds), *The Hagiographical Experiment: Developing Discourses of Sainthood* (Leiden, 2020), pp. 93-118, pp. 100-3.

contemplation to take on the solemn and necessary duty of the *ecclesia*'s 'worldly' cares.[10] The idea of ecclesiastical authority as a burden taken on in self-sacrifice had widespread assent. While the canons allowed certain clerics to move to the 'better life' by becoming monks, bishops were not widely encouraged to do so.[11] Sisebut's sharp words for the bishop Caecilius of Mentesa are illustrative. Weighed down by the worldly cares of office, the latter had sought the repose of a monastery, but Sisebut furiously accused him of consigning his defenceless flock to the jaws of wolves and lions—of consigning them to damnation by prioritizing personal purity over the complex and compromising duties of pastoral care.[12] Here, in contrast to the *Vita Fructuosi*, episcopal responsibilities trumped ascetic aspirations.

The idea of the episcopate as a reluctant worldly duty was not, it seems, universally accepted. There is evidence that the Gregorian pastoral thought of people like Isidore faced critique from those with a more exclusivist vision of ascetic excellence. Consider the defensiveness in Isidore's assertion that, according to God's plan, the 'worldly' side of ecclesiastical life exists (among other things) to safeguard the very possibility of contemplative life: 'therefore the one who condemns bishops for pursuing worldly concerns too much and spiritual things too little is really criticizing the plan of God by which they are instituted.'[13] It might be expected that the critics were, as in the *Vita Fructuosi*, monastics. In many cases this will have been so, but Isidore indicates also that laypeople could make criticisms along these lines, particularly when he censures the *plebs* for calling into question the worldliness of a bishop's life.[14] Corroboration comes from Gallaecia, where the later seventh-century *Regula communis* alleged that certain presbyters simulated sanctity and

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[10] See above, p. 144.
[11] IV Toledo, c. 50 (Coll. Hisp. V, p. 230): *quia meliorem uitam sequi cupiunt*.
[12] *Ep. Wis.*, 1, pp. 3-6. Interestingly, the same language could be used of the pastoral responsibilities of abbots, as in Braul., *Ep.* 13, where he upbraids Frominian for seeking to resign his abbacy.
[13] Isid., *Sent.*, III.39.1a-3, quote at III.39.2, p. 281: *Dei ergo ordinem accusat a quo instituuntur, qui episcopos condemnat dum minus spiritalia, sed magis terrena sectantur*; trans. Knoebel, p. 189.
[14] Isid., *Sent.*, III.39.3.

founded monasteries so as to keep the favour of congregations who would otherwise withdraw their financial offerings.[15] The Gregorian-Isidorian justification of episcopal power cannot be taken for granted. Exploring alternative ascetic ideals will shed light not only on monastic culture but also on the way in which clerical office was understood.

I begin, however, with Valerius of Bierzo because he represents the most radical voice in the monastic culture of the Visigothic kingdom. From Valerius we see how ideals of independent ascetic life could exist within the Visigothic kingdom, long after the Isidorian attempts to regulate ascetic itineracy. Valerius in some ways reaches back to the independence known by late Roman ascetics—indeed, he reached back directly to the late-fourth-century ascetic traveller Egeria as an *exemplum*. He therefore invites us to think about non-institutional visions of Christian excellence across the *longue durée* in Iberia. His striking bursts of anti-clericalism also lead us to consider the wider problems of ascetic and episcopal authority outlined above.

II. VALERIUS OF BIERZO AND LATE VISIGOTHIC GALLAECIA

The most radical voice in the extant literature of Gallaecian monasticism—and indeed the whole ascetic literature of post-Roman Iberia—is without doubt Valerius of Bierzo.[16] Born in the region of Astorga in the first half of the seventh century, he left a remarkable and unique literary oeuvre, the most famous works of which are three overlapping 'autobiographical' works narrating his life and struggles as an ascetic. Everything we know of his life comes from these texts.[17] He tells us that this youth was initially devoted to worldly

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[15] *RComm.*, 2, esp. p. 175. See below, pp. 261-2.

[16] His *opera omnia* is edited in M.C. Díaz y Díaz (ed. and trans.), *Valerio del Bierzo. Su persona. Su obra* (León, 2006). For an English translation of the 'autobiographical' writings, with extensive discussion, see C.M. Aherne (ed. and trans.), *Valerio of Bierzo: An Ascetic of the Late Visigothic Period* (Washington, DC, 1949).

[17] For what can be constructed of the chronology of Valerius' life: Díaz y Diaz, *Valerio del Bierzo*, pp. 27-41.

ambitions and 'empty disciplines'.[18] He seems to have received an education fit for a young man of the lay elite, including such things as knowledge of Roman legal procedure, as Roger Collins has shown.[19] However, he left this behind to undertake a dramatic 'journey of conversion'.[20] This drew him to the monastery of Compludo, Fructuosus' first foundation, established around 640.[21] Fructuosus' *Regula* for the monastery survives. It describes a rigorous cenobitic life, emphasizing abbatial authority and regularity.[22] Under unclear circumstances, Valerius left this community and took up a life of ascetic solitude on a mountain in the region of Castro Pedroso. This was to be the first of many varied situations in which he practiced his ascetic discipline. In some cases, he received patronage from wealthy lay elites, some of whom wanted him to serve as a cleric in their churches. At other times he lived on the margins of established monasteries like Rufiana, another Fructuosan foundation (probably to be identified with the later San Pedro de Montes). Here he lived in the small cell (*cellula*) which Fructuosus had had built at a distance from the main monastery.[23]

Valerius lived and wrote in the wake of Fructuosus' activities in Gallaecia. Writing predominantly in the 680s, after Fructuosus death, Valerius had known people who had once

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[18] Valerius, *Ordo quer.*, 1, p. 246: *uanis disciplinis intentus*

[19] R. Collins, 'The "autobiographical" works of Valerius of Bierzo: their structure and function', repr. in *idem*, *Law, Culture, and Regionalism in Early Medieval Spain* (Ashgate, 1992), ch. IV, pp. 425-42, at p. 435.

[20] Valerius, *Ordo quer.*, 1, p. 248: *conuersionis itinere*.

[21] On Compludo's foundation: *VFruct.*, 3, with the dating given by Díaz y Díaz at p. 15 of his introduction to the text. It has been argued, against the traditional narrative, that Valerius never in fact entered Compludo in J.C. Martín Iglesias, 'Valerio en Compludo? Examen crítico de los *Opúsculos autobiográficos* (CPL 1282-1284) y las *Visiones del más allá* (CPL 1277-1279) de Valerio del Bierzo', *Veleia*, 23 (2006), pp. 327-38, whose arguments are cautiously accepted by C. Martin, 'Valérius et l'Ennemi. Grands propriétaires, clercs, cénobites et ermites face au contrôle du sacré dans Le Bierzo du VII[e] siècle', in P. Depreux, F. Bougard, and R. Le Jan (eds), *Compétition et sacré au haut Moyen Âge: entre mediation et exclusion* (Turnhout, 2015), pp. 67-84, at pp. 68-9. I am not persuaded.

[22] *RFruct.*

[23] Valerius, *Ordo quer.*, 19 and *Quod de sup.*, 1. For the establishment of the monastery and cell: *VFruct.*, 6.

been associates of Fructuosus', and he always maintained a sense of reverence for him, recalling him frequently with the epithet *beatissimus*.[24] Yet, like the *Vita Fructuosi*, Valerius had a partial view of Fructuosus, which ignored his ecclesiastical offices, his involvement in royal politics, and, to a large extent, his cenobitic ideals. Valerius is an interesting and unusually vivid source for the more radically ascetic climes in which texts like the *Vita Fructuosi*, with its subtly negative view of Isidore and his project emerged. The dominant strand in Valerius' 'autobiographical' writing was the desire for solitude and repose, away from human society. He narrated his story as a kind of *exemplum* of the difficulty of achieving this ideal in the world.

Valerius' 'autobiographical' writings have attracted particular attention, at least partly because of the relative rarity of first-person narration in the late antique and early medieval record.[25] The three 'autobiographical' texts, the third of which is fragmentary, present an odd assemblage. They overlap in their chronological coverage, and later texts refer back to episodes in the earlier ones. Collins has noted that their titles—*Ordo querimonie prefati discriminis*, *Replicatio sermonum a prima conuersione*, and *Quod de superioribus querimoniis residuum sequitur*—refer to successive stages in a particular kind of Roman legal process. Valerius presented them as a plaint, followed by further justifications of his case.[26] This overarching vindicatory aim, which much be understood in relation to his controversial style of ascetic life, explains at least part of their forthright and stark tone.

It is true that they give us little of the introspective, contemplative considerations of self that we are familiar with from Augustine's *Confessiones*—the usual *comparandum* for early Christian 'autobiographical' writing. Scholars have therefore sometimes been reluctant to

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[24] Notably Baldarius, an associate of Fructuosus' at Rufiana. He is discussed in Valerius, *De celeste reuelatione*, 1.

[25] For an overview of the issue see W. Pohl, 'Introduction: Ego trouble?', in R. Corradini, *et al.* (eds), *Ego Trouble: Authors and their Identities in the Early Middle Ages* (Vienna, 2010), pp. 9-15, with Valerius mentioned at p. 12.

[26] Collins, 'The "autobiographical" works of Valerius of Bierzo', pp. 432-5.

assign them to the genre of 'autobiography'. Certainly, the three texts do not see Valerius in introspective, self-doubting or self-questioning mode. They were not introspective laments like Isidore's *Synonyma* but a kind of 'auto-hagiography', rooted in the imaginary of hagiographical *vitae* and reports on eastern desert asceticism.[27] The kind of material that Valerius had access to is indicated in his large hagiographical compilation, which grouped together a varied corpus of ascetic materials, including Jerome's *Vita Pauli* and *Vita Hilarionis*, texts from the *Historia monachorum* on eastern ascetic practices, and much else besides.[28] This also helps to explain certain features of his mental world, like the frequent and highly physical presence of the devil. Encounters with an anthropomorphic devil were common in hagiography. Braulio's *Vita Aemiliani*, for example, had the titular holy man literally wrestle with the devil—an imagine which Braulio, recognizing that the physical appearance of an invisible spirit may appear 'incredible' to some, felt the need to justify scripturally.[29] Valerius' self-understanding needs to be understood in hagiographical, rather than penitential or introspective terms.

Valerius frequently presented himself as a lone ascetic, living in barren 'the desert', facing down constant persecutions from the devil and his agents. He did so despite pursuing his vocation in a variety of situations, with different patrons and different relationships to churches and shrines. Because Valerius was not attached to cenobitic monastic life, he is typically described, according to the standard typologies, as an 'eremitic' ascetic, meaning one

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[27] For Valerius' writings as hagiography see esp. J.C. Martín Iglesias, 'La biografía dentro de la autobiografía: el caso de Valerio del Bierzo (siglo VII)', in V. Valcárcel Martínez (ed.), *Las biografías griegas y latinas como género literario: De la Antigüedad al Renacimiento, Algunas calas* (Vitoria-Gasteiz, 2009), pp. 319-42. On Athansius' influence: Collins, 'The "autobiographical" works of Valerius of Bierzo', pp. 429-31.

[28] See Díaz y Díaz, *Valerio del Bierzo*, pp. 86-101, with texts catalogued at pp. 97-9, which substantially revises and replaces *idem*, 'Sobre la compilación hagiografíca de Valerio del Bierzo', *Hispania Sacra*, 4/7 (1951), pp. 1-25.

[29] Braul., *VAem.*, 14, at pp. 20-1: *Si cui hoc fortasse uidetur incredibile inuisibilem nimirum spiritum esse adtrectabilem, saluo mistico intellectu, aperiat quomodo Iacob diuinae paginate narrent cum angelo, quamuis bono fuisse luctatum.*

who pursued their ascetic vocation in the solitude of the 'desert' (*eremus*) like the earliest Christian ascetics in Egypt. Their example had spread to the Latin world at least as far back as the fourth century, when a distinctive, figurative understandings of how to find the 'desert' in the very different landscape of the West emerged. In some cases, this became a purely imaginary landscape, present as an inner ideal to those in the *coenobium* or even to those ascetically minded people who held clerical office.[30] Even more expansively, in Ildefonsus' *De itinere deserti* the imaginary landscape of the desert was the site of the spiritual journey that marks all post-baptismal Christian life.[31] In other cases, however, like that of Valerius, the 'desert' was still identified somewhat literally with concrete locations of wilderness. Valerius' 'desert' was found in the mountains of El Bierzo, in locations he frequently characterizes as perilous wilderness.[32] Even here we need to be alert to the imaginative construct of the landscape. Valerius characterizes the beautiful and verdant site of Rufiana as a 'desert' on account of its conduciveness to solitude.[33]

Eremitism may have had a particular preponderance within the landscape of Gallaecia, but it was a phenomenon known across Hispania, in a variety of regions.[34] Braulio of Zaragoza's *Vita Aemiliani* celebrated a sixth-century wandering monk from La Rioja who was said to have spent forty years alone in the mountains, contemplating Christ and

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30 R.A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 157-97; C. Rapp, 'Desert, city, and countryside in the early Christian imagination', and C. Leyser, 'The uses of the desert in the sixth-century West', in *Church History and Religious Culture*, 86/1-4 (2006), pp. 93-112 and pp. 113-43, respectively.

31 Ildef., *De itin.*, with discussion in D. Castro, 'El desierto de Ildefonso de Toledo. Notas sobre la construcción de la autoridad episcopal en el reino visigodo', *Gerión*, 37/1 (2019), pp. 177-99.

32 E.g. Valerius, *Ordo quer.*, 2, p. 24: *ad eremi deserta.* On the historical reality of the region of El Bierzo: C. Martin, 'The Asturia of Valerius: Bierzo at the end of the seventh century', *Visigothic Symposia*, 2 (2017-18), pp. 60-78. For Aemilian's mountainous wilderness: Braul., *VAem.*, IV.11

33 Valerius, *Ordo quer.*, 29. For gardens as deserts in the Latin ascetic imagination: Rapp, 'Desert, city, and countryside', pp. 107-9.

34 M.C. Díaz y Díaz, 'Eremitical life in Visigothic Spain', trans. M. Dolorita, in Díaz y Díaz, *Vie chrétienne*, ch. VII, pp. 209-27.

contending with the devil.[35] The holy man Nanctus, memorialized in the *Vitas sanctorum patrum Emeretenisum*, provides another sixth-century example.[36] Fructuosus, too, was for a long time an itinerant, travelling particularly in Gallaecia and Baetica. While he was a founder of cenobitic monasteries, his *Vita* tells of various periods of ascetic solitude—once memorably being mistaken for a wild animal by a hunter on account of his dishevelled and wild appearance as he lived on a mountainside.[37] A final example from the seventh century is Mauricius, a wandering ascetic who wrote in defence of his lifestyle to the disapproving bishop Agapius.[38]

The status of eremitism within ecclesiastical life is complex, as is its precise definition. Amidst legalistic sources, there was a tendency toward demanding fixity. The Fourth Council of Toledo had worked to bind wandering monks and *religiosi* to settled institutions; Isidore's *Regula* emphasized the need for monasteries to be cut off from the outside world, and sharply discouraged lone ascetic vocations and travel beyond the monastery walls.[39] Leander and Isidore required monastics never to leave the institution to which they first dedicated themselves, the latter demanding a written contract to this effect.[40] Total enclosure was certainly expected by some bishops and monastics but it was not universal. (Indeed, it may even be that the ideal of total enclosure had only recently crystallized: Albrecht Diem has suggested that Caesarius of Arles' monastic writings were central to the development of this ideal in Gaul.)[41] Either way, while being increasingly discouraged by certain ecclesiastical authorities, itinerant eremitism had an immovable place

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[35] Braul., *VAem.*
[36] *VSPE*, III.
[37] *VFruct.*, 5.
[38] *Ep. Wis.*, 17.
[39] IV Toledo, cc. 52-3 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 231-2); *RIsid.*, 1, 19, 24.
[40] Leand., *De inst. uirg.*, 25; *RIsid.*, 4, at p. 95: *Omnis conuersus non est recipiendus in monasterio nisi prius ibi se scriptis sponderit permansurum.* A monk's agreement, with clauses to that effect, is preserved as *Form. Wis.*, 45.
[41] A. Diem, *The Pursuit of Salvation: Community, Space, and Discipline in Early Medieval Monasticism* (Turnhout, 2021), pp. 281-8.

in monasticism, hallowed by the literary heritage of the desert fathers. Thus, a canon of the Seventh Council of Toledo (646) was obliged to make a distinction between lone ascetics (here *reclusi*) who lived genuinely holy lives and those who did not, condemning the latter while accepting the legitimacy of the former.[42] In his six-part typology of monks, Isidore classified the eremite among the three good kinds of monk.[43]

According to Isidore's definitions, eremites imitated the original life of the monks of Egypt, retiring to the desert to live an ascetic life of solitude. These contrasted to cenobites, who lived in communities, and anchorites, who sought a life of ascetic reclusion only after having perfected themselves in communal life.[44] A distinction between cenobitic and solitary lives was widespread, though not all authors distinguished consistently between eremites and anchorites (both John Cassian and Valerius tended to use 'anchorite' as the catch-all term for lone ascetics, whether or not they had been in monasteries).[45] Isidore's definition of the 'anchorite', whose lone ascetic vocation followed rigorous cenobitic training, derived from the work of Cassian.[46] One could valorise the lone pursuit of perfection without encouraging it in practice, however. Columba Stewart has argued that in Cassian's spiritual programme, the communal and solitary vocations were more often understood as successive stages of the universal inner journey of the monk.[47] The figure of the anchorite could, like the desert, be a pedagogical image to be internalized rather than a social form manifested by actually leaving the *coenobium*.

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[42] VII Toledo, c. 5 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 352-5).
[43] On the earlier history of classifications of monks: D.F. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, CA, 2002), pp. 1-18.
[44] Isid., *De eccl.*, II.16(15).2-10; cf. Isid., *Etym.*, VII.13. For Isidore's sources: Dias, 'L'idéal monastique', pp. 148-9.
[45] Valerius, *Ep. Egerie*, 4, and *De gen.*, 2.
[46] Cassian, *Conlationes*, XVIII-XIX, ed. É. Pichery, SC, 64 (Paris, 1959), pp. 10-55, esp. XVII.4-6, at pp. 13-18.
[47] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, pp. 30-5.

Various authorities, then, sought to discourage actual anchoritism/eremitism, even while promoting it as a vision of perfection. In the *Dialogi*, for example, Gregory the Great made sure to affirm that the holy men whose virtues he extolled were the exception, not the rule. They were the few individuals who had been granted substantial enough gifts of the Spirit to embark on the highest vocations of spiritual life without prior submission to the discipline of a superior. All others would require discipline and regular, settled lives if they were to hope for spiritual progress.[48] Likewise, Isidore's own *Regula* began with the claim that the obscure and difficult regulations of those perfect ascetics who had gone before needed to be attenuated and modified for those who had come to monasticism from a state of sin ('post peccatum conuersi'). There were some *perfecti*, according to this view, but they were not to be modelled in the here and now by ordinary monks.[49] The uniqueness of Valerius, within the Iberian literary record, lies in refusing this accommodation with communal life. He was unambiguous that he was one of the exceptions and, moreover, he tends to give the sense that he, alongside a few associates, were the sole people lit by the light of apostolic piety. The remainder, by contrast, were a tepid, faded mass, if not actively agents of the devil.

For Valerius, this outlook gave rise to his remarkably hostile accounts of several clerics and monks. He gave hostile portraits of the priests Flainus and Justus in his first 'autobiographical' text. Both are presented as agents of the devil and both appear in the narrative solely to drag him away from the repose of contemplative solitude. The misdeeds of these persecutors, as Valerius styled them, could be extreme. The priest Justus, whom Valerius upbraids as a drunk, popular with local lay elites for his good humour and adeptness at the lyre, is said to have tried to slit Valerius' throat before the altar of church.[50] In both cases, Valerius simply rejects their status as priests: Flainus is a *psuedosacerdos*; Justus is a

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[48] Gr. Mag., *Dial.*, I.1.6-7.

[49] *RIsid.*, *Praefatio*, quote at p. 91. Cf. Braulio, *Renotatio*, p. 203, where Isidore's *Regula* is described as: *Monasticae regulae librum unum, quem pro patriae usu et inualidorum animis decentissime temperauit.*

[50] Valerius, *Ordo quer.*, 13-16.

hypocrite, giving the *similitudo* of religiosity 'publice in oculis hominum' while being a depraved agent of the devil 'in occultis'.[51] Valerius' venom was not just reserved for lower clergy. When Valerius resided in Fructuosus' cell at Rufiana, the bishop of the region, Isidore of Astorga made his acquaintance and sought to recruit him for some ecclesiastical business in, as Valerius put it, 'the public theatre of the city of Toledo'.[52] Valerus viewed Isidore's attempt to enroll him in ecclesiastical business as a devil-inspired plot to wrest him from his ascetic vocation. When Isidore dies suddenly we are told that this was God's 'just judgement', which saw him swallowed into the depths of hell.[53]

Valerius was not a consistently anti-clerical author, however, and we misunderstand him if we see him as staking any position against clergy *qua* clergy. He was perfectly able to accept that Isidore's successor Aurelian of Astorga was a holy man, and Valerius was happy to accept that Aurelian could ordain his loyal disciple Saturninus as a presbyter in a newly built church.[54] It is crucial to stress that Valerius' fundamental dichotomy was not an institutional one but a hagiographical one: it was between the agents of the devil and those inspired by God, and this usually resolved down to those who hindered and those who helped his search for ascetic repose. Thus, clerics could fall on either side, and so could laypeople. He did not systematically prefer one to the other, but nor did he have any reverence for clerics or monks because of their formal office within the *ecclesia*. His was a deinstitutionalized vision of authority and sanctity, in which personal ascetic accomplishment transcended all. He was heir to an ideal of ascetic rigour which was not so much against the institutional church as apart from it, existing in splendid disregard of office *qua* office, taking personal sanctity to be its own manifest justification.

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[51] Valerius, *Ordo quer.*, 6, 14.
[52] Valerius, *Ordo quer.*, 21, at p. 176: *ad publicum Toletane urbis perduceret theatrum*. Isidore of Astorga's signature is found at III Braga (Conc., p. 379).
[53] Valerius, *Ordo quer.*, 21, at p. 270: *recto uidelicet omnipotentis Domini iudicio*. On divine punishment: Castellanos, *La hagiografía*, pp. 338-40.
[54] Valerius, *Repl. serm.*, 16.

The nature of Valerius' life means he tells us more about lay agency in ascetic life than most other sources. For much of his life, Valerius was dependent on the support of wealthy laypeople. Sometimes his discussion of patronage is relatively vague. He speaks, for example, of *fidelissimi christiani* taking pity on him and drawing him (unwillingly) to a church on the estate of Ebronanto, in the region of Castro Pedroso.[55] In many instances, however, he is much more specific. Ebronanto was owned by Ricimer, a *vir illustris*. He wanted Valerius to serve as a priest in a new church he had built specifically for him. Later, after Ricimer's death, Valerius was again in the patronage of a wealthy family (an 'opulentissimum domum'), though this patronage dried up suddenly when the family were dispossessed by the king.[56]

Later on, while in the cell associated to Rufiana, Valerius again lived off alms from another wealthy house. The latter part of *Ordo querimonie* describes a conflict between Valerius and the *pseudomonachi* of Rufiana, who are driven by envy to attempt the theft and destruction of horses given to Valerius by the *vir illustris* Basilianus.[57] Furthermore, Valerius was at various points teaching students who came to him in the more hospitable months.[58] He says that he even went to the lengths of writing a short book for a certain child of 'good' parents.[59] This sets up an edificatory anecdote about the misfortunes which struck the boy's mother, Theodora, when she forgot to pay him with a promised goat-skin cloak.[60] This all tells us two important things. Firstly, Valerius' rhetoric of solitude is to be taken with a pinch of salt—he needed students, patrons, and allies for financial reasons, at the very least. Secondly, Valerius' vocation was not one that can be defined solely in negative terms, as the

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55 Valerius, *Ordo quer.*, 7.
56 Valerius, *Ordo quer.*, 17. Neither the king nor the reason is given. M.R. Valverde Castro, 'La monarquía visigoda en Valerio del Bierzo', *Edad Media*, 12 (2011), pp. 281-300, at pp. 289-99, argues that the king was likely Wamba.
57 Valerius, *Ordo quer.*, 23-6.
58 Valerius, *Repl. serm.*, 9.
59 Valerius, *Repl. serm.*, 6, quote at p. 284: *quondam bonorum filium enutrirem.*
60 Valerius, *Repl. serm.*, 6-8.

refusal of cenobitism or the rejection of institutional authorities. Valerius was actively supported by certain laypeople, who evidently saw his life as a worthy pious act. These lay voices rarely enter the literary record, but they are an important counterweight to the suspicion of ascetic solitude found in the works of Isidore or the church canons.

Valerius' self-righteous assertions—and his framing of his 'autobiographical' works as both 'auto-hagiography' and legalistic plaints—make sense against a world in which his vision of ascetic achievement was contentious. This was doubtless the case in Gallaecia, even if he could find patrons among both the clergy and laity. Valerius therefore had to partake in the critique of certain forms of monasticism, carving out a position for himself as legitimate by arguing against others. Valerius' language of delegitimation, aimed at his spiritual rivals, was founded on a longstanding vocabulary used to discredit false monks and unattached ascetics. Much of this is evident in the fourth- and fifth-century disputes over wandering ascetics traced by Daniel Caner and Maribel Dietz through the works of figures like Augustine of Hippo and Paulinus of Nola. Here, the task was to separate out true monks, living out the vocation of the desert fathers in new climes, from those 'hypocrites' who impersonated true monks so as to gain money or influence. These problematics, in both literary and practical terms, continued into the post-Roman centuries.[61]

The difficultly underlying all these cases was that of how one distinguishes the true and the false in cases in which religious figures have the same outer appearance and make the same claims to authority. Some attempt had to be made to frame opponents as false—as hypocrites or liars, giving only the appearance of sanctity while lacking inner virtue. This discourse was known even in royal law, where a particularly vivid law of Egica's attacked widows who adopt religious clothing after their husband's deaths but then sew in elements

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[61] Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks,* pp. 158-205. On prior ideals of ascetic travel: M. Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims: Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, A.D. 300-800* (University Park, PA, 2005).

of secular clothing in hidden places, waiting for an opportunity for vice. They are seen as one thing *publice*, in their outer appearance, while being another within—that is, they are guilty not only of 'apostacy' but *fraus*.[62] Valerius' polemic fits into this wider anxiety over the possible gap between the outer appearance and inner state of different people. This was an anxiety particularly acute with regard to ascetics who were not bound to an institution, as we saw in the discussion of Cassian's and Isidore's taxonomies. In a face-to-face society, one's status as a good ascetic, rather than one of the despised, fraudulent categories, was always open to contestation and to the court of opinion. A language of 'publicness', 'hiddenness', and 'fraudulence' thus pervaded.

Added to this religious tension was a wider social anxiety over runaway slaves, evident in a series of increasingly febrile laws in the *Lex Visigothorum*.[63] These culminated in an Egican law of c. 702 which made Visigothic subjects collectively liable for runaway slaves found in their localities.[64] The matter was considered one of public order, not just private property. That these issues could become entangled with those of wandering ascetics is clear from the *Vita Fructuosi*, which narrates an incident in which Fructuosus, unkempt and barefoot, is attacked by a rural peasant ('rusticum ac plebium uirum') who presumed he is a runaway slave ('eumque fugitiuum extimans').[65] Earlier in the seventh century, the wandering ascetic Mauricius' complained of his hostile bishop, 'you judge that we are *uagi* and *profugi*'.[66]

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[62] *LV*, III.5.6, ed. Y. García López, *Etudios críticos y literatios de la "Lex Wisigothorum"* (Alcalá de Henares. 1996), pp. 480-3, with discussion at pp. 463-78. These widows are said to have literally sewn in 'clauos'—that is, the purple stripes on ancient tunics. This may be intended figuratively, as a way of expressing secularity, though this is not clear. The relevant passage, at p. 480, reads: *replicates abintus clauos suis tunicis insuant*. This law is thought to have been building on *LV*, III.5.3.

[63] *LV*, IX.1.1-20. On these laws, see L.A. García Moreno, *El fin del reino visigodo de Toledo: decadencia y catástrofe. Una contribución a su crítica* (Madrid, 1975), pp. 64-70 and, less catastrophist, P.D. King, *Law and Society in the Visigothic Kingdom* (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 164-70.

[64] *LV*, IX.1.21, ed. García López, *Estudios críticos*, pp. 580-7, with discussion pp. 571-8, 587-9.

[65] *VFruct.*, 11, quotes at p. 98. *Fugitivus* or *fugitibus* were standard terms for runaway slaves in the legal material cited above.

[66] *Ep. Wis.*, 17, at p. 46: *Uagos et profugos nos esse arbitraris*. The latter term, *profugi*, was once used of political fugitives in Chindasuinth's reign: *LV*, II.1.8, at p. 54.

Thus, for a host of reasons, not only religious, but social, and political, people like Valerius were subject to suspicion and hostility. Within a context of genuine precarity, as evidenced by his succession of different patrons, Valerius turned the language of delegimitation on his opponents. Priests who quarrelled with him were *pseudosacerdotes*; monks at Rufiana who turned against him were *pseudomonachi*.[67] Allegations of 'pseudo'-religious status emerged in times in which legitimacy came into question. An Arian bishop might be termed a *pseudoepiscopus* in a hostile source, for example.[68] Centuries earlier, Priscillian had also used the term in a letter justifying himself before the bishop of Rome, Damasus.[69] The field of ascetic competition and mutual accusation in which Priscillian operated—one involving the novel experiments of Martin of Tours, Sulpicius Severus, and Paulinus of Nola, and Jerome as well as his own—has been well studied by Virginia Burrus and Kim Bowes.[70] Of course, Valerius' world was not that of late Roman villa Christianity, but the same suspicions of 'private' vocations, of patronage outside of ecclesiastical channels, and of the need to distinguish true from fraudulent vocations emerge here too. Much of the violence in Valerius' writings derives from a need to assert himself in a highly competitive and bitter field.

Valerius did not seek to legitimate his ascetic endeavours through the kind of technical 'moral science' of spiritual discipline, such as has been attributed to John Cassian.[71] His preferred mode of self-justification was to position himself within a tradition which reached back to the source—back to the monks of the Thebaid—in the most direct way possible. When Valerius sought to give a historical example which the eremitic monks in the

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[67] Valerius, *Ordo quer.*, 6 and 22, respectively.
[68] *VSPE*, V.5, at p. 58.
[69] Prisc., *Tract.*, II, at p. 76. This was pointed out in Fear, *Lives*, p. 80, n. 150. See also Gregory of Elvira's attacks on *pseudoapostoli* and *falsi sacerdotes*, discussed above at p. 73.
[70] V. Burrus, *The Making of a Heretic: Gender, Authority, and the Priscillianist Controversy* (Berkeley, CA, 1995), pp. 141-55; K. Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values, and Religious Change in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 179-87.
[71] C. Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 33-61.

region around him could use as a source of inspiration, he chose not any clerical authority or cenobitic monk but an ascetic laywoman.[72] The laywoman in question was the fourth-century traveller and writer Egeria, known to posterity chiefly for her journey to the Holy Land. Born in the far West of the known world—that is, either Gallaecia or south-western Gaul—she recorded her travels in an *Itinerarium*, detailing the Biblical sites she encountered, the monastic culture of the region, and the liturgical rites of Jerusalem.[73] The text was known to Valerius in full, though it comes down to us in more fragmentary and incomplete forms. Egeria composed the *Itinerarium* for a group of *sorores* in her native region. In the fourth-century context these should not be understood as consecrated nuns, but as a more informal grouping of pious and relatively well-off people, perhaps congregating in a property in the way that other elite Christians did across Hispania, Gaul, and the wider Mediterranean. She was not educated in classical literature to the degree of a contemporary lay Christian like Prudentius or Paulinus of Nola, but she came from this same late Roman ferment. This was a world of diverse ascetic experiments in elite households, not one of rigorous, rule-based cenobitism.[74]

This is a world familiar from the more or less informal community around Priscillian, who was for much of his life a lay teacher, leading an ascetic community increasingly at odds with certain clerical factions. Here women, in particular, could have a more independent role that they would have in the monastic thought of Leander, for example, or in the Baetican canons, where female monasteries were rigorously subordinated to male authority.[75]

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[72] Valerius, *Ep. Egerie*.

[73] Egeria, *Itinerarium*, ed. P. Maraval, SC, 296 (rev. edn, Paris, 2017), pp. 120-318. On the text see esp. J. Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels to the Holy Land* (rev. edn: Jerusalem/Warminster, 1981). Her Gallic origin is argued for in H. Sivan, 'Who was Egeria? Piety and pilgrimage in the age of Gratian', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 81/1 (1988), pp. 59-72. Cf. M. Dietz, *Wandering Monks*, pp. 43-54 who argues for Egeria's Iberian provenance.

[74] K.D. Bowes, 'Inventing ascetic space: houses, monasteries, and the "archaeology of monasticism"', in H. Dey and E. Fentress (eds), *Western Monasticism* Ante Litteram*: The Spaces of Monastic Observance in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 315-51.

[75] II Seville, c. 11 (Conc., pp. 170-1).

Priscillian was well-known, and much maligned, for the role women played in his ascetic circle.[76] This is certainly not to say that Egeria was a 'Priscillianist'—an accusation which has no substantial basis—but is to speak of the scope for laywoman to be involved in less institutionalized ascetic forms, in the late Roman period through to the Visigothic.[77] Valerius provides little evidence for women ascetics, but we do know that a wealthy laywoman, the 'uirgo sacratissima' Benedicta, sought out Fructuosus when she escaped from betrothal to high-ranking royal official (a *gardingus*) to engage on a lone ascetic vocation. The *Vita Fructuosi* tells her story to explain the origins of what later became a large cenobitic monastery for women.[78] Other hagiographies also attest to female ascetics, like the 'sanctissima uidua' Euseuia who sought to meet Nanctus (an ascetic who refused to even set eyes on women), or the virgins who lived alongside Aemilian in his old age.[79] Valerius was not particularly interested in the gendered implications of Egeria's asceticism, other than to upbraid men for their comparative weakness (the steadfast virtue of this *femina fragilis*, he noted, was stronger—*fortior*—than that of all the men of his own age).[80] He was, however, interested in extolling the virtues and superior piety of ascetic vocations which were unencumbered by the institutional strictures of formal cenobitism.

It is interesting that Valerius would reach back to Egeria's example when seeking to instruct eremites in late-seventh-century Gallaecia. Looking back from a world in which formal, cenobitic monastic was far more established, it is possible that Valerius understood her anachronistically as a nun: he refers to her with the equivocal words *beatissima sanctimonialis Egeria*.[81] Interestingly, a similar transfiguration occurred in the *Passio Eulalie*

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[76] Sulp. Sev., *Chron.*, II.48.1, II.50.3. Cf. Prisc., *Tract.*, I, at p. 60, for the spiritual equality of women.
[77] *Pace* H. Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila: The Occult and the Charismatic in the Early Church* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 166-7.
[78] *VFruct.*, 15, quote at p. 106.
[79] *VSPE*, III, at p. 22; Braul., *VAem.*, 30.
[80] Valerius, *Ep. Egerie*, 2.
[81] Valerius, *Ep. Egerie*, 3. Ascetic vocabulary could be very vague: see pp. 18-19.

Emeritensis, a Visigothic *réécriture* of a Roman martyr narrative. The young martyr whom Prudentius had depicted as an aristocratic girl travelling alone and self-willed to martyrdom was re-imagined by the Visigothic text as a *sanctimonialis puella*, piously attached to her fatherly bishop, who travelled with her *couirginalis* Julia.[82] The general tendency was to monasticize earlier lay ascetics in memory, but it remains emphatically true that Valerius did not understand Egeria's example as one legible in terms of the forms of female monasticism present in in the Iberian canons or the monastic writings of Leander and others, focussed as they were on fixity of place and isolation from men, laywomen, and outside influences.[83] She travelled freely and met with male monks.[84] Furthermore, her independent travel would have been impossible in the seventh century, when foreign travel had been forbidden for political reasons (hence Fructuosus' thwarted journey east) and in which monastics were often strongly discouraged—indeed, forbidden—from travelling about without necessary purpose, even within their region.[85]

If Egeria was thought monastic by a seventh-century audience, she was clearly itinerant rather than cenobitic. It was precisely her long-distance travel and eschewing of fixity that made her example important and instructive to Valerius. She was an example of someone who, while resident in the extreme western shores of the world, was able to go to the source of Christianity—to the actual sites of biblical events and of early monastic history—and to rekindle the link between this privileged place of origin and the unfortunate,

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[82] Prudentius, *Peri.*, III.1-60; *PEulE.*, 3-5. For discussion: J. Gil, 'La Pasión de Santa Eulalia', *Habis*, 31 (2000), pp. 403-16, esp. pp. 408-10.

[83] See e.g. Leand., *De inst. uirg.*, 1-2, 22.

[84] See e.g. Egeria's visit to the monastery at Sinai: Egeria, *Itinerarium*, 3.1, ed. Maraval, SC, 296, pp. 128-30. Egeria's visits to the monastic sites in Egypt were described in the lost section of the *Itinerarium*, as discussed in Maraval, SC, 296, pp. 79-86. For Valerius' gloss on events: *Ep. Egerie*, 4, at p. 230: *tandem parte Orientis ingressa, sanctorum summo cum desiderio Thebeorum uisitans monachorum gloriosissima congregationum cenobia, similiter et sancta anachoretarum ergastula.*

[85] *VFruct.* 17. This is usually interpreted in the light of Chindasuinth's anti-treason legislation, on which: S. Esders, 'Chindasvinth, the "Gothic disease", and the Monothelite controversy', *Millennium*, 16/1 (2019), pp. 175-212, esp. pp. 193-5.

distant lands to which others were confined.[86] What Valerius sought to do imaginatively by reinforcing the sense of a direct link between the monastic traditions of the Thebaid and his own ascetic milieu, she had done in literal, physical terms by taking herself to that very source.

III. SANCTITY AND THE HISTORY OF THE *ECCLESIA*

Valerius is the latest Visigothic author whose works come down to us, and he tells us something about the later years of the kingdom, as seen from a peripheral region. Yet, more interestingly, he also attests to forms of religious life and organization—to lay patronage, to independent ascetic life, to desires to capture the authentic discipline of the East—that existed, in some form or another, right from the later Roman period to the end of the Visigothic kingdom and beyond. More than a representative of a new 'post-Isidorian' spirituality, Valerius is testament to an ever-present, but rarely visible world of religious endeavour which occurred on estates, and in lay-founded *oratoria*, churches, and monasteries, largely outside the purview of the powerful bishoprics from which most of our sources arise. His was a spirituality little affected by the shifts in the political fortunes of bishops in the Nicene Visigothic kingdom—not a fossilized 'survival' from a prior age but a representative of a trajectory of development which existed largely apart from the problems and opportunities raised by a confessionally-identified and politically-unified kingdom. Valerius' independent spiritual vocation implies both an ecclesiology and a form of organization. It is to the first we now turn. Valerius may have been remarkably elitist in his ecclesiology, but his ideas were shared more widely than we might expect. They tell us about much more than Valerius' own idiosyncrasies.

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[86] For Gallaecia's isolation: Valerius, *Ep. Egerie*, 3, pp. 228-30.

Valerius espoused a highly elitist view of the *ecclesia*. At the opening of his hostile tract on bad monks, *De genere monachorum*, Valerius outlined a brief history of monasticism, positioning it as the true inheritor of the fervour of the original *ecclesia*. From the first moments of Christianity, he says, there were in the eastern regions people so filled with the thought of the kingdom of heaven and the fear of God, that they lived as cenobites and anchorites. The latter, who lived alone in the vast expanses of the desert, Valerius describes as 'perfect'.[87] Such ascetic excellence reached all the way to 'these distant confines of the far part of the West', and small pockets of holy religion were found.[88] Monasteries were constructed 'a paucis electis et perfectis uiris in desertis atque diuersis locis'. Good monasteries trace their heritage seamlessly back to the perfection of the Egyptian founders. But as the world limps into its old age, the original flame of piety has grown cold ('refrigescit') in some places, and new, abominable monasteries have emerged, driven by avarice and other worldly corruptions.[89] The remainder of the work condemns one particular kind present in Gallaecia. It is the more general intellectual framework that I want to focus on here, however. It is this that illuminates the wider stakes of Valerius' pervasive elitism in his understanding of the *ecclesia*.

Characteristic of Valerius' thought—as of much late antique thought—was a nostalgia for a point of origin where things were purer and better, having not yet succumbed to decline. The notion of 'tepidity' which Valerius took from John Cassian, reflected this nostalgia, which in Cassian's imagination (as in that of Valerius and others) was rooted in the original Christian community at Jerusalem and the earliest monastic vocations in the Thebaid. In his *Conlationes*, Cassian leveraged his own experiences in the region, staging

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[87] Valerius, *De gen.*, 2, at p. 324: […] *ut non solum per cenobialium crebras ac iuges congregationes innumerus et infinitus exercitus multiplicaretur monachorum, uerum etiam diuersa heremi deserta copiosius contegerentur perfectorum ergastulis anachoritarum.*

[88] Valerius, *De gen.*, 3, p. 324: *ista ultime extremitatis occidue partis confinia.*

[89] Valerius, *De gen.*, 3.

dialogues in his text with venerable Egyptian masters of the ascetic life. Cassian's work provided the apparently authentic germ of eastern thought that fed into the ascetic visions of many clerics and ascetics in the West, including those of the notable monastery of Lérins.[90] Valerius took on not only this legitimatory genealogy, but also Cassian's sense of decline—the idea that the Christianity practiced by the mediocre majority paled into insignificance when measured against the athletes of Christ in the Egyptian desert. This narrative of Christian history rewards further exploration: it takes us to the heart of elitist ascetic ecclesiology.

Cassian's influential eighteenth *conlatio* provided the base text for the idea that the purity of faith present in the Acts community had fallen away into tepidity as large numbers of people flocked into the church. Indeed, the rules laid down by the apostles for the Jerusalem community as described in Acts were initially the rules laid down for the whole *ecclesia*. Things changed as many more people came into the *ecclesia*: a multitude of believers, coming 'de alienigenis ac diuersis gentibus' and possessed of 'inueterata gentilitatis consuetudine' required less rigid rules. It was this process that caused the cooling of the original apostolic fervour of the Jerusalem community, illustrated particularly by the fact that Christians began to combine their faith with personal wealth, against the community of property that marked the apostolic perfection of the early *ecclesia*. Therefore, those who retained the fervour of the apostles had to separate themselves out from this multitude, retaining the original rigour of the early *ecclesia* away from the city in isolated places ('in locis suburbanis ac secretioribus'). Such people were not a novel elite, but the authentic remanent of the original Christian life as lived before the hierarchy of clerical and lay states was established, pristinely preserved apart from the compromised mass. Those who recluded

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[90] Markus, *End of Ancient Christianity*, pp. 157-211; C. Leyser, "'This sainted isle": panegyric, nostalgia, and the invention of "Lerinian monasticism"', in W. Klingshirn and M. Vessey (eds), *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays in Honor of Robert Markus* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1999), pp. 188-206.

themselves from the wider, less fervent multitude were practising 'priuatim ac peculiariter' that which was originally laid down 'per uniuersum corpus ecclesiae generaliter'.[91] Cassian's account deeply influenced later ascetic authors like Valerius. Cassian's genealogy justified a highly stratified and hierarchical account of the *ecclesia*, in which the original perfection of the apostles was preserved only by a small group, set apart from the rest.[92]

Hierarchical ideas of this kind were common in monastic writing. Eutropius of Valencia, in a text written while he was abbot of Servitanum, gives a particularly striking example. An avid reader of Cassian, he epitomized the eight-part scheme of vices in Cassian's *Institutiones* in a short epistolary treatise of his own, known as *De octo uitiis*. In another epistolary tractate, *De dictrictione monachorum*, he described how monasteries fit into the wider *ecclesia*. The monastery housed the very few ones who were able to seek perfection—for 'the Lord takes delight not in the inattentive and tepid name and number, but in the sanctity of the perfect ones.'[93] His view of the fate of the imperfect ones was bleak:

> Therefore, both 'many have been called' and 'few, in truth, have been elected' [Matt. 20:16], and the flock is very small to whom 'it has pleased the Father to give his kingdom' [Luke 12:32]. It is much better (*satisque melius*) with few, holy people entering into [this] life than with many people, living tepidly and excessively (*luxuriose*), [needing] to be separated from the fellowship of the saints. And through the confined and narrow path walk a few people, and they reign in the land (*patria*) of eternal life. Through the wide and spacious [path] walk the many, and they are thrown headlong into the depths of Gehenna.[94]

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[91] Cassian, *Conlationes*, XVIII.5, ed. Pichery, SC, 64, pp. 14-16. See Markus, *End of Ancient Christianity*, pp. 165-8; Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, pp. 45-7.

[92] Isidore, by contrast, saw even present-day monks as less perfect than their desert exemplar. See above, p. 228.

[93] Eutrop. Val., *De dict.*, p. 24: *non enim in dissoluto tepidoque vocabulo et numero, sed in sanctitate perfectorum dominus delectatur.*

[94] Eutrop. Val., *De dict.*, pp. 24-5: *Ideo et* multi vocati *et* pauci vero electi*, et pusillus est grex cui* conplacuit patri vestro dare regnum*, Satisque melius est cum paucis et sanctis in vitam ingredi quam cum plurimis tepide et luxoriose viventibus a sanctorum consortio segregari; et per artam et angustiam viam pauci ambulant et in aeternae vitae patria regnant, per amplam et spatiosam multi ingrediuntur et in gehennae profundo praecipitantur.*

Eutropius was not an ascetic separatist on Valerius' model, however. He was someone who combined monastic and elitist ecclesiology with participation in the grandest articulations of the Nicene Visigothic state.

At the time of writing, Eutropius was abbot of Servitanum, a monastery in the diocese of Ercávica in Carthaginiensis.[95] His extant works were both directed to the see's bishop, Peter. Servitanum was founded by the monk Donatus, an émigré from the persecution that flared up in North Africa with Justinianic reconquest and the Three Chapters controversy. He had fled with seventy monks and a large library according to Ildefonsus.[96] John of Biclarum describes Donatus as a miracle worker.[97] It was in this monastic clime that Eutropius was trained, and over which he exercised his abbacy, succeeding his master Donatus upon his death. Eutropius, though, did not remain within a narrowly monastic world, but went on to serve as bishop of Valencia.[98] Even as an abbot, he was engaged in high politics. John of Biclarum describes Eutropius, alongside the monk-bishop Leander of Seville, as instrumental at the Third Council of Toledo.[99] How we square Eutropius' bleak and elitist ecclesiology with diocesan pastoral care and kingdom-wide religious reform is unclear. Doubtless, people could utilize elitist ecclesiology in some cases, while turning to more universalist visions in others. We see this most clearly in the works of Eutropius' conciliar collaborator Leander.

Leander espoused a universalizing vision of the *ecclesia* in the homily he gave at the close of the Third Council of Toledo. Here, following Visigothic conversion, his theme was the calling of the diversity of peoples to the single *ecclesia*.[100] In other works, however, he

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[95] R. Barroso Cabrera and J. Morín de Pablos, 'La ciudad de Arcávica y la fundación del monasterio Servitano', *Hispania Sacra*, 48 (1996), pp. 149-96.
[96] Ildef., *De viris*, 3. See above, pp. 98-9.
[97] J. Bicl., *Chron.,* 18.
[98] Isid., *De viris*, 32.
[99] J. Bicl., *Chron.*, 91.
[100] See above, pp. 84-5.

made clear that the universal *ecclesia* knew sharp hierarchy within it. Writing to his sister, the nun Florentina, Leander espoused a Cassian-esque view of monastic and ecclesiastical history. Thus, he identified apostolic Christianity with the community of property found at Jerusalem and traced the compromises of the much wider, later *ecclesia* to measures taken by the apostles in response to incoming *gentiles*. Property was at the heart of this. It was the *gentiles* who brought the *vita privata*—here meaning, a life based on private property—into the once communal *ecclesia*. Centuries later, monastics continued the community of property inaugurated by the Jerusalem community, while others followed the compromise path of the *gentiles* with their private property and family interests.[101] There was a clear hierarchy here. It is instructive to recall that these views, which bear some relation to Valerius', were present not just in the more radical elements of ascetic thought, but in mainstream cenobitic and episcopal thought.

We lack the sources that allow us to see different ecclesiological visions at work within individual monk-bishops' oeuvres. Nonetheless, it is possible to examine the tension between different ecclesiologies by considering a different, though connected genealogy for Christian excellence: that of the martyrs. Here we can detect a clear conflict between an elitist and a civic reading of the martyrs' legacy found, respectively, in ascetic thought and martyr cult. For Valerius, the martyrs, perhaps more so than the Acts community, lay at the heart of his ideal of ascetic attainment. Valerius' understanding of Christian history is most fully developed in *De uana seculi sapientia*. Here, in a brief sketch of salvation history the martyrs and their late-Roman context occupy a prominent place.[102] Valerius gives a relatively conventional account of the status of martyrs as heroes of the Christian faith, though he puts particular emphasis on the wealthy, noting that martyrs came 'non solum ex plebeio cetu

[101] Leand, *De inst. uirg.*, 26
[102] Valerius, *De uana.*

uulgali conuersatione degentes, sed et pontifices, reges, duces atque diuersi seculi potentes'.[103] The martyrdom of the powerful and wealthy clearly impressed him more than the martyrdoms of more humble people: their self-denial and sacrifice was all the greater for the sheer height from which they were able to fall. Valerius' vision was elitist in both social and spiritual terms. He regarded the martyrs' immediate and privileged successors as monks and nuns. His was a legitimatory genealogy which claimed the heritage of the martyrs for an elite section of the present-day *ecclesia*, drawn disproportionately from elevated social circles.[104] This was not universally accepted.

To see another use of the martyrs we have to turn to the *passiones*. These presented their own history of the *ecclesia* and of martyrs' role within this. Two Visigothic *passiones* of the seventh century, the *Passio Leocadie* and *Passio Vincenti, Sabine et Christete*, bear near-identical introductory prefaces, drawing heavily on the anterior Gallic *Passio Saturnini*.[105] In the Iberian prefaces, the coming of Christianity and emergence of the *ecclesia* is narrated for ends quite different to those to which this history was put by Valerius. The heritage of the martyrs is not presented as something taken up exclusively by monastics or by exceptional 'confessor' saints but by the civic community. This difference has not been appreciated in prior scholarship, however, owing partly to the entanglement of these texts with Valerius' writings (he provides the *terminus ante quem* for at least one of them). It has been common to interpret these *passiones*' historical vision in line with the elitist views of Valerius.[106] This is a mistake. Valerius was certainly able to read them in this way, but *passiones* were texts used to

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[103] Valerius, *De uana*, 6, at p. 176.

[104] Cf. Fructuosus' elite milieu, connected to the royal court: *VFruct.*, 2, 8, 15. J. Kreiner, *The Social Life of Merovingian Hagiography* (Cambridge, 2014) argues that Merovingian hagiographies had a chiefly elite audience.

[105] *PLeoc.*, 2-3; *PVSC*, 2-3. For the *Passio Saturnini* see the edition of P. Cabau, '*Opusculum de passione ac translatione sancti Saturnini, episcopi Tolosanae ciuitatis et martyris*. Édition et traduction provisoires', *Mémoires de la Société archéologique du Midi de la France*, 61 (2001), pp. 59-77.

[106] M.C. Díaz y Díaz, 'The Christian origins of the Peninsula as seen in some seventh century texts', in *idem*, *Vie chrétienne*, ch. I, pp. 87-94; T. Deswarte, *Une Chrétienté romaine sans pape: l'Espagne et Rome (586-1085)* (Paris, 2010), pp. 86-92.

different people, from ascetics to priests, to the laypeople attending civic martyr festivities. We cannot reduce them to the function they played in the (later) vision of ascetic elitists, even if, alongside their liturgical and festive functions, they found an important edificatory use in monasteries.[107] The memory of the martyrs was complex and diverse, with significance throughout all elements of Christianity.[108]

All these texts, like Valerius, see Christianity's growth in the West as a slow and late process. In the pre-persecution period, Christianity was sparsely represented, but the few Christians there were had un-dulled faith: 'sera tandem Spanie finibus innotuit eratque rara fides et ideo magna, quia rara'.[109] This coheres neatly with an elitist ecclesiology. From here, however, the *passiones* take a different turn. Rather than founding a minority of perfect Christians, these small communities serve as the seeds of the great Christian multitudes of the post-persecution era. Indeed, the faith 'palpitated', 'sprouting forth' amidst a fallen, idolatrous world, thereby emerging as a 'public' force, with institutions and structure:[110]

> It came forth to such an extent that in some cities the flame of perfect faith burned so that there flourished churches not now in hiding places, requiring occlusion, but in public (*publice*), and with priests and all the clergy.[111]

The martyrs marked its triumphant burst into the public spere—its dramatic emergence into the world of the Roman forum, and the domain of civic spectacles. The *ecclesia* was to be celebrated for moving from enforced secrecy to triumphant openness, not for preserving a pure strand of continuity in defiance of a popularization of the faith that could only be conceived of as dilution and vulgarization.

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[107] See Gil, 'La Pasión de Santa Eulalia'.

[108] See esp. E. Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York, NY, 2004).

[109] *PLeoc.*, 2, p. 42; *PVSC*, 2, p. 214.

[110] *PLeoc.*, 2, p. 42: *et fides in Christo, pullulans inter tantas rabies paganorum, palpitabat.* Cf. Valerius of Bierzo, *De gen.*, 3, p. 324: *rara uidelicet et exigua pullularent sacre religionis crepundia.*

[111] *PLeoc.*, 2, p. 42; *PVSC*, p. 214: *Ita prouenit ut in non nullas urbes perfecte fidei flagrarent* [*PVSC.*: *fraglarent*] *incendia, ut iam non per latebras occulendo, sed publice Eclesie sacerdotibus et omni prepollerent clero.*

The primary context for *passiones* was urban martyr cult. As I have argued in more detail elsewhere, the Visigothic *passiones* were rooted in a distinctively civic imaginary.[112] This is in part because of their origin—as a genre if not as individual texts—in the late Roman world. Prudentius provides eloquent testimony to the manner in which martyr cult was integrated, on the imaginative level, into the structures of civic life.[113] Though the Visigothic *passiones* were written (or re-written), for the most part, in the sixth or seventh centuries, they retained martyr cult's civic focus. Numerous Visigothic *passiones* referred to the martyrs as *spectacula*, playing on the ceremonial language of the Roman games.[114] Thus, the Sevillan martyrs Justa and Rufina were said to have entered 'the stadium of spiritual contest', becoming *spectacula Dei*.[115] It would not have been lost on Visigothic audiences that the martyr festivals had themselves become civic occasions, held before crowds in an urban fabric rich in vestiges of the Roman world. Like Roman *spectacula*, Christian martyr cult provided a locus for idealized accounts of civic unanimity and harmony—indeed, for the unity of the Christian community as such.[116] The civic understanding of the martyrs contrasts markedly with Valerius' contempt for cities—not least with his dismissal of Toledo as a 'public theatre'.[117] In the *passiones*, as was inherent to their form, the significance of such maligned 'worldly' spaces was dramatically inverted. Martyr cult was about appropriating urbanity and Roman civic publicness for Christian times, not rejecting it in favour of ascetic isolation.

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112 D. Addison, 'Re-imagining Roman persecution in the Visigothic passions', in J. Wood, D. Fernández, and M. Lester (eds), *Rome, Byzantium, and the Visigothic Kingdom of Toledo* [forthcoming 2021/22].

113 C. O'Hogan, *Prudentius and the Landscapes of Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 71-97.

114 In addition to those cited below: *PEulE.*, 17; *PIustiP*, 2. Frequent allusion is made to I Cor. 4:9.

115 *PIuste*R, 3, p. 142: *Iam tempus certaminis gloriosi ferbebat, et diuinum examen pugne celestis urguebat et spiritalis agonis stadium parabatur nec diutius differri poterant spectacula Dei.*

116 L. Grig, *Making Martyrs in Late Antiquity* (London, 2004), pp. 34-53; Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, pp. 104-33.

117 See above, p. 229, n. 52.

The distinction I have drawn, relatively schematically, between civic martyr cults and ascetic elitism brings us necessarily to the question of 'confessor' sanctity. The idea of ascetic sanctity as a kind of 'living' or 'bloodless martyrdom' was well established: it dated right back to the fallout from the end of Roman persecutions.[118] The spectacular sufferings of the historical martyrs were transfigured for times of peace by the idea of the 'confessor' saint, the would-be martyr whose inner virtue was the same as any martyr, yet who, by pure serendipity, did not live in times of persecution. Valerius explained this in *De uana seculi sapientia* by reproducing the influential definition of the two kinds of martyrdom given in Gregory the Great's *Dialogi*.[119] On this view, the confessor's suffering was an interiorized version of the martyr's bloody passion, occurring amidst the persecution of the devil or his agents rather than that of worldly powers. In the *Vita Pauli*, Jerome directly compared the 'persecutions' of the lone ascetic to those suffered by the martyrs.[120] Valerius included the *Vita Pauli* alongside various other texts on desert asceticism in his hagiographical compilation.[121] He also, however, engaged closely with martyr texts, compiling several for liturgical use in a now-lost book he describes putting together.[122] Confessor sanctity and martyr cult remained intertwined: martyr piety imbued Valerius' mentality as much as it did those engaged with civic cults, but in a way which implied a very different ecclesiology. Valerius' present-day interests were in a narrow group of ascetic experts who claimed the heritage of the martyrs in a transfigured, ascetic way, scornful of civic life and the alleged tepidity of mass religion.

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[118] See esp. C. Straw, 'Martyrdom and Christian identity: Gregory the Great, Augustine, and tradition', in Klingshirn and Vessey (eds), *The Limits of Ancient Christianity*, pp. 250-66.
[119] Valerius, *De uan.*, 9-10. See A. de Vogüé, '*Martyrium in occulto*. Le martyr du temps de paix chez Grégoire le Grand, Isidore de Séville et Valerius de Bierzo', in *Fructus centesimus, Mélanges offerts à J.M. Bartelink à l'occasion de son soixante-cinquième anniversaire* (Turnhout, 1989), pp. 125-40.
[120] The comparison of the devil's inner torments and those of imperial persecution is clearly made in Jerome, *Vita Pauli*, 2, ed. J.P. Migne, PL, 23 (Paris, 1883), cols. 17-30, at col. 19.
[121] Díaz y Díaz, *Valerio del Bierzo*, pp. 97-9.
[122] Valerius, *Quod de sup.*, 2.

To contrast an elitist model of sanctity to the broader ecclesiology implicit in civic martyr cult is to map out the two extremes on a spectrum. As I have shown, many figures engaged in elements of both. What is important is to see how different traditions of thought could become entangled. Valerius' elitism is notable for its rejection of city life and most ecclesiastical institutions, but others, far less detached from civic life, espoused similarly elitist visions of the *ecclesia* while also preaching to congregations. Valerius' ecclesiology was not just indicative of his idiosyncratic outlook, but of a wider discourse detectable throughout Visigothic ecclesiastical life. With this in mind, it pays to examine Iberian monasticism more widely, in its cenobitic as well as its eremitic forms.

IV. INSTITUTION, INDIVIDUAL, AND OFFICE IN VISIGOTHIC MONASTICISM

Hispania has frequently been seen as set apart, somewhat, from the developments of the rest of the Latin West.[123] The *Regula Benedicti* made no inroads into Iberian monasticism before the end of the Visigothic period and did not become normative in Iberia until Gregorian Reform.[124] The isolation of Iberian developments can be exaggerated, however, and is likely more historiographical than historical. Indeed, the normative status of the enclosed, rule-based, cenobitic monastery in western monasticism has recently been contested by Albrecht Diem, Claudia Rapp, and others.[125] Historians are increasingly alert to the diversity of ascetic and monastic forms that contended with one another during the experiments of the early

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123 For overviews of Iberian monasticism see esp. J. Orlandis, *Estudios sobre instituciones monásticas medievales* (Pamplona, 1971); A. Linage Conde, *Los orígenes del monacato benedictino en la Península Ibérica* 3 vols (León, 1973); F.J. Moreno Martín, *La arquitectura monástica hispana entre la Tardoantigüedad y la Alta Edad Media* (Oxford, 2011); P.C. Díaz Martínez, 'Las fundaciones monásticas en la Península Ibérica (siglos VI-VIII)', in *Monachesimi d'Oriente e d'Occidente nell'alto medioevo*, Settimane, 64, 2 vols (Spoleto, 2017), i, pp. 463-97.

124 Linage Conde, *Los orígenes del monacato benedictino*, i.

125 See esp. A. Diem and C. Rapp, 'The monastic laboratory: perspectives of research in late antique and early medieval monasticism', in A.I. Beach and I. Cochelin (eds), *The Cambridge History of Medieval Monasticism in the Latin West* (Cambridge, 2020), pp. 19-39.

medieval centuries—a diversity flattened out by teleological accounts of the emergence of a vigorously promoted Benedictine norm in the Carolingian period. In what follows I argue that there was considerable diversity in Iberian monasticism, both in institutional forms, and in the manner in which they related to episcopal and central power. Some monasteries were wealthy cenobitic institutions, tied into episcopal patronage, while others were lay foundations of far less clear nature, which enjoyed considerable independence from central power. I begin by examining monastic diversity in more institutional terms, before turning to the independence certain monasteries had in *de facto* social and economic terms. Finally, I suggest that the capacity to leverage independence from episcopal power was built into the proprietorial structures of monasticism, in its various forms. The world of lay patronage and contested episcopal power articulated by Valerius has a wider significance for our understanding of Iberian Christianity.

Firstly, it is important to recognize that rule-based cenobitism was only one monastic form among others. In Hispania, Ildefonsus attributes the earliest formal *Rule* to Servitanum, a monastery founded near Valencia by African émigrés in the 550s, but there is no need to presume that all subsequent monasteries were centred on a single *Rule*.[126] The very idea of a bounded *coenobium* under a single, authoritative *Rule* developed slowly and unevenly across the Latin West, as Albrecht Diem has argued. Often taken as the benchmark of 'orthodox' monastic life, this model was in fact one amongst others.[127] Monastic life in Hispania had long been nourished by a variety of texts, including Greek cenobitic texts like the *Regula Basilii* and *Corpus Pachomianum*, and various Latin works like Augustine of Hippo's *Rule* and

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[126] Ildef., *De viris*, 3, at p. 120: *Iste prior in Hispaniam monasticae obseruantiae usum regulamque dicitur aduexisse.*

[127] A. Diem, 'Inventing the holy rule: some observations on the history of monastic normative observance in the early medieval west', in Dey and Fentress (eds), *Western Monasticism* Ante Litteram, pp. 53-84. For the wider history of monastic rules: A. Diem and P. Rousseau, 'Monastic rules (fourth to ninth century)', in Beach and Cochelin (eds), *The Cambridge History of Medieval Monasticism*, pp. 162-94. On the development of enclosure as an ideal: Diem, *Pursuit of Salvation*, pp. 265-327.

the works of John Cassian. An anonymous précis of the opening book of the latter's *Institutiones* known as the *Regula Cassiani* has been connected to Visigothic Hispania.[128] These diverse texts circulated in collections known to scholars as *corpora regularum*.[129] These did not constitute a single *Rule* under which monasteries were run, but they constituted a corpus of regulatory materials which could be utilized in less legalistic ways. In this they were perhaps more like the ascetic guidance of the Egyptian desert fathers which the collections of *apophthegmata* preserved. Cenobites like Martin and Paschasius in the Suevic monastery of Dumium certainly took an interest in these, collecting and translating them for monastic use.[130]

From the sixth centuries onward, some Iberian authorities began to compose their own codified *Rules* for particular institutions or clusters of institutions, bringing a certain clarity and harmony to the multiplicity of norms that were previously utilized. The earliest extant text is Leander's *De institutione uirginum*, composed in the later sixth century, which was followed by Isidore's and Fructuosus' quite different *Regulae*, composed in Baetica and Gallaecia respectively. These engaged with and supplemented *corpora regularum*. In the introduction to his *Regula*, Isidore referred to prior *instituta maiorum* handed down from the *sancti patri*, noting that they were somewhat obscure in their language and demands and needed to be tempered for contemporary times.[131] Diverse collections of texts continued to circulate, and newer codes entered circulation far outside their original instituted sphere of operation. We should therefore be cautious in distinguishing, for example, 'Isidorian' from 'Fructuosan' monasticism as if each monastery could be said to be grounded on a single,

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128 P.B. Dias, 'A *Regula Cassiani*. Uma leitura dos *De institutis coenobiorum* feita em ambiente frutuosiano', *Humanitas*, 57 (2005), pp. 195-244.
129 I. Velázquez Soriano, 'Reflexiones en torno a la formación de un *corpus regularum* de época visigoda', *Antigüedad y Cristianismo*, 23 (2006), pp. 531-67, esp. p. 533.
130 Mart. Brac., *Sent. patr.*, pp. 30-51; Paschasius of Dumium, *Verba seniorum*, ed. J.P. Migne, PL, 73 (Paris, 1849), cols. 1025-62. On *apophthegmata* and their westward trajectory see esp. P. Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian* (2nd edn, Notre Dame, IN, 2010).
131 *RIsid.*, *Praef.*, quotes at p. 90.

defined regulatory text. Isidore's *Regula* circulated in Gallaecia in the later seventh century, within a 'Fructuosan' context, undergoing various modifications as a result.[132] No region of Hispania knew a single, dominant *Rule* in the period: diversity, multiplicity, and blending were the norm throughout the period. Those monasteries subject to the exclusive authority of a defined text—presumably those which enjoyed a particularly close relationship to certain bishops or monastic founders—may well have been the exceptions.

One fascinating insight into the variety of monastic forms comes from an anonymous sermon called *De monachis perfectis*, preserved, curiously, in Valerius' hagiographical compilation.[133] Preached by a bishop to his congregation, the sermon promoted the sanctity of monks who lived in cities, neither operating as lone individuals nor confined to a *coenobium*. The sermon's audience was lay, as is clear from its elementary exposition of monastic life which extended even to explaining what an abbot is.[134] The preacher's emphasis was on the spiritual example laypeople could derive from these monks: the lives of monks, he said, are described so that they 'might be a shape and example for others'.[135] These lessons were essentially in the cultivation of the three theological virtues, *fides*, *spes*, and *caritas*, that all Christians were called to exercise. Monks' vocation was higher than that of laypeople, the preacher said, but it was not without its relevance: all had to manifest some of the same fundamental virtues.[136]

These urban monks clearly lived some kind of communal life under an abbot, but they were not spatially confined or forbidden from mixing with the laity for certain functions. They visited the infirm and imprisoned, for example, and they did manual labour

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132 M.C. Díaz y Díaz, 'Aspectos de la tradición de la *Regula Isidori*', repr. in *idem*, *Vie chrétienne*, ch. IX, pp. 27-57.

133 *De mon. perf.* For context: L.A. García Moreno, 'Los monjes y monasterios en las ciudades de las Españas tardorromanas y visigodas', *Habis*, 24 (1993), pp. 179-92.

134 *De mon. perf.*, p. 83: *habentes praepositum quem abbatem appellant, cuius magisterio informati certam regulam observant vivendi.*

135 *De mon. perf.*, p. 80: *et aliis forma sint et exemplum.*

136 *De mon. perf.*, p. 84.

and gave hospitality; they were to be present at church services on Sundays and feast days; they had to be mindful of how they appeared before the public.[137] These were monks who were integrated into the life of the city. The preacher anticipates a certain resistance on the part of the congregation to the acceptance of these monks' vocation, seemingly coming from those who identify monasticism with isolation. Urban monks may have been 'set up among so many people', he said, but 'they are seduced by no fleshly desire': they do 'occupy second place' to solitary monks, but they are able, nonetheless, to be 'alike in divine works' to these solitaries.[138] The sermon is important because it shows a vision of monasticism in which monks are integrated into civic life and in which they can stand as exemplars relevant to laypeople. Here we see the most integrated, if hierarchical account of monastic and lay life, intertwined in the religious life of the city.

The extent to which monastery and city could mingle was a matter of anxious disagreement. Leander denied consecrated virgins any contact with laywomen, men, and youths, arguing for a complete break between the monastic and the 'worldly' life.[139] He wrote directly against the practice of virgins living in their own cells in cities ('uirgines, quae in urbibus per cellulis demorantur, quas multimoda cura constringit'), arguing that such people were incompletely freed from the 'private' concerns of domestic cares.[140] That said, suburban monasteries seem to have been relatively common across Hispania. The suburban monastery of Cauliana, for example, was built eight kilometres outside of Mérida.[141] Such monasteries could, of course, be completely segregated from the life of the city, but the inclusion of the

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137 *De mon. perf.*, p. 83.

138 *De mon. perf.*, p. 82: *quod inter tantos populos constituti nulla carnali concupiscentia seducuntur; quamquam enim secundum locum a primis obtineat, in divinis tamen operibus similes aestimantur.*

139 Leand., *De inst. uirg.*, 1-3.

140 Leand., *De inst. uirg.*, 26.1.

141 *VSPE*, II, at p. 14. Cf. *Ep. Wis.*, 9, with discussion above, p. 156. This monastery has not been located: see I. Sastre de Diego, T. Cordero Ruiz, and P. Mateos Cruz, 'Territorio y monacato emeritense durante la Antigüedad Tardía, in J. López Quiroga, A.M. Martínez Tejera, and J. Morín de Pablos (eds), *Monasteria et territoria. Elites, edicilia y territorio en el Mediterráneo medieval (siglos V-XI)* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 141-162.

chapter about the monastery in the *Vitas sanctorum patrum Emeretenisum*, a text chiefly intended to exalt the city's bishops, hints at a certain connection between the two environments. Monasteries with tight relationships to episcopal sees presumably perceived city life with less horror than Valerius, even if they did not endorse the mingling of city and monastic life present in *De monachis perfectis*.

We have many examples of bishops coming to the episcopate from monasteries, and this can tell us much about the relationship between monasteries and urban Christianity. A number of monasteries in Hispania had special relationships to episcopal sees. The most notable here is perhaps the monastery of Agali, which from unknown beginnings came to provide a string of bishops to the see of Toledo through the seventh century, as celebrated by its alumnus Ildefonsus of Toledo.[142] Like Lérins, it has been seen as the engine of a particular political project—in this case the establishment of a vision of holy episcopal authority suitable for a see which was coming to pre-eminence across the whole Visigothic kingdom.[143] Other examples abound. The Gallaecian monastery of Dumium was itself an episcopal see, with a bishop who lived under the monastic rule and served as its abbot. In at least two instances—those of Martin of Braga and Fructuosus—this monastic see was a route to the metropolitan see of Braga. The monastery of Asán, founded at the beginning of the sixth century in the Pyrenees in the far north-east of the peninsula, produced the bishop Vincent of Huesca from among its ranks. Leander of Seville lived as a monk before becoming the foremost bishop of the young Nicene kingdom.[144] John of Biclarum, the chronicler, entered the see of Gerona after having founded a monastic community at

142 Ildef., *De viris*, 6-7, 12. Cf. Julian of Toledo, *Elogium Ildefonsi*, ed. V. Yarza Uquiola, CCSL, 115B (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 3-5, at pp. 3-4.
143 On Lérins see Leyser, "'This sainted isle'", pp. 188-206.
144 Isid., *De uir.*, 28.

Biclarum.[145] Eutropius of Valencia, the sometime abbot of the monastery of Servitanum, provides a further example. We encountered him and his works above.[146]

There is certainly no need to presume an intrinsic tension between monasteries and the episcopate. A large number of monasteries were founded by bishops, and some of these will have been paid for at least in part by diocesan wealth (as opposed to funded by bishops in a private capacity). The Third Council of Toledo permitted bishops to draw on diocesan resources to found monasteries, and the Ninth Council felt the need to limit this outlay at one fiftieth of the diocese's wealth.[147] It was common for bishops to be remembered as monastic founders or as supporters of local monastic communities. Justinian of Valencia, for example, was recalled as such in his epitaph.[148] Martin of Braga and Masona of Mérida were each said to have founded multiple monasteries.[149] Bishops also donated to monasteries. The documents pertaining to the Pyrenean monastery of Asán give us the clearest account of how monastic properties could be built up in a relatively wealthy and well-connected monastery.[150] One of the monastery's attested donations came from the monk Vincent. He gave property when he entered the monastery then, after becoming bishop of Huesca, wrote the monastery into his will.[151] The monastery also received properties from an incoming monk called Gaudiosus, and from various bishops. As well as receiving a donation from the nearby bishop of Narbonne, they had received properties from the bishops Baguda and Licinianus: these latter properties were restored to the monastery by Reccared, having been

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145 Isid., *De uir.*, 31. John's successor in the see, Nonnitus, was also a monk: Ildef., *De viris*, 9.
146 Above, pp. 48, 240-1.
147 III Toledo, c. 4; IX Toledo, c. 5 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 111-12, 498-9).
148 *ICERV*, no. 279. See A.V. Ribera i Lacomba and M. Rosselló Mesquida, 'Monasterios en el territorio de Valencia: abades, obispos y edificios', in López Quiroga *et al.*, (eds), *Monasteria et territoria*, pp. 163-79.
149 Isid., *De viris*, 22; *VSPE*, V.3, at p. 50.
150 See now the essays in C. Martin and J.J. Larrea (eds), *Nouvelles chartes visigothiques du monastère pyrénéen d'Asán* (Bordeaux, 2021).
151 The text is ed. and trans. S. Corcoran, 'The donation and will of Vincent of Huesca: Latin text and English translation', *AT*, 11 (2003), pp. 215-21.

appropriated to the fisc by a predecessor (most likely Leovigild during his period of anti-Nicene activity).[152]

Some monasteries could be exceptionally wealthy. The monastery-see of Dumium, founded in the Suevic period by Martin of Braga, is one example. We know of its wealth because of an unusual episode contained in the *acta* of the Tenth Council of Toledo (656). Riccimir, the late abbot and bishop of the monastery who preceded Fructuosus, had written up a highly atypical and charitable will which was annulled by the council. Riccimir's will demanded that the revenues deriving from the see's property be given over to the poor. This included not only properties which he had donated in a personal capacity, but also those which pertained to the monastery-see at his ordination. He was also said to have sold off moveable goods to give the proceeds to the poor, and to have manumitted over five hundred slaves (at least some of which were his own). Disentangling Riccimir's property from that of the monastery-see is impossible, but the council's annulment of Riccimir's remarkable charity indicates a considerable wealth, in land, moveable goods, and enslaved human beings.[153]

Along with considerable wealth, some monasteries acquired political and even legal functions. As in Frankish society, certain monasteries could enjoy close relationships to the monarchy. King Sisebut, for example, wrote of his joy when his son, Teudila, entered a monastery.[154] They could also be places of enforced penance for clerics and powerful laypeople, including kings. The most famous example is that of Wamba, who was sent to a monastery to see out the last years of his life in penance, having been given emergency end-of-life penance when he appeared to be mortally ill.[155] In less dramatic cases, too,

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[152] Asán chart. 1, 3-4.
[153] X Toledo, *Item aliud decretum* (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 544-51).
[154] *Ep. Wis.*, 7.
[155] XII Toledo, c. 1 (Coll. Hisp. VI, pp. 148-55). For comparative discussion: M. de Jong, 'Monastic prisoners or opting out? Political coercion and honour in the Frankish kingdoms', in de Jong, Theuws, and van Rhijn (eds), *Topographies of Power*, pp. 291-328.

monasteries served as places of confinement. Visigothic canons adduce monastic confinement as a punishment for clerics' political treachery, as well as for bishops who committed sexual sin or mutilated slaves.[156] Not only clerics were confined in monasteries. Tonsured penitents or other religious who reneged on their vows could be sent to monasteries for penance. A canon of 638 notes that confining them can be difficult if they have powerful allies—these were in some cases prominent and powerful figures from 'the world'.[157] Lay sinners, too, could be confined in monasteries. A law of Chindasuinth's empowered secular *iudices* to sentence laypeople to monastic penance in cases of incestuous marriages.[158] Monasteries could be engaged not only with the law but also law-making, at least in canonical terms. Abbots represented bishops at church councils and, after the Eighth Council of Toledo (653), the abbots of particularly powerful monasteries attended councils in their own right alongside prominent laypeople and royal agents.[159]

These politically connected monasteries need not be taken as the norm, however. Many monasteries, however, enjoyed a considerable degree of *de facto* independence from structures of ecclesiastical and royal governance—particularly those established by laypeople or unattached monastic founders.[160] This independence was grounded in proprietorial matters. Of course, bishops had long had certain powers over monasteries according to canon law, notably to the Council of Chalcedon (451).[161] Here founders of monasteries were

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156 Respectively: Narbonne, c. 5 (Conc., p. 147); X Toledo, *Item decretum pro Potamio episcopo* (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 537-44); XI Toledo, c. 6 (Coll. Hisp. VI, pp. 110-11). For the origins of the practice: J. Hillner, 'Gregory the Great's "prisons": monastic confinement in early Byzantine Italy', *JECS*, 19/3 (2011), pp. 433-71; more widely: *eadem*, *Prisons, Punishment and Penance in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2015).
157 Esp. VI Toledo, c. 7 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 311-13). Cf. Tarragona, c. 1 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 272-3); *LV*, III.5.3.
158 *LV*, III.5.1. For the incarceration of powerful laypeople cf. *RComm.*, 19.
159 C.J. Bishko, 'Spanish abbots and the Visigothic councils of Toledo', repr. with additional material in *idem*, *Spanish and Portuguese Monastic History, 600-1300* (London, 1984), ch. V, pp. 139-52.
160 For different proprietorial structures see P.C. Díaz Martínez, *Formas económicas y sociales en el monacato visigodo* (Salamanca, 1987), esp. pp. 45-53 on lay foundations and donations.
161 For Chalcedon's reception in the West see esp. the remarks of S. Wood, *The Proprietary Church in the Medieval West* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 191-9.

held to require consent from the relevant bishop before they could found monasteries, and these monasteries would remain under what the Latin translation termed the *cura* and *sollicitudo* of the bishop.[162] Any clerics in these monasteries would be subject to the bishop, and thus liturgically dependent on the diocesan centre.[163] But the council also affirmed that monastic properties, once constituted, were to remain as such, lest they revert in 'saecularia habitacula'.[164] The proprietorial question perhaps had the greater impact than the spiritual one in the Iberian reception. There were Visigothic attempts to stop lay abuses of monasteries, like the canon of the Third Council of Zaragoza (691) which forbade powerful laypeople from using monasteries as places of lodging.[165] But the ideal of monastic proprietorial integrity was in fact more often levelled against bishops than laypeople. This proprietorial independence permitted a degree of autonomy for at least some monasteries.

As far back as 546, the provincial Council of Lérida explicitly spelled out the proprietorial independence for lay-founded monasteries. Monasteries founded by laypeople were to be exempt from paying a third of their incomes to the bishop, as lay-founded churches were: their property lay outside the jurisdiction of the *diocesana lex*.[166] At the Second Council of Seville and the Fourth Council of Toledo, both held under Isidore, canons were produced to protect the rights of these foundations from episcopal exactions. The Sevillan canon affirmed the paramount importance of the stability of monastic establishments, noting that some bishops, through their avarice ('vi cupidiatis') had tried to despoil monasteries that their predecessors had established.[167] At the Fourth Council of Toledo bishops were expressly forbidden to enforce servile labour on the monks, noting that such demands turned the monastery into a mere *possessio*—that is, into private property ('ut ex pene

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162 Chalcedon, c. 4 (in the Latin translation of the *Hispana*: Coll. Hisp. III, pp. 251-2).
163 Chalcedon, c. 8 (Coll. Hisp. III, p. 253).
164 Chalcedon, c. 24 (Coll. Hisp. III, p. 261).
165 III Zaragoza, c. 3 (Conc., pp. 476-8).
166 Lérida, c. 3 (Coll. Hisp. IV, pp. 300-1, quote at p. 301).
167 II Seville, c. 10 (Conc., pp. 169-70, quote at p. 170).

coenobio possessio fiat'). Bishops' role, the canon ruled, was to be solely spiritual and disciplinary, not proprietorial. They could exhort the monks to a holy life, check the rule, and establish abbots, but no property whatsoever could be drawn away from a monastery without infringing its rights.[168] This independence was not a 'feudal' sundering of diocesan unity reflecting episcopal weakness, but a recognition of a longstanding and accepted distance between certain monasteries and bishops on at least the proprietorial level.[169]

The language is illuminating: what was being rejected, both when laypeople and bishops were accused of overstepping the mark, was that the monastery was becoming mere private property. The denial of private property was at the absolute heart of cenobitic life, for all monks, whether in lay-founded or episcopal monasteries. Incoming monks were expected to contribute property—whether in the form of lands or the proceeds of sales from such lands—following Christ's oft-cited injunction that 'unless someone renounced all he possesses, he cannot be my discipline' [Luke 14:33] or his exhortation to 'sell everything you have and give it to the poor' [Luke 18:22; Matt. 19:21].[170] All such donations, however, became the property of the community *qua* community, such that no-one kept any special individual relationship to this property once given over. This was often explained by reference to the community of property in the Acts community, where 'the multitude of believers were of one heart and one soul, and none said that anything that they had was theirs, but that these were the whole community's' [Acts 4:32].[171] Thus, Leander's *De institutione uirginum* completely denied the validity of the virgins in the community holding any

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168 IV Toledo, c. 51 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 230-1).

169 Linage Conde, *Los orígenes del monacato*, i, p. 225, characterizes the legal situation of monasteries *vis-à-vis* bishops as 'independencia en lo económico y submisión en lo regular'. Cf. Díaz Martínez, *Formas económicas*, p. 17.

170 See e.g. Asán chart. 1; Vincent of Huesca, *Donation to Asán*, ed. S. Corcoran, 'The donation and will of Vincent of Huesca: Latin text and English translation', *AT*, 11 (2003), pp. 215-21, at p. 216.

171 On the trope: D. Ganz, 'The ideology of sharing: apostolic community and ecclesiastical property in the early middle ages', in W. Davies and P. Fouracre (eds), *Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 17-30 and V. Toneatto, *Les banquiers du Seigneur. Éveques et moines face à la richesse (IV^e^-début IX^e^ siècle)* (Rennes, 2012), pp. 234-42.

peculium, saying that anyone who did was guilty of a kind of adultery, and a form of fraud against the community of property.[172]

This is not to say that private property was easily effaced. The *Regula communis*, a seventh-century Gallaecian text, displayed an acute anxiety that individuals would lay claim to property donated to a monastery. Claims to donated property had apparently been prosecuted by legal means, involving judges, and even via violence. On this ground, the rule mandated an exceptionally literal interpretation of Christ's injunction to 'sell all you have', by requiring incoming monks to divest themselves completely of property before entering the community.[173] This solution was exceptional, but the danger of private appropriation was ever present. As with lay-founded churches, the legal solution was not to incorporate all religious property into the diocesan patrimony, but to consider many foundations self-standing entities which had to be protected from appropriation by different actors. A formula for a royal foundation of a monastery defended its property against annexation by the bishop, on the one hand, and the abbot (when acting as a private individual) on the other.[174] Not only lay individuals or ill-disciplined monks threatened to disrupt the communality of property by their appropriations: bishops were equally a threat.

Proprietorial matters were deeply tied into the wider denial of privateness that marked cenobitic life as a whole—indeed, the effacement of private property is better understood as a particular instance of the monastic annihilation of the private will than as an 'social' or 'economic' maxim. Maintaining one's own property hidden from the community was like keeping a corner of one's mind undisclosed before the superior. Vice hid in the shadows, shrouded in secrecy, all had to be declared openly before the abbot as means of

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[172] Leand. *De inst. uirg.*, 28.

[173] *RComm.*, 18.

[174] *Form. Wis.*, 9, at p. 84. On parallels with lay-founded churches see D. Addison, 'Property and "publicness": bishops and lay-founded churches in post-Roman Hispania', *EME*, 28/2 (2020), pp. 175-96.

eviscerating privateness—of effacing even one's own will in the ascetic cultivating of obedience.[175] In the monastery one had to disclose all of ones 'cogitationes, reuelationes, inlusiones et neglegentias proprias' to the superior, according to Fructuosus' *Regula*.[176] Isidore, too, required that monks declare a nocturnal illusion ('inlusionem nocturnam')—presumably a sexual dream or nocturnal emission.[177] Even the involuntary motions of the mind were to be subject to open scrutiny before others.

Sexual sin may have had a particular primacy in the ascetic imagination, but the drive toward monastic transparency before one another was a much more all-encompassing theme, relating to matters of property as much as anything else. In Leander's words, private property, in a monastic context, was equated with hiding things for private interest—with drawing things away from public use.[178] Openness, communality, the negation of the private will, and the organization of monastic property were all deeply interconnected.[179] It was against the background of this deeply rooted notion of de-privatization that the integrity and stability of monasteries' patrimonies was jealously defended against the forces of private appropriation—whether bishops, laypeople, or the monks themselves. All external and internal claims on this communal property could be framed as private appropriations, and so even bishops' agency was severely limited.

It is worth emphasizing that there had always been distance between some monasteries and episcopal power and that monastic independence did not depend on novel legal or institutional forms. We are not dealing with a new, disruptive 'feudalization' but observing a long-standing *de facto* state of independence reaching back to the ascetic

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175 In addition to the citations below, see *Reg. comm.*, 5.
176 *RFruct.*, 12, p. 151.
177 *RIsid.*, 17, at p. 115. Cassian used *inlusio* in this way: Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, pp. 81-3.
178 Leand. *De inst. uirg.*, 28.
179 This is richly brought out, in a wider context, in Toneatto, *Les banquiers du Seigneur*, pp. 247-347 and P.R.L. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD* (Princeton, NJ, 2012), pp. 173-84.

households of the late Roman world. The ascetic life lived by the community around Priscillian of Ávila—for a long time a laymen rather than a bishop—can come under this rubric, as can the well-known communities around Paulinus of Nola in Italy or Sulpicius Severus in Gaul.[180] In Chapter 2 we saw how the layperson Turibius' ascetic household could have an unclear status even in the sixth century.[181] Scholars interested in the development of institutions of monastic independence like the well-known 'immunities' from Merovingian Gaul have often presumed that late antiquity knew only strong episcopal government over monasteries, against which the devolution of power entailed by royal immunities was a novel force. Barbara Rosenwein, for example, has argued from this position.[182] Doubtless the Merovingian was a novel legal instrument that needs to be explained in its specific social and political contexts, but our interest here is not with the Merovingian case. In Iberia, as was likely the case elsewhere, there is no reason to presume firm episcopal control from the start. Indeed, the extent of diocesan episcopal control over monasteries and wider ascetic life has been convincingly challenged in recent work, including by scholars of Merovingian society.[183]

Those monastic forms not sanctioned by episcopal power or by extant documents are known chiefly by their condemnation. We have to be careful to buy into the polemic of hostile sources at face value: each, like Valerius, was busy asserting its own legitimacy by smearing opposing forms. The *Regula communis*, connected to Fructuosus' administrative endeavours, gives important evidence for the kind of controversy that lay-founded monastic

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180 R. Alciati, 'And the villa became a monastery: Sulpicius Severus' community of Primuliacum', in Dey and Fentress (eds), *Western Monasticism* Ante Litteram, pp. 85-98; Bowes, 'Inventing ascetic space'.

181 Above, pp. 77-81.

182 B.H. Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space: Power, Restraint, and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe* (Manchester, 1999), pp. 32-6. On Frankish immunities see also P. Fouracre, 'Eternal light and earthly needs: practical aspects of the development of Frankish immunities', in Davies and Fouracre (eds), *Property and Power*, pp. 53-81.

183 A. Diem, 'Gregory's chess board: monastic conflict and competition in early medieval Gaul', in Bougard, Depreux, and Le Jan (eds), *Compétition et sacré*, pp. 165-91; M. Eisenberg, 'The Council of Carthage of 525 and the making of post-imperial episcopal authority', *Journal of Late Antiquity*, 13/2 (2020), pp. 258-84.

institutions could cause. The *Regula*'s first chapter attacked laypeople who founded monasteries in their own houses ('in suis sibi domibus monasteria componere'). Here, it said, they enrol their families, slaves, and dependents, mixing their prior life with the monastic life. These founders are charged with the familiar accusation of avarice, and of consorting with worldly powers. In an echo of the situation described in the Lérida canon cited above, laypeople are said to have founded churches in dedication to the martyrs and falsely declared them monasteries. The communality of property which is supposed to ground the monastic community never manages to transcend private interest, the *Regula* claims, and communality is only ever skin deep: the monks live in common only 'per imaginarium karitatem'. Disputes over property thus arise, and people seek to restore property to themselves, or else family members outside of the monastery attack to restore family properties.[184] This latter problem was anticipated in the *Regula communis* proper, too—it was not confined to this maligned category of monastery.[185] Nonetheless, the first canon aims to generalize in its condemnation of these lay-founded monasteries, presenting all lay-founded monasteries as the result of avarice rather than authentic piety.

The second chapter, which attacks monasteries built by *presbyteres*, is less familiar. Again, there is the standard accusation that avarice rather than true vocation drives the monasteries' establishment. The presbyters building *quasi monasteria* are driven to do so by the 'common people' (*vulgus*), who threaten to withdraw donations if their priest is not seen to be monastic. The revenues in question are referred to as 'deciamas aut cetera lucra'. The former word does not refer to the mandatory tithe here, as it would do in later centuries, but the question of what exactly these offerings were and who was making them is an interesting one.[186] So too is the fact that priests were apparently being corralled into monastic life by

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184 *RComm.*, 1.

185 *RComm.*, 18, at p. 203.

186 See G. Martínez Díez, *El patrimonio eclesiástico en la España visigoda: estudio histórico jurídico* (Comillas, 1959), pp. 24-9.

laypeople.[187] Gallaecia knew a closeness between acting bishops and monasteries that is not paralleled elsewhere in the peninsula. The monastic see of Dumium is the obvious example. To this we can add the *sedes Britonorum*, which encompassed *ecclesiae* related to a monastery.[188] This is not to follow Charles Julian Bishko's hypothesis that many Gallaecian sees were monasticized, pruducing various *episcopi sub regula* in Fructuosus' time.[189] Nonetheless, there does seem to have been a particular significance to monastic piety in Gallaecian ecclesiastical life. The *Regula communis* hints at the way in which expectations of a monastic lifestyle could spread beyond the monastery and be wielded against 'worldly' bishops even by laypeople.

To understand the polemic of the *Regula communis*'s opening chapters, we have to place it in its wider institutional context. The *Regula communis* was a text drawn up in later seventh-century Gallaecia. It reflects a series of decisions made by a relatively tightly organized network of monasteries, whose abbots met to discuss disciplinary matters and to draw up general policy for the network. At the head of this network was the *episcopus sub regula*, usually taken to be the abbot-bishop of Dumium.[190] The *Regula* reports the decisions of one such meeting. The text may have been drawn up in the time of Fructuosus: though it is no longer seen as his sole work, this synodal document has been connected to a process of reform initiated by Fructuosus' tenure as the abbot-bishop of Dumium then Braga.[191] Either way, it is clear that the regulations refer to a set of monasteries connected in a uniquely institutional manner, and that this network jealously guarded its boundaries, attacking other monasteries, whether founded by laypeople or clerics. A network of this kind, tied into the episcopal power of the atypical see of Dumium, is a remarkable and unique testimony to

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187 *RComm.*, 2.
188 *Parrochiale Sueuum*, 13.1. See above, p. 37.
189 C.J. Bishko, '*Episcopus sub regula* or *episcopi sub regula*? St. Fructuosus and the monasticized episcopate in the peninsular west', *Bracara Augustua*, 21 (1967), pp. 63-4.
190 Orlandis, *Estudios*, pp. 74-5; P.C. Díaz Martínez, '*Regula communis*: monastic space and social context', in Dey and Fentress (eds), *Western Monasticism* Ante Litteram, pp. 117-35.
191 Orlandis, *Estudios*, pp. 98-112; Linage Conde, *Los orígenes del monacato*, i, pp. 233-43.

monastic organization in Iberia. It likely speaks of particular arrangements and traditions in Gallaecia rather than wider Visigothic monastic practices. The unique role of Dumium in the political and ecclesiastical life of the Suevic kingdom may have cast its shadow a century later. Either way, the *Regula communis* shows that attempts to rigorously institutionalize and network monasteries coincided with the exclusion of other forms of monastic organization, and the vicious de-legitimization of opponents.

It is difficult to peel back behind the polemic to see the reality, in institutional and social terms, of the monasteries being attacked. Pablo Díaz has given the most expansive interpretation to the lay-founded monasteries described in the *Regula communis*' first chapter. For Díaz, these monasteries, incorporating married couples, children, slaves, and extended kin-groups, followed anterior settlement structures. They were 'monasteries' made from village communities, little changed when they declared themselves communal religious entities.[192] This hypothesis is by no means certain, nor is the further idea that the *Regula communis* was produced precisely to govern these atypical family monasteries, or that a 'popular character' can be ascribed to these monasteries.[193] The ingress of family groups into monasteries certainly was a phenomenon known and accepted across Gallaecia, since the *Regula communis* allowed for this in its own provisions, by rigorously splitting couples from one another, and children who were old enough from their parents within the extended monastic community.[194] Furthermore, *monasteria* are known in northern Spain in the tenth century which operated along similar lines. Wendy Davies has described a kind in which families lived together and no clear rule was in place.[195] Davies has also noted the parallel

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[192] Díaz Martínez, *Formas económicas*, pp. 141-6.
[193] Díaz Martínez, '*Regula communis*', p. 120.
[194] *RComm.*, 6. Cf. *VFruct.*, 15, at p. 108, where incoming families are said to have divided between the male and female communities of a double monastery.
[195] W. Davies, 'Where are the parishes? Where are the minsters? The organization of the Spanish church in the tenth century', in D. Rollason, C. Leyser, and H. Williams (eds), *England and the Continent in the Tenth Century: Studies in Honour of Wilhelm Levison (1876-1947)* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 379-97, at pp. 386-8.

case adduced in eighth-century Northumbria by the monk Bede, who denounced monasteries which he said were founded by lay lords for pecuniary gain and which permitted married men and women to live together with children, recognizing no *Rule*.[196] Both Bede's remarks and those of the *Regula communis* need to be seen as polemical as well as descriptive. This is not to deny that they were describing real phenomena, but to caution that we are looking through the hostile eyes of people certain that only those who practiced monastic life in their ways did so legitimately. We need to take seriously the idea that these condemned institutions were not merely corrupt but reflected different spiritual and institutional ideals.

Historians of Gallaecian monasticism have often turned to the idea of 'pactualism' to explain particular features of its institutional structure. Some texts, including a short agreement appended to manuscripts of the *Regula communis*, are regarded as monastic *pacta*. These were agreements with a reciprocal character, denoting different responsibilities of the incoming monk and the abbot, and describing some means of dispute settlement involving appeals to extra-abbatial authority. Attention was first draw to these texts by Ildefons Herwegen in a short monograph of 1907, written under the strong influence of Ulrich Stutz.[197] Stutz had argued that *Eigenkirchen* and *Eigenklöstern*—that is, churches and monasteries that were controlled by their proprietors as private property rather than by bishops—were a 'Germanic' innovation, derived from the religious and legal customs of 'Germanic' people. Herwegen made similar claims about *pacta*, which he identified as a 'Germanic' legal form.[198]

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[196] Bede, *Epistula ad Egbertum* [=*Ep.* 2], 11-12, ed. C. Plummer, *Venerabilis Bedae opera historica*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1896), i, pp. 405-23, at pp. 414-16. For discussion: J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 101-8.

[197] I. Herwegen, *Das Pactum des hl. Fruktuosus von Braga. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des suevish-westgothischen Mönchtums und seines Rechtes* (Stuttgart, 1907). Stutz wrote the foreword.

[198] On this scholarship, see above, pp. 13-15.

The 'Germanist' thesis has been roundly rejected, but a modified idea of 'pactualism' remains central to scholarship on Gallaecian monastic life.[199] Certainly, it does seem that Gallaecia saw monastic forms that were less focussed on abbatial authority and based more on reciprocal agreements between those entering the monastery. It is unclear how distinct this was from other forms of monasticism, however. It makes more sense to concentrate on the brute fact that monasteries could have considerable independence from episcopal authority than it does to presume a novel legal form. This capacity for independence, as I have shown, can be traced right back to late Roman ascetic households and can be seen as far afield as eighth-century Northumbria: it requires no special explanation in terms of 'Germanic' legal institutions. The basic structural fact of lay power is more important for our purposes than the apparent constitutional differences in Gallaecian monasticism.

An indication of the manner in which more independent lay-founded institutions could emerge comes in an enigmatic text known as the *Consensoria monachorum* (or sometimes *Regula consensoria monachorum*). This speaks of the formation of a monastic community of property in ways which seem relatively autonomous of higher institutional powers.[200] The text is a kind of *pactum* in the names of the monks in question, promising to share property and obey certain rules. Though there is an abbot, the text, which addresses proprietorial questions above all, reflects a mutual agreement of all in the community. It has been described, with some hyperbole, as 'radically collective and egalitarian'.[201] The *Consensoria* transmitted with the rules of Isidore and Basil, sometimes at the end in the same manner as the *pactum* appended to the *Regula communis*. It may, then, have functioned as a *pactum*

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[199] The key reference point is C.J. Bishko, 'The pactual tradition in Hispanic monasticism', in *idem*, *Spanish and Portuguese Monastic History*, ch. I, pp. 1-43.

[200] *Consensoria monachorum*, ed. J.P. Migne, PL, 66 (Paris, 1866), cols 993-6. See C.J. Bishko, 'The date and nature of the Spanish *Consensoria monachorum*', repr. with additional material in *idem*, *Spanish and Portuguese Monastic History*, ch. II, pp. 377-99.

[201] C.J. Bishko, 'The pactual tradition', p. 9.

intended for use alongside a rule or set of rules reflecting a different kind of monastic life.[202] Nonetheless, the regulations seem to bring us close to the way in which groups of laypeople could, with relative autonomy, found a monastic community and become monks, via mutual agreement. Texts of this kind display the means by which communities could be established and private property effaced on the local level. Without accepting the thesis of 'village monasteries', we can recognize that certain laypeople—presumably those of significant enough means—could pool property into monastic foundations through their own agency. In spite of canonical injunctions, these need not have tight connections to wider networks of episcopal power or to any monastic federation. In cenobitic, as well as solitary forms, ascetic life could operate in relative independence from episcopal authority and the forces of homogenization.

V. CONCLUSION

Writing at the beginning of the 1970s, Juan Gil presented Valerius as indicative of a radical transformation in Visigothic society—'the correlate in the spiritual [realm] to the incipient feudalism in the political'. Valerius' works, Gil said, would have been incomprehensible in Isidore's time.[203] My own account is different on both fronts. Firstly, I do not accept that Valerius represents a chronologically posterior kind of religious life to Isidore, or one marked by decline, the disintegration of political structures, or 'feudalization'. Instead, I have put Valerius' world and ideas into dialogue with Isidore's. If Valerius represents the extreme end of an asceticism detached from institutional fixity, there were many others who partook in similar ascetic thought while occupying less radical positions. Ascetic ideals were fought over by different authorities with different visions of power and spirituality. We have to

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[202] Herwegen, *Das Pactum*, pp. 71-9, gives an equivocal statement of this case.
[203] J. Gil, 'Judíos y cristianos en la Hispania del siglo VII', *Hispania Sacra*, 30 (1977), pp. 9-110, p. 84: '[el] correlato en lo espiritual del incipiente feudalismo en lo político'.

avoid falling into the self-justificatory claims to uniquely uncompromising spirituality given in texts like the *Vita Fructuosi* or Valerius' works: the basic ideals and tensions inherent in ascetic life were felt across the spectrum of ascetics and clerics, albeit in highly divergent institutional contexts. The basic tension between the ideal of the desert and the necessity of institutions and structures of governance existed across Hispania, and was negotiated in various overlapping ways. Gallaecia may well have known a particularly rich and diverse ascetic culture, but we also have a particular preponderance of texts from this region. Diversity likely reigned everywhere, in both communal and solitary modes of ascetic life.

Secondly, I have argued against the idea that Valerius and his milieu, which operated with an ambiguous, sometimes adversarial, relationship to the clerical hierarchy and cenobitic institutions, was a symptom of a disintegration in clerical power, equivalent to the 'feudalization' of wider society. Instead, these figures should be understood as evidence for long-standing ascetic practices which were, to some degree, continuous with the independence afforded to the lay religious vocations of some elite late Roman Christians. The spirituality of Prudentius, writing poetry on his country estate in his leisured retirement, was of course very different to Valerius'. But both men reflect in different ways the manner in which individuals could operate at arm's length from institutional Christian forms, with a high degree of individual agency. Valerius' evocation of Egeria illustrates particularly neatly the manner in which he saw his own vocation as continuous with earlier non-institutional ascetic practices. It was episcopal power, and the pretensions of church councils and monastic regulations that were the novel force, changing the eco-system of ascetic life by trying to enforce fixity, institutionalization, and submission to episcopal authority. This was resisted by some. In the seventh century, the wandering ascetic Mauricius argued for independence from the bishop Agapius by arguing for a limited account of pastoral power. 'The good pastor', he said, 'only approaches the lost sheep': wandering ascetics are by no

means 'lost', but live a life of rigorous self-denial necessarily apart from others.[204] The episcopal assertion of authority over such asceticism doubtless had its effects in some places, but there were always parallel traditions existing, to a greater or lesser extent, independently from the exigencies of the political centre.

[204] *Ep. Wis.*, 17, p. 46: *Supplex itaque peto ut iam erroneas quas tibi uidentur oues minime lacesses, quia pastor bonus non uenit nisi ad oues perditas et suo eas reportans gremio gregi admiscuit.*

CONCLUSION

The Visigothic kingdom came to an abrupt end in the years after 711. In a context of domestic factional conflict brought about by the contested election of Roderic as Visigothic king, Arab and Berber forces crossed from Africa into Hispania under the military leadership of Tariq.[1] Christian sources from the eighth century recorded the end of Visigothic political power in catastrophist terms. The so-called *Crónica mozárabe de 754*, written by a Christian cleric living under Islamic rule, recorded the arrival of Arab forces in brutal, highly rhetorical language:

> Who can relate such perils? Who can enumerate such grievous disasters? Even if every limb were transformed into a tongue, it would be beyond human capacity to express the ruin of Spain and its many and great evils.[2]

Added to this catastrophism was a moralizing element. The progress of Arab invasion has come at a time of factional strife and decline. That the formerly prosperous city of Zaragoza lay open to violence, famine, and enslavement was, we are told, by *iudicium Dei*.[3] To the Mozarabic chronicler, the invasion was not only a military disaster but a providential one, echoing apocalyptic signs from scripture.[4] Medieval apocalypticism was nothing new. The end of Roman power had been greeted with apocalyptic expectation, too, in Hydatius of Chaves' Gallaecian *Chronica*, for example.[5] Yet, unlike these prior ruptures, 711 came to occupy the central place in the Spanish national story, marking *la perdida de España* which *la*

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[1] For the narrative history: R. Collins, *Early Medieval Spain: Unity in Diversity, 400-1000* (London, 1983), pp. 146-82; more detailed: A. García Sanjuán, *La conquista islámica de a península Ibérica y la tergiversación del pasado. Del catastrofismo al negacionismo* (Madrid, 2013).

[2] *Chronica anni 754*, 51-5, quote at 55, p. 72: *Quis enim narrare queat tanta pericula? Quis dinumerare tam inportuna naufragia? Nam si omnia menbra uerterentur in linguam, omnino nequaquam Spanie ruinas uel eius toth tantaque mala dicere poterit humana natura*; trans. Wolf, *Conquerors*, p. 108.

[3] *Chronica anni 754*, 54.

[4] *Chronica anni 754*, 55.

[5] R.W. Burgess, *Hydatius: A Late Roman Chronicler in Post-Roman Spain. An Historiographical Study and New Critical Edition of the Chronicle*, 2 vols (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1988), i, pp. 155-93.

Reconquista would later 'restore'. The moralistic interpretation stuck, too, rendering the later Visigoths a cautionary tale in the consequences of decadence.[6]

Scholarship on the end of the Visigothic kingdom has long been haunted by the spectre of decline. In the national mythology, 711 was a locus of national trauma. As such, it was also a locus for the kind of soul-searching which acquired particular resonance with the final loss of Spanish colonial possessions in the Americas and Philippines in 1898.[7] Thus, in the search for an explanation for the Islamic conquest, an acute case of decline and disintegration was diagnosed in the later Visigothic kingdom. The sources certainly lend help in this interpretation—Valerius of Bierzo speaks of a very different context to Isidore of Seville; the febrile royal laws against Jews and runaway slaves reached a rhetorical pitch that provides ample material to support historians' sense of looming catastrophe.[8] Opponents of this narrative, notably Roger Collins, have sought to rehabilitate the later kingdom, pointing out that, the shrill rhetoric of the laws aside, much of its trajectory was not dissimilar to that which can be discerned in other regions of the former Roman world.[9]

While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the events around 711 in any detail, it is illuminating to think about how the analysis of Suevic and Visigothic Iberia given in the previous chapters relates to the world beyond 711. Christianity remained the dominant religion in the culture of Hispania, at least in the shorter term, even as the large majority of the peninsula fell under Umayyad rule. Christian institutions remained, without the supporting structure of the Visigothic state. In the north of the peninsula, new Christian kingdoms emerged. While grand councils were no longer held, the baseline activity of Christian life continued, as it always had, away from central state power. Source material for

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[6] On the historiography of 711 see esp. García Sanjuán, *La conquista islámica*, pp. 27-147; Linehan, *History and the Historians*, pp. 51-94.

[7] On narratives of national decline: H. Rawlings, *The Debate on the Decline of Spain* (Manchester, 2012).

[8] The classic modern example is: L.A. García Moreno, *El fin del reino visigodo de Toledo: decadencia y catástrofe. Una contribución a su crítica* (Madrid, 1975).

[9] Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, esp. pp. 144-5.

the immediate aftermath of 711 is not easy to come by, but in the loosely organized northern kingdoms of the ninth and tenth centuries, surviving charters give us a sense of the local administration of Christian institutions. Wendy Davies has identified a weak episcopal structure and a highly heterogenous set of religious institutions. Charters tell of *monasteria* in which families live together and no formal rule is evident, and of churches bought and sold by laypeople as private properties, sometimes even owned and traded in fractions.[10] Using charter evidence of a richness and granularity unparalleled in the Suevic and Visigothic periods, scholars of the ninth and tenth centuries are able to draw a picture of religion in society in which property and religious authority are inextricably linked and lay and clerical power are deeply intertwined. How are we to relate this world to that of Isidore or the Visigothic canons?

One answer is to see the post-Visigothic world as a fragmented one, dramatically fallen from the heights of Isidorian legalism and ecclesiastical power. For some twentieth-century scholars of the Visigothic church this is precisely what any evidence of private, proprietorial power entailed—a fall into a world of 'feudal' relations, in which the originally 'public' structure of 'the church' had collapsed into a series of churches ruled uncanonically by private lords. This was the argument of Gonzalo Martínez Díez, the notable historian and canonist, who claimed that lay proprietary control over churches was unknown in the legalistic and well-ordered Visigothic church: proprietary churches emerged only 'in the ashes

[10] See, respectively: W. Davies, 'Where are the parishes? Where are the minsters? The organization of the Spanish church in the tenth century', in D. Rollason, C. Leyser, and H. Williams (eds), *England and the Continent in the Tenth Century: Studies in Honour of Wilhelm Levison (1876-1947)* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 379-97, at pp. 386-8; *eadem*, *Acts of Giving: Individual, Community, and Church in Tenth-Century Christian Spain* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 36-64, esp. pp. 42-4 (note that many of the transactions showing lay ownership were transfers of churches or monasteries *out* of lay hands—a particularly common occurrence through the tenth century: see pp. 50-2, 61-4).

of the Visigothic state' when the church was 'battered and maimed of its central organs, the councils, by the Islamic invasion'.[11]

As I hope to have made clear, however, any such position presumes too much of 'the Visigothic church' as an institution. In the preceding chapters I have shown that the Suevic and Visigothic periods can be viewed in much more de-centralized ways. These societies were not unproblematically Christian from top to bottom. The governing centres of each was Christianized and, after their respective conversions, Nicene in confession. The Suevic kingdom does not evince a clear attempt to root royal legitimacy in Nicene Christian terms, but it does show an institutional interaction between the episcopal and royal structures of power. The Visigothic kingdom, by contrast, adopted a highly assertive politics of orthodoxy as the grounding of its rule—manifest particularly in the concerted anti-Jewish measures of the seventh century. Through the legal evidence, both societies appear to have strong ecclesiastical structures, well supported by royal power. Against this impression, the world described by Wendy Davies appears profoundly different. But this impression is misleading.

We cannot understand the wider religious culture of either kingdom solely through a top-down analysis of ecclesiastical government. Religion did not just trickle down from the top. The religious cultures of Iberian laypeople were highly heterogeneous. Alongside the kind of Christianity preached by clerics, we have to understand the more syncretic worlds that existed within and apart from the formal structures of Christianity—the world disclosed in its denunciation by Martin of Braga, or in *defixiones* and 'magical' objects, as well as the quite different world of independently minded asceticism described by Valerius of Bierzo. Even among the Christian authorities who provide our written sources, highly divergent

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11 G. Martínez Díez, *El patrimonio eclésiastico en la España visigoda*, (Comillas, 1959), p. 71: 'podríamos afirmar que la Iglesia visigoda no conoció la "iglesia propia", y que ésta solo pudo brotar en España sobre las cenizas del estado visigodo, y de una Iglesia maltrecha u mutilada de sus órganos centrales, los concilios, por la invasión agarena'.

visions of the Christian community are in evidence. For every attempt to yoke Christian life to the polity, there were figures like Valerius, whose ecclesiological sensibilities were far more elitist and less civic, or lay founders, whose institutions often had highly ambiguous relationships to the structures of the episcopal networks that made up what we often think of as 'the church'. Christianity could be sundered from state structures, as it was after 711, but it could not be divorced from the structures of the society in which it existed. The bonds inherent in the latter were more fundamental—indeed, they were constitutive.

Recent scholarship on the socio-economic and archaeological history of the Iberian Peninsula has tended to argue for long-term transformations rather than a short, sharp shock in 711. This is true for the history of Christianity, too. A number of churches formerly presumed to be Visigothic have been redated to the Mozarabic period in recent decades following the work of Luis Caballero Zoreda and others.[12] The emergence of local churches, relating perhaps to the agency of peasant communities, has been traced across the *longue durée* in northern Iberia, in tandem with long-term shifts in settlement patterns.[13] Doing so helps us decentre the dominating presence of Visigothic state formation in the extant sources and prior historiography.

This has a particular import for how we think about the history of Iberian Christianity and its institutional forms. The mainstream narrative runs as follows: 'the church' institutionalizes steadily through the sixth and seventh centuries, reaching a high point in the 'Isidorian' period, before falling into a more confused position in the later Visigothic period; the later period is marked by greater centralization on Toledo but weaker control and uniformity in the peripheries. There is much to be recommended in this—the

[12] For a summary see his reflections in 'A propósito del Centenario del 711. Apuntes sobre método de la Arqueología de la Arquitectura', *Anales de Historia del Arte*, 22, núm. especial, II (2012), pp. 101-30.

[13] J.A. Quirós Castillo, 'Pertenecer y diferenciarse. Iglesias "locales" y agencia campesina en el noroeste de la Península Ibérica', *Studia Historica—Historia Medieval*, 38/2 (2020), pp. 117-52.

alignment of ecclesiastical and royal power after the Third Council of Toledo undoubtedly had a significant impact on bishops' political role and the prominence of ecclesiastical institutions like councils and canon law. At the same time, I have shown that we can think about lay power within ecclesiastical matters in more continuous terms, and this flattens the 'Isidorian' high point somewhat. Indeed, a distribution of power between lay and clerical figures was present in the very logic of early seventh-century canonical reform. Clerical power was not just discussed in legalistic terms but also as an issue of moral repute and probity before the wider public. At the Fourth Council of Toledo—the Isidorian council *par excellence*—bishops' prerogatives over religious entities in their diocesan territory were limited via a moralizing language of restraint. Lay foundations were protected against the incursions of bishops, and the latter were charged with frequently succumbing to the disorderly passion of avarice.[14]

This moral understanding of office, indebted to late Roman notions of office and *honor*, was dedicated to restraining bishops as much as it was to asserting their power—it was a discourse which recognized that bishops were at least informally accountable to those over whom they exercised pastoral authority, and sought to make them unimpeachable men of honour rather than unrestrained authorities jealously claiming a monopoly in matters of religion. The extent to which bishops operated among rival or simply alternate sources of power, including religious power, should not be underestimated. Our sources tell us far more about ecclesiastical government than they do about the king's agents or civic authorities, and they tell us even less about private aristocratic power, though it remained important throughout the period. Lay powers need not always be thought of in radically different ways to their clerical counterparts. They certainly need not be seen as illegitimate or 'foreign' to

[14] IV Toledo, c. 33 (Coll. Hisp. V, pp. 220-1).

ecclesiastical structures: they were an essential part of the distributed authority in religious matters than defined the Christian culture of the period.

Religious authority was always wielded in a local context, among local actors, lay and clerical, who each had their own interests. The ecclesiastical establishment was not merely one element of a generic elite, indistinct aside from the fact of ordination from the laity. But nor is it easy to speak of 'the church' in unified terms, as if it represented a single entity, separate from lay society, stretching across the territory of Hispania and beyond. In paying a greater attention to lay agency, and to the vagueness that characterized the divides between certain lay ascetics and formal monastics, or canonical penitents and other fervent Christians, we can call into question the very idea of 'the church' as it often appears in historiography. It makes sense to speak of the spread of Christianity, to be sure—although its spread was neither as fast as some presume, nor as uniform in its content as clerics wished. It also makes sense to speak of the institutionalization of ecclesiastical life, as the corpus of canons was enlarged and conciliar practice became more institutionalized. Yet, we do a profound disservice to the Christian culture of the period if we reduce it to the world and imagination of formal ecclesiastical actors. Furthermore, we make it harder to see continuity in local religious worlds as they developed through the period covered in this thesis and beyond. While the written sources do not train our eye on local matters, the place of the Suevic and Visigothic kingdoms in the history of Iberian Christianity is better understood if we appreciate how the normative and literary sources speak of more fragmented and diverse religious worlds than we are accustomed to suppose. The literary sources need not be read only as testament to centralization but, as I hope to have shown, they can be understood anew against this more fragmented backdrop.

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