

Inimica amicitia

Friendship and the notion of exclusion in early
Christian Latin literature



Adrian Brändli
Lincoln College
University of Oxford

A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Michaelmas 2016

Abstract

This thesis discusses the notion of *amicitia* in early Christian literature. By examining letters and normative texts ranging from the third to the early fifth century, the study illuminates not only how contemporary authors shaped friendship conceptually but also how these concepts relate to the actual social practice. Typically, scholars confine their reading of Christian friendship to the late antique period. In so doing, they approach *amicitia* either as a particular kind of relationship performing crucial social functions or as a subject for theorization that followed the example of a longstanding ancient philosophical tradition. Particularly influential has been the view that links *amicitia* with affection and love. Hence, scholars tend to stress the inclusiveness of friendship. By contrast, my own study focuses on the aspect of exclusion as the necessary by-product of social inclusion processes. Along these lines, *amicitia* is described as existing in a dialectical opposition with its antonym, *inimicitia*.

This approach yielded a number of insights. First, as the study moves into uncharted territory, the examination of third century texts highlights a tradition of *amicitia*-related thought that reached further back than has previously been assumed. From this, a more nuanced picture of friendship emerges that is not constrained by scholarly established boundaries between different fields of study. Second, the principle of inclusion and exclusion, dividing the world into *amici* and *inimici*, has been revealed as a powerful tool in church politics and religious controversy that established sharp boundaries between competing Christian factions. This view, which posits the truth of faith as the necessary prerequisite for friendship, is set off against other contemporary voices that did not make *amicitia* dependent on a particular religious group affiliation. Third, while disentangling friendship from the question of love, the character of Christian *amicitia* is viewed against the backdrop of the divine household. Though the conceptual overlap between friendship and kinship is not unique to the Christian tradition, such thinking ties in with an idea of community that builds on the paternity of God.

These findings have implications for both the study of ancient friendship and the history of the early church. They improve our understanding of the relation between the conceptualization of *amicitia* and the actual social practice and moreover offer a deep insight into the social dynamics of contemporary religious controversies.

Abbreviations

For Christian and late antique sources, I followed the conventions of the *Lexikon der Antiken Christlichen Literatur* (LACL). Classical authors and their works are referred to following the guidelines of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (OCD). Abbreviations for periodical titles are given according to the *L'Année Philologique* (AP).

AL	Cornelius Mayer (ed.), <i>Augustinus-Lexikon</i> , Basel 1986-
CAH	The Cambridge Ancient History, Cambridge 1970-
CCSL	<i>Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina</i> , Turnhout 1954-
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> , Berlin 1863-
CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> , Vienna 1866-
DNP	Der neue Pauly, Stuttgart 1996-
EAH	R. Bagnall et al. (eds.), <i>Blackwell Encyclopedia of Ancient History</i> , Oxford 2013.
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte, Leipzig/Berlin 1897-
ILS	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> , ed. H. Dessau, Berlin 1892-1916.
PL	<i>Patrologia cursus completus, Series Latina</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne, Paris 1844-1890.
PLRE	A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, J. Morris (eds.), <i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , vol. I: AD 260-395, Cambridge 1971.
RAC	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, Stuttgart 1950-
SC	Sources Chrétiennes, Paris 1942-

Table of contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 The legacy of Cicero	5
1.2 The biblical evidence	12
1.3 Reading Christian friendship	20
1.4 Chapter outline	27
2. An age of experiment: divine kinship in early Christian Latin literature	31
2.1 Perpetua and the paternity of God	35
2.2 Tertullian and the community of brothers	50
2.3 Lactantius and the notion of divine kinship	60
3. <i>Unitas fraternitatis</i> : brothers and enemies in Cyprian of Carthage	76
3.1 Ecclesial unity and Christian love	78
3.2 Turning brothers into enemies	94
3.3 Stephen, the friend of heretics	110
4. <i>Amicitia cum fratribus</i> : Ambrose of Milan and the power of friends	119
4.1 Friendship and the truth of faith in the <i>De officiis</i>	122
4.2 Friends and brothers	135
4.3 Friendship in action	155
5. <i>Amicitia mundi</i> : the complexity of friendship in late antiquity	169
5.1 Classical friendship in late antiquity: Symmachus and Ausonius	172
5.2 Competing models of friendship: Ausonius and Paulinus	191
6. <i>Inimica amicitia</i> : Christian friendship and religious conviction	216
6.1 Friendship and community in Augustine	217
6.2 Friends united by faith: Paulinus and Severus	232
6.3 Declaring enmity: Jerome and Rufinus	244
7. Conclusion	267
8. Bibliography	279
8.1 Primary sources	279
8.2 Translations	288
8.3 Literature	290

1. Introduction

In the late 380s, bishop Ambrose of Milan famously pointed to the need for cohesion in the church. Specifically, he highlighted friendship as the main model able to achieve such unity. While directly addressing the members of the clerical body, he encouraged the pursuit of friendly relations: ‘take good care of the friendship you have entered into with your brothers (*initam cum fratribus amicitiam*); in the whole range of human life there is nothing more wonderful than this (*nihil est ... pulchrius*).’ Following this, he construed the friend as ‘another self’ (*alter*) whose friendship was making one out of two (*ut unum velis fieri ex duobus*).¹ The whole passage is fundamentally steered by a decidedly Ciceronian perspective. For one thing, Ambrose takes his cues directly from Cicero’s *De officiis*, the professed model of his identically named work and obvious starting point for the discussion of friendship. But his indebtedness to classical literature runs much deeper than that. Apart from the connection to the *De officiis*, the bishop also hinted at a number of themes that are characteristic of the dialogue *Laelius*, Cicero’s principal work on friendship. In particular, this concerns Ambrose’s description of *amicitia* as the single most beautiful thing in human life, which very much reminds us of Cicero’s diction.² Also the idea of the second self can similarly be found in the *Laelius*, though the image ties in with a wider theme in the ancient friendship discourse.³ At the same time, however, Ambrose’s presentation of friendship was equally indebted to the Christian literary tradition. His insistence that *amicitia* was to be achieved within the clerical body of brothers (*cum fratribus*) is reminiscent of the flowery use of kinship imagery in biblical writings.⁴ Moreover, the

¹ Ambr. *Off.* 3.132; 134.

² Cic. *Amic.* 20: ... *nihil melius homini sit a dis immortalibus datum*; 47: ... *nihil a dis immortalibus melius habemus, nihil iucundus*; cf. DAVIDSON 2001, 901.

³ Cic. *Amic.* 80: *verus amicus ... qui est tamquam alter idem*; 81: ... *ut efficiat paene unum ex duobus*; cf. DAVIDSON 2001, 903 who points to Aristotle and the Stoics for the notion of the second self.

⁴ For the prevalence of such language in the biblical writings see for instance MEEKS 1983, 85-94.

bishop felt the need to point out that it was Christ himself who ‘has given us the pattern of friendship (*formam amicitiae*) we should follow.’ By evoking the example of Jesus, who is said to have referred to the disciples as his friends, Ambrose claimed the *forma amicitiae* to be a divine gift rather than a human invention.⁵ He thus turned to Scripture as the main authoritative voice for his claim.

This association of two distinct literary traditions is characteristic of Ambrose’s conception of friendship in the *De officiis*. Unsurprisingly, as a Roman Christian, the bishop moved about different worlds of thought. The classics of the Graeco-Roman culture belonged to his repertoire as well as the literature of the Judaeo-Christian world. Starting from this observation, it is the aim of this thesis to describe and comprehend the incorporation of *amicitia*-related thought into Christian discourse by taking into account both traditions.⁶ On the one hand, I will show how Christian authors developed their own concepts of friendship in close dialogue with Scripture and the classical heritage. On the other hand, I investigate the ways in which their respective thinking translated into the actual practice of friendship. In so doing, my study seeks to bridge methodological boundaries that divide historically oriented investigations interested in the reconstruction of past events from literary analyses, which consider language and discourse as the main areas of their expertise. This divide becomes particularly obvious if we consider the previous scholarship on the subject at hand. For one thing, studies have often focused on the conceptualization of individual friendship in Christian literature. While some scholars

⁵ Ambr. *Off.* 3.136: *Dedit formam amicitiae quam sequamur ...* (with reference to John 15:14-15); cf. DAVIDSON 2001, 904.

⁶ I use the English abstract noun friendship and its derivatives as the closest equivalent to Latin *amicitia*, knowing that the meaning of any given word or concept in a given language can never entirely be the same as the most comparable term of another language. Consequently, I confine my reading of early Christian texts to Latin literature. Scholars usually tend to tacitly equate *amicitia* with *φιλία* despite the cultural differences that were involved. For the problem of equation in general see WILLIAMS 2012, 26-35 who, among other things, points to the markedly wider scope of *φιλία* in comparison to *amicitia*. See also STEINBERGER 1955 and KLEIN 1957 who both explore the differences between Roman and Greek friendship conceptions.

paid particular attention to the theme of intimacy and emotional attachment in the relevant sources, others examined normative texts with a view to their foundation in ancient philosophical thought. By way of comparison, they determined the ways in which Christian conceptions departed from corresponding non-Christian views.⁷ In this context, it was particularly the writings of Augustine that were assigned a crucial role in the incorporation of a pagan ideal of friendship into a Christian frame.⁸ Other scholars have taken a markedly different approach. Rather than focusing on the history of ideas, they investigated the role that friendship played in society. In so doing, they produced a wealth of prosopographical and network-based studies that underscore the importance of interpersonal relations for the late antique period. For the main part, these investigations direct their attention to individual Christian or non-Christian authors and their participation in socially and politically relevant networks.⁹ Both schools of thought contributed immensely to our understanding of the history and culture of the later Roman Empire and also the relation of Christianity with the classical past. But while the former approach has a tendency to neglect the historical context in which friendship conceptions were developed, the latter lacks the analytical tool to connect the insights about the social dynamics of friendship-based networks to the world of ideas. In contrast, my own contribution attempts to overcome these shortcomings by combining the literary approach with a thorough contextualization of the considered texts.

⁷ Amongst others FABRE 1949; VISCHER 1953, 173-200; MCGUIRE 1988, 38-90; LIENHARD 1990, 279-296; WHITE 1992; PIZZOLATO 1993, 215-338; KONSTAN 1996, 97-113; KONSTAN 1997, 149-173; CONYBEARE 2000, 60-90; CARMICHAEL 2004, 1-69.

⁸ See for instance MCNAMARA 1958; MONAGLE 1971, 81-92; PIZZOLATO 1974, 203-215; DIDEBERG 1975; BRECHTKEN 1975; GEERLINGS 1981, 265-274; MCEVOY 1986, 40-92; VAN BAVEL 1987, 59-72; LIENHARD 1990, 279-296; WHITE 1992, 185-217; CASSIDY 1992, 127-140; PIZZOLATO 1993, 296-319; CLARK 1996, 217-229; KIESEL 2008; VANDER VALK 2009, 125-146; JAEGER 2010, 185-200.

⁹ See the path breaking study of MATTHEWS 1975 on Symmachus, which should be read together with MATTHEWS 1974. Following his footsteps, many studies have appeared that highlighted the significance of *amicitia*-based networks in late antiquity. For Symmachus see BRUGGISSER 1993; SOGNO 2006, 59-89. For Ausonius see SIVAN 1993; COSKUN 2002B. For Jerome see CLARK 1992; REBENICH 1992; CONRING 2002; CAIN 2009. For Paulinus see TROUT 1999; MRATSCHEK 2002. For Ambrose see LIZZI 1989 and 1990; MCLYNN 1994, 252-290; FREND 1998. For Augustine see BROWN 2000, *passim*; MORGENSTERN 1993.

Chronologically, the thesis covers a timespan of about two hundred years stretching from the early third to the early fifth century. Students of Roman history tend to deal with these periods separately, which is in line with a scholarly established boundary that distinguishes between imperial Rome and late antiquity. Studies on Christian *amicitia* would therefore usually start their discussion of the relevant sources with Ambrose before laying particular emphasis on the works of Augustine.¹⁰ By contrast, my own contribution focuses on the transitional period between the third and the fourth century along with the socio-political transformation processes that it entailed. These centuries were crucial to the history of the church as Christianity moved from an illicit religious sect to a powerful force, which gradually gained access to the highest circles of the late Roman society. Commonly, this development is associated with the reign of Constantine and the legislation of subsequent emperors who promoted the Christian faith.¹¹ At the outset of the considered period, we find authors like Tertullian, Cyprian, and Lactantius who were the first to establish a Christian Latin literature that was to merge the intellectual world of the Roman Empire with the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Nonetheless, it was only with the second half of the fourth century, that our sources begin to flow more generously. In a relatively short period of time, from the 370s to the 430s, a number of key figures like Ambrose and Augustine emerge that testify to the church's growing self-confidence in a changed world. Along these lines, my discussion will centre on normative texts such as Cyprian's *De ecclesiae unitate*, Ambrose's *De officiis*, or Augustine's *Contra Academicos* as well as his letter to Marcianus (*Ep.* 253), which all develop

¹⁰ Consider the example of WHITE 1992 who begins examining Greek *φιλία* (Basil of Caesarea, Gregory Nazianzen, John Chrysostom, and Synesius of Cyrene) before going over to Latin *amicitia* (Ambrose, Jerome, Paulinus, the monastic tradition, and Augustine). Apart from brief references, the third century evidence is not taken into account (see for instance p. 3 where Clement of Alexandria and Minucius Felix are mentioned). Accordingly, chapter 3 argues that the classical concept of friendship did not make a lasting impact on Christianity until the fourth century.

¹¹ See recently GIRARDET 2006; VAN DAM 2007; BARNES 2011; BARDILL 2012.

specific themes of Christian communality that bear either implicit or explicit reference to the notion of *amicitia*. In addition to that, I also consider the surviving letter collections from this period, which are indicative of the social practices involved. While we are entirely reliant on the testimony of Cyprian for the third century, the late fourth century provides us with a wealth of epistolary literature. Apart from the letters of Ambrose, Jerome, Paulinus, and Augustine, we are moreover given voices outside the clerical ranks – e.g. the pagan aristocrat Symmachus and his Christian counterpart Ausonius – that put into perspective the views of the church.¹²

1.1 The legacy of Cicero

The most obvious starting point for any re-evaluation of friendship in the Latin speaking world was the writings of Cicero. This is probably best demonstrated by the example of Ambrose whose discussion of *amicitia* heavily relied on the treatise *De officiis* and the dialogue *Laelius*. But the bishop of Milan was not the first Christian author to use the Ciceronian body of thought for his own purposes. Already a century earlier, the North African apologist Arnobius famously noted that pagans would rather see Cicero's writings destroyed than stand back while Christians effectively employed his legacy to dismantle traditional values and beliefs.¹³ One of Arnobius' purported pupils, the rhetor Lactantius, was to prove this point as he made a name for himself as *Cicero Christianus*.¹⁴ In the late fourth century, there were then a number of Christian writers who, aside from Ambrose, drew on Cicero's works to shape novel ideas about friendship. Jerome, for instance,

¹² For an introduction to ancient epistolography see MORELLO 2007. Still useful is STOWERS 1986 who has a particular focus on Christian letters. For this study, I was not able to consult the new book on late antique letter collections by SOGNO/WATTS 2016 due to its late date of publication.

¹³ Arn. *Nat.* 3.7 with reference to Cicero's *De natura deorum*.

¹⁴ This title goes back to the Renaissance writer Pico della Mirandola whose assessment is reminiscent of Jer. *Ep.* 58.10. See KENDEFFY 2015, 56-92.

readily declared himself a ‘Ciceronian’ (*Ciceronianus*) whose neglect of Scripture in favour of pagan literature seems even to have caused him nightmares.¹⁵ Hence, Rufinus criticized his former friend for the extensive use of the Roman classics in his writings. Given Jerome’s preferences, it may then be no surprise that he responded to the accusations with a longer quote from the now lost oration *Pro Gabinio*, in which Cicero expanded on the theme of reconciliation among friends.¹⁶ Another willing recipient of Cicero’s views was Augustine who cited the relevant passages in several instances. In so doing, he showed a particular interest in his predecessors’ attempts to capture the very essence of *vera amicitia* – be it by drawing on *De inventione* or on the famous definition of friendship in the *Laelius*.¹⁷ Altogether, the wealth of references to Cicero in connection with a philosophical ideal of friendship in late antiquity suggests a high point in the reception of the corresponding literature. Yet the works of Lactantius – though not specifically dealing with the theme of friendship – show that the appreciation of the late Republican orator was by no means limited to the late fourth, early fifth centuries.

Cicero himself did not develop his ideas from scratch but relied on Greek conceptions περί φιλίας. Aulus Gellius claimed that he, while composing the *Laelius*, had used a now lost work of Theophrastus to tackle some of the more problematic issues concerning friendship. Other possible sources that were extensively discussed in scholarship include the stoic philosopher Panaetius and Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, though no specific model could be ascertained. Rather, Cicero shows a familiarity with the topic that enabled him to loosely draw on multiple sources.¹⁸ In one of his early works,

¹⁵ Jer. *Ep.* 22.30.

¹⁶ Ruf. *Apol. adv. Hier.* 2.7, which should be read together with Jer. *Adv. Ruf.* 1.1.

¹⁷ Aug. *Div. qu.*, q. 31 follows Cic. *Inv. rhet.* 2.166 to the letter. Aug. *Acad.* 3.6.13 and *Ep.* 258.1 cite Cic. *Amic.* 20.

¹⁸ Gell. 1.3 mentions Theophrast. All attempts at determining a single source have failed. STEINMETZ 1967 attempted to reconstruct Panaetius’ work on friendship from the evidence provided by the *Laelius*. See FÜRST 1996, 176-178 with further references.

the *De inventione*, the orator for the first time raised the question of friendship. Specifically, he was dealing with friendship in terms of its conflicting nature allowing for either an honourable course of action (*honestum*) or one that was steered by personal benefit (*utilitas*). In this context, he defined friendship as ‘a desire (*voluntas*) to do good to someone simply for the benefit of the person whom one loves (*diligit*), with a requital of the feeling on his part (*cum eius pari voluntate*).’ Cicero’s understanding presupposes some form of emotional attachment (*diligo*) as the necessary prerequisite for friendship. Ideally, such disposition translated into a habit of giving and receiving (that is, to do good with equal *voluntas*) on both sides of the parties involved. In this way, the practice of exchange could be seen as a friend’s continual confirmation of his intentions toward another man, and vice-versa. As for the question whether *amicitia* was to be sought for its own sake or because of the benefits that one was to earn from his friends, Cicero gave no definitive answer. Rather, he acknowledged the many opinions that had been associated with the dilemma, adding that this ‘is a matter to be considered at another time’.¹⁹ Cicero was taking up this unfinished train of thought in his late work. In the *De officiis*, friendship is presented as a particular case in which the conflict between *honestum* and *utilitas* came most pointedly to the fore. Cicero’s discussion proceeded from the observation that ‘obligations (*officia*) in the case of friendships are particularly complex’. He argued that apparent advantages such as public offices, riches, or sensual pleasures should not take precedence over *amicitia*. However, there were notable restrictions to the practice of friendship. To his mind, a ‘good man will never promote a friend’s interests to the detriment of the state (*contra rempublicam*) or in defiance of his oath or pledged word (*contra iusiurandum ac fidem*).’ Friendship was thus only permissible as long as it did not violate one’s allegiance to the state or cause a breach of oath or trust among friends. By implication, this meant that, if

¹⁹ Cic. *Inv. rhet.* 2.166-168.

‘dishonourable demands’ were being made, one’s moral obligation toward that which is honourable had to be placed before friendship.²⁰

Cicero’s considerations about the limits of friendship formed also an integral part of the *Laelius*, the orator’s principal work on friendship. Unlike the previously discussed passages, the dialogue presented a sustained philosophical argument to the reader that was primarily interested in the ‘stability of friendship’ (*stabilitas amicitiae*).²¹ The starting point is provided by the celebrated friendship between Gaius Laelius and P. Cornelius Scipio, which is compared to Cicero’s own relationship with T. Pomponius Atticus. The fictive dialogue takes place shortly after Scipio’s death and portrays Laelius participating in a conversation about friendship with Gaius Fannius and Q. Mucius Scaevola. In the process, Laelius raised the question of the limits of friendship, inviting his interlocutors to further discuss the issue of ‘how far love ought to go in friendship’ (*quatenus amor in amicitia progredi debeat*).²² This led to a longer monologue in two parts that culminated in behavioural norms that needed to be observed. The *lex amicitiae* – as Cicero called it – then required one to ask of and do for friends only that which is honourable. In so doing, his diction closely mirrored the discussion of the *De officiis*, stating that honourable men would never besiege ‘a friend for anything contrary to good faith (*contra fidem*) or to his solemn oath (*contra ius iurandum*), or inimical to the commonwealth (*contra rem publicam*).’ Along these lines, Cicero placed special emphasis on acts that bore the potential to overthrow the order of the Republic and instanced a number of examples from the Roman past that highlighted such criminal offence. In his view, then, men like Tiberius Gracchus, whose reforms of agrarian legislation spectacularly failed due to the Senate’s resistance, exhibited exactly the kind of irresponsible behaviour that one should not

²⁰ Cic. *Off.* 3.43-46.

²¹ Cic. *Amic.* 65 and 82. FÜRST 1996, 161-163 proposes the following thematic structure: while *Amic.* 26-32 was concerned with the question of the *ortus amicitiae*, the paragraphs 33-100 deal with the *stabilitas amicitiae*.

²² Cic. *Amic.* 36.

follow.²³ By contrast, if the stakes were lower, Cicero was even prepared to make concessions to a general rule that gave priority to *honestas* over friendship. Accordingly, he stated that ‘if by some chance the wishes of a friend are not altogether honourable and require to be forwarded in matters which involve his life or reputation, we should turn aside from the straight path.’ The implication here is that one ought to come to a friend’s aid even if, in a strict sense, *honestas* called for a different course of action. Such violation was however only permitted in cases where the expected consequences for the friend were grave while the damage to the honourable cause remained minimal. Hence, Cicero conceded that ‘there is a certain extent to which friendship can be granted pardon.’²⁴

Cicero’s readiness to make concessions to an otherwise strictly defined rule points to a prominent feature in the *Laelius* that has wider implications for the actual practice of friendship and its intellectual penetration. Not unlike the depiction in the *De officiis*, Laelius’ discourse is informed by a sharp distinction between what Cicero extolled as *vera amicitia* on the one hand, and what he dubbed ‘common friendships’ on the other.²⁵ Along these lines, the dialogue confronts a philosophically informed ideal of *amicitia* with the somewhat contradicting experiences that one was exposed to in Roman public life. This is already indicated in Cicero’s preface, where the ideal friendship between Laelius and Scipio is contrasted with the sudden breakup of Q. Pompeius Rufus and P. Sulpicius Rufus. Although these holders of high offices previously shared a close relationship that had been marked by affection (*coniunctissime et amantissime*), their parting eventually led to ‘deadly hatred’ (*capitali odio*).²⁶ The ‘essence of friendship’ (*vis amicitiae*), then, is captured

²³ Cic. *Amic.* 36-44.

²⁴ Cic. *Amic.* 45-61, here 61 (my own translation). There have been many attempts trying to explain away the overt contradiction that arises from the general rule at *Amic.* 44 and the exemption at *Amic.* 61. FÜRST 1996, 166-169 gives an overview about the proposed solutions.

²⁵ See Cic. *Off.* 3.45 and *Amic.* 22; 76 where Cicero distinguished between common (*communes amicitiae; vulgaris aut mediocris; vulgares amicitiae*) and true friendship (*sapientes viri perfectique; vera et perfecta; sapientia familiaritates*).

²⁶ Cic. *Amic.* 1-5. For the tension between the philosophical ideal and actual practice see HELDMANN 1976, 72-103 and FÜRST 1996, 147-165.

as ‘complete agreement’ (*summa consensio*) with regard to one’s desires (*voluntates*), inclinations (*studia*), and opinions (*sententiae*). Laelius moreover claimed that such unanimity of mind and practices was at the very heart of *nostra amicitia*, that is, his friendship with Scipio.²⁷ Cicero however supplemented this formulation with a second definition that attempted to grasp the true nature of *amicitia* with more precision: ‘friendship (*amicitia*) is nothing else than an accord in all things, human and divine (*omnium divinarum humanarumque rerum ... consensio*), conjoined with mutual goodwill and affection (*cum benevolentia et caritate*).’²⁸ Basically, two principles emerge from this line that are presented as the main constituents of friendship. First, *amicitia* involves emotional attachment and presupposes a corresponding conduct toward one’s friends, for which Cicero used the terms *benevolentia* and *caritas*. Secondly, the definition promotes the idea of unanimity that is given expression in the word *consensio* (alternatively, Cicero also used *concordia*²⁹). While the former concern the realm of feelings as well as the practical aspects that were indicative of friendly sentiments, the latter relates to one’s cognitive ability to achieve common ground among friends. Furthermore, Cicero’s description of such consensus as extending to the *res humana* and *divina* primarily built on the orator’s experiences in the political arena of Roman public life. The dialogue’s inherent focus on politics can not only be glimpsed from Cicero’s frequent use of examples from the glorious past of the Republic but it is also the implication of Laelius’ acknowledgment that he had always found ‘agreement on public questions’ (*de republica consensus*) in his friend Scipio.³⁰

²⁷ Cic. *Amic.* 15: ... *id in quo omnes vis est amicitiae, voluntatem studiorum sententiarum summa consensio.*

²⁸ Cic. *Amic.* 20: *est enim amicitia nihil aliud nisi omnium divinarum humanarumque rerum cum benevolentia et caritate consensio.*

²⁹ For instance at Cic. *Amic.* 23: *vis amicitiae concordiaeque.* For the terminology involved see HELLEGOUARC’H 1963, 125-127.

³⁰ Cic. *Amic.* 103, which stands in marked contrast to the mention of the *inproborum consensio* (43) earlier in the dialogue.

Crucial to the understanding of the dialogue as whole is Cicero's own recognition that *amicitiae* do often not live up to the high standards that were set by the friendship of Laelius and Scipio. In the course of the conversation, the initial assertion that 'real friendships are eternal' (*verae amicitiae sempiternae sunt*) was hence being contested by Cicero's observation that, in many instances, friendly relations resulted in 'everlasting enmities' (*odia sempiterna*).³¹ In this context, Laelius felt himself reminded of a saying by Scipio who mentioned that 'nothing was harder than for a friendship to continue to the very end of life.' Along the way, there were many obstacles that could bring *amicitiae* to an end – be it that a friendship ceased to be beneficial, that one's views regarding the Republic did not concur, or that a sudden change of character occurred. According to Cicero, difficulties often arose from rivalry over a bride or contest for some advantage. In particular, he highlighted the threat that was posed by the struggle for office and honour. It was exactly in such instances that even the 'worthiest of men' frequently got enmeshed in 'deadliest enmities' (*inimicitias maximas*) even if they arose between 'dearest friends' (*inter amicissimos*).³² To avoid the disruptive effects of open hostility, Cicero offered valuable advice. If possible everything should be done to prevent the parting of friends (*amicorum discidia*) but if a separation seems inevitable, it was certainly better to see friendships 'quenched' (*extinctae*) rather than to have them 'overthrown' (*oppressae*). For, in such cases, one ran the real risk that *amicitiae* turned into 'serious enmities' (*in gravis inimicitias convertant*).³³ Elsewhere, Cicero used a very similar phrasing stating that, if a change of character or inclinations, or a conflict over political views occurred, 'care must be taken lest it appear, not only that friendship has been put aside (*non solum amicitiae*

³¹ Compare Cic. *Amic.* 33 with paragraph 35. See also FÜRST 1996, 153 who saw here 'ein direkter, aus realer politischer Erfahrung gewonnener Widerspruch gegen die philosophische Theorie der Beständigkeit von Freundschaft unter Guten.'

³² Cic. *Amic.* 33-34.

³³ Cic. *Amic.* 78: *Quam ob rem primum danda opera est ne qua amicorum discidia fiant, sin tale aliquid evenit, ut extinctae potius amicitiae quam oppressae esse videantur. Cavendum vero ne etiam in gravis inimicitias convertant se amicitiae ex quibus iurgia maledicta contumeliae gignuntur.*

depositae), but that open hostility has been aroused (*sed etiam inimicitiae susceptae*).³⁴ These instances are indicative of Cicero's use of friendship language, reading them in conjunction with its antonym. The durability of *vera amicitia*, it seems, formed a marked contrast to the unavoidable experience of *inimicitiae*. Of course, this is not to say that all friendships were doomed to failure but the making of personal enemies was at least a possibility, with which one had to reckon, especially if he pursued a career in the public service. On a strictly semantic level, however, the drawing of contrasts is characteristic of Cicero's diction. Along these lines, he for instance acknowledged that the 'power of friendship and concord' (*vis amicitiae concordiaeque*) became visible only if it is properly compared to 'the results of enmity and disagreement' (*ex dissensionibus atque discordiis*).³⁵ To his mind, the mutual agreement (*consensio/concordia*) and affection (*benevolentia/caritas*) of true friendship thus formed a marked contrast to the opposite experience, which is indicated by terms like *dissensio*, *discordia*, and *odium*.

1.2 The biblical evidence

The other authoritative voice, to which Christian authors like Ambrose usually turned as a source for friendship, was Scripture. For a Roman, who was trained in classical literature, the intellectual world of this diverse body of Judaeo-Christian texts was not always instantly accessible. Some were struggling with the seemingly unrefined nature of these writings that, in comparison to the Graeco-Roman classics, lacked the rhetorical brilliance, to which the Roman elites were accustomed. At one time, Jerome for instance admittedly preferred reading Cicero and Plautus to the books of the prophets whose style

³⁴ Cic. *Amic.* 77: *Sin autem aut morum aut studiorum commutatio quaedam, ut fieri solet, facta erit, aut in rei publicae partibus dissensio intercesserit cavendum erit ne non solum amicitiae depositae, sed etiam inimicitiae susceptae videantur.*

³⁵ Cic. *Amic.* 23: *Id si minus intellegitur, quanta vis amicitiae concordiaeque sit, ex dissensionibus atque discordiis percipi potest.*

of writing he judged as ‘uncultivated’ (*incultus*). Likewise, the young Augustine, when he for the first time seriously considered the sacred texts, was disappointed conceding that they could not stand comparison to ‘the dignity of Cicero’ (*quam Tullianae dignitati compararem*). Eventually, the opinions of their younger selves did not persist as Jerome and Augustine both found ways to appreciate the biblical writings despite their underwhelming outer appearance. For the men that they came to be, then, the inner meaning preserving a hidden religious truth counted for more than matters of style.³⁶ Similarly, in the case of friendship, Scripture could not possibly compete with the analytical depth with which ancient philosophers penetrated the topic. After all, the main concern of the biblical texts was not ethics but to convey the divine message. Nevertheless, the sacred writings provided a number of cues that served as conceptual links between the classical and the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Ambrose’s reference to the divine roots of the *forma amicitiae* nicely illustrates the point in question. For the bishop’s thought establishes an inherent connection between Cicero’s discussion of friendship in the *De officiis* and the purported saying of Jesus about his relationship to the disciples. Along these lines, also other biblical passages could be used to think of friendship in Christian terms.

No other book in the Bible has as much to say about friendship as the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*. Altogether, the work comprises no less than nine pericopes about the topic, depicting friendly relations as a desirable, yet treacherous good. While the faithfulness among friends was seen as a highly laudable quality, Ben Sira also recommended caution in placing one’s trust in others. For, as it often happened, some eventually proved to be fair-weather friends, or even turned to enmity. The ‘faithful friend’ (φίλος πιστός; *amicus fidelis*) then formed a marked contrast to the commonly observed unfaithfulness among humans and was therefore seen as a ‘medicine of life’ (φάρμακον ζωῆς; *medicamentum vitae*)

³⁶ Jer. *Ep.* 22.30 and Aug. *Conf.* 3.5.9.

for all those who possessed the fear of God.³⁷ Unlike other biblical texts that do not usually elaborate on the topic, Ben Sira presented a coherent argument about friendship that was consistent with comparable Greek ideas. At the same time, the linkage of friendship with the notion of fear of God suggests a theological underpinning that merged Hellenistic views with Jewish beliefs.³⁸ Aside from these general reflections about the value and perils of friendship, the Hebrew Bible also provided a stock of concrete examples. Well-known are Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, who were trying to console Job in his misery. They are introduced as ‘the three friends of Job’ (οἱ τρεῖς φίλοι αὐτοῦ; *tres amici Iob*) and also the main protagonist himself related to them as ‘my friends’ (ὧ φίλοι; *amici mei*).³⁹ But Job’s comforters were far from being ideal friends. Rather than bringing relief to his misery, they were only adding to his desolate condition. The most famous friendship of all, then, was the one between David and Jonathan. As the story goes, Jonathan took David into his heart after the latter’s victory over the Philistine Goliath. In this context, it is twice said that Jonathan ‘loved (*dilexit; diligebat*) him as his own soul’ (*quasi animam suam*). This disclosure of true affection eventually resulted in the formation of a covenant (*foedus*) that was repeated on two other occasions.⁴⁰ Finally, after Jonathan’s death, David described the feelings of his deceased companion as ‘passing the love of a woman’ (ὄπερ ἀγάπησιν γυναικῶν; *super amorem mulierum*).⁴¹ Interestingly, their relationship is never described as ‘friendship’ in either the Latin or in the Greek rendering of the story (the Septuagint text omits the passage about their first encounter). Rather, further specifications like ‘as his own soul’ or ‘passing the love of a woman’ mark their

³⁷ Sir 6:16 and cf. 8-11 for the fear-weather friend and enmity. The nine pericopes are the following: Sir 6:5-17; 9:10-16; 12:8-12; 13:15-23; 19:13-17; 22:19-26; 25:1-11; 27:16-21; 37:1-6. In recent years, Ben Sira’s teaching on friendship received heightened attention. See for instance the collected articles in REITERER 1995 or CORLEY 2002.

³⁸ CORLEY 2002, esp. 213-218.

³⁹ Job 2:11; 19:21.

⁴⁰ 1 Sam 18:1-5. For the two other mentions of a covenant between David and Jonathan see 1 Sam 20:16 and 23:18.

⁴¹ 2 Sam 1:26.

relationship as particularly close. The description of Jonathan's relationship with David then strongly resonates with similar notions of Graeco-Roman provenance that saw in the friend a second self.⁴² Yet the construal of the biblical story as an ideal friendship goes back to later Christian authors who effectively employed the example of David and Jonathan to counter the most celebrated friendships of the Graeco-Roman tradition such as Achilles and Patroclus, or Laelius and Scipio.⁴³

Another recurrent theme in Scripture is friendship with God. The notion is distinct from interpersonal relationships as it projects earthly ties onto the divine in order to convey the idea of a particular closeness with the godhead.⁴⁴ Surprisingly few biblical figures were portrayed as friends of God. In the *Book of Wisdom*, the notion appears in connection with the possession of σοφία. Only those who acquired wisdom would eventually gain 'friendship with God' (πρὸς θεὸν ἐστείλαντο φιλίαν; *participes facti sunt amicitiae Dei*), thus making them 'friends of God and the prophets' (φίλους θεοῦ καὶ προφήτας; *amicos Dei et prophetas*).⁴⁵ In this regard, a passage in *Exodus* is of particular interest. Here, God is said to have spoken with Moses 'as a man speaks unto his friend' (πρὸς ἑαυτοῦ φίλον; *ad amicum suum*). Even though the prophet is not explicitly referred to as friend of God, the passage served as the starting point for the construal of their relationship in terms of friendship. This interpretation is supported by both the Greek and Latin text, which have the word φίλος and *amicus*, whereas the Hebrew features the rather shallow 'neighbour' or 'another'.⁴⁶ Beside Moses, Abraham also earned to be named friend of God. Famous is the corresponding reference in the *Epistle of James*, calling

⁴² Deut 13:6(7) mentions the friend along with a specifying 'who is as your own soul' (ὁ φίλος ὁ ἴσος τῆς ψυχῆς σου; *amicus quem diligis ut animam tuam*). The Hebrew text has the rather indifferent 'neighbour' instead. See PAESLACK 1954, 84.

⁴³ PAESLACK 1954, 97; TREU 1972, 424. See for instance Ambr. *Off.* 3.21.125.

⁴⁴ PETERSON 1923, 162-202 provides an overview of the theme in antiquity; cf. the critical annotations by KONSTAN 1996, 91-97.

⁴⁵ Wis 7:14 and 27.

⁴⁶ Ex 33:11; cf. Deut 34:10 and Num 12:8. See PAESLACK 1954, 83; TREU 1972, 424; TREU 1981, 1049.

Abraham φίλος θεοῦ.⁴⁷ The evidence in the Old Testament, by contrast, is inconclusive. While the Vulgate translation reads *amicus*, the Septuagint text features the verb ἀγαπάω instead to render Abraham’s relationship with God.⁴⁸ As this example demonstrates, the authors of the New Testament were also familiar with the notion of friendship with God. In their case, it was particularly the relationship with Christ that was attributed a special place. In John and Luke, for instance, Jesus is said to have referred to the disciples as ‘my friends’ (φίλοι μου; *amici mei*).⁴⁹ In other instances, the closeness was indicated by verbal constructions. The apostle John appears as the one ‘whom Jesus loved’ (ἐφίλει; *amabat*), and the betrayal of Judas is symbolically marked by a kiss (κατεφίλησεν; *osculatus est*).⁵⁰ Friendship with Jesus, however, was not viewed as any other ordinary relationship between humans. Based on the post-Easter experience which, in the eyes of his followers, revealed Jesus as the true Messiah, friendship with him was rather interpreted as the world-transcendent relationship to the Son of God.⁵¹ Following the model provided in the Bible, the notion widely disseminated among early Christians. Phrases like φίλος θεοῦ and *amicus Dei* were used as a title distinguishing the holder from his fellow co-religionists as being particularly close to God. Aside from biblical figures such as Moses, Abraham, and the disciples, it was the martyrs and confessors who, since the third century, were counted among the friends of God. Later, the notion was extended to ascetics and bishops who earned the title too.⁵²

⁴⁷ James 2:23.

⁴⁸ Jes 41:8; 2 Chr 20:7; Dan 3:35 has *dilectus tuus* instead of *amicus*. PETERSON 1923, 172 n. 2 moreover points to an alternative variant of Jes 41:8 in Origen’s *Hexapla*, which reads τοῦ φίλου μου rather than ἡγάπησα.

⁴⁹ John 15:12-15 and Luke 12:4.

⁵⁰ John 13:23; 20:2 and Matt 26:49-50 where Jesus calls Judas ‘friend’. While the Greek text gives ἑταῖρε, the Vulgate version reads *amicus*. Aside from the disciples, Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead, also appeared as one of his friends (John 11:11).

⁵¹ TREU 1972, 426; TREU 1981, 1051; WHITE 1992, 48f.

⁵² PETERSON 1923, 186-201. We can moreover adduce instances, in which all Christians or even all humans were being collectively referred to as friends of God (p. 198f.). Consider the addressee of Luke-Acts, Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). It can either be read as a general reference to the friends of God or as an actual name, which would still convey the desired meaning.

Despite these links, the notion of friendship appears not to have been particularly popular among the earliest Christian authors. In fact, the abstract noun *φιλία* occurs only once in all of the New Testament writings and here it has a markedly negative connotation, describing ‘friendship with the world’ (*φιλία τοῦ κόσμου; amicitia mundi*) as ‘enmity with God’ (*ἔχθρα τοῦ θεοῦ; inimica est Dei*). The word *φίλος*, on the other hand, appears more frequently, yet its use is almost exclusively limited to Luke-Acts and the Johannine literature.⁵³ Particularly striking is the lack of explicit friendship language in the Pauline corpus.⁵⁴ Far more prominent is the model of the ancient household, which institutes a sense of belonging in terms of family relations. It is for that reason that the apostle Paul, whose letters belong to our earliest Christian sources, made frequent use of kinship imagery in order to describe the community of believers. At the very heart of this conception lies the notion of God’s paternity, which is already attested in the Hebrew Scriptures.⁵⁵ It seems moreover to have been characteristic of Jesus to relate to God as ‘father’ (*πατήρ; pater*; or the Aramaic *Abba*); that is at least the way he is depicted in the Gospels. The letters reflect this practice by formulaically referring to God as ‘our father’ and to Jesus Christ as ‘our lord’ (*κύριος; dominus*).⁵⁶ Conversely, this understanding made fellow believers ‘children of God’ (*τέκνα θεοῦ/υἱοὶ θεοῦ; filii Dei*). The idea of their descent from the celestial father is probably best demonstrated by early descriptions of the baptismal ritual. As part of the procedure, baptizands were not only to receive the gift of

⁵³ James 4:4 for friendship with the world. Luke employs the word *φίλος* more than any other author in the New Testament. He is also the only one who has the Parable of the Persistent Friend (11:5-8). In the Gospel of John, the theme of friendship with Jesus prevails. See MITCHELL 1997, 236f. for Luke-Acts, and 257f. for John. Outside these textual traditions only Matthew (11:19) and James (2:23; 4:4) make a few isolated references.

⁵⁴ KLAUCK 1991, 7; MITCHELL 1997, 226.

⁵⁵ Is 9:6; 63:16; 64:8; Jer 3:4, 19; Mal 1:6; 2:10; Ps 68:5; 89:26; Wis 2:16; 14:3; Sir 23:1, 4; 51:10.

⁵⁶ For instance, Matt 5-7 or Mark 14:36. For the letters see: 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; 6:18; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2; Phil 1:2; Col 1:2; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:2; Philem 1:3; 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2; Tit 1:4; 1 Pet 1:2; 1 John 1:3; 2:21-23; 2 John 1:3; Jude 1:1. Besides, Paul used paternal language to cast himself as a person of authority. Paul as father: 1 Cor 4:15; 1 Thess 2:11. Referring to his audience as his sons and children: Gal 4:19; 1 Cor 4:14; 2 Cor 6:13; 12:14. To individuals: Philem 10; 1 Cor 4:17; Phil 2:22. Interestingly, he used the image of a nursing mother at 1 Thess 2:17.

the Spirit but also acknowledged God as their father by crying out ‘Abba! Father!’ (ἄββα ὁ πατήρ; *Abba Pater*).⁵⁷ On an interpersonal level, the recognition of one’s divine origins translated into corresponding familial terms, making fellow believers part of a community of brothers and sisters. This notion of siblinghood is particularly prominent in the Pauline letters, where it served as the preferred form of address. Followers of Christ were referred to as ‘brothers’ (ἀδελφοί; *fratres*), and we can of course also find occurrences in the singular, sometimes even adding the name of a particular person. In rare cases, female individuals were signalled as ‘sister’ (ἀδελφή; *soror*). Overall, however, Paul’s choice of language perpetuates a decidedly androcentric perspective.⁵⁸

Conceptually, the notions of divine kinship and friendship are however not as far apart as one might think. This becomes particularly obvious if we take a closer look at the corresponding Greek terminology. The abstract noun φιλία, for instance, covered a remarkably wide range of social ties, including family relations, that went beyond the scope of its closest Latin equivalent, *amicitia*. With a view to the Pauline letters, it has therefore rightly been pointed out that ‘kinship was a widely recognized kind of φιλία, and kinship terms were often used to describe friendship.’⁵⁹ This convergence between kinship and friendship is a distinctive feature of the New Testament writings that has wider implications for the suggested household model. While sparingly using explicit friendship language in their texts, the first Christians often implicitly appealed to conventions that were commonly associated with the notion of friendship. Particularly

⁵⁷ MEEKS 1983, 87f. with reference to Rom 8:14-21 and Gal 3:26-4:6. I leave aside the question of Christ’s sonship, which was obviously different from ordinary children of God. Later Christian generations construed him as the ‘only-begotten Son’ (John 3:16), who was distinct from the adoptive sons and daughters of God.

⁵⁸ See the overview in AASGAARD 2004, 3 and 313f. Altogether, the author counts 122 occurrences of the ἀδελφ-root in the authentic Pauline letters (Appendix 1), of which only five refer to Christian women. In all other New Testament letters (Appendix 2), the total number amounts to 81 by two occurrences for female members of the community.

⁵⁹ FITZGERALD 2003, 331f. This is a point worth thinking about, especially if we consider compound words like φιλάδελφος or φιλαδελφία, which both contain the φιλ- root. For the scope of φιλία in comparison to *amicitia* see WILLIAMS 2012, 32 with reference to KONSTAN 1997, 9 and 67-77.

interesting in this context is the description of the early Jerusalem community in *Acts* where it is twice said that the believers had ‘all things in common’ (ἅπαντα κοινὰ; *omnia communia*), and once that a large number of them were of ‘one heart and one soul’ (καρδία καὶ ψυχὴ μία; *cor et anima una*).⁶⁰ Even though no explicit reference is being made in this case, the maxims of having all things in common and being of one soul strongly suggest a connection to the friendship theme. Especially the idea of sharing possessions resonates with the proverbial expression κοινὰ τὰ τῶν φίλων that is frequently found in both Greek and Roman literature. But also the reference to the μία ψυχὴ finds strong precedents in the extra-biblical friendship tradition.⁶¹ Another example can be found in Paul’s *Epistle to the Romans*, where the apostle appealed to a well-known aphorism of the ancient friendship discourse in order to highlight Christ’s death as an exceptionally noble deed. His argument was that there was scarcely anybody who would die for another man, as Christ had done to save mankind. Since Paul was well aware of the teachings about friendship (and so was his audience), he needed to be cautious in phrasing his claim, acknowledging that maybe ‘for a good man’ (ὕπερ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ; *pro bono*) some would give their lives.⁶² The acknowledgement, then, that the practice among the ἀγαθοί represents a notable exception to the rule, seems to be a concession to the axiom that true friends die for one another.⁶³ Most revealing in this respect, however, is the closing sentence to the *Third Epistle of John*. Writing to a certain Gaius, the author conveyed his greetings as follows: ‘the friends (οἱ φίλοι; *amici*) salute you. Greet the friends (τοὺς φίλους; *amicos*) by name.’⁶⁴ Elsewhere in the letter, the author however evoked the kinship model by calling some of the fellow believers ‘brothers’ (τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς; *fratres*).⁶⁵ We are given the additional

⁶⁰ Acts 2:44 and 4:32.

⁶¹ KLAUCK 1991, 6; MITCHELL 1997, 237-257. For the extra-biblical sources see ID., 238 n. 54.

⁶² Rom 5:6-8.

⁶³ KLAUCK 1991, 9f.

⁶⁴ 3 John 15.

⁶⁵ 3 John 5 and 10.

information that a conflict, involving the author of the letter and a man named Diotrephes, had split the community into two. It may then well be possible that the designation ‘friend’ or ‘friends’ was used as an additional marker to distinguish one’s own party from the opposition.⁶⁶ In any case, this remains the only instance in the New Testament in which we can see Christians referring to one another as friends. At the same time, the passage also sharpens our understanding of the concepts involved, which could easily serve as a substitute for one another.

1.3 Reading Christian friendship

From the above discussion, two interrelated themes emerge that are relevant for the proper understanding of early Christian friendship conceptions. On the one hand, Cicero’s treatment of the topic highlighted the opposition of *amicitia* and *inimicitia*. Whereas the word *amicus* denotes someone who was on friendly or even intimate terms with somebody else, *inimicus* basically means ‘non-friend’ and thus signalled individuals as being inimical to one another or some greater cause. As has rightly been pointed out, this opposition ‘is distinctly more transparent on the lexical level than the comparable antithesis in many other languages, such as English friendship vs. enmity’ or Greek φιλία vs. ἔχθρα.⁶⁷ The biblical writings, on the other hand, provide a number of literary cues that oscillate between the notion of divine kinship and friendship. Particularly notable in this context is the portrayal of the Christian brother as friend. In the Latin, such conceptual convergence strongly reverberates with words like *familiaris* or *familiaritas*, which convey the idea of being friends with one another while, at the same time, evoking

⁶⁶ KLAUCK 1991, 1f.; MITCHELL 1997, 257f.

⁶⁷ WILLIAMS 2012, 129.

a sense of belonging to a particular household or family.⁶⁸ To be sure, these themes are not exclusive to either of the respective textual traditions. For instance, the opposition between friendship and enmity can also frequently be found in the biblical writings. Take the example of Ben Sira whose ideal of the faithful friend is contrasted with the ‘friend who turned to enmity’ (φίλος μετατιθέμενος εἰς ἔχθραν; *amicus qui egreditur ad inimicitiam*). Similarly, the third letter of John alludes to a local conflict in the community of believers that has Diotrephes as the enemy of a group of friends. Even though there is no explicit reference to the corresponding language, the mention of friends presumes the enemy at the other end of the spectrum.⁶⁹ On the other hand, the linkage of friendship with kinship terminology is also a common theme in Roman literature, where it highlights a friend as particularly close. Cicero’s relationship with Atticus is a well-known example. The late Republican orator dedicated his dialogue *Laelius* to Atticus, thereby acknowledging that he as *amicissimus* wrote the booklet ‘to a friend on friendship’ (*ad amicum ... scripsi de amicitia*). Elsewhere, however, this friendship was frequently translated into familial terms. Cicero, for instance, called Atticus ‘a second brother’ (*alter frater*) or pointed to the brotherly love (*fraterne amari*) that they shared.⁷⁰ Thus, the binary coding of friendship with enmity as well as its linkage with kinship imagery were part of a wider theme in both textual traditions. However, while the former is particularly prominent in Cicero’s treatment of *amicitia*, the latter strongly reverberates with the biblical notion of divine kinship.

As I suggest reading early Christian texts with a view to the use of respective antonyms, I move into underexplored territory. For previous studies have predominantly focused on the relationship between ‘friendship’ and ‘love’ rather than investigating the

⁶⁸ ID., 40-42.

⁶⁹ Sir 6:9; 3 John 9-10. See for instance MARSHALL 1987 who points to the theme of enmity in Paul’s letters to the Corinthians.

⁷⁰ Cic. *Amic.* 5; *Fam.* 13.1.5; *Att.* 1.5.

intricate interplay between *amicitia* and *inimicitia*. There are certainly good reasons to proceed that way. On the one hand, the theme of love and affection seems to provide an obvious starting point for any treatment of the topic. Already Cicero argued that it was the Latin term for love, *amor*, from which *amicitia* originally derived, thereby suggesting an etymological link between the two words.⁷¹ On the other hand, the notion of Christian love, which is at the very heart of Christian ethical thinking, raised the question of how one was to understand the relationship between ‘pagan’ *amicitia* and Christian *caritas*. Most scholarly contributions were thus crucially influenced by this problem. Luigi Pizzolato’s study on the notion of friendship in antiquity, for instance, mainly focused on what he determined as its two main themes: ‘il consentire e l’amare’. Similarly, David Konstan, whose survey of classical and early Christian texts is equally broad in scope, saw friendship as a ‘personal relationship predicated on affection and generosity rather than on obligatory reciprocity.’ In so doing, he turned against other scholarly trends that highlighted the political relevance of friendship-based networks in the Graeco-Roman world.⁷² Furthermore, Carolinne White, who provided the first comprehensive study on early Christian literature, devoted an entire chapter exclusively to the problematic issues concerning friendship (φιλία/*amicitia*) and charity (ἀγάπη/*caritas*). Finally, Liz Carmichael deliberately limits the scope of her study to the theological implications of what she calls ‘friendship-love’ and, in so doing, discounts any other facets that may have been involved.⁷³ This is not to argue that such scholarly interests are unwarranted but that the suggested focus on the relationship between friendship and love has a tendency to overly

⁷¹ Cic. *Amic.* 26.

⁷² PIZZOLATO 1993, VIII; KONSTAN 1997, 5. It has much been debated whether *amicitiae* have to be viewed as either pragmatic relationships using an affectionate language for the purpose of constituting social and political networks, or as interpersonal relationships that were characterized by genuine affection. Whereas GELZER 1912 laid particular emphasis on the former position, his idea of using *amicitia* as a means to chart the political landscape of the Roman Republic was later contested by MEIER 1966 and BRUNT 1988. More recently, VERBOVEN 2002 approached the subject from a socio-economic rather than a political perspective.

⁷³ WHITE 1992, 45-60; CARMICHAEL 2004, 5.

constrict the discussion to one particular theme. More recently, other studies have shown a way out of the impasse. Craig Williams, for instance, who explored new avenues in approaching the topic of Roman friendship, noted that ‘*amicitiae* ... invite being read as existing in a dialectical tension with *inimicitiae*’. He devoted a few pages to the theme that did not only point to the previous scholarly preoccupation with love and affection but also endorsed alternative ways of reading the relevant literature.⁷⁴ Another notable exception is Stefan Rebenich whose article on the troubled friendship between Augustine and Jerome fruitfully employed a similar approach to highlight the implications of the friend-enemy distinction for a period of doctrinal conflict and strife.⁷⁵ Along these lines, my own reading proceeds from this binary coding inherent to early Christian texts to examine the theme in more detail by drawing on a broad textual basis.

The convergence of kinship and friendship language in early Christian texts, on the other hand, has not received much attention either, though scholars have occasionally pointed to the significance of the theme. The French philosopher Jacques Derrida, for instance, while discussing his book the *Politics of Friendship*, described ‘the figure of the brother, of fraternity’ as a vital part of the canonical model of friendship in antiquity. He located its origins in the Graeco-Roman culture but moreover added that ‘it also comes from the Christian model in which brotherhood or fraternity is essential.’ Such emphasis instituted what Derrida called ‘a phallogocentric or phallogocentric concept of friendship’, from which women were excluded. This does of course not mean that women did not

⁷⁴ WILLIAMS 2012, 23 suggests reading *amicitia* in conjunction with its respective antonym. This point is taken up again at p. 128-30. Strangely enough, one of the main guiding questions of his own work is again concerned with ‘the relationship between friendship and love’ (cf. p. 61). See also FÜRST 1997 whose study of ancient thought on friendship pays particular attention to the distinction between ‘ideal’ (true and lasting friendship) and ‘reality’ (dissension, conflict, and rupture).

⁷⁵ REBENICH 2008, 11-31. FISKE 1965, 119-138 came to similar conclusions, despite the fact that she chose a very different approach. See also FÜRST 1999, viii who points to the domineering theme in the letter exchange, wavering between ‘Streit, Kritik, Dissens, Konflikt’ and ‘Eintracht, Liebe, Konsens, Versöhnung’. Following Rebenich’s argumentation, LÖHR 2010 provided a case-study on Augustine and Pelagius.

pursue friendships with either men or other women but that ‘there was no voice, no discourse, no possibility of acknowledging these excluded possibilities’ within the accepted frame of the androcentric perspective.⁷⁶ In the field of classical studies, Derrida’s ideas were taken up by Craig Williams who considered the conceptual and linguistic overlaps between words like *amicitia*, *amor*, *frater*, and *soror* as part of his study on Roman friendship. He argued that the figure of the *frater* could in different contexts effectively be employed either to ‘represent a relationship as meaningful and affectionate’ or as a way to ‘sidestep questions of gendered and penetrative hierarchy’. The corresponding language thus signalled relationships as particularly close, or at least created the appearance of closeness if, for instance, matters of status were involved.⁷⁷ For the early Christian period, however, these findings have not yet come into view. To be sure, there is a growing number of studies situating the biblical use of kinship imagery in the broader context of Roman family ideals and household management. Other possible influences could moreover be detected by pointing to similarities in the language use of voluntary associations.⁷⁸ Apart from that, there are several scholarly contributions investigating the impact of friendship-related thought on the intellectual world of the Bible, which highlight the apparent tension with the prevailing household model.⁷⁹ Whereas biblical scholars have mainly focused on the New Testament writings and the early centuries of the Christian movement, students of late antiquity have paid particular attention to the transformation of the Roman household through Christian influence.⁸⁰ Particularly striking, in this regard, is the lack of relevant literature for this later period.

⁷⁶ Quotations taken from a discussion at the Centre for Modern French Thought, University of Sussex, 1 December 1997 (retrieved from <http://hydra.humanities.uci.edu/derrida/pol+fr.html>). See also DERRIDA 1993, esp. 365f. and DERRIDA 1997.

⁷⁷ WILLIAMS 2012, 156-173, here esp. 171. See also BANNON 1997 who considers fraternal relationships in Roman literature and law.

⁷⁸ MEEKS 1983, 74-110; OSIEK/BALCH 1997; MOXNES 1997; HELLERMAN 2001; OSIEK/BALCH 2003. For the voluntary associations see HARLAND 2003, esp. 30-33.

⁷⁹ See the discussion above with reference to KLAUCK 1991; MITCHELL 1997; FITZGERALD 2003.

⁸⁰ See for instance COOPER 2007 and SESSA 2012.

Rather than dealing with the brother-friend paradigm as complementary ways of shaping friendship, previous scholarship in this area has tended to view *amicitia* as being in some kind of opposition to Christian *fraternitas* and *caritas*.⁸¹ It is for that reason that the figure of the Christian *frater* as an integral part of the ancient friendship discourse has never gained attention in the recent scholarly discussion. Following the suggested model of Derrida, it is therefore the aim of my thesis to work out the correlation of friendship and kinship language in the early Latin Christian textual tradition.

Since I follow concepts such as *amicitia* and *fraternitas* as they evolve over time from the early third to the early fifth centuries, I necessarily commit myself to a comparative view analysing the corresponding semantic fields with an eye toward continuities and discontinuities. Needless to say, such an undertaking must take into account the social and political dimensions of the concepts in question. For literary constructions of friendship did not occur in an empty space but always referred to a particular context in which interaction and communication was performed. Consequently, I move from the critical assessment of utterances, statements and texts to the level of an overall evaluation that deliberately adopts a broader perspective in order to point out continuing themes and discursive ruptures. In so doing, my approach rests on theoretical considerations that have been introduced by Reinhart Koselleck. His *begriffsgeschichtlicher* approach lays special emphasis on the study of certain key concepts that are deemed relevant to the social and political organization of a given society. It is primarily Koselleck's combination of a thorough synchronic interrogation of texts with a diachronic evaluation of semantic change, which is conducive to my own study.⁸² His narrow understanding of language,

⁸¹ For instance, KONSTAN 1997, 156-158 who considers the topic under the heading 'friendship vs. brotherly love.' In his analysis, Konstan follows the influential hypothesis of FABRE 1949, 142-148 who argued that the language of Paulinus' letters is indicative of a sharp distinction between 'pagan' *amicitia* and Christian *caritas*.

⁸² KOSELLECK 1972, xiii-xvii; KOSELLECK 1979, 19-36; KOSELLECK 2006. For an English introduction to Koselleck's conceptual history see RICHTER 1995.

however, which reduces the complexity of linguistic systems to the analysis of single concepts, has a tendency to reductionism and oversimplification.⁸³ In this case, more recent studies have pointed the way, moving away from the constricted focus on key concepts to the study of historical semantics. The term stands for a wide range of varying approaches charting ‘contexts produced by patterns of argument, narrations, or metaphors’ (as well as visual imagery or social practices) that can broadly be understood as ‘the historical study of the production of meaning through sign systems.’⁸⁴ Furthermore, by looking at antonyms like *amicitia* and *inimicitia* or conceptual parallels such as *amicus* and *frater*, my thesis draws on the sociological concept of inclusion and exclusion as an explanatory model to account for semantic change. It was most notably the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann who drew attention to exclusion as the necessary by-product of inclusion processes. He argued that it is only the existence of people and groups, which cannot be integrated into a definite social order, that makes visible social cohesion and thereby points to the necessity of specifying conditions upon which participation could be granted. It is therefore only with these stipulations in place that the case of exclusion can properly be labelled. Since such labels emerge from a discourse on the conditions for inclusion, they convey the meaning of and justification for the social order itself in the form of an antithesis.⁸⁵ In this way, the analytical tools of inclusion and exclusion can fruitfully be employed to account for conceptual oppositions in early Christian texts such as *frater/inimicus* and *amicus/inimicus*.

⁸³ For a critical evaluation of Koselleck’s approach see SHEEHAN 1978, 312-319; BUSSE 1987, esp. 65f.; POCOCK 1996, 47-58.

⁸⁴ STEINMETZ 2011, 5-51, here esp. 49f. See also BUSSE 1987, 7-28 and STEINMETZ 2008, 174-197.

⁸⁵ LUHMANN 1997, 618-634, here 620f. See also STICHWEH 2005, 37-48.

1.4 Chapter outline

This thesis does not follow the usual approach in discussing the theme of friendship in early Latin Christian literature. It is neither entirely devoted to the scrutiny of a particular set of ideas and their relation to the classical past, nor is my view solely committed to the study of networks of power and the purview of *amicitiae* in society. Rather, my thesis attempts to fill in the gap arising from these approaches by examining the relation between literary concepts and the actual practice of friendship. In so doing, my own reading has revealed two interrelated themes that are particularly prominent in Christian texts of the period: the dichotomy of *amicitia* and *inimicitia* and the linkage of friendship with kinship. As we move through the centuries, we encounter different variations of these themes, which are intended to meet the requirements of a particular historical setting. At the same time, it is also possible to determine common features across the centuries allowing us to describe *amicitia* as part of a wider theme in Christian literature and practice that appears to follow specific rules and conventions. In the following, I have therefore opted to present my findings in roughly chronological order so as to not dismiss the possibility of change over time. Each chapter is intended to work out the significance of friendship-related thought by taking into account the characteristics of a given context. By contrast, the conclusion adopts a diachronic perspective highlighting recurring themes that are indicative of the broader picture.

Chapter two provides an introduction to the use of kinship imagery in early Latin Christian literature. It is at the turn from the second to the third century that we find Christians for the first time moulding their thoughts in the Latin vernacular. In so doing, a distinctive Latin Christian textual tradition emerged that drew its cues from both Roman thought and the biblical tradition. Tertullian's *Apologeticum* and the *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* belong to our earliest sources testifying to this development. Christian authors

used words like *pater*, *filia*, or *frater* closely following the biblical template as a means to express their relationship to God and other fellow believers. At the same time, the notions of paternity, childship, and siblinghood came with the full weight of the expectations that they were given in Roman society. In particular, morally and legally binding concepts like *patria potestas* or *pietas* were translated into Christian terms. While they usually served as an obligating point of reference for members of the Roman family, they now were instituted as regulative elements in the household of God. Lactantius' principal work, the *Divinae Institutiones*, marks a provisional endpoint to this development. Writing at the turn from the third to the fourth century, about one hundred years after Tertullian, he devised a synthesis of Roman legal thought and Christian ethical thinking that revolves around the idea of God's paternity.

Chapter three and four are devoted to the use of implicit and explicit friendship language in different Christian contexts. Here I develop my main arguments regarding the reception of *amicitia*-related thought. At the outset stands the example of Cyprian whose work has not yet come into view in the scholarly debate about friendship. In his writings, we are given a deep insight into the ways the mid-third century bishop of Carthage responded to the unsettling experience of conflict and strife. Particularly, in the *De ecclesiae unitate*, we come across the notion of the *unitas fraternitatis*, which Cyprian effectively employed to distinguish between dissenters and the community of the faithful. Anyone, then, who acted to the detriment of the church's unity by challenging the bishop's position of leadership was regarded as *frater inimicus*, an enemy to the Christian brotherhood. This argumentation, dividing the Christian world into *amici* and *inimici* (in Cyprian's case brothers and enemies) is reminiscent of ancient thought on *amicitia* whose ideal of unanimity of mind oscillated between the rare delights of true friendship and the experience of enmity. This can moreover be seen from an analysis of Cyprian's

correspondence, in which the bishop purposely used his conception to mark particular individuals and groups as *personae non gratae*. In style and content, some of the letters closely resemble late Republican pieces of invective, which were informed by the same friend-enemy dichotomy.

A crucial step in the reception of Cicero's views on friendship is the work of Ambrose, the late fourth century bishop of Milan. Particularly, his books *De officiis* made explicit what remained implicit in Cyprian's oeuvre. Not only did he take Cicero's identically named work as the starting point for his own discussion of *amicitia* but he also drew on the material provided by the *Laelius* to place classical thought into a Christian frame. Key to the understanding of his model of friendship is the conceptualization of the term *fides*, whose meaning he purposely shifted from the trust that friends placed in one another to the fidelity and constancy toward God. Consequently, one who proved to be an *amicus infidus* forfeited his right to Christian fellowship and was therefore regarded as an enemy. Along these lines, the practice of friendship was closely tied to the community of *fratres* as is best demonstrated by Ambrose's correspondence. Here the bishop is depicted at the centre of a powerful ecclesiastical network, which drew its strength from the *amicitia* that united Christian *fratres* according to their faith. By contrast, Ambrose also used friendship to undermine the claim to truth of other Christian groups, which did not concur with the bishop's doctrinal views. In 381, at the council of Aquileia, he for the first time put into motion his network of loyal clerics to settle a dispute over religious matters that saw in the opposition no fellow episcopal colleagues but a *pars inimica* to be destroyed.

Chapters five and six are intended to broaden our perspective on Christian friendship. The abundance of literature surviving from the late fourth, early fifth centuries offers the opportunity to present a more versatile picture of *amicitia*. In the form

of the correspondences of Symmachus and Ausonius, we are on the one hand given evidence for the cultivation of friendship among the aristocratic elites that show little interest in questions of belief. Rather, their world revolved around the holding of high offices, the pursuit of a successful career, the management of family estates and landholdings, or the ostentatious display of literary achievements. As such, their testimony provides a point of reference outside the clerical ranks that puts into perspective the programmatic views of Ambrose and other church representatives. On the other hand, the extensive body of material from the late antique period puts us in the fortunate position of being able to trace the use of friendship language beyond the narrow confines of the Milanese church and the adjacent bishoprics. Particularly noteworthy in this context are the works of Augustine, bishop of Hippo, whose association of Ciceronian thought with Christian love, retrospectively affected the depiction of his earlier friendships. More practical aspects come into view when we turn our attention to Paulinus of Nola's correspondence. His exchange with Sulpicius Severus is illustrative of a functioning relationship that continually reasserted the existing agreement in the principles of the faith by way of friendship. In contrast, a rereading of the troubled relationship between Jerome and Rufinus points to the disruptive effects of conflict and strife, illustrating the transformation of former friends into sworn enemies.

2. An age of experiment: divine kinship in early Christian Latin literature

Early Christian texts are marked by a strong sense for community. Authors made use of a wide range of words, images, and metaphors to denote specific communities, forge togetherness among individual Christians, or define the relationship between humans and God. The apostle Paul, for instance, portrayed Christians as the ‘faithful’ or the ‘holy’ (πιστοί, ἅγιοι), alluded to their election and calling as a chosen people (e.g. κλητοί), or referred to them altogether as ‘church’ or the ‘body’ of Christ (ἐκκλησία; σῶμα).⁸⁶ Arguably the most pervasive of these designations was the idea of familial relatedness, which can be found across all New Testament texts. This implied an elaborate language that construed the Christian movement as part of a divine household. The depiction of God as father and of humans as his children tie in with such thinking. Also the notion of siblinghood, which constituted Christians brothers and sisters in the faith, bore relation to a construal of the community as family. Even the ubiquitous imagery of authority, portraying God as lord and Christians as fellow slaves (κύριος; δούλοι), could easily be situated within the household model, though the use of such language also entailed wider social and political implications.⁸⁷ Later generations subsequently turned to Scripture as authoritative texts and a source of inspiration, exploring the potential value of kinship imagery while further refining its conceptual underpinning.

The chosen language to convey these notions was Greek (with the exception of the Aramaic *abba*, which points to the Judaeo-Palestinian roots of Jesus’ movement). Given the cultural context in which the Christian message was initially spread, it is no

⁸⁶ See HARNACK 1924, 410-433; MEEKS 1983, 85 and 89f.; AASGAARD 2004, 3.

⁸⁷ For the terminology involved see MEEKS 1983, 74-110 and AASGAARD 2004. The latter pays particular attention to the notion of siblinghood in the Pauline corpus.

surprise to see early Christian writers turning to Greek as the preferred means of communication. Even in addressing the community at Rome, where Latin was the predominant language, the Anatolian-born Paul used his native tongue to convey the message.⁸⁸ The formation of a distinctively Latin Christian vocabulary, then, was a relatively late development that can be traced back not much further than the late second century. Our earliest securely datable source is the *Passio Sanctorum Scilitanorum*, which reports the trial and execution of a group of Christians from the North African city of Scilium. They were sentenced to death in the year 180 because of their association with the Christian sect. The text represents a reworking of the official court records, taking down the statements of the accused as they stood before the tribunal of Publius Vigellius Saturninus, the then acting proconsul of the province of *Africa proconsularis*. Apparently, these Christians were in possession of *libri et epistulae Pauli*, which may point to an early Latin rendition of scriptural texts. This assumption seems to be corroborated by explicit references to biblical passages, which the accused invoked to openly state their beliefs.⁸⁹ If true, such transfer of originally Greek biblical thought into the Latin formed one of the key prerequisites for the formation of a Latin Christian literature.

This is of course also true for the idea of divine kinship in early Christian texts. One variant reading of the Scilitan acts then straightforwardly refers to God's paternity and the sonship of Christ. According to this passage, the martyrs were eventually commemorated as reigning 'together with the father, the son, and the holy spirit' (*cum patre et filio et spiritu sancto*) after their deaths. Even if we are dealing with a later addition here, the phrase at least serves as a reminder of the necessity of equivalent terms and

⁸⁸ The local parish probably consisted of a sizable number of Greeks and Greek-speaking Jews (see the names at Rom 16).

⁸⁹ *P. Scill.* 12. During the trial one of the suspects quoted from 1 Tim 6:16: ... *quem nemo hominum vidit nec videre his oculis potest* (6). Another one seems to be referring to Matt 22:21, 1 Peter 2:17, and Rom 13:7: *honorem Caesari quasi Caesari; timorem autem Deo* (9). BURTON 2013, 177 rightly points out that the possibility of a Latin translation is just as likely as that the martyrs were in possession of a Greek version.

concepts that appropriately conveyed the Christian message in the vernacular of the Latin-speaking majority of the Roman west. The surviving fragments of early Latin biblical translations, which are collectively referred to as *Vetus Latina*, testify to such endeavours. But given the fragmentary state of our evidence, mainly consisting of citations by Latin authors such as Cyprian of Carthage, it seems almost impossible to trace the textual tradition further back than the mid-third century, though there may have existed older specimens.⁹⁰ Beginning with Tertullian at the turn from the second to the third century we can moreover perceive the development of a Latin Christian literature, which put to use the Graeco-Roman art of rhetoric and persuasion to argue the case for a Christian way of life – be it in favour of a particular form of Christianity or as an alternative to the mainstream culture of a predominantly non-Christian society. Particularly fruitful in this regard appears to have been the recurring hostility toward Christians, which frequently resulted in localized persecutions. The potentially hostile world of the Roman empire then provided the fertile ground for writers to think about communal aspects of the Christian faith and how it was distinct from other religious groups and societies.

Christian authors writing in Latin had thus two possible sources to which they could turn in order to reason the idea of divine kinship. On the one hand, they were guided by the example of the biblical writings. This meant that one either had to relate to the textual corpus in its original language or, alternatively, utilize one of the early Latin renditions. Either way, they entered a world that was distinctively Greek at its heart. On the other hand, they enriched the biblical legacy with a perception of the domestic sphere that was closer to their experience as Roman citizens. The Latin terminology that they

⁹⁰ The obvious candidate to start with would be Tertullian. Yet his use of biblical passages suggests that he was working from a Greek template rather than a Latin translation. See PETZER 1995, 120f. and BURTON 2013, 177f. Based on our evidence we cannot exactly be sure whether his texts represent his own translations or a preexisting Latin rendition.

employed did not only resonate with the biblical tradition but was also inextricably linked to its Roman heritage. Words like *pater* and *dominus*, or *frater* and *soror* generally came with the full weight of the moral expectations that they were given in Roman society. Particularly noteworthy in this regard are the concepts of *patria potestas* and *pietas* that formed part of a distinctively Roman perspective on the *domus dei*, the household of God.⁹¹ Along these lines, it is the aim of this chapter to provide a broad survey of early Latin conceptions of divine kinship in an age of experiment, in which Christians developed novel ideas by combining the scriptural evidence with Roman thought.

In particular, I will focus on a selection of early Christian texts that pay close attention to the theme of kinship. On the one hand, we have the *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, which is indicative of the ways in which individuals like the young martyr Vibia Perpetua related to God. As Christian woman, she saw in herself a dutiful child and daughter of God who subjected herself to his rule. As such, the head of the divine household formed a marked contrast to Perpetua's worldly father, whose claim to authority went unheard. On the other hand, works like Tertullian's *Apologeticum* or Lactantius' *Divinae Institutiones* present a particular picture of the Christian community that strongly builds on the notion of divine kinship. Tertullian maintained that fraternity and love formed an integral part of the Christian self-image, which was marked by unanimity of minds and the community of goods. This sense of being brothers to one another was founded in the conviction that God was father to all human beings, though there were worthier brothers who voluntarily acknowledged his paternity while others remained ignorant of his existence. Along these lines, Lactantius later developed a model of divine kinship that attempted to validate the biblical message against the backdrop of Roman moral thought. In so doing, he employed the legal concept of *patria potestas* to

⁹¹ For the expression see for instance Tert. *Idol.* 7.1 or Lact. *Inst.* 4.29.8.

argue the case for God's paternity and advanced the notion of *pietas* as the main connector between humans and God. The recognition of a common point of origin in God, then, ensured a sense of togetherness among humans that was able to restore true justice to Roman society.

2.1 Perpetua and the paternity of God

For the year 203, our sources record the persecution of Christians in the North African capital of Carthage. Tertullian testified to both the dying of his fellow believers and the tensions that such sacrifice had caused in the community.⁹² Additionally, we are given the account of the *Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis* (hereafter *Passio*), which commemorates the fate of a group of Christians who were martyred in the amphitheatre of Carthage on the occasion of emperor Geta's birthday.⁹³ The document is not made of one piece but includes three distinct authorial hands. On the one hand, we have the first-hand testimony of a young woman named Vibia Perpetua, which offers a detailed account of her prison life along with a series of narratives about visions and dreams that she reportedly had during her incarceration.⁹⁴ An additional vision report is attributed to one Saturus who is said to be the teacher of the imprisoned Christians.⁹⁵ On the other hand, it is clear that the writings of Perpetua and Saturus were later reworked by an

⁹² Tert. *Scorp.* 9.1-2.

⁹³ Some of the material in this section is currently being prepared for publication and will appear in *Studia Patristica*.

⁹⁴ *P. Perp.* 3-10. According to *P. Perp.* 2.3, she had written the text *manu sua et suo sensu*. The authorship of Perpetua has generally been acknowledged. For an overview see AMELING 2012, 80f. with n. 12. Doubts have been raised about Perpetua's ability to write a text in light of the inhospitable conditions in Roman prisons (HEFFERNAN 1995, 322f.). BREMMER 2002, 84 has however convincingly argued that there were periods during her incarceration in which she could have written her text. Moreover, letters from imprisoned Christians are well attested for the period.

⁹⁵ *P. Perp.* 11-13. According to *P. Perp.* 4.5, Saturus was not present when the group was arrested but handed himself over to the authorities willingly. Like Perpetua, he is said to have written his account with his own hand (11.1: ... *quam ipse conscripsit*).

anonymous editor, probably soon after the execution but certainly no later than 212.⁹⁶ He added an introductory part and delivered a graphic report about the martyrdom that bracketed the original pieces.⁹⁷

Even though the editor introduced the reader to a group of five catechumens along with their instructor, the narration clearly centres on Perpetua. In fact, a substantial part of the *Passio* is devoted to her personal fate and, together with Saturus, she is the only one whose own words were made part of the compilation. Her prominence in the *Passio* may indeed have specific reasons. Unlike her fellow martyrs, she is depicted as having both a *nomen* (Vibia) and a *cognomen* (Perpetua). If this identification is correct and she really belonged to the *gens* Vibia, as has often been suggested, this would make her a member of a widely ramified family clan with a long, distinguished history. Although we cannot be entirely sure about the naming, her social distinction is still ostentatiously displayed by the designation *honeste nata*. Perpetua is described as belonging to the class of *honestiores*, which implies that she stemmed from a relatively wealthy, possibly decurional family of some renown.⁹⁸ Moreover, the phrase *liberaliter instituta* hints at her level of education and is a sign for her upper class status. In fact, she was perfectly capable of moulding her own thoughts into a consistent narrative and, on one occasion, she is depicted as being fluent not only in Latin but also in Greek. The family seems thus to have had sufficient financial means to afford a costly education for their daughter.⁹⁹ A

⁹⁶ The allusion to Geta's birthday at *P. Perp.* 7.9 provides a *terminus ante quem* of 211/12 for the whole work. Caracalla had his brother murdered in late 211 and issued the order to wipe out his memory (*damnatio memoriae*) in 212. See HEFFERNAN 2012, 68 who argues for 206-209 as the most probable timeframe for the composition.

⁹⁷ *P. Perp.* 1-2; 16-21. At *P. Perp.* 14-15, the editor moreover recounts the fate of the fellow prisoners Secundulus and Felicitas from the editor's perspective.

⁹⁸ In light of her social rank, it seems strange that she later faced a method of execution that was unusual for a member of her class. Rather than being beheaded, she was condemned *ad bestias* (*P. Perp.* 6.6) along with all the others. In Roman thinking, decapitation was a comparatively honourable death. HEFFERNAN 2012, 204, however, sees 'little jurisprudential impediment that would bar Hilarianus from sentencing her to death *ad bestias*.'

⁹⁹ *P. Perp.* 2.1. Perpetua elsewhere used the word *tegnon* (4.9), the latinized form of the Greek τέκνον. In Saturus's vision, she engages in a conversation with the bishop Optatus and the presbyter Aspasius, which

second point concerns her responsiveness to divine inspiration. In the introduction, the editor called upon the power of the *Spiritus Sanctus* that occasioned *prophetias et visiones novas* among men. He moreover quoted from Scripture to demonstrate that such happenings had been foretold for the end of days.¹⁰⁰ It appears that his statement is aimed at certain Christians who held the *vetera fidei exempla* in higher esteem than the *nova documenta* provided by more recent prophecies and visions. The editor explicitly rejected their attempt to restrict the *virtus* of the Spirit to times long past.¹⁰¹ Thus, alongside the canonical Scriptures, contemporary revelations should likewise be regarded as authoritative pieces of instruction, a claim that is commonly associated with the so-called New Prophecy movement.¹⁰² Perpetua and her prophetic ability certainly made a useful example in this controversy. No fewer than four visions are preserved as part of her report and, when it came to divine inspiration, she showed full confidence in her unusual powers.¹⁰³

The editor reveals that Perpetua belonged to a family comprising a father, mother, and two brothers. She was about twenty-two years of age and supposedly married to an unknown person who does not appear in the *Passio* at all. The marriage had yielded an infant son whom she was still breastfeeding at the time.¹⁰⁴ This preliminary information is key to the understanding of Perpetua's following report that eventually unfolds a swelling family conflict before the eyes of the reader. The main

they conduct in Greek (13.4). See for instance AMELING 2012, 78-102 who is somewhat skeptical about her skills.

¹⁰⁰ *P. Perp.* 1.3-5 quoting from Acts 2:17-18.

¹⁰¹ *P. Perp.* 1.1-3.

¹⁰² For the possibility of 'Montanism' in the *Passio* see the critical remarks by MARKSCHIES 2012, 277-290, who cannot detect Montanist tendencies but would like to see 'slight allusions to central elements of the theology of Tertullian's house church'.

¹⁰³ Perpetua reportedly experienced four successive visions: one about a huge ladder and an immense garden (4), two about her deceased brother Dinocrates (7-8), and a final one about a wrestling match with an Egyptian (10). Each is followed by the words 'then I awoke' (*experta sum*) and a brief statement about the meaning of what she saw (4.10; 7.9; 8.4; 10.13-14). In a short exchange with her brother (4.1-2), in which he asked for a vision, she, without the slightest doubt, promised to deliver one by the next day because she knew that she was able to converse with God (*sciebam fabulari cum Domino*).

¹⁰⁴ *P. Perp.* 2.1-3.

protagonists of this conflict were Perpetua in her roles as obedient daughter and Christian believer, and her father as the responsible and deeply caring head of the family. As Perpetua's narration centres on the father-daughter relationship, other important figures are mentioned only by passing or omitted altogether. Particularly, the absence of the husband has caused much confusion among modern readers. Neither Perpetua nor the editor mention him. It is only said that she was *matronaliter nupta* and, starting from this observation, it has always been assumed that there must have been a husband who was absent for some inexplicable reason.¹⁰⁵ There is in fact a good chance that the editor was equally puzzled over Perpetua's marital status as we are. He had certainly read about the infant son in Perpetua's account and subsequently faced the challenge either to edit out the child, which would have been an impossible feat, or somehow to explain away the absence of the husband. According to this reading, the reference to her lawful marriage would thus have served as a vindictory note forestalling any critique that might have come around concerning Perpetua's motherhood.¹⁰⁶ At the same time, the centrality of the *paterfamilias* to the exclusion of any other family relations also had wider social implications. It resonates with a distinctively Roman understanding of family that, in both moral and legal thought, presumed the presence of the male head of the household as the necessary precondition for the existence of any *familia*.¹⁰⁷ A father's name was inextricably linked with the word for family, justifying his position of authority in the household. Key to the proper understanding of this paternalistic perspective are the notions of *patria potestas* and *pietas*.

¹⁰⁵ *P. Perp.* 2.1. It has been suggested that he may have become estranged from his wife because of her religious beliefs (cf. SHAW 1993, 25) or that she had recently become a widow (cf. BREMMER 2002, 88).

¹⁰⁶ SIGISMUND-NIELSEN 2012, 107 and 113 equally holds the process of editing responsible for the absence of Perpetua's husband, without however further arguing the case.

¹⁰⁷ Perpetua's belonging to her father's household would also explain why he was able to withhold her infant child. He appears with the child at Perpetua's hearing (*P. Perp.* 6.2) and refuses to give it back after the pronouncement of the death sentence (6.7). Previously, Perpetua had given her baby to her mother and brother (3.8) but received it back when she got the permission to keep the child with her in prison (3.9). For a thorough analysis of the words *familia* and *domus* in Latin literature see SALLER 1984, 336-355.

From a legal perspective, the male head of the household wielded almost unrestricted powers over the members of his family. In particular, this included the *materfamilias* if she was in a *cum manu* marriage with her husband, all those who were related to him through the male line, and any domestic slaves that he may have possessed. By legal definition, they all remained subjected to his rule as long as he lived, or decided to release them from his power. Theoretically, he even had the right to kill anybody who was under his *potestas*.¹⁰⁸ The notorious *ius vitae necisque* had however only little relevance in actual practice. Another restriction is provided by the low life expectancy in ancient societies, which usually led to the children's independence at a relatively young age. Also, by the early imperial period, the customary form of marriage no longer involved a woman's *manus*. This meant that married women like Perpetua usually still belonged to her father's *familia*, and in case of his demise, she along with whatever property she may have inherited gained independence. In all likelihood, her husband had thus no say in what belonged to her unless she willingly decided to entrust the management of her property to him.¹⁰⁹ *Pietas*, on the other hand, was one of the core concepts of Roman moral thought, which did not only relate to the inner organization of the Roman family but, at a higher level, also governed one's attitude towards fatherland, emperor, and the gods.¹¹⁰ Nonetheless, it had its proper place in the household, where it regulated the relationships between family members. In previous scholarship, *pietas* has often been seen as the natural counterpart to a father's *potestas*. While the latter signified the rule of the father over his children, the former specified the filial obedience in response to his paternal authority. Recent investigations have however indicated that our evidence does not support such a simplistic view.¹¹¹ *Pietas* was by no means limited to the father-child

¹⁰⁸ LACEY 1986, 121-144.

¹⁰⁹ SALLER 2011, 119.

¹¹⁰ See SCHRÖDER 2012, 335-358 for a preliminary survey of the topic.

¹¹¹ SALLER 1988, 393-410.

or father-son relationship but encompassed the family as a whole, describing a mutual sense of obligation toward one another. As such, it called for dutifulness, loyalty, and respect with regard to one's next of kin. At the same time, however, *pietas* also required emotional attachment on the part of the family members whose love, devotion, and gratitude was indicative of the solidarity among relatives.¹¹²

The question of paternal authority and filial obligation are at the very heart of Perpetua's narration. We are not informed about the father's religious convictions but it seems likely that he was a pagan since he urged his daughter to conduct the sacrificial offering. Moreover, Perpetua herself associated her father's repeated attempts at persuasion with the machinations of the devil (*cum argumentis diaboli*).¹¹³ It is however clear that she was not the only member in the family openly displaying her allegiance to the Christian sect. In fact, one of her brothers was a catechumen too. Nothing specific is said about the mother but it is probable that she shared the faith of her children, since she seemed sympathetic to her daughter's commitment.¹¹⁴ The father, on the other hand, tried hard to make his daughter renounce her faith.¹¹⁵ He repeatedly visited her while she was held in custody and even dared to interrupt her hearing before the tribunal. Apparently, the reasons for his insistence were multilayered. Perpetua acknowledged that he had come *pro sua affectione*, because of his love for the imprisoned daughter.¹¹⁶ Affection seems however not to have been his sole motive. For he spoke to her like a father would *pro sua pietate*, that is, to safeguard the bonds of *pietas* that obligated Perpetua to the rest of the family. Accordingly, the father referred to the public shame and loss of reputation

¹¹² SALLER 2000, 857.

¹¹³ *P. Perp.* 3.3.

¹¹⁴ For the brother and mother see *P. Perp.* 2.2; 3.8. There was nothing uncommon about interfaith marriages or mixed-religion families. But as the example of the *Passio* demonstrates, the potential repercussions were serious.

¹¹⁵ Perpetua hints at his intentions at *P. Perp.* 3.1; 5.1.

¹¹⁶ *P. Perp.* 3.1.

that Perpetua's condemnation would bring upon the household as a whole: 'do not deliver me to the disgrace of men' (*ne me dederis in dedecus hominum*) and 'do not destroy us all' (*ne universos nos extermines*).¹¹⁷ Particularly interesting is his assertion that no one of the family would be able to speak freely (*nemo ... nostrum libere loquetur*) again if Perpetua was punished.¹¹⁸ The religious choice of one person, it seems, was closely linked to the fate of the family as a whole. The father was well aware that his daughter's misconduct, that is, her defiance of the paternal *pietas* by refusing to perform the ordered sacrifice, will have serious repercussions on his household. Consequently, he called to her mind each family member separately in a series of empathic imperatives: 'have pity on your father' (*miserere patri*), 'think of your brothers, think of your mother and your aunt' (*aspice fratres tuos, aspice matrem tuam et materteram*), 'think of your son' (*aspice filium tuum*).¹¹⁹ He could not have made clearer what was stake. The consequences of Perpetua's actions were not limited to the death of an individual but affected the well-being of the *familia*, and in particular the public reputation of the father who was to live on with the stigma of disgrace.

Despite the father's pleading, Perpetua did not submit to his paternal authority and stayed true to her commitment to God. Already during their first conversation, she argued that she could only be called what she was, a Christian. Before the tribunal, then, where her father was also present, she confirmed her belief when she, in response to the question *Christianus es?*, promptly answered *Christiana sum*.¹²⁰ Perpetua's estrangement from her father becomes particularly obvious in the latter's unfatherly behaviour. Throughout the text, he is depicted as a failing father who struggled to maintain his composure in front of others. On several occasions, he embarrassed himself not only in

¹¹⁷ *P. Perp.* 5.2; 4-5.

¹¹⁸ *P. Perp.* 5.4.

¹¹⁹ *P. Perp.* 5.2-3. See also *P. Perp.* 6.2 where the father brusquely says *supplica; misere infanti*. Subsequently, this exclamation is taken up by the procurator Hilarianus who concurs with the father's opinion, saying: *parce ... canis patris tui, parce infantiae pueri*.

¹²⁰ *P. Perp.* 3.1-2; 6.4.

front of his daughter but also in the public arena. Perpetua associated him with a complete lack of self-control, a rather unfavourable trait for any honourable Roman man. The procurator Hilarianus, for instance, had him publicly humiliated when he interrupted Perpetua's hearing. As a consequence of his action, he received physical punishment, was thrown down to the ground (*iussus est ab Hilariano proici*) and beaten with a rod (*virga percussus est*).¹²¹ Similar observations can be made with respect to the relationship with his daughter. One moment, after having been defeated by her argumentative superiority, he approached her as if he wanted to pluck out her eyes (*ut oculos mihi erueret*). Another time, he started kissing her hands (*basians mihi manus*) and threw himself at Perpetua's feet (*se ad pedes meos iactans*), desperately weeping (*lacrimans*) in front of her. Finally, he started tearing out his beard (*barbam suam evellere*) while again prostrating himself (*prosternere se in faciem*) before his daughter.¹²² The images reveal the powerlessness on the father's part. From his point of view, all the efforts and risks that he had taken to make his daughter change her mind were to no avail. While Perpetua actively decided on her fate, he was condemned to passivity. Both the attempted assault on the physical integrity of the daughter as well as the self-destructive gesture targeted at his very own body can thus be read as an attempt to overcome this unbearable situation. It appears that an act of violence was the last resort for a man whose argumentative rigour did not have the desired effect.¹²³ At the same time, the imagery hints at a reversal of traditional roles attributed to men and women in Roman society. The father's kisses on Perpetua's hands, for instance, strongly resonate with the customary way of how a client was

¹²¹ *P. Perp.* 6.5. For the episode see BREMMER 2002, 92f. and HEFFERNAN 2012, 203.

¹²² *P. Perp.* 3.3; 5.5; 9.2.

¹²³ HABERMEHL 1992, 56f. saw in the plucking out one's eyes a typically female gesture and therefore interpreted the scene as reversal of gender roles. KESSLER 1994, 191-201, on the other hand, pointed out that it constituted a regular reaction of husbands to possible rivals. He argued that the father's attempt aimed at Christ as the quasi-lover of his daughter. The tearing out of one's own beard is likewise a highly symbolic gesture. HEFFERNAN 2012, 247 pointed to similarities in connection with traditional Roman mourning practices. Especially women were commonly portrayed tearing out their hair as visible sign of grief.

supposed to approach his patron. Similarly, his willingness to submit himself to repeated prostration before his own daughter further adds to the father's self-abasement.¹²⁴ While Perpetua played the dominant part, the father adopted an overly submissive posture. This is confirmed by the assertion that he did not refer to her as his *filia* anymore but called her *domina*.¹²⁵ The word appears to describe the relative autonomy that she had gained by resisting the father's persistent pleading. Clearly, the father's claim to authority had gone unheard, despite the fact that Perpetua never ceased to call him *pater meus*.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, his unmanly and unfatherly behaviour rendered him an unlikely family patriarch.

Alongside the failing father an anonymous male figure emerges from the text whose conduct better matched that of a carrier of paternal authority. Unlike the actual father, the competitor was a product of Perpetua's mind that appeared in her visions and dreams. In one instance, he approached her with the words 'you are welcome here, my child' (*bene venisti, tegnon*) and consigned a piece of sweet cheese to her cupped hands. Eventually, when Perpetua had finished consuming the gift, a crowd of bystanders responded with a unanimously voiced 'amen'.¹²⁷ Another time, the man presented her with a green branch, which she had earned as a trophy for her victory in a wrestling match. He gave her a kiss and said: 'daughter, peace be with you' (*filia, pax tecum*). She then exited the arena in the fashion of a victorious gladiator.¹²⁸ These encounters confront the reader with an alternative father figure. But who was this man? There are

¹²⁴ For the kiss as a ritualized expression of submission see BINDER 2002, 940f.; HEFFERNAN 2012, 190.

¹²⁵ *P. Perp.* 5.5: ... *me iam non filiam nominabat sed dominam*. The phrase resonates with the brother's reference to his *domina soror* (4.1).

¹²⁶ *P. Perp.* 3.1; 3.3; 5.1; 5.5; 6.2; 6.5; 6.8; 9.2. The father's claim to authority can be glimpsed from *P. Perp.* 5.2: ... *si dignus sum a te pater vocari*.

¹²⁷ *P. Perp.* 4.9: *Et levavit caput et aspexit me et dixit mihi: „Bene venisti, tegnon”. Et clamavit me et de caeso quod mulgebat dedit mihi quasi bucellam; et ego accepi iunctis manibus et manducavi; et universi circumstantes dixerunt: „Amen”. The word *tegnon* is the Latinized form of the Greek τέκνον.*

¹²⁸ *P. Perp.* 10.12-13: *Et accessi ad lanistam et accepi. Et osculatus est me et dixit mihi: „Filia, pax tecum”. Et coepi ire cum gloria ad portam Sanavivariam*.

several clues in the text that hint at his identity. At first, he is described as a white-haired person (*hominem canum*) wearing shepherd's clothes (*in habitu pastoris*). He is placed in the middle of a vast garden ground (*spatium immensum horti*) milking sheep (*oves mulgentem*) while many thousands dressed in white (*candidati milia multa*) were standing by.¹²⁹ In the second vision, the location is described as an amphitheatre. This time, the man wore a distinguished purple robe with two stripes down the middle of his chest (*purpuram inter duos clavos per medium pectus habens*). His elaborate shoes were made of gold and silver (*galliculas multiformes ex auro et argento*), and in his hands he carried a wand (*virgam*) and a green branch that was adorned with golden apples (*ramum viridem in quo erant mala aurea*).¹³⁰ The two passages are particularly rich in imagery and in both instances Perpetua's description closely resembles the depiction of Christ in early Christian literature and art.

The pastoral attire and activity of the first figure, evokes the image of the Good Shepherd, which was firmly rooted in Scripture and influenced by ancient bucolic motives. The *pastor bonus* was a commonly recognized and widely used symbol for Christ. Tertullian, for instance, testified to the prominence of the theme in the North African church, where even some of the liturgical vessels featured the corresponding imagery.¹³¹ It is moreover worth mentioning that Saturus's vision report draws a very similar picture of an aged man sitting in a paradisiac landscape (*in eodem loco sedentem quasi hominem canum*). But, in his case, heaven is specifically marked out as the dwelling place of the Lord (*dominus*), that is, Christ.¹³² The depiction of the second male figure is in line with this

¹²⁹ *P. Perp.* 4.8: *Et vidi spatium immensum horti et in medio sedentem hominem canum, in habitu pastoris, grandem, oves mulgentem; et circumstantes candidati milia multa.*

¹³⁰ *P. Perp.* 10.8: *Et exivit vir quidam mirae magnitudinis ... discinctatus, purpuram inter duos clavos per medium pectus habens, et galliculas multiformes ex auro et argento factas, et ferens virgam quasi lanista, et ramum viridem in quo erant mala aurea.*

¹³¹ Tert. *Pudic.* 7.1; 10.11-12. ENGEMANN 1991, 557-607 provides a useful overview. For the scriptural evidence see Matt 18:12-14; Luke 15:3-7; John 10:11-16.

¹³² *P. Perp.* 11.10; 12.3. Saturus describes a great space (*spatium grande*) that seemed to be a garden (*viridarium*) with rose trees and an abundance of flowers. The place is inhabited by angels, martyrs, and other Christians (11-13).

reading. The richly ornamented vestment and the trophy, which the man was carrying, reveal him as *agonothetes*, the designated manager of the Pythian Games.¹³³ Judging from the other attributes that are mentioned in connection with this person, he also assumed the role of a trainer of gladiators. He is explicitly referred to as *lanista* in the text and held the *virga* as an additional distinguishing mark in his other hand. This instrument was commonly used in the context of gladiatorial training and combat.¹³⁴ The imagery of athletic contest is a prominent theme in early Christian literature and often occurs in connection with the experience of martyrdom. Already the biblical writings provide the starting point for the analogy. Most famous in this regard is 2 Tim 4:7 construing the imminent death of the apostle Paul as the endpoint of a καλός ἀγών.¹³⁵ Also more contemporary sources use similar imagery. Tertullian, for instance, described Christian martyrdom as a *bonus agon* and compared the suffering of the martyrs to an athlete's preparations before the competition. Particularly interesting in this context is his assertion that the living God acted as *agonothetes* in the final contest.¹³⁶ This latter acknowledgement then ties in with Perpetua's own depiction of the anonymous male figure as appointed overseer of the games. To her mind, thus, God had many faces and appeared to Christians in many forms: he was the shepherd who took good care of his flock; he acted as athletic trainer preparing martyrs for their final contest; or functioned as manager of the games overseeing and controlling the performance in the arena. Above all, however, he was the caring father who received Perpetua as 'child' and 'daughter of God' (τέκνον Θεοῦ; *filia Dei*). As such he directly competed with Perpetua's father who could not prevent her commitment to the Christian cause.

¹³³ ROBERT 1982, 258-77 identified the figure as *agonothetes*. Tert. *Scorp.* 6.2 informs us that Carthage had the right to host the Pythian games at that time.

¹³⁴ *P. Perp.* 10.8; 12. For the *virga* see HEFFERNAN 2012, 266.

¹³⁵ 1 Tim 6:12.

¹³⁶ Tert. *Mart.* 3.3. For the *agon* motif in Paul see PFITZNER 1967, which should be read together with ESLER 2005, 356-84 and SAXER 1986, 212-14.

The narration deliberately sets the father against the Christ-like figure of the visions and dreams. The calm and warmth with which the latter is associated forms a stark contrast to the emotional and overly submissive demeanour of the latter. Moreover, the description of the Good Shepherd as *homo canis* echoes analogous depictions of the father elsewhere in the *Passio*. Both the father himself and the procurator Hilarianus relate to his white hair (*canis meus, canis patris tui*), and Perpetua admits on two occasions that she felt sorry for his old age.¹³⁷ Consequently, the *potestas* that he was given over his own daughter as lawful head of the family was henceforth assigned to Christ who, according to Perpetua's imagination, represented a worthier carrier of paternal authority. As her *pietas* shifted, she did however by no means propose a radically different family model but stayed within the framework that she had known all her life. Although one father figure was replaced with another, the male holder of *patria potestas* remained the focal point of her description. Nevertheless, Perpetua's understanding of divine kinship was noticeably different from that of her usual family relations. For one thing, the intimate relationship to Christ, making Perpetua a *filia Dei*, transcended all worldly ties and, in so doing, reached out to the divine. Crucial in this context are the prophetic abilities that served as a bridge into the heavenly sphere, having her receive the assurance about each step of her future fate as Christian believer and prospective martyr.¹³⁸ For another thing, the notion of divine kinship, as Perpetua construed it, was necessarily tied to the experience of birth and death. The former did however not signify her physical birth but pointed to her spiritual rebirth as a member of the Christian family through baptism. Similarly, the

¹³⁷ *P. Perp.* 5.2; 6.3; 6.5; 9.3.

¹³⁸ On the day of her detention, Perpetua was still a catechumen but received baptism shortly before she was sent to prison (*P. Perp.* 3.5). Later, she publicly confessed her faith during the hearing before the tribunal of Hilarianus (6.4). Finally, she was brought into the arena where she, along with the others, was martyred (16-21). Each of these events – baptism, confession, and martyrdom – was accompanied by vision experiences that seem to confirm her gradual progression toward becoming a believer, confessor, and martyr.

latter did not denote the ordinary death of a human being but meant the ultimate sacrifice, that is, martyrdom. In the *Passio*, they are presented as the main markers of her belonging to the household of God.

The interaction of Perpetua with the Christ-like figure is skilfully arranged as part of an intricate frame of cross-references that tie her association with the divine holder of paternal authority to her individual progression as a dutiful daughter of God. Her vision about the Good Shepherd, then, immediately followed her own initiation into the Christian community. It is therefore no surprise that many of the images that Perpetua employed were in fact reminiscent of the actual post-baptismal rituals that she had experienced during the ceremony. The cupped hands and the unanimously voiced response of the bystanders evoke the celebration of the first communion after the bathing.¹³⁹ On that occasion, as Tertullian reports, neophytes were usually given some blend of milk and honey.¹⁴⁰ Perpetua described the consistency of her gift as a compact or at least semifluid mass rather than a liquid. But her subsequent acknowledgement that she woke up still chewing something sweet implies the taste of honey as a second ingredient.¹⁴¹ Also the image of the father welcoming his child ties in with such a depiction. For the use of kinship imagery with reference to baptism strongly resonates with other contemporary accounts that construed the bathing as a *novus natalis* in the course of which the baptizand acknowledged God as his or her *pater*.¹⁴² Somehow fittingly for a prophetess, her description did however not focus on the believer's acknowledgment of divine paternity but visualizes the warm reception that she had earned as the newborn child of God. Despite the firm rooting of the vision in the personal experience of the

¹³⁹ BREMMER 2002, 104 points to Tert. *Idol.* 7 and Cypr. *Ep.* 58.9.2; *Laps.* 15 for the reception of the gift into one's hands, and Tert. *Spect.* 25 for the practice of saying *amen* after the eucharist.

¹⁴⁰ Tert. *Coron.* 3.3: *inde suscepti lactis et mellis concordiam praegustamus*. See FERGUSON 2009, 345.

¹⁴¹ *P. Perp.* 4.10: ... *commanducans adhuc dulce nescio quid*. See BREMMER 2002, 104 and HEFFERNAN 2012, 183f.

¹⁴² Tert. *Apol.* 39.9; *Bapt.* 20.5; and Cypr. *Domin. orat.* 9.

neophyte, some references already point ahead to her martyrdom. The clearest indication in this regard is Perpetua's own interpretation of what she saw. For, together with her brother, she construed her dream as a sign of impending death. But also the mention of the *milia multa candidati* seems to point to her fate as a Christian martyr. The image alludes to Rev 7:9 where a multitude of people was standing before the throne of the lamb. As a symbol of their martyrdom, they were clothed in white robes and held a palm in their right hands. Perpetua herself was to earn a similar trophy as reward for her victory over an Egyptian wrestler whom she faced as her main opponent in the final vision.¹⁴³

Her encounter with the overseer of the Pythian Games, on the other hand, lays particular focus on the experience of martyrdom. The vision foreshadows the happenings in the arena where Perpetua, along with the other Christian prisoners, was eventually thrown to wild animals. Perpetua herself interpreted her martyrdom as the decisive struggle over eternal life or death and took the fight against the Egyptian as a symbol for the upcoming, final confrontation with the devil (*contra diabolum esse pugnaturam*).¹⁴⁴ The imagery that she employed to describe such a test of faith is clearly dominated by the *agon*-theme. At the outset of the contest, she is rubbed down with oil while her opponent applied dust to his own body. Both elements are well-attested ritualistic practices signifying the preparation of ancient athletes for a contest.¹⁴⁵ In the following, she

¹⁴³ See *P. Perp.* 10.8; 12. It is also possible to see in the bystanders the totality of neophytes that, like Perpetua, had received the sacrament of baptism. Traditionally, they were dressed in white robes after the bathing and were therefore referred to as *candidati*. The main problem with this identification is that such practice is attested no earlier than the fourth century, though the tradition is likely to go further back than that. For the baptismal robe see PAVAN 1978, 257-271; NOCE 2002, 57-70.

¹⁴⁴ *P. Perp.* 10.14.

¹⁴⁵ *P. Perp.* 10.7. There has been much debate about Perpetua's astonishing remark that she suddenly turned into a male being (*facta sum masculus*) after her clothes were removed from her body. WILLIAMS 2012B, 63f. makes the interesting observation that, only a few sentences further down, the *agonothetes* refers to her again as a woman (10.9; 13). He argues that the scene should be read as 'an act of retrospective interpretation' by the narrator who used gendered language to describe activities that are 'culturally coded as masculine'. For the rubbing with oil and the application of dust see BREMMER 2002, 116f. and HEFFERNAN 2012, 263f.

engaged in a deadly freestyle fight with an Egyptian professional and showed remarkable skill as a pankratiast.¹⁴⁶ Finally, she earned the customary prize of a victorious athlete (in her case a richly ornamented branch) and exited the arena through the *porta Sanavivaria* as a sign of her triumph.¹⁴⁷ At the same time, however, other images refer the reader back to Perpetua's initiation into the community. Particularly, the reference to her as Christ's daughter (*filia*) and the mention of the kiss of peace (the verb *osculo* coalesces with the noun *pax*) tie in with the allusive language of the previous vision recalling the baptism ceremony.¹⁴⁸ Such cross-referencing may also be due to a commonly held belief that viewed martyrdom as a second baptism. Tertullian, for instance, called it a *secundum lavacrum*, a bathing that involved blood rather than water.¹⁴⁹ Also the editor of the *Passio* explicitly referred to the *secundus baptismus* of Saturus. He mentioned that the audience received his eventual death with the exclamation *salvum lotum*, which roughly translates as 'saving bath'. The expression is usually associated with the baptismal rite and can moreover be found on ancient mosaics in conjunction with bathing scenes.¹⁵⁰

Perpetua's understanding of her familial belonging to God was thus crucially shaped by her experience of baptism and the prospect of martyrdom. They were the main markers indicating a new plane of existence that was preferable to ordinary kinship. In this regard, Perpetua presented herself as following in the footsteps of Jesus. For according to the synoptic gospels, particularly in Mark and Matthew, it was Jesus himself who renounced his family ties in favour of a spiritual form of solidarity that went beyond

¹⁴⁶ For the colourful depiction of the fight see *P. Perp.* 10.10-11.

¹⁴⁷ *P. Perp.* 10.12-13. For the green branch with golden apples see ROBERT 1982, 266-271. The prize moreover closely resembles a martyr's palm, the traditional symbol for those who have died for their faith.

¹⁴⁸ The kiss of peace was usually administered in connection with prayers or the Eucharist. But, as Just. *I Apol.* 65.1-2 reports, the practice also concerned the reception of newly baptized Christians as full members of the community. At *P. Perp.* 21.7, the kiss of peace also appears on another occasion. The anonymous editor reports that Perpetua and the other martyrs kissed each other in the arena as a symbol for their martyrdom (*osculati invicem ut martyrium per sollemnia pacis consummarent*).

¹⁴⁹ Tert. *Bapt.* 16.1.

¹⁵⁰ *P. Perp.* 21.2. For further references about the *salvum lotum* expression see MUSURILLO 1972, 131 with n. 21 and HEFFERNAN 2012, 359.

all worldly relations.¹⁵¹ Similarly, Perpetua disobeyed the direct orders of her own father and openly committed herself to a worthier holder of paternal authority. At the same time, the *Passio*'s cross-referencing of baptism and martyrdom by way of using manifold images and allusions is clearly reminiscent of scriptural depictions that construed the regeneration through water as either a new birth or the imitation of Christ in his death and resurrection.¹⁵² Baptism and martyrdom thus appear as liminal rites that mark the passage from worldly to divine kinship. Along these lines, Perpetua drew a close parallel between her own personal progression as a child and daughter of God and the life and death of Jesus Christ.

2.2 Tertullian and the community of brothers

The happenings of 203 were emblematic of the situation of North African Christianity at the turn from the second to the third century. There existed no overriding imperial policy to suppress the unwanted religious movement, but rumours about the alleged moral depravity of Christians stirred public anger. This hostility eventually resulted in occasional outbursts of persecution such as those in Scillium or Carthage.¹⁵³ Only a few years before the trial and execution of Perpetua and her fellow martyrs, in 197, the community of the provincial capital already saw some of its members die for their faith, while others were locked up and tortured. Our only witness for the disturbing events is Tertullian, who was not born a Christian but converted to Christianity at an unspecified point in his life. He offered words of encouragement to those who were currently kept in

¹⁵¹ Matt 12:46-50; Mark 3:31.35.

¹⁵² The former is exemplified by John 3:5 or Titus 3:5-7 while the latter conception draws on Rom 6:3-11. See JOHNSON 2008, 695-698.

¹⁵³ Tert. *Apol.* 7.1 refers to some of the more repulsive deeds associated with Christians. For the view that Christians were the cause of natural disasters see *Apol.* 40.1-2. For the relationship between pagans and Christians in this period see LANE FOX 1986.

custody, writing a brief note, which he had ominously titled *Ad martyras*.¹⁵⁴ Starting with this work, he emerged as one of the most prolific Christian voices of his time, whose elevated style of writing and argumentative sophistication reveal a level of education that places him within the social elite of his native Carthage.¹⁵⁵ In close succession, his initial reaction was eventually supplemented by two apologetical works that dealt with the implications of persecution from a decidedly Christian perspective. Although Tertullian mentioned in neither of them a specific occasion that prompted him into writing, it is highly likely that they were the product of the same hostile environment that made him address his fellow believers in prison. Both books – the *Ad nationes* and the *Apologeticum* – were closely linked with one another, as the former represents a less polished, raw version of the latter. A thorough comparison of the treatises thus shows that substantial parts of the *Ad nationes* were reused and brought into shape for the publication of the *Apologeticum*. Apparently, Tertullian had reworked the material before he put into circulation his statement on the matter later on in the same year.¹⁵⁶

The final publication did not simply provide a reply to pagan criticism but also attempted to present a picture of the Christian community that contradicted the widespread opinion about the suspected immoral disposition of its members. Among other things, the *Apologeticum* countered the allegation that Christians formed some kind of an ‘illegal faction’ (*illicita factio*) acting to the detriment of the state.¹⁵⁷ Against this

¹⁵⁴ The allusion to Septimius Severus’s victory at the battle of Lyon (*Mart.* 6.2) establishes February 197 as the *terminus post quem* for the work. See BARNES 1985, 32f. A majority of scholars place the *Ad martyras* to the year 197, while others associate the happenings with the year 203.

¹⁵⁵ Jer. *Vir. ill.* 53.1-5 famously reports that Tertullian was a presbyter, that his father had been a proconsular centurion, and that he became a schismatic in his later years. BARNES 1985 contested the traditional view of Tertullian as presbyter, son of a centurion, and Montanist. Most scholars today agree that he had never held a clerical office, though his influence on his co-religionists must have been considerable. The picture of Tertullian as a schismatic has also been revised, as our understanding of ‘Montanism’ developed.

¹⁵⁶ For the dating and the relationship between the works see BARNES 1985, 33f. and CASTILLO GARCIA 2001, 20-23.

¹⁵⁷ Tert. *Apol.* 38.

charge, Tertullian sought to rehabilitate the followers of Christ by citing certain communal activities (*negotia Christianae factionis*) as evidence for the innocence and sincerity that was to be associated with the Christian name.¹⁵⁸ In contrast to the rather disparaging term *factio*, he defined the Christian community as ‘a body’ (*corpus*) that united its members according to a shared religious consciousness (*religio*), a unity of teaching (*disciplina*), and a common bond of hope (*spes*).¹⁵⁹ In actual practice, Christian gatherings featured common prayers to God, readings from Scripture, as well as lectures on the divine precepts. Besides, each member was supposed to spend a small amount of money once a month on the poor and needy.¹⁶⁰ In terms of its organizational structure, the religious body was governed by what Tertullian referred to as *seniores*, which is probably best translated as ‘presbyters’ (from Greek πρεσβύτεροι) and should not be confused with the North African *seniores laici* who are attested elsewhere.¹⁶¹ It was the duty of these dignitaries not only to provide spiritual guidance and to oversee the collection and disbursement of the community’s funds but also to pass judgement on to all those who did not observe the biblical teachings.¹⁶² Above all, however, Tertullian’s discussion of the Christian community centres on the aspects of love and fraternity. Both the Christian disposition to love and the name of brother were singled out as the main distinguishing features that set Christians apart from a predominantly non-Christian environment.

¹⁵⁸ The reference to the *negotia Christianae factionis* at *Apol.* 39.1 mirrors the charge of the previous paragraph (*illicita factio*).

¹⁵⁹ Tert. *Apol.* 39.1: *corpus sumus de conscientia religionis et disciplinae unitate et spei, foedere*. Similar expressions can be found elsewhere. At 23.11 Tertullian mentions only *fides* and *disciplina*, while *Apol.* 39.3 adds *fiducia* as a fourth element beside *fides*, *spes*, and *disciplina*.

¹⁶⁰ Tert. *Apol.* 39.2-3; 5.

¹⁶¹ For the debate whether Tertullian’s wording at *Apol.* 39.4 suggests the presidency of either ‘priests’ or ‘lay elders’ see BARNES 1985, 273-275. Tertullian does not differentiate here between ecclesiastical offices (cf. *Bapt.* 17.1, where he sets the *episcopus* apart from the *presbyteri* and *diaconi*). Perhaps a differentiation was not required in view of a predominantly non-Christian target audience that was not interested in such internal matters.

¹⁶² Tert. *Apol.* 39.4.

Moreover, these aspects were presented as the cause for frequent defamation. It was then Tertullian's objective to establish their true meaning against the allegations of outsiders.

According to the *Apologeticum*, Christians were branded with the sign of love. The *operatio dilectionis* put a mark upon them (*notam nobis inurit*). Likewise, the fact that Christians were commonly known by the name of brothers (*fratrum appellatione*) seems to have given rise to resentment. 'Look, how they love one another (*Vide ... ut invicem se diligant*) and how they are ready to die for each other (*et ut pro alterutro mori sint parati*)' were the words that Tertullian put in the mouths of his predominantly non-Christian audience. As far as the notion of fraternity is concerned, he moreover noted – with cutting irony – that it is the lack of affection in their kinship relations (*omne sanguinis nomen*) that made pagans despise the word of brother.¹⁶³ Tertullian was in fact not the only Christian author to make this observation. Also the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix paid particular attention to the notions of love and siblinghood. His presentation of the argument closely resembles that of the *Apologeticum*, which has many scholars led to wonder about the exact relationship between those two works.¹⁶⁴ The dialogue features a fictitious conversation between a Christian named Octavius Ianuarius and his pagan interlocutor Caecilius Natalis at Ostia, leading to the latter's conversion to Christianity. One of the charges that had often been advanced against the Christians was their alleged involvement in incestuous activities. Caecilius spoke of *incestum* that was to be associated with the Christian sect and accused them of setting up a 'religion of lusts' (*libidinum religio*). The Christian use of sibling terminology and their programmatic disposition to love were then cited as evidence for these allegations:

¹⁶³ Tert. *Apol.* 39.7-8: *Sed eiusmodi vel maxime dilectionis operatio notam nobis inurit penes quosdam. ,Vide, inquirunt, ut invicem se diligant', ipsi enim invicem oderunt, et ut pro alterutro mori sint parati', ipsi enim ad occidendum alterutrum paratiores. Sed et quod fratrum appellatione censemur, non alias, opinor, insaniunt, quam quod apud ipsos omne sanguinis nomen de affectione simulatum est.*

¹⁶⁴ A broad timeframe can be established between 160-260. Based on similarities between the *Octavius* and the *Apologeticum*, scholars have sought a more specific date by determining the chronological order. A majority believes that Minucius Felix was influenced by Tertullian, but there is also some support for the opposite view. A third position suggested that both depended on a common model. This seems unlikely since there is no evidence for a common source. See the overview in HARDWICK 1989, 19-23.

‘they fall in love almost before they are acquainted’ (*amant mutuo paene antequam noverint*) and ‘they, without distinction, call themselves brothers and sisters’ (*se promiscue appellant fratres et sorores*). Caecilius’ main point then was that the conflation of love and siblinghood turned into incest in what otherwise could still be regarded as ‘ordinary fornication’ (*non insolens stuprum*).¹⁶⁵ Octavius, on the other hand, strongly objected to these accusations. Rather than linking *amor* with sexual intercourse, he explained the Christian disposition as an inherent inability to show hatred (*nos mutuo amore diligimus, quoniam odisse non novimus*). In lieu of the incestuous practices that the peculiar use of sibling terminology from a pagan perspective appeared to imply, Octavius gave a rather different reasoning for the prominence of kinship language among Christians: ‘we call ourselves brothers (*fratres vocamus*), as descendants of one God, our parent (*unius dei parentis homines*), as partners in the faith (*consortes fidei*), as joint heirs in hope’ (*spei coheredes*).¹⁶⁶ According to Minucius Felix, the preference to refer to Christians as brothers and sisters was grounded in the conviction that they belonged to a divine household whose spiritual quality went beyond the finite nature of worldly kinship ties. The community of brothers had thus nothing to do with incestuous behaviour, as many outsiders like Caecilius believed, but drew its strength from the Christian belief in one God, one faith, and one hope. This attachment to a common cause and the knowledge of its divine origin justified the mutual solidarity among Christians.

In the *Apologeticum*, Tertullian used a similar line of argument to defend the community of brothers against the allegations from outsiders. Not unlike in Minucius Felix’ dialogue, his argumentation was fundamentally steered by the notion of divine

¹⁶⁵ Minuc. Oct. 9.2: *occultis se notis et insignibus noscunt et amant mutuo paene antequam noverint; passim etiam inter eos velut quaedam libidinum religio miscetur, ac se promiscue appellant fratres et sorores, ut etiam non insolens stuprum intercessione sacri nominis fiat incestum.*

¹⁶⁶ Minuc. Oct. 31.8: *sic mutuo, quod doletis, amore diligimus, quoniam odisse non novimus; sic nos, quod invidetis, fratres vocamus, ut unius dei parentis homines, ut consortes fidei, ut spei coheredes.*

kinship. Directly addressing his pagan audience, he empathically acknowledged that ‘we are your brothers too’ (*fratres ... etiam vestri sumus*) because both shared a common point of origin in ‘one mother nature’ (*natura mater una*) by whose law all were bound.¹⁶⁷ Both the idea of a universal brotherhood of man and the image of mother nature to which Tertullian appealed seem to be borrowed from Stoic philosophy.¹⁶⁸ At the same time, the name of brother did not apply to all in the same way, for non-Christians were singled out as *mali fratres* who could hardly be called humans (*parum homines*), while Christians were referred to as ‘worthier brothers’ (*quanto dignius fratres*).¹⁶⁹ This distinction between worthy and unworthy siblings rather recalls biblical examples, most notably Gal 2:4 where the apostle Paul coined the term *ψευδαδελφοί* (*falsi fratres* in the Latin) as a designation for his adversaries.¹⁷⁰ The notion of universal brotherhood, then, was mingled with a moral judgement about who is good and who is bad. The distinction was based on a number of interrelated criteria: first, as Tertullian pointed out, Christians have obtained the knowledge of God the Father (*unum patrem deum agnoverunt*); second, they have imbibed the Holy Spirit (*unum spiritum biberunt sanctitatis*); third, they have gone from the womb of ignorance (*de uno utero ignorantiae*) to the light of truth (*ad unam lucem ... veritatis*).¹⁷¹ In other words, the difference between believers and unbelievers was that Christians knew about their divine origin, while all others remained stuck in ignorance. It was only the *digniores fratres* who had acknowledged the paternity of God, and it was only them who had received baptism as a symbol of their attachment to the divine household. Like Perpetua

¹⁶⁷ Tert. *Apol.* 39.8: *Fratres autem etiam vestri sumus iure naturae matris unius, ...*

¹⁶⁸ Epictetus reportedly referred to slaves as ‘kinsmen’ and ‘brothers by nature’ because they were ‘offspring of Zeus’ too (*Diss.* 1.13.4). For Tertullian’s reference to mother nature see GEORGES 2011, 559. The influence of Stoic thinking on Christianity has recently been explored by THORSTEINSSON 2010.

¹⁶⁹ Tert. *Apol.* 39.8-9: *... etsi vos parum homines, quia mali fratres. At quanto dignius fratres et dicuntur et habentur ...* . Tertullian employs similar expressions at *Carn.* 7.13 where he contrasted the Jewish synagogue with the Christian church. The latter represents both a *potior mater* and a *dignior fraternitas*.

¹⁷⁰ See Tertullian’s reference to the *falsi fratres* at *Adv. Marc.* 1.20.4; 5.3.2-5 and *Monog.* 14.1.

¹⁷¹ Tert. *Apol.* 39.9: *... qui unum patrem deum agnoverunt, qui unum spiritum biberunt sanctitatis, qui de uno utero ignorantiae eiusdem ad unam lucem expaverunt veritatis?*

in the *Passio*, Tertullian associated kinship imagery with the initiation ceremony. For one thing, he alluded to the element of water by using the verb *bibere*. The image of drinking was often used in connection with the reception of the Spirit, and there are also biblical examples that could have served as a model for Tertullian's depiction.¹⁷² Similarly, the mention of God's paternal authority points to other early Christian descriptions of the baptismal rite. In the Pauline letters, as we have previously seen, the initiation then appears to climax at the very moment when the baptizand received the Spirit while acknowledging the fatherhood of God.¹⁷³ Finally, the use of the light metaphor can also be linked to the baptismal theme (and to conversion narratives in general). According to Justin, baptism was commonly seen as a form of 'illumination' (φωτισμός). Likewise, in the mid-third century, Cyprian described his conversion as a *secunda nativitas* that led him from the *tenebrae* and *nox caeca* of his pagan life to the *lux* and *veritas* of the Christian faith.¹⁷⁴ Thus, the dividing line between the *mali fratres* on the one hand and their 'worthier' counterparts on the other was the latter's willing recognition of God, which was visibly demonstrated by the completion of the baptismal rite.

Particularly noteworthy about Tertullian's depiction of the community of brothers is his association of the light/truth analogy with the male component (*deus pater*), while the darkness of the *uterus ignorantiae* refers to the aforementioned *mater natura*. The feminine aspect, it seems, was excluded from the midst of a male-dominated brotherhood. This is moreover reflected in Tertullian's use of the sibling terminology itself, whereby expressions like *fratres* tacitly assume that women were part of the

¹⁷² See for instance 1 Cor 12:13.

¹⁷³ Rom 8:15 and Gal 4:6. The acknowledgment of God's paternity during the ceremony is still attested for the mid-third century. Cypr. *Domin. orat.* 9 states that the *homo novus* who was reborn in God by divine grace uttered 'father' (*pater primo in loco dicit*) because he has commenced to be his son (*filius esse*).

¹⁷⁴ Just. 1 *Apol.* 61.12; Cypr. *Ad Donat.* 3-4.

community without specifically mentioning the *sorores*.¹⁷⁵ In other contexts, however, the image of the mother was given a positive meaning. Along with the aspect of God's fatherhood and fraternity among Christians, motherhood actually marked another distinctive feature of the divine household. In the closing remarks to the work *De baptismo*, the description of the baptismal rite is embellished with flowery kinship imagery. The central part of the ceremony itself, i.e. the washing of the baptizand, is portrayed as a 'new birth' (*novus natalis*).¹⁷⁶ Tertullian further described the scene as the neophyte rose from the 'bath' (*lavacrum*) devoting himself to prayer, which was to be performed 'in the presence of the mother, together with the brothers' (*apud matrem cum fratribus*).¹⁷⁷ What followed was the joint entreaty to God calling upon the Father and Lord (*petite de patre ... petite de domino*).¹⁷⁸ Again, we find a wealth of family imagery in close association with the rite of baptism. While the fellow believers appear as *fratres*, God is depicted in his dual role as *pater* and *dominus*. Especially interesting, however, is the reference to the mother, which in this context is clearly not nature but the church. Childbirth and motherhood were then used as apt metaphors to describe the role of the church as a place of worship and instruction. Elsewhere, Tertullian specifically pointed to the church's name by using the phrase *mater ecclesia*.¹⁷⁹ Unlike the notion of God's paternity, the description of the church as mother however had no direct biblical roots.¹⁸⁰ Probably the earliest Christian writer to make extensive use of such imagery was Irenaeus of Lyon in the latter half of the second century. In his books *Adversus Haereses*, the notion of the church's motherhood

¹⁷⁵ It is telling that the pagan Caecilius alluded to the Christian practice of referring to one another as *fratres et sorores*, while his discussion partner omitted the female part altogether (*fratres vocamus*). See Minuc. *Oct.* 9.2; 31.8.

¹⁷⁶ Tert. *Bapt.* 20.5: ... *cum de illo sanctissimo lavacro novi natalis ascenditis*.

¹⁷⁷ Tert. *Bapt.* 20.5: ... *et primas manus apud matrem cum fratribus aperitis*. The described posture (standing with outspread hands) is typical for the prayer. (my own translation)

¹⁷⁸ Tert. *Bapt.* 20.5: ... *petite de patre, petite de domino peculia gratiae distributiones charismatum subiacere*.

¹⁷⁹ Tert. *Mart.* 3.1; *Monog.* 7; 16.

¹⁸⁰ Famous is the description of the celestial Jerusalem as 'our mother' at Gal 4:26, which has commonly been cited to reason the church's motherhood. See PLUMPE 1943, 1-34 for a survey of the biblical and extrabiblical sources.

appears in a highly developed form, whereby the idea of maternity was coupled with images of childbearing, breastfeeding, and virginity.¹⁸¹ Depending on the situation, Tertullian was thus perfectly able to adjust his diction – be it the Stoic notion of the *mater natura* toward a pagan audience or the idea of the *mater ecclesia* toward his fellow believers.

In Tertullian's apologetical and catechetical literature, the Christian community thus emerged as a brotherhood whose *raison d'être* was founded in the paternity of God and the motherhood of the church. Believers became sons and daughters of God because they acknowledged him as their *pater*. They related to the church as *mater* because it was the place where they were spiritually reborn. Hence, Christians saw themselves as *fratres* and *sorores*. Tertullian further characterized such brotherly bond as marked by unanimity of mind and community of goods: 'so we, who are united in mind and soul, have no hesitation about sharing property' (*itaque qui animo animaque miscemur nihil de rei communicatione dubitamus*).¹⁸² This is a reference to the description of the Jerusalem community in *Acts*, which presented the sharing of possessions and the idea of like-mindedness as distinctive features of Christian togetherness. As I have pointed out earlier, such notions strongly reverberated with the Graeco-Roman literary tradition, which associated both of these qualities with the intercourse between friends.¹⁸³ It is therefore not surprising to see Tertullian, after describing the ideal community, using friendship language to turn the allegation of indecency against the accusers themselves. His main point was that, while Christians had everything in common except their wives (*omnia indiscreta sunt apud nos praeter uxores*), the rest of mankind turned this rule upside down by their readiness to participate in frivolous wifesharing (*qui non amicorum solummodo matrimonia*

¹⁸¹ Iren. *Haer.* 3.24.1; 25.5-6; 4.33.4; 11. See PLUMPE 1943, 35-44 and JENSEN 2008, 137-155, esp. 139f.

¹⁸² Tert. *Apol.* 39.11.

¹⁸³ Acts 2:42 and 4:32. See MITCHELL 1997, 236-257.

usurpant, sed et sua amicis patientissime subministrant).¹⁸⁴ As evidence, he cited the examples of Socrates and M. Porcius Cato. Whereas the former was said to have claimed that, in the ideal state, women should be common to all men, the latter reportedly surrendered his wife to his *amicus* Hortensius in order to forge an alliance between the families.¹⁸⁵ Tertullian's polemic thus attacked his pagan audience on different levels: the purported promiscuity among non-Christians was marked as morally misguided, while the decency of Christians was highlighted as particularly praiseworthy. This can be read as a counter-attack against the allegations that associated Christians with incestuous behaviour. On a subtler level, however, Tertullian challenged the foundations of friendship *per se* when he ridiculed the notion of sharing. He contested the widely accepted view that pictured friendship as a community of goods and minds by pointing to the actual practice that featured the scandal of wifesharing as the only common ground between friends. Thus, Tertullian used *amicitia* as a contrasting foil that was set against the community of brothers in which joint property and discipline among its members were no empty rhetoric but an essential part of their commitment to God.¹⁸⁶

Tertullian's mention of friendship in connection with the notion of fraternity ties in with a recurrent theme in Graeco-Roman literature that drew on kinship imagery to indicate particular closeness between friends. Previously, we have already pointed to Atticus who, in the works of Cicero, appears as both a close *amicus* and a beloved *frater*.¹⁸⁷ Another example is provided by Minucius Felix. The dialogue *Octavius* is presented as a relaxed *sermo* between friends that eventually resulted in a disputation about the religious

¹⁸⁴ Tert. *Apol.* 39.12: *Omnia indiscreta sunt apud nos praeter uxores. In isto loco consortium solvimus, in quo solo ceteri homines consortium exercent, qui non amicorum solummodo matrimonia usurpant, sed et sua amicis patientissime subministrant* ...

¹⁸⁵ Tert. *Apol.* 39.12: *... ex illa, credo, maiorum et sapientiorum suorum disciplina, graeci socratis et romani catonis, qui uxores suas amicis communicaverunt, quas in matrimonium duxerant liberorum causa et alibi creandorum; cf. Pl. Resp.* 5.457cd for Socrates and Plut. *Cat. min.* 25.5 for Cato the Younger (not the *ensor* as Tertullian mistakenly inferred at *Apol.* 39.13).

¹⁸⁶ For the charge of wifesharing in Roman literature see WILLIAMS 2012A, 167-169.

¹⁸⁷ Compare Cic. *Amic.* 5 with *Fam.* 13.1.5 and *Att.* 1.5.

truth. Octavius himself is referred to as *amicissimus homo*, and when the narrator in his role as arbiter was allocated the middle place between the two debaters, he reassured the reader that this did not happen out of special distinction, but that ‘friendship always assumes or creates equality’ (*quippe cum amicitia pares semper aut accipiat aut faciat*).¹⁸⁸ At the same time, however, the Christian Octavius repeatedly referred to his pagan interlocutor as *frater*. In this context, the expression can either be read as a term of endearment for a close *amicus* or as a reference to Caecilius’ future conversion, which expressed the hope that one day he would become a member of the Christian brotherhood too.¹⁸⁹ In either case, the concurrent use of brother and friendship terminology represented nothing out of the ordinary and therefore would not have perplexed a contemporary reader. The name of brother, as we have seen, was firmly rooted in the Christian tradition, yet the same language also had its proper place in Roman literature, where it, apart from kinship relations, also described a dear friend. Tertullian’s depiction of the Christian community aimed at the same inherent connection between confraternity and friendship. He could certainly not have dealt with notions like like-mindedness and property sharing without leaving an apologetical note that justified the preference of the community of brothers over *amicitia*.

2.3 Lactantius and the notion of divine kinship

About a century after Tertullian and Perpetua, Christianity stood again on the verge of persecution. This time it was no localised incident but the actions that were taken formed part of an empire-wide policy that aimed at religious outsiders like the Manicheans or the Christians to strengthen imperial ideology and cult. On 24 February 303, emperor

¹⁸⁸ Minuc. *Oct.* 2.2; 4.6.

¹⁸⁹ Minuc. *Oct.* 3.1; 5.1; 16.5.

Diocletian and his college of co-rulers issued the first in a series of edicts enforcing the anti-Christian legislation.¹⁹⁰ At that time, a North African rhetor named Lactantius resided at the imperial court in Nicomedia where he held the position of a teacher of Latin rhetoric. As a Christian he must have been horrified by the events that immediately preceded the official promulgation of novel laws. For on the day before the legal measures were put into effect, the church of Nicomedia was looted and levelled to the ground in order to ceremoniously mark the end of the Christian cult.¹⁹¹ In response to these events, Lactantius composed the *Divinae Institutiones*, a treatise in seven books that, on the one hand, sought to disprove pagan religiosity and, on the other, claimed religious truth and moral superiority for the Christians. In particular, Lactantius referred to two individuals that prompted him into writing. One was an unnamed philosopher in whom some scholars have recognized no one else than the famous neoplatonic thinker Porphyry.¹⁹² The other anonymous person can be identified with Sossianus Hierocles, the governor of the province Bithynia in that year.¹⁹³ Both had written books against the Christians and the latter was moreover singled out as one of the prime movers of the persecution. Lactantius feared the eloquence and argumentative rigour with which his adversaries were able to fuel anti-Christian sentiments among literate circles. His response was thus primarily designed to counter the attacks of men whose influence and profound erudition helped justify the persecution.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁰ For the so-called Great persecution see BARNES 1982, DAVIES 1989, 66-94; LEADBETTER 2009, 114-155.

¹⁹¹ Lact. *Mort. pers.* 12; cf. *Inst.* 5.2.2. Incidentally, Diocletian and his co-emperor Galerius chose the day of the *Terminalia*, i.e. the festivities in honour of the god of boundaries, as the fit occasion to publicly state their intentions regarding the Christians.

¹⁹² Lact. *Inst.* 5.2.2-4.1. The identification of the unnamed philosopher as Porphyry was suggested by WILKEN 1979, 124. DIGESER 1998, 129-146 and with her a growing number of scholars accepted this position while BARNES 2001, 158f. argued against it.

¹⁹³ BARNES 1976, 239-252.

¹⁹⁴ DIGESER 2000, 7f.

In the *Divinae Institutiones*, Lactantius presented a picture of God and society that combined the biblical notion of divine kinship with Graeco-Roman thought. This is in line with his overall approach that programmatically drew on extrabiblical sources to show that the Christian message was true. As the appropriate frame for his treatise, he chose the literary form of the *institutio*, i.e. an introductory textbook that was commonly used to instruct prospective students about a specific subject. Rather than introducing his readership to the fields of law or oratory, as for instance Gaius and Quintilianus had done, Lactantius however sought to provide a similar work for the field of religion. Hence, the title of his treatise reads as ‘divine instructions’.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, Lactantius justified his choice by claiming that previous attempts by Latin apologists at defending the Christian faith failed because their writings were defective. With a view to Minucius Felix, he noted that his dialogue had hardly scratched the surface of the matter. Cyprian, whom Lactantius praised for his elegant and powerful language, made the mistake of using scriptural evidence instead of ‘worldly’ arguments to convince his readership. Finally, Tertullian failed because his approach too narrowly focused on the refutation of accusations without however providing instructions in the divine teachings.¹⁹⁶ According to Lactantius, there was thus a lesson to be learned from the example of his predecessors: the objective should be to instruct (*instituere*) in divine matters rather than merely to respond (*respondere*) to accusations.¹⁹⁷ At the same time, one should utilize the *humana*

¹⁹⁵ ID., 9 and 57. Quintilian’s *Institutio oratoria* is a notable example of the genre. Lactantius himself mentions the ‘Institutes of Civil Law’ (*Inst.* 1.1.12) as his model. Legal writers such as Gaius, Ulpian, and Iulius Paulus commonly wrote *Institutiones*.

¹⁹⁶ Lact. *Inst.* 5.1.21-28; 5.4.3-8. In his list of Latin apologists, we miss Arnobius’ *Adversus nationes*. The most likely explanation is that, at the time of writing, Lactantius had no knowledge of the existence of another Latin apology. This would imply that their works were written around the same time.

¹⁹⁷ While the first part of the *Divinae Institutiones* is concerned with the refutation of pagan cult and philosophy (Books I-III: *De falsa religione*, *De origine erroris*, *De falsa sapientia*), the remainder of the work was intended to instruct readers in the principles of the religious truth (Books IV-VII: *De vera sapientia et religione*, *De iustitia*, *De vero cultu*, *De beata vita*). Lactantius’s focus on pagan literature to the detriment of the scriptural testimony had drawn some criticism among other Christians. Almost a century later, Jerome mingled praise with censure when speaking about Lactantius’ work. See Jer. *Ep.* 58.10, which should be read together with *Ep.* 53.7.

testimonia rather than Scripture to prove the accusers wrong. It is for that reason that Lactantius' treatment of human-divine relations and interhuman solidarity was necessarily steered by both traditions, merging biblical thought with extrabiblical concepts.¹⁹⁸

For him, the Christian God was the sole reason why humans cherished one another and he went even one step further by arguing that, if God were worshipped by all, there would be neither strife nor war in the world. The strength of his argument lies in the family imagery employed, which committed humans not only to God but also to their fellow men. Lactantius posited that 'God is father equally to all' (*pater idem omnibus deus est*) and that this was the reason why humans were the 'sons of God' (*dei filii*). If people were aware of this truth, they would eventually recognize 'the bond of brotherhood' (*fraternitatis vinculum*) that they share with their fellow humans and there would ultimately be no need to fight one another anymore. The notion of 'divine kinship' (*divina necessitudo*), as Lactantius put it, is thus presented as the solution to the sort of deficiencies that were able to shake any society to its very foundations.¹⁹⁹ While the vertical father-son relationship connected man to God, the horizontal integration of humanity was established through the sibling bond. It is a distinctive feature of the *Divinae Institutiones* that Lactantius's unfolding of such family imagery implemented an androcentric perspective that seems to deliberately exclude the female aspect from consideration. In fact, Lactantius's depiction of the *divina necessitudo* discusses neither the role of the daughter nor that of the sister. Also the rendering of the church as the nourishing mother is missing,

¹⁹⁸ In comparison to his extensive use of pagan authorities, direct references to Scripture remain relatively rare. But, as we will see, Lactantius was by no means ignorant of the biblical tradition. For an overview of Lactantius's sources see BOWEN/GARNSEY 2003, 14-21.

¹⁹⁹ Lact. *Inst.* 5.6.12 and 5.8.6 citing Lucr. 2.992. See also *Inst.* 5.17.34 where humans are established as social beings (*siquidem socialis est hominis ac benefica natura*) whose sociability points to kinship with God (*quo solo cognationem cum deo habet*). There are variations to the expression *fraternitatis vinculum*. Elsewhere, Lactantius speaks of the *ius fraternitatis* (5.22.7) or the *fraterna necessitudo* (*Epit.* 54.5).

though other Christians made effective use of the *mater ecclesia*.²⁰⁰ Clearly, Lactantius's focus was on the relationship between father and son and that between brothers. This reflects the nature of a paternalistic society that tended to edit out women from its records. Yet it is moreover likely that Lactantius's emphasis on the male line was steered by his overall argumentation, which drew an elaborate analogy between the legal construct of the Roman *paterfamilias* and the biblical notion of God's paternity. God was thus presented as the focal point of the household while all other domestic relations were construed as an immediate result of his fatherhood.

The identification of God with the *paterfamilias* is not a Christian invention but was deeply anchored in Roman religious life. Many of the pagan deities were referred to as fathers; in some instances, such as Jupiter or Marspiter, the name of the god was even merged with the title *pater*. Cicero, for instance, stated that Jupiter means *iuvans pater*, which translates as 'helping father'.²⁰¹ Lactantius himself ridiculed such practice, not so much because the name *pater* seemed unfit for a deity but because there could only be one father. In the same way, as it was unlawful for one person to have many fathers, the worship of many gods must therefore be regarded as both a breach of the bonds of *pietas* and a violation of the law of nature (*contra naturam est contra que pietatem*). As his principal witness, he cited the Roman satirist Lucilius whose corresponding comments were filled with cutting irony: whatever the name of the god – be it Jupiter, Saturn, Neptun, or Mars – they were all called father.²⁰² The purpose of Lactantius's argument eventually was to establish the Christian God as the one, true father who, unlike all pagan deities, was alone deserving of worship.

²⁰⁰ For instance, Tert. *Mart.* 1; *Monog.* 7; 16; *Orat.* 2.6; Cypr. *Laps.* 2; *Ep.* 10.1.1 (cf. above p. 58f.). An obvious place to allude to the church's motherhood would have been in the concluding section to book four (*Inst.* 4.30) where Lactantius briefly deals with the theme of heresy.

²⁰¹ Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.64.

²⁰² Lact. *Inst.* 4.3.11-13. For a discussion of Lactantius's *paterfamilias* analogy and its foundation in Roman religious thought see WLOSOK 1960, 232-246 and LOI 1970, 81-86.

In his analogy, God was ascribed a double role as loving father and punishing master. His *duplex potestas* was not only indicated in the hallowed names *pater* and *dominus* but was also reflected in his power to indulge (*indulgere*) and to punish (*coercere*). This was in line with a legally prescribed image of the *paterfamilias* that attributed a loving and forbearing attitude to the head of the household while, at the same time, acknowledging his punitive and coercive powers over all family members.²⁰³ God's *potestas* was however not the only concern of Lactantius. He also discussed the duties that mankind owed in return. In accordance with God's double function as *pater* and *dominus*, his dependents were ascribed a double role as either sons (*fili*) or slaves (*servi*). While it was the duty of a son to love and honour his father (*patrem diligere debent et honorare*), slaves were supposed to revere and respect their master (*dominum colere ac vereri*). Thus, the relationship of man to God should be one that adequately responded to his demands as father and master. Just as his affection called for a son's love (*amor*), a slave's fear (*timor*) was the appropriate response to divine sanctions.²⁰⁴ According to Roman moral standards, it was proper for family members to revere and honour the *paterfamilias*. Lactantius then linked this common perception with the biblical notion of God's paternity. He was however well aware that not all lived up to these expectations. In particular, the mischievous behaviour of philosophers (*philosophi*) and worshippers of gods (*cultores deorum*) was singled out and compared with the offences of 'disinherited sons' (*filiis abdicatis*) and 'runaway slaves' (*servis fugitivis*). While the former would usually be stripped of their due share in the patrimony, the latter will not achieve impunity for their misdeeds. It is thus in God's *potestas* to charge the transgressions of unbelievers with equal punishment. Philosophers, on the one hand, will not obtain a share in the *caelestis hereditas*, which, according to Lactantius, was immortality (*immortalitas*). The *cultores deorum*, on the other, were bound to suffer eternal

²⁰³ Lact. *Inst.* 4.3.14-17.

²⁰⁴ Lact. *Inst.* 4.4.1-2.

death (*sempiterna mors*).²⁰⁵ Summing up his argument about the father-son relationship between God and mankind, he thus posited God as the only one who deserved to be called *pater* and *dominus* because he was at the same time creator (*qui creavit*) and ruler (*qui regit*). He held the right over life and death (*qui habet vitae et necis ... potestatem*), a phrase that was commonly cited in connection with the *paterfamilias* and, though somewhat anachronistic, represented the full extent of his power over the household. Anyone, then, who did not acknowledge God must therefore be regarded as either a ‘foolish slave’ (*insipiens servus*) trying to escape the mastery of his *dominus*, or an ‘undutiful son’ (*impius filius*) disregarding the authority of *suum verum patrem*.²⁰⁶ The image of the Roman head of the family in his roles as father and ruler of the household was thus brought in line with a view that pictured God as the author of creation and lord of the world.

Lactantius was not the first Christian to compare the authority of God with the legal power of the Roman *paterfamilias*, though his analogy was much more complex than previous examples. We have already seen that Tertullian in the *Apologeticum* and in *De Baptismo* employed the same language to describe God’s paternity – and so did Perpetua in the *Passio*.²⁰⁷ But there is at least one further instance in Tertullian’s work where the analogy is spelled out in more detail. Here, Tertullian introduced the reader to the dual role of God as both *pater* and *dominus*. While the former signified his forbearance (*clementia*), the latter stood for the discipline (*disciplina*) which he demanded from those who were subjected to his rule. Accordingly, God must be dutifully loved (*diligendum pie*) while, at the same time, his punitive power should necessarily be feared (*timendum necessarie*). Tertullian moreover argued that God’s dual power as father and lord was already prefigured in Scripture, where believers were commended to do both, to love and to fear

²⁰⁵ Lact. *Inst.* 4.4.5.

²⁰⁶ Lact. *Inst.* 4.4.11.

²⁰⁷ Tert. *Apol.* 39.9; *Bapt.* 20.5 (cf. above p. 56-59).

God (*diliges deum – timebis deum*).²⁰⁸ To argue God’s paternity, Lactantius could thus either turn to a time-honoured custom that venerated the pagan gods as fathers or hark back to Tertullian who had drafted a similar analogy on the basis of the biblical tradition. We know that Lactantius was well acquainted with both possible sources. On the one hand, he specifically referred to the pagan father-gods, attacking the legitimacy of their claim to fatherhood. On the other hand, he demonstrated his familiarity with Tertullian’s work by criticising his predecessor’s apologetical account.

In the *Divinae Institutiones*, Lactantius put the teaching of the Bible into words and concepts that were understandable to any Roman. As the *paterfamilias* analogy unfolds, traditional Roman thought was combined with biblical notions, creating a unique blend of the two traditions. This is particularly true with regard to *pietas*, one of the core concepts of Roman moral thought. It had its proper place in the Roman household, where *pietas* governed the relations between family members. Yet it was equally applicable to the relationship between humans and the gods, or in Lactantius’s case between man and God. The Latin usage thus provided the connecting factor between the domestic and the divine sphere, which eventually made the analogy work.²⁰⁹ In the above passages, *pietas* was closely tied to the knowing and worshipping of God. Lactantius, for instance, emphasized that it was *contra pietatem* to have many gods, and the one who did was eventually singled out as *impius filius*. Elsewhere, he pointed to the ‘unjust and impious veneration of the gods’ (*iniustus atque impius deorum cultus*) and referred to pagan worshippers as ‘treacherous and rebellious children’ (*perfidi ac rebellis liberi*), who refused to acknowledge God as their parent.²¹⁰ Lactantius thus charged his target audience with *impietas* because he regarded their acts as a violation of the bonds that, analogous to the father-child

²⁰⁸ Tert. *Adv. Marc.* 2.13.5 with reference to Deut 6:5 and 13.

²⁰⁹ WLOSOK 1960, 237.

²¹⁰ Lact. *Inst.* 5.8.11.

relationship, tied humankind to God. In his view, the *vinculum pietatis* worked on distinct levels. On the one hand, it was understood as the bond that maintained the link between God and man. On the other, it equally comprised the body of rules by which men were bound to the divine (*hominem sibi deus religaverit et pietate constrinxerit*). Accordingly, humans were obliged to serve (*servire*) God and to submit themselves (*obsequi*) to him as their *dominus* and *pater*.²¹¹ It is thus the duty of humankind not only to respectfully venerate the common father and master but also to obey to the divine rules as the concrete expression of God's paternal authority.

At the same time, Lactantius also dealt with the implications of the *adfectus pietatis* for society and human interaction, arguing that the recognition of God's paternal authority induced a feeling of togetherness among human beings that prevented them from doing harm to one another.²¹² Consequently, he stated that wherever the divine *pietas* was put into effect, there was no war and people lived in concord because 'they love all men as brothers' (*omnes homines pro fratribus diligunt*).²¹³ The father-son relationship that tied man to God thus effectuated a corresponding sibling bond on the interpersonal level. Humans were *fratres* to one another because they shared in God the same point of origin, and the knowledge about man's common descent eventually made them love (*diligere*) people that they would not have cherished if the truth about God were not revealed to them. Lactantius characterized this state of being brothers with the term *aequitas*. Since God was the same father to the entire human race, it must follow that all humans were his children 'by equal right' (*si enim cunctis idem pater est aequo iure omnes liberi sumus*). According to Lactantius, the Graeco-Roman civilization failed to institute *aequitas* because it had evolved into distinct social classes. Greeks and Romans held a place in

²¹¹ Lact. *Inst.* 4.28.12.

²¹² Lact. *Inst.* 6.10.3.

²¹³ Lact. *Inst.* 5.10.10.

society according to their wealth, power, and rank. Wherever people were subjected to such social distinctions, *aequitas* could however not be achieved (*ubi enim non sunt universi pares, aequitas non est*). Thus, Lactantius drew a picture of society that was marked by *inaequalitas*, which was deficient in so far as it did not recognize and honour the vital bonds of divine kinship.²¹⁴ His understanding of *aequitas* did however not involve the idea of social equality in the modern sense of the word. Rather than targeting at social change through the redistribution of wealth and power, Lactantius envisaged a spiritual equality that escaped the realm of worldly interpretation. Christians, he said, ‘measure all things human spiritually and not physically’ (*cum omnia humana non corpore, sed spiritu metiamur*). Despite the overt social differences even among Christian believers, co-religionists were called ‘brothers in spirit’ (*spiritu fratres*) or ‘fellow-slaves in worship’ (*religione conservos*).²¹⁵ Lactantius thus carefully distinguished between the domain of worldly ambitions that was necessarily marked by social disparity, and the divine sphere where equality before God prevailed.

One of the main concerns of Lactantius’ conception of divine kinship was justice and how it can be brought back into a world that, according to Lactantius, was infested by injustice. In the eyes of many Christians, the most recent example was the implementation of anti-Christian laws, though the persecution may not have been the only reason for the prominence of the subject in Lactantius’s work. In fact, he devoted the entire book five (*De iustitia*) and substantial parts of book six to the topic. Moreover, the overall design of his work as ‘Divine Institutes’ was based on the *institutiones civilis iuris*, the ‘Institutes of Civil Law’. In the main, Lactantius’s understanding of *iustitia* was steered by the conviction that true justice could only be attained if the worship of God was in place. It is in this respect that the notions of *pietas* and *aequitas* played a prominent role.

²¹⁴ Lact. *Inst.* 5.14.15-20.

²¹⁵ Lact. *Inst.* 5.15.2-3.

They were singled out as the *duo fontes* of justice. One, as we have seen, was defined as the knowing (*dei notio; cognoscere deum*) and worship of God (*cuius cognitionis haec summa est ut colas*), while the other was understood as making oneself equal with all others (*se cum ceteris coaequandi*).²¹⁶ In actual fact, they were hardly separable from one another since they both had their focal point in the celestial father. Elsewhere, Lactantius used other terminology to describe the double-sided nature of justice. Here, the virtue of *pietas* corresponded to the duty of religion (*religio*) while *aequitas* matched the notion of compassion or humanity (*misericordia vel humanitas*).²¹⁷ These concepts were deeply steeped in classical culture and were therefore likely to evoke corresponding associations in the minds of contemporary readers. We have already paid close attention to *pietas* and its proper function in the Roman household. Moreover, we have pointed to the use of kinship language in connection with the pagan father-gods. These aspects need no further elaboration. At this point, it suffices to say that already Cicero could use the terms *pietas* and *religio* interchangeably in order to denote the appropriate behaviour towards the gods. To be sure, the latter was more specifically tied to the sphere of religion and cult, while the former additionally conveyed the kind of domestic connotation that was so typical of Lactantius's conception of God.²¹⁸ The nexus between *aequitas* and *humanitas*, on the other hand, appears to be influenced by Stoic philosophical thought, especially if we tie them to the notion of universal brotherhood. Now *aequitas* had a specific use in Roman law where it stood for the just and proper implementation of legal terms in each individual case.²¹⁹ This was however not what Lactantius had in mind since he specifically referred

²¹⁶ Lact. *Inst.* 5.14.9-12 and 15.

²¹⁷ Lact. *Inst.* 6.10.2.

²¹⁸ HELLEGOUARC'H 1963, 276. Cic. *Inv. rhet.* 2.66 distinguished between *religio* as fear and veneration of the gods and *pietas* as one's duties towards fatherland, parents, and other relatives. Elsewhere, however, *pietas* was used as a synonym for *religio*. Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.116, for instance, defined it as *iustitia adversus deos*, justice toward the gods.

²¹⁹ TUORI 2013, 132f.

to the *aequitas bene iudicandi*, the equity of good judgments, and set it off from a broader meaning of the term that proclaimed the basic oneness of mankind. Such thinking strongly resonates with comparable Stoic positions that gave notions such as *humanitas* or that of an all-embracing brotherhood their distinctive meaning.²²⁰

Beneath the surface, however, Scripture guided Lactantius's discussion of justice. Whereas Stoic philosophy and Roman moral thought hold the key to the understanding of the single components of the definition, the whole argumentative frame rested on the biblical notion of love in its characteristic form as 'love of God' and 'love of neighbour'. This distinction was in fact the source of the double sidedness of justice and it has rightly been pointed out that the passage can only be decoded on the basis of its biblical foundation.²²¹ According to the synoptic gospels, Jesus had propounded that the love of God (*diliges dominum deum*) was the first and great commandment (*maximum et primum mandatum*), while the love of neighbour (*diliges proximum tuum*) was the second (*secundum*). Together they summed up the writings of the Old Testament, both the law and the prophets (*universa lex et ... prophetae*).²²² There are a couple of similarities that need to be noted in comparison with Lactantius's definition of justice. For one thing, the two commandments were not given the same weight but the love of God as *maximus et primus mandatus* took precedence over the love of neighbour. Similarly, Lactantius described *pietas* as the 'source and origin' (*caput ... et origo*) of true justice, whereas *aequitas* was seen as the seat of its 'vigour and reasonableness' (*vis ac ratio*). With regard to the duties of *religio* and *humanitas*, he moreover noted that the former was the *primum iustitiae officium*, while

²²⁰ Sen. *Clem.* 2.5.2-3, for instance, asserted the importance of *humanitas* in Stoic thought and Epict. *Diss.* 1.13.4 postulated the brother bond as uniting factor among men.

²²¹ BUCHHEIT 1979, 356-374 thoroughly analysed Lactantius's dependence on the biblical notion of 'Gottes- und Nächstenliebe'. His investigation however understates possible pagan influences. See already PÉTRÉ 1948, 72.

²²² Matt 22:36-40 (cited according to the Vulgate version); cf. Ex 20:1-7; Deut 6:5; Lev 19:18; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:25-28.

the latter followed in the second place.²²³ Furthermore, the biblical twofold law of love shared the main target of the Lactantian conception of justice. While the first commandment called for love for God, the second required a similar disposition towards one's neighbour. According to Lactantius, then, *religio* established the 'connection with God' (*coniungi cum deo*), while *humanitas* governed the domain of interhuman relations (*cum homine*).²²⁴ Finally, the subsumption of the entire *lex* of the Old Testament under two fundamental *mandata* echoes Lactantius's accentuation of *pietas* and *aequitas* as the *virtutes principales* of justice.²²⁵ Lactantius' understanding of *iustitia* was thus fundamentally steered by biblical thought. It combined notions of Graeco-Roman provenance with the teachings of Jesus. In so doing, Lactantius proposed the model for an ideal society whose welfare crucially depended on the acknowledgement and veneration of its divine origins.

This construal of justice becomes also obvious in other respects. The notion of *pietas*, as we have seen, was closely tied to the *duplex potestas* of God as father and lord. In his role as *pater*, he was supposed to exercise forbearance (*indulgere*), that is, to be kind and tender if required. The verb implied a loving attitude toward mankind but remains nebulous in its meaning. If we however look at the duties that humans owed in return, the vocabulary gets much more specific. In this case, Lactantius spoke of *diligere et honorare*, explicitly stating that it was part of the *duplex honos* of man to show their celestial father the kind of 'love' (*amor*) that befits a dutiful son.²²⁶ Similarly, Jesus' instruction to love God (*diliges dominum deum*) posited a loving disposition toward the celestial father as the first and foremost duty of each believer. The same can be said about the second commandment, namely that one should love his neighbour (*diliges proximum tuum*). Already the use of the noun *miser cordia*, which Lactantius introduced as a synonym for the favoured term

²²³ Lact. *Inst.* 5.14.11; 6.10.2.

²²⁴ Lact. *Inst.* 6.10.2.

²²⁵ Lact. *Inst.* 5.14.9.

²²⁶ Lact. *Inst.* 4.3.14 for *indulgere* and *Inst.* 4.4.1-2; *Epit.* 54[59].4 for *diligere* and *amor*.

humanitas, points to a specific understanding of the terminology involved. Later, in his reworked and abbreviated version of the *Divinae Institutiones*, the so-called *Epitome*, he replaced his diction, which was initially intended for a pagan audience, adding the word *caritas* instead of *humanitas*. Both terms, *misericordia* and *caritas*, conveyed a specific Christian meaning. They both suggested a compassionate and loving attitude towards others that manifested itself in the form of charitable acts.²²⁷ According to Lactantius, humanity thus meant ‘to love man because they are human and the same as we are’ (*diligere hominem, quia homo sit et idem quod nos sumus*).²²⁸ Elsewhere, he made more specific assertions about the proper quality that such love implied. He posited that one should love all men as brothers (*omnes homines pro fratribus diligunt*) and be friends even with enemies (*amicis sunt etiam inimicis*). The explicit mention of the enemy tied Lactantius’s notion of *humanitas* to the teaching of Jesus who, according to the gospels, had extended the biblical notion of love of neighbour by pointing to the enemy as its most proper object.²²⁹

At the same time, Lactantius sharply criticized man’s insistence on reciprocity in human dealings. Rather than focusing on one’s personal advantage, one should desist from asking a favour in return if a gift was granted. Particularly, his attacks were directed toward Cicero whose deliberations about *beneficentia* and *liberalitas* in the *De officiis* resulted in an appeal to restricted use of one’s own financial power: assistance, he argued, should only be granted to suitable people (*idonei homines*). Lactantius, on the other hand, accused his predecessor of restraining man from humanity (*refrenat homines ab humanitate*) and posited *non idonei homines* as the proper object of gift-giving because they were not able to return the favour.²³⁰ Therefore, one should not spend his riches on the erection of

²²⁷ BLAISE 1954, 133f. (s.v. *caritas*) and 534 (s.v. *misericordia*). See also PÉTRÉ 1948, 71f. who points out that Lactantius rarely used the word *caritas* in the above sense.

²²⁸ Lact. *Inst.* 6.11.1.

²²⁹ Lact. *Inst.* 5.10.10; cf. 6.10.5: *propterea deus praecepit inimicitias per nos numquam faciendas* For the biblical commandment to love one’s enemies see Matt 5:43-48 and Luke 6:27; 32-36.

²³⁰ Lact. *Inst.* 6.11, esp. 9-13 citing Cic. *Off.* 2.52; 54.

splendid buildings or in support of public games. Also, one's fellow tribesmen and clients only come in the second place. The real target however should be 'to support the needy and the useless' (*egentes atque inutiles alere*).²³¹ This critique of the principles of reciprocal exchange then strongly resonates with the biblical maxim that all good deeds will be recompensed in the afterlife. Jesus set the example when he taught that one should invite the poor and the sick rather than more potent guests for dinner. Since they were not able to reciprocate the favour, God will render compensation.²³² It is thus not the aim of charitable acts to make the *inutiles* anything other than what they were, that is, to actually change their desperate situation, but to earn recompense before God. Similarly, Lactantius acknowledged that it was against the principles of *humanitas* to seek for compensation in a fellow man. Rather, the price that one was going to win will come from God (*quia mercedem capiet a deo*).²³³ Altogether, the notion of *humanitas* in the *Divinae Institutiones* shows a striking resemblance to the biblical notion of love of neighbour. On the one hand, it propounded a loving attitude toward fellow human beings regardless of who they were. Ideally, even the enemy was supposed to benefit from such disposition. On the other hand, Lactantius's *humanitas* advocated an understanding of giving that favoured marginalized persons over more distinguished circles in order to gain remuneration before God.

Lactantius advocated a model of divine kinship that was deeply steeped in the classical tradition, merging biblical imagery with Graeco-Roman thought. In his *Divinae Institutiones*, he drew an elaborate analogy between the notion of God's paternity and the legal concept of *patria potestas*, which had the male head of the family as the focal point of

²³¹ Lact. *Inst.* 6.11.21-28. In the following, Lactantius listed the poor, prisoners, children, widows, and the sick among the receivers of benefactions. Moreover, he mentioned the burial of strangers and paupers as an additional duty (6.12.16-25).

²³² Luke 14:12-14.

²³³ Lact. *Inst.* 6.12.2.

the Roman household. The deity's *duplex potestas*, making the father adopt both a forbearing and punishing attitude toward his children, corresponded to the *duplex honos* of men who were supposed to show respect and reverence in return. The virtue that governed human-divine relations was the notion of *pietas*, connecting men to God by a mutually felt sense of obligation. On an interpersonal level, such *adfectus pietatis* effectuated the kind of solidarity among human beings that was able to level out social distinctions. The recognition of the vital bonds of divine kinship, making people brothers to one another, was then the best guarantee for the implementation of a state of *aequitas* in society. This was not to be achieved by the redistribution of wealth and power but merely required the appreciation of the spiritual bonds that made all human beings equal before God. In this respect, the notions of *pietas* and *aequitas* formed the foundation for justice. Only if the worship of God was in place, the *divina necessitudo* could truly be recognized. Ultimately, it was only then that *iustitia* could be brought back into a world that had hitherto been marked by injustice.

3. *Unitas fraternitatis*: brothers and enemies in Cyprian of Carthage

Beginning with the third century, Latin speaking authors like Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Perpetua and Lactantius began picturing the Christian community as part of a divine household that suggested a corresponding concept of relatedness on an interpersonal level between fellow believers. In so doing, they drew on both the scriptural tradition as well as on Roman moral thought to reason divine kinship and to defend it against attacks from outsiders. Eventually, they came up with highly sophisticated conceptions that drew an analogy between the Roman household and the language of the Bible. At the same time, their perception of the domestic sphere often resonated with the notion of *amicitia* as is indicated by the works of Tertullian and Minucius Felix. While the former pointed to the conflation of kinship and friendship language by leaving an apologetical note in favour of the community of brothers, the latter's diction is reminiscent of similar examples in Roman literature that used the word *frater* to add a familial tone to one's dealings with friends. Such conceptual overlaps have wider implications for the reception of a philosophical concept of friendship in a Christian context. This is probably best demonstrated by the mid-third century bishop Cyprian of Carthage whose writings have never been considered as a potential source for the study of friendship-related thought. The negative result seems less of a surprise if we consider the bishop's negligible references to *amicitia* in his writings.²³⁴ Implicitly, however, many of his views regarding Christian fellowship were fundamentally steered by its principles. It is thus the aim of the present chapter to uncover Cyprian's dependency on the notion of friendship with respect

²³⁴ A cursory search reveals no more than twenty hits for *amicitia/amicus* in the entire oeuvre of Cyprian.

to both the conceptualization of the theme in his work and the bishop's ecclesio-political activity.

Crucial to the understanding of Cyprian's tenure as bishop of Carthage are the many internal struggles challenging his authority as appointed overseer of the local community. From the start, probably in 249, there was a strong opposition inside the clergy resenting the election of the new bishop. Cyprian's flight during the Decian persecution then led to a temporary lack of control over his flock, which offered his opponents the opportunity to build up a following of their own. Later, when the inexperienced Cornelius was made bishop of Rome instead of the distinguished theologian Novatian, a similar schism occurred in the Roman capital, which had repercussions on Cyprian's own position in his hometown. Finally, when Stephen of Rome, the successor of Cornelius, ceased to communicate with a significant part of the established church, Cyprian and his fellow bishops even faced the charge of heresy. It was in view of such ecclesial conflicts that Cyprian felt the need to find an appropriate tool in order to highlight ecclesial opposition. In so doing, he made recourse to rhetorical strategies that were commonly associated with Roman politics. In his work *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate*, which gains centre stage in this chapter, the bishop posited *unitas* and *caritas* as the two main principles according to which Christians must live their lives.²³⁵ Anyone then who tears apart the divinely sanctioned unity of the church could only be regarded as an *inimicus*. While *caritas* strongly resonates with the biblical tradition that commands love of God and love of neighbour, the notion of *unitas* appears to be prefigured in Tertullian's *De praescriptione haereticorum*. At the same time, however, the contrast between the *unitas fraternitatis* and the blameworthy *inimicus* who acts against the

²³⁵ The significance of the notion of *unitas* for Cyprian's ecclesial thinking has long been acknowledged. See for instance BECK 1967, 123-138; WICKERT 1971; OSBORN 1973; HINCHLIFF 1974; ADOLPH 1993; HOFFMANN 2004, 369-371.

ordinances of bishop and church points to further influences. In fact, the bishop's thinking was fundamentally steered by a friend-enemy distinction that drew on contrastive language to express ecclesial opposition. In this regard, Cyprian's diction shows close parallels with classical notions that could be used to establish sharp boundaries between *amici* and *inimici*.

After a close analysis of the bishop's conceptual framework, the remainder of the chapter is devoted to the examination of a selection of letters showing that the conception had not only theoretical value but was also used in the actual practice. In this case, the focus lies on figures like Felicissimus and Novatus, the perceived instigators of the schism at Carthage, and the conflict with Stephen of Rome over the issue of rebaptism. In these sections, I will show that Cyprian applied his rhetoric of exclusion to a wide range of different contexts in order to denounce his opponents as enemies of the divinely sanctioned order of the church. In the process, formerly respected church representatives, whom the bishop usually regarded as faithful *fratres*, were turned into blameworthy criminals who did not deserve to be named brothers but *inimici*.

3.1 Ecclesial unity and Christian love

In spring 251, Cyprian summoned a gathering of church representatives at Carthage to discuss internal matters.²³⁶ As far as we know, the council's agenda contained two interrelated items. First, the assembly sought commonly accepted standards for the ecclesial reconciliation process. At that time, the North African communities had just emerged from a prolonged period of persecution, in the course of which many Christians had offered sacrificial offerings to the gods as a sign of loyalty to the reigning emperor

²³⁶ Cypr. *Ep.* 55.6.1. Cyprian made his plans for a synod known as early as spring 250. See the references in FISCHER/LUMPE 1997, 167 n. 5.

Decius.²³⁷ From the standpoint of the church, their submission to the imperial order represented a lapse in faith (hence the name *lapsi* in our sources), which could only be expiated by acts of penance. In consideration of the sheer number of Christians who sought readmission to communion after their offence, the bishops were in dire need of general rules and procedures that regulated the influx of returnees.²³⁸ Second, varying opinions about the implementation of penitential standards had led to schisms in the individual communities, which posed a threat to church leadership. In Carthage itself, a group of rogue clerics around colourful figures like Felicissimus and Novatus challenged the authority of Cyprian, who had gone into hiding when the persecution broke out – a course of action, which brought him much criticism not only in his hometown but also overseas in Rome. During his absence, they succeeded in establishing a following of their own by taking a more lenient course toward the *lapsi*. The agitation of the clerical opposition in Carthage, along with widespread reservations regarding Cyprian's withdrawal, thus weakened the bishop's position in the community and necessitated appropriate counteractions on his part.²³⁹ This latter issue was even more pressing as, while the council was still in session, news reached Carthage about similar occurrences in Rome, where the election of Cornelius as new bishop – the previous office holder Fabian had become one of the first victims of the Decian persecution – threatened to divide the local community. Apparently, the electoral process favoured the relatively

²³⁷ RIVES 1999, 135-154. For a review of the relevant literature see DUNN 2007, 23.

²³⁸ Cypr. *Ep.* 55.6.1 summarizes the council's decisions regarding the *lapsi*. During the persecution, the bishop's position had been that, if possible, all pending cases should be deferred until a synod could decide on the matter. In the meantime, the people concerned should do penance for their offence. The only exception concerned those that were close to death. At first, he argued that their plea must be accompanied by a so-called *libellus pacis* that was given out by prospective martyrs (Cypr. *Ep.* 18.1-2; 19.2.1-2). Later, he conceded that the criterion of illness was sufficient to grant peace (*Ep.* 20.3.3).

²³⁹ The opposition made use of their self-proclaimed power to grant forgiveness in order to establish binding relations between the *lapsi* and themselves, which rivaled Cyprian's own patronage. See convincingly BOBERTZ 1988, esp. 75-252 who saw the institution of patronage at the very heart of the conflict. The bishop's reaction prior to the spring synod of 251 targeted at the restoration of patronal relations. See ID. with BOBERTZ 1997, 252-259. Cyprian's decision to take refuge in a secret place was criticised by the Roman clergy (Cypr. *Ep.* 8). Even years later, long after the Decian persecution had ended, he had to fend off accusers that openly questioned his escape (*Ep.* 66.4.1).

inexperienced presbyter over his sacerdotal colleague Novatian, who had controlled the fate of the Roman church in the absence of a designated heir to the episcopal throne. At first, the North African bishops, who were unaware of the actual situation, recognized the claim of neither of the competing parties but sent out a delegation to investigate the matter. Based on their report, the installation of Cornelius was later recognized while Novatian's claim to authority was rejected.²⁴⁰

It was on this occasion that Cyprian presented to a wider audience his policy regarding the *lapsi* as well as his standpoint in view of the recent occurrences of schism, notably in his own community. Two position papers, whose main arguments he presumably had already formulated during the time of exile, were read out to the assembly.²⁴¹ With this presentation, Cyprian launched a counter-attack against those who, from his perspective, undermined the authority of the church and that of the bishop. While the work *De lapsis* suggested a set of rules to adequately regulate the process of reconciliation, the *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate* (hereafter *De unitate*) provided instructions regarding the proper handling of schismatic movements. The bishop saw the ecclesial unity under attack by dissenters who had emerged from within the community itself and thus proclaimed the indivisibility of the *unitas fraternitatis*, the oneness of the Christian brotherhood. Cyprian summarized his argumentation as follows:

‘Lord thy God is one Lord (*dominus unus est*), and thou shalt love the Lord thy God (*diliges dominum deum tuum*) with thy whole heart and with thy whole sole and with thy whole strength. This comes first, and the second is like to it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour (*diliges proximum tuum*) as thyself. On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets.’
Unity and love together (*unitatem simul et dilectionem*) he taught with the

²⁴⁰ For the Roman schism see FISCHER/LUMPE 1997, 182-189 and BAUMKAMP 2014, 208-224. *Cypr. Ep.* 44-45; 48 give account of the happenings revolving around the election of Cornelius. According to Cornelius, Novatian had deceived three Italian bishops into making him antibishop (Eus. *H. e.* 6.43.7-9).

²⁴¹ The wording of *Cypr. Ep.* 54.4 suggests that the bishop had recited the *libelli* at the synod (*quos hic nuper legeram*).

weight of his authority; he embraced all the prophets and the law in the two commandments.²⁴²

The passage is made up of different pieces. Basically, it represents a conflation of two versions of the same biblical story. Matt 22:37-40 is merged with the corresponding account of Mark 12:29-31. Both report an alleged saying of Jesus, according to which he reduced the books of the Old Testament to just two commandments: first, to love God and second, to love one's neighbour. Ultimately, the essence of *tota lex* and the *prophetarum* was to be found in these *duo praecepta*.²⁴³ Cyprian then followed with his own interpretation by adding that 'unity together with love' (*unitas simul et dilectio*) was the lesson to be learnt from the divine dictum. In this case, the bishop favoured the word *dilectio* to the elsewhere attested *caritas* probably because the noun took up the verb *diligere* of the biblical quotation. Substantially, however, this did not make much of a difference since Cyprian often alternated between these words as a matter of stylistic choice.²⁴⁴ In a Christian context, both terms typically signified a feeling of compassion towards others, which manifested itself in charitable acts that did not ask for a favour in return. Hence, their description as love of neighbour (*diliges proximum tuum*). At the same time, however, Christian love had divine roots. It originated in God and anyone who conformed to the biblical precept would ultimately be remunerated in the hereafter for his worldly beneficence. Hence, the semantic field of the terminology equally covered the aspect of love of God (*diliges dominum deum tuum*).²⁴⁵ While the word *dilectio* was a natural choice in

²⁴² Cypr. *Unit. eccl.* 15: '*Dominus unus est, et diliges dominum deum tuum de tote corde to et de tota anima tua et de tota virtute tua. Hoc primum, et secundum simile huic: diliges proximum tuum tamquam te. In his duobus praeceptis tota lex pendet et prophetarum.*' *Unitatem simul et dilectionem magisterio suo docuit; prophetas omnes et legem praeceptis duobus inclusit.* For the following see BRÄNDLI 2013, 89-96.

²⁴³ For the Old Testament roots of the two commandments see Deut 6:4-5 (love of God) and Lev 19:18 (love of neighbour).

²⁴⁴ PÉTRÉ 1948, 70f.

²⁴⁵ For the range of meanings see BLAISE 1954, 133f. (s.v. *caritas*) and 273 (s.v. *dilectio*). PÉTRÉ 1948 provides a detailed analysis of the topic. More recently MÜLLER 2014, 17-48.

view of Cyprian's biblical quotations, the use of the term *unitas* requires further explanation. For one thing, the emphasis on *dominus unus* at the outset of the passage created a verbal link to the idea of unity. For another, the commandment to love God already presupposed an agreement about the proper object of love, and therefore implicated a certain idea of oneness. But what does *unitas* exactly mean?

The notion of unity established a conceptual nexus between office and church. It allowed Cyprian to argue the prerogatives of the bishop and his claim to authority in the church from biblical testimony.²⁴⁶ The key passage, in this regard, was the episode where Peter, as the first among the apostles, was entrusted with the pastoral office (Matt 16:18-19). As Cyprian himself acknowledged, the rest of the disciples later received the same commission, yet the bishop made Peter the symbol of the divinely sanctioned *unitas*.²⁴⁷ The unity and indivisibility of office and church followed as the logical consequence of their origin in one man (*super unum*, R.T.), that is, in *una cathedra* (P.T.). Consequently, Cyprian saw himself and his colleagues as the current endpoint in a long and sustained line of bishops that led directly back to the foundation of the episcopate in Peter. Cyprian's claim to apostolic succession thus established the bishop as the true heir of the original gathering around Jesus and, in so doing, attempted to justify his position of leadership in the community. At the same time, the conception also allowed for plurality. For, despite Peter's special role as the source of the episcopate, all other apostles were endowed with equal powers (John 20:21-23).²⁴⁸ One and the same ministry was shared

²⁴⁶ The central passage is Cypr. *Unit. eccl.* 4-9.

²⁴⁷ Two independent versions of Cypr. *Unit. eccl.* 4-5 survived. The primacy text (P.T.) places special emphasis on the priority of Peter (most notably in the phrase *primatus Petro datur*). The received text (T.R.) accentuates the equal status of all apostles. There is a broad consensus among scholars that Cyprian authored both versions and that the R.T. represents a rewriting of the P.T. It would appear that the bishop saw the necessity to revise his position when he got involved in the baptismal controversy with Stephen of Rome. See BÉVENOT 1971, x-xv and for a contrasting view HALL 2004, 138-146. More recently, SHUVE 2010, 627-642 attempted to reconcile the two positions.

²⁴⁸ Cypr. *Unit. eccl.* 4: *apostolis omnibus parem tribuat potestatem* (P.T.). See also the modified version of the phrase in the T.R.

by a plurality of office holders. By analogy, this means that each bishop took an equal share in the office, though the episcopate itself remained undivided. Similarly, the church formed in its entirety *una ecclesia*, while, at a local level, it was made up of a wealth of individual congregations.²⁴⁹ Cyprian resorted to the legal phrase *in solidum* to argue the case for unity in diversity, and added a number of images to clarify the contrasting aspects of *unitas*: there are many sunbeams (*multi radii*) but only one light (*lumen unum*), many branches (*rami multi*) on a tree but only one root (*unum fundatum*), and many water streams (*rivi plurimi*) flow from a single fountain (*de fonte uno*). Even if a portion is cut off from its source, the unity of the origin remains intact.²⁵⁰

Cyprian was not the first Christian to explain the unity of the church with reference to apostolic succession. Irenaeus and Tertullian had already traced the origin of the church back to the apostles who founded communities all over the world before they bequeathed the legacy to their successors. Since then the church had multiplied from generation to generation but remained in contact with its origins through an unbroken line of succession. There were thus *tot ac tantae ecclesiae* in the world but they were all counted as one as long as they originated from the apostles.²⁵¹ Like Cyprian, Irenaeus employed the imagery of light in order to illustrate the principle of oneness.²⁵² Tertullian, on the other hand, made use of the term *unitas*, which stood in a marked contrast to the *separationes* that were caused by schismatics. This unity became manifest through the granting of peace (*communicatio pacis*), the name of brother (*appellatio fraternitatis*) and the servicing of hospitality (*contesseratio hospitalitatis*) among Christians.²⁵³ But there were also

²⁴⁹ Cypr. *Unit. eccl.* 5: *episcopatus unus est cuius a singulis in solidum pars tenetur. Ecclesia una est quae in multitudinem latius incremento fecunditatis extenditur.*

²⁵⁰ Cypr. *Unit. eccl.* 5. For the legal background of the phrase *in solidum* see BECK 1967, 127-129 and HOFFMANN 2000, 29-31.

²⁵¹ Tert. *Praescr.* 20.4-9 and Iren. *Haer.* 1.10.2. For the possible dependence of Cyprian's argumentation on Tertullian's *De praescriptione haereticorum* see WICKERT 1971, 37 with n. 23.

²⁵² Iren. *Haer.* 1.10.2.

²⁵³ Tert. *Praescr.* 5.4; 20.8.

overt differences that set Cyprian's conception apart from that of his predecessors. Both Irenaeus and Tertullian strongly emphasized the uniformity of the biblical tradition as the decisive factor for the unity of the church. While the former referred to 'the authority of one tradition' (ἡ δύναμις τῆς παραδόσεως μία), the latter pointed to 'one tradition of faith' (*sacramenti una traditio*).²⁵⁴ According to their view, the proper transmission of the teachings as they were taken down and collected in the Bible guaranteed the connection to the origin. Tertullian's understanding of *unitas* thus originated in the handing down of *una traditio*. Cyprian, on the other hand, established an inherent connection between the idea of unity and the office of the bishop. In his case, ecclesial *unitas* was primarily founded in *unus episcopatus*.²⁵⁵ This does not mean that the biblical precepts were of no relevance for him but it underscores his determination to strengthen the position of the bishop against all attempts at undermining his authority. In fact, Cyprian ascribed a pivotal role to the bishop in the church. He embodied the idea of the *ecclesia una* and, as the provisionally last link in a historically conceived line of consecutive bishops, he guaranteed the connection to the origin. He represented the interests of a single community among other bishops and enforced the decisions of the episcopal college at a local level. This double role of the bishop is captured in the famous phrase that the 'bishop is in the church' while, at the same time, 'the church is in the bishop' (*episcopus in ecclesia esse et ecclesia in episcopo*).²⁵⁶ This identification of the episcopal office with the body of the church implied that the association with the rightful holder of the episcopate became a necessary precondition for salvation. For, as Cyprian elsewhere asserted, there was no salvation outside the church (*salus extra ecclesiam non est*).²⁵⁷ Conversely, this meant that anyone who broke with

²⁵⁴ Compare Tert. *Praescr.* 20.9 with Iren. *Haer.* 1.10.2.

²⁵⁵ Cypr. *Unit. eccl.* 5.

²⁵⁶ Cypr. *Ep.* 66.8.3. For the double role of the bishop see the summarizing notes in HOFFMANN 2004, 369-371.

²⁵⁷ Cypr. *Ep.* 73.21.2.

the *episcopus* was condemned to eternal damnation because he acted against the divinely instituted ‘mystery of oneness’ (*sacramentum unitatis*).²⁵⁸

Cyprian’s interpretation of the twofold commandment of love posits *unitas* and *dilectio* as the main guiding principles for a Christian life. As we have seen, his reasoning necessarily built on biblical exegesis and the authority of previous Christian thinkers, who had developed the idea of unity before him. In this context, the construct of *unitas* emerged as a theoretical framework that was designed to ensure the bishop’s position of leadership in the church. Accordingly, unity also meant to be in agreement with the holder of the episcopal office and not to disobey his orders. On the other hand, the concrete instruction to love one another anticipated the idea of unity and advanced *dilectio* as the guarantor for unanimity and concord among the members of the community. Despite its firm rooting in the biblical tradition, the phrase *unitas simul et dilectio* is however also evocative of other influences. Conceptually, it strongly resonates with Cicero’s famous definition of *amicitia* as ‘accord in all things, human and divine, conjoined with mutual goodwill and affection’ (*omnium divinarum humanarumque rerum cum benevolentia et caritate consensio*).²⁵⁹ At first glance, the passages seem to be an unlikely pairing but, on reflection, we can see strong parallels between Cyprian and Cicero. Both writers assumed oneness and sympathy as the appropriate tool to create harmony and solidarity among a particular group of people. On a semantic level, however, this congruence becomes much less obvious. After all, the words that they chose and the meaning that the terminology was intended to convey remained bound to a specific historical setting. Naturally, the late Republican orator and politician Cicero placed special emphasis on the wellbeing of the *res publica*. In this regard, the term *consensio* marked the agreement about matters

²⁵⁸ The oneness of the church is prefigured in the unity of the godhead (Cypr. *Unit. eccl.* 6). For the phrase *sacramentum unitatis* see Cypr. *Unit. eccl.* 4 (T.R.); 7; *Ep.* 69.6.1; 73.11.2; 74.11.2-3.

²⁵⁹ Cic. *Amic.* 20.

pertaining to the Roman state (*omnes divinarum humanarumque res*), while *benevolentia* and *caritas* described the mutual support and affection that *amici* were expected to grant to one another.²⁶⁰ The third century bishop Cyprian, on the other hand, was primarily concerned with the *res ecclesiae*. He employed the term *unitas* to express common accord about the divinely sanctioned order in the church, and posited *dilectio* as the affective force that was supposed to guarantee unanimity among Christians. Unlike Cicero, whose definition of *amicitia* concerned an elitist circle of politically and economically potent friends, Cyprian's main target was the *unitas fraternitatis*, the unity of the Christian brotherhood.²⁶¹ Moreover, Cicero's understanding of *caritas* was not equal to the biblical notion of love, as spelled out by Cyprian with reference to the synoptic gospels, but must rather be seen as a form of affection that constantly renewed itself in a mutual exchange of services and courtesies. The Christian ideal, on the other hand, deliberately rejected the principle of reciprocity in one's dealings with fellow men since any service to the community would eventually be remunerated before God.²⁶²

Despite these discrepancies, the overt conceptual connections between Cyprian's idea of *fraternitas* and Cicero's notion of *amicitia* remain valid. Such parallels are in need of explanation, all the more as the bishop made explicit reference to friendship right at the outset of his work *De unitate*. Scripture provided the point of departure for the argument that Christians can only achieve the promise of eternal life if they held fast to the *Christi mandata*, the commandments of Christ. In support of his view, Cyprian cited from the Gospels: 'if you wish to reach life, keep the commandments' (*si vis ad vitam venire serva mandata*) and 'if you do what I command you, I call you not servants but friends' (*si*

²⁶⁰ For the philosophical friendship ideal in the context of the late Republic's political situation see HELDMANN 1976, 72-103 and FÜRST 1996, 138-182.

²⁶¹ For the expression see Cypr. *Unit. eccl.* 14.

²⁶² For the Christian ideal of love see the episode at Luke 14:12-14 and my comments in chapter 2 (cf. above p. 74f.)

feceritis quod mando vobis, iam non dico vos servos sed amicos).²⁶³ For Cyprian, the ultimate goal of immortality and friendship with God was closely tied to the strict observance of the biblical teachings. Nobody could be called among God's friends unless he decided to follow the divine instructions. From the start, the bishop thus established a meaningful link between the biblical commandments – with particular emphasis on the twofold law of love – and the prospect of *amicitia*. This explicit reference to friendship with God in the opening lines of the *De unitate* then suggests a connection between the conception of ecclesial unity and the notion of *amicitia*. To further strengthen this hypothesis, we must follow Cyprian's argumentation as he spells out the implications of his thinking.

The bishop was of course well aware that there were individuals and groups inside the community that openly questioned his claim to leadership. Particularly, the recent experience of schism in Carthage served as a reminder of his vulnerability to attacks. From Cyprian's perspective, the call for unity was thus necessarily linked to his position of power and leadership. This means that anyone who committed an offence against the bishop also acted to the detriment of the divinely sanctioned *unitas*. Accordingly, Cyprian stated that the actions of his opponents were driven by the 'frenzy of discord' (*discordiae furor*) rather than a sense for unity or love: 'what unity is maintained, what love practised or even imagined by one who splits the church, destroys the faith, disturbs the peace, casts charity to the winds, desecrates the sacrament?'²⁶⁴ The interrogative clause made plain the difference between the authority of the rightful holder of office and the unlawful claims of the opposition. While they divided the church, the bishop appeared as the quintessential personification of ecclesial unity. The *discordia* that is associated with these troublemakers thus formed a marked contrast to the *unitas* of the church. In the following,

²⁶³ Cypr. *Unit. eccl.* 2 with reference to Matt 19:17 and John 15:14-15.

²⁶⁴ Cypr. *Unit. eccl.* 15: *Quam vero unitatem servat, quam dilectionem custodit aut cogitat qui, discordiae furore vesanus, ecclesiam scindit, fidem destruit, pacem turbat, caritatem dissipat, sacramentum profanat?*

Cyprian contended the legitimacy of their claims and denied them the state of being Christian:

Whoever is separated from the church must be avoided and fled from; such a man is wrong-headed, he is a sinner and self-condemned. ... An enemy of the altar (*hostis altaris*), a rebel against the sacrifice of Christ (*adversus sacrificium Christi rebellis*); giving up faith for perfidy, religion for sacrilege; an unruly servant (*inobsequens servus*), an undutiful son (*impius filius*) and hostile brother (*frater inimicus*), despising the bishops and deserting the priests of God, he presumes to set up a new altar²⁶⁵

The bishop argued that all those who separated themselves from the church must be avoided and fled from because they mask their sacrilege as religion and mistake their own inclination to *perfidia* for the truth of faith. Particularly blameworthy was their openly displayed disregard for the bishop's rule as well as their determination to set up an *aliud altar* as a rival church beside the one that wielded authority. In these lines, Cyprian made every effort to discredit his opponents. He shaped them as would-be spokesmen of the church who, in fact, advocated the opposite of what he and his followers stood for, even if they pretended to be a regular church. In the end, they were mere pretenders whose deceitful acts were swiftly revealed as a perversion of the truth. Accordingly, Cyprian ceased to count them among the members of the church but denounced them with derogatory attributions such as 'enemy of the altar' (*hostis altaris*), 'rebel against the sacrifice of Christ' (*adversus sacrificium Christi rebellis*), 'disobedient slave' (*inobsequens servus*), 'undutiful son' (*filius impius*), or 'hostile brother' (*frater inimicus*).

These ascriptions are of great importance because they point to the multiple influences that determined the bishop's view. On the one hand, there is his use of family

²⁶⁵ Cypr. *Unit. eccl.* 17: *Aversandus est talis adque fugiendus quisque fuerit ab ecclesia separatus: perversus est huiusmodi et peccat, et est a semetipso damnatus. ... Hostis altaris, adversus sacrificium Christi rebellis, pro fide perfidus, pro religione sacrilegus, inobsequens servus, filius impius, frater inimicus, contemptis episcopis et Dei sacerdotibus derelictis constituere audet aliud altare, ...*

imagery that reverberates with the biblical language and the corresponding usage of other Christian authors. The references to the *servus*, *filius*, and the *frater* then serve as a constant reminder of the place from where the opposition had originally emerged. For Cyprian's adversaries, like all other Christians, were once considered to be children of God and hence fellow brothers in the faith. Their separation from church and bishop, however, disqualified them as members of the divine household and eventually marked them down as disobedient, undutiful, and downright hostile. These adjectives made sufficiently clear that they had forfeited their place in the community. On the other hand, Cyprian made recourse to a typically Roman way of expressing political antagonism. He evoked the image of the rebel whose violent uprising targeted at the destruction of the prevailing order. In this case, the church was singled out as the main target of the *rebellio*. Yet non-Christian authors commonly used the same vocabulary to indicate opposition against the Roman state. The imagery represents a central theme in Cyprian's oeuvre and we can frequently find the corresponding language in connection with the experience of schism.²⁶⁶ Apart from that, the passage features expressions that convey Cyprian's open hostility toward the rival party. Those who were once regarded as brothers had eventually become ill-disposed enemies (*hostis*, *inimicus*). The word *hostis* was commonly associated with foreign enemies who acted from the outside, while *inimicus* tended to denote the internal enemy. In actual practice, however, there was much overlap between the two terms. As the example of Cyprian demonstrates, a *frater inimicus* could easily be turned into a *hostis altaris* or vice versa.²⁶⁷ The language in fact strongly reverberates with late Republican pieces of invective such as Cicero's orations against Catilina in which he had successfully shaped and cemented the public perception of his adversary as archenemy of

²⁶⁶ See BECK 1967, 137 with n. 5; JACQUES 1982, 944f.; and RIVES 1995, 290f. who all point to the significance of the vocabulary.

²⁶⁷ HELLEGOUARC'H 1963, 188f.

Rome. Particularly striking are the parallels between Cyprian and the late Republican orator in a passage in which Catilina and his followers were defamed as *hostes patriae* and *homines bonorum inimici*. It was only a small step from here to the bishop's portrayal of the opposition as enemies of the church and hostile brothers.²⁶⁸

To be sure, the biblical tradition is also familiar with the notion of enmity, particularly to express enmity with God. But in this context it is likely that Cyprian drew his ideas from classical sources.²⁶⁹ One indication is the political nature of the conflict itself. Cyprian's struggle with his opponents was predominantly one of power. The proper response to their provocations could thus only lie in a language that allowed the bishop to express such political antagonism. A second point concerns the juxtaposition of the imagery of rebellion with enmity. It can hardly be a coincidence that the corresponding expressions are placed alongside each other, given their shared background as political combat terms. Cyprian's diction thus concurred with his perception of the conflict as an attack against his position. In this context, abusive rhetoric was the logical choice for a trained rhetor to publicly dismantle the moral integrity of his opponents. The bishop certainly had the educational background as well as the necessary experience in the political arena at Carthage to adequately respond to the challenge from dissenters within the community.²⁷⁰ Yet as a man of the church, his previous concern for the *civitas* had shifted to ecclesial matters. Hence the *hostis patriae* was replaced with the *hostis altaris*.

A final point relates to the political dimension of the notion of friendship. The scope of *amicitia* was by no means limited to politics but the binary coding that contrasts *amici* with *inimici* frequently served as an effective tool to render political solidarity and opposition. In this regard, Cyprian's mention of the *frater inimicus* is of particular interest.

²⁶⁸ Cic. *Cat.* 1.33. For further references see HELLEGOUARC'H 1963, 189 n. 1 who mentions Clodius and Marc Antony as other possible examples.

²⁶⁹ SPEYER 1981, 996-1043 provides an overview on the theme of enmity with God.

²⁷⁰ For Cyprian's background and formation see BRENT 2010, 23-75.

Etymologically, the compound *inimicus* (deriving from *in-amicus*) formed the exact counterpart to *amicus* and hence already bore the reference to friendship in its stem. As readers of ancient texts, we should be alert to this correlation, all the more given the ubiquity of the friend-enemy distinction in Roman literature.²⁷¹ Unlike friendship, enmity can however not be regarded as an institution in its own right. For while the maintenance of *amicitia* required the strict observance of carefully defined social obligations, the display of *inimicitia* did not involve such a behavioural code. Rather, the notion of enmity is dependent on its counter-part as it highlighted individuals and groups as non-integrable into particular social circles.²⁷² This suggests a conceptual connection between friendship and enmity that goes beyond mere lexical relatedness. The latter was an integral part of the former since the very existence of *inimici* gave justification to the formation of *amicitiae*. We therefore have to bear in mind such interdependence, even if the counter-concept is only implied. This is specifically true for the phrase *frater inimicus*, which replaces the natural contrast of *inimicus* (that is, *amicus*) with the biblical brother terminology. The expression places two mutually exclusive terms in immediate proximity to one another. Inclusion and exclusion stand side by side and hence point to the origin of the conflict inside the Christian community. As a Christian, who was deeply steeped in the biblical tradition, Cyprian gave the imagery of divine kinship preference over friendship, and therefore replaced the *amicus* with the Christian *frater*. For a Roman man with a thorough training in classical literature, however, the association of one with the other did not represent anything out of the ordinary. Cyprian must have been aware that the theme of brotherly love often occurred in connection with friendship. Not only could an *amicus* be referred to as a *frater*, indicating a special closeness and familiarity between

²⁷¹ WILLIAMS 2012, 128-130.

²⁷² HELLEGOUARC'H 1963, 186 noted that the notion of enmity, unlike friendship, does neither mark membership with a particular group nor stipulate definite social obligations. See also EPSTEIN 1987, 2 and MARSHALL 1987, 35.

friends, but also the portrayal of pairs of brothers sometimes resorted to the language of friendship.²⁷³ Thus, Cyprian's language did not only tie in with the friend-enemy distinction but also appealed to the brother-friend paradigm that were both firmly rooted in Roman thinking.

In *De unitate*, Cyprian made use of a language that allowed the bishop to better differentiate between friends and enemies. His description of Christian solidarity as 'unity together with love' (*unitas simul et dilectio*) shows strong conceptual parallels with Cicero's famous definition of *amicitia*, and combines basic principles of the friendship tradition with biblical themes: the political implications of Cicero's *consensio* were replaced with the concern for ecclesial *unitas*; the mutual affection (*caritas, benevolentia*) among *virii boni* gave way to the idea of Christian love (*dilectio, caritas*); and the designation of one's associates as *amici* found its equivalent in the Christian *frater*. In both cases, the notion of oneness decided on fellowship or enmity. Cyprian's conception of *unitas* signified agreement with the bishop as appointed leader of the church and, in so doing, separated the *fratres* from *inimici*. Similarly, Cicero posited the common accord about 'all things, human and divine' (*omnes divinarum humanarumque res*) as the main factor distinguishing between *amici* and *inimici*. The reference to enmity then serves as the clearest sign of Cyprian's dependence on the friendship tradition.²⁷⁴ Particularly, the oxymoron *frater inimicus* implicates a clear-cut distinction between friend and enemy. The mention of the *inimicus* evokes the *amicus* as its positively connoted counterpart while, in fact, replacing the friend with the Christian *frater*. Cicero had already used opposite words to describe the notion of enmity. His ideal of *vera amicitia* that coalesces with notions like *consensio* and *caritas* formed a marked contrast to the experience of *inimicitiae*, which were provoked by 'dissension' and

²⁷³ For the overlap between brotherly love and friendship see WILLIAMS 2012, 156-173.

²⁷⁴ See the comparable approach of MARSHALL 1987 who took enmity in the Pauline texts as a reference to the social conventions of the ancient friendship tradition.

'hatred' (*dissensio, odium*).²⁷⁵ Analogously, Cyprian saw the *unitas fraternitatis* threatened by the malicious acts of those to whom he collectively referred as *frater inimicus*. At the same time, he depicted his opponents as the 'authors of dissension' (*dissensionis auctores*) whose *odium* for bishop and church is singled out as the driving force behind their scheming.²⁷⁶

This language strongly reverberates with the ancient friendship tradition, which posits inclusion through *amicitia* and exclusion through *inimicitia* as two sides of the same coin. Cyprian transformed the model in such a way as to make it applicable to an understanding of togetherness that primarily built on the notion of divine kinship. Finally, when we return to Cyprian's point of departure, we can see in what way the differentiation was supposed to be made. From his perspective, only those who stayed true to the biblical *mandata* would eventually earn the title *amici Christi*. By implication, this meant that all those who refused Cyprian's interpretation of Scripture could be friends neither with Christ nor bishop but must be reckoned as enemies of the church. Again his overall conception is revealed as following a simple logic, dividing the Christian world into friends and enemies. On the one hand, there is a circle of potential friends who were in agreement with their bishop. On the other hand, we find the *frater inimicus* and the *hostis altaris* who did not submit themselves to Cyprian's rule and therefore forfeited their place in the community.

²⁷⁵ See the contrasting language at Cic. *Amic.* 23 and 77 with my comments in chapter 1 (cf. above p. 13-15).

²⁷⁶ For the expression *dissensionis auctores* see Cypr. *Unit. eccl.* 23. Elsewhere, Cyprian referred to the *hostilia et furiosa odia* that incited heretics to act to the detriment of the church (*Patient.* 19). In Cain's fratricide, he moreover recognized the *prima odia* that now threatened the *fraternitas nova* (*Zel.* 5).

3.2 Turning brothers into enemies

Cyprian's rhetoric in the *De unitate* had not only theoretical value but came to be used in actual practice. The bishop effectively employed the arsenal that was available to him in order to brand certain individuals and groups as *personae non gratae*. To this effect, he heavily relied on a conceptual framework that helped differentiating between friends and enemies. It is then particularly in Cyprian's letters that we find a number of concrete examples testifying to the procedure, in the course of which formerly respectable *fratres* were turned into enemies of the church. Alternately, they were portrayed as persistent troublemakers, impertinent criminals, would-be revolutionists, or secret conspirers. A fitting example is provided by the deacon and confessor Nicostratus who, along with a group of other *confessores*, had associated himself with the Roman antibishop Novatian. As long as Cyprian saw the slightest chance of their return to the party of Cornelius, he respectfully referred to them as *fratres carissimi*.²⁷⁷ Contrary to the expectations of the bishop, however, Nicostratus decided to remain in communion with Novatian. Henceforth, we perceive a radical change in Cyprian's diction. Rather than handling the case as that of an aberrant *frater* who must be persuaded of his error, he went over to shaping the image of a criminal who had committed fraud and robbery (*fraus* and *rapina*). Not only had he misappropriated church funds but also robbed widows and orphans of their due share.²⁷⁸ Along similar lines, also other church representatives fell victim to the bishop's defamation. In the following, I will therefore have a closer look at the portrayal of the presbyter Novatus and the deacon Felicissimus, both of whom were at variance with the head of the Carthaginian church.

²⁷⁷ Cypr. *Ep.* 46.2.2.

²⁷⁸ Cypr. *Ep.* 52.1.2. The accusations had originally been made by bishop Cornelius of Rome (cf. *Ep.* 50.1.2).

The core of the opposition at Carthage consisted of clerical personnel who had ceased to recognize the authority of their bishop. Cyprian repeatedly referred to a group of *quinque presbyteri* who seem to have resisted his episcopacy from the start. The reasons for the conflict remain unclear but it is likely that they felt overlooked when a relatively inexperienced newcomer like Cyprian was chosen in favour of a more established circle of candidates like themselves.²⁷⁹ One of the most colourful figure in this circle was the presbyter Novatus, in whom Cyprian recognized the prime mover of the ‘first flame of discord’ (*primum discordiae incendium*).²⁸⁰ But such antagonism represented a relatively late development. This becomes clear from a document, which Cyprian had written, while he was in exile, presumably early in spring 250. The letter was addressed to the presbyters and deacons of Carthage, to whom the bishop referred as his ‘most dear and cherished brothers’ (*fratres carissimi ac desiderantissimi*). As a commonplace phrase in Cyprian’s correspondence, the repeated invocation of brotherhood among Christians may seem rather formulaic. Nevertheless, such expressions are indicative of the respectful tone with which the bishop chose to conduct his dealings.²⁸¹ Specifically, Cyprian referred to a message that he had received from the *conpresbyteri nostri* Donatus, Fortunatus, Novatus, and Gordius. Unfortunately, we do not know anything specific about the contents of this letter aside from Cyprian’s decision to defer the case until it was safe enough to consult the clergy and the *plebs* in this matter. Novatus is mentioned in a row with other presbyters and there is no indication of any disagreement, though it is possible that the petition may have touched on controversial subjects. Rather, Novatus, along with all other members

²⁷⁹ The pace with which Cyprian ascended to episcopal dignity is indicated at Pont. *Vita Cypr.* 3.1; 5.1 where he is referred to as *homo novus*. References to the initial opposition against Cyprian’s episcopacy include Cypr. *Ep.* 43.1.2; 3.1-2; 59.9.1 and Pont. *Vita Cypr.* 5.6.

²⁸⁰ Cypr. *Ep.* 52.2.2.

²⁸¹ Cypr. *Ep.* 14: *Cyprianus presbyteris et diaconis fratribus salutem. 1: Optaveram quidem, fratres carissimi, ut universum clerum nostrum integrum et incolumem meis litteris salutarem. ... 4: Opto vos, fratres carissimi ac desiderantissimi, semper bene valere et mei meminisse. Fratritatem si qua uobis cum est multum a me salutate et ut nostri meminerint admonete.* For Cyprian’s formulaic use of the brother terminology see PÉTRÉ 1948, 124-126 and HOFFMANN 2000, 153 with n. 17.

of the clergy, is counted among the bishop's *fratres* and the explicit reference to his rank as presbyter demonstrates Cyprian's willingness to regard the later enemy as an official representative of his church.²⁸²

The situation had changed about a year later when the bishop returned to Carthage after the Decian persecution had subsided. Probably in spring 251, Novatus sailed for Rome where he joined forces with the party of Novatian. The exact purpose of his voyage remains unclear. The *Liber Pontificalis* and Cyprian's correspondence suggest an involvement of Novatus in the ordination of Novatian as antibishop of Rome, yet it is hard to determine how reliable our sources are in this respect.²⁸³ What we know for sure, however, is that Novatus returned to North Africa later that year. He travelled not alone but enjoyed the company of a couple of followers of Novatian, among whom we find the aforesaid deacon Nicostratus. The Roman bishop Cornelius dispatched a letter to Carthage in order to warn his episcopal colleague about the arrival of the unwanted delegation.²⁸⁴ Cyprian, in return, acknowledged the receipt of the message and informed Cornelius that he had already taken the necessary steps against the adversaries.²⁸⁵ This meant that he deliberately put into circulation compromising material about the travel party that should deter his North African colleagues from receiving such rogue clerics. In so doing, he paid particular attention to the wrongdoings of his former presbyter Novatus, who is portrayed as one of the main stirrers of discord not only in his hometown Carthage

²⁸² Cypr. *Ep.* 14.4. It is tempting to identify the four presbyters of this letter with the *quinque presbyteri* that Cyprian would later mention. Apart from Novatus, Fortunatus can also be linked to the clerical opposition. He appears to be identical with the same-named presbyter who was made antibishop in Carthage. As Cyprian's antagonist, he attracted the criticism of the bishop who did not stop calling him *pseudoepiscopus* (Cypr. *Ep.* 59.9-16). Nothing specific is known about Donatus and Gordius other than their names.

²⁸³ *Lib. Pontif.* 21.4; 22.2; Cypr. *Ep.* 52.2.3. For Novatus' role see CLARKE 1984-89, 291.

²⁸⁴ Cypr. *Ep.* 50.1.1 lists Nicostratus, Novatus, Evaristus, Primus, and Dionysus as members of the travel party.

²⁸⁵ Cypr. *Ep.* 52.1.1-2.

but also overseas in Rome.²⁸⁶ The invective opens with a delineation of Novatus' character:

Novatus has always been an agitator and a trouble-maker (*rerum novarum semper cupidus*); his avarice is inexhaustible and drives him frantic with greed; he is puffed up with pride and swollen with insensate arrogance; he has always been of evil repute here among the bishops; they have all always damned him as traitorous heretic; he is always on the look-out for an opportunity to betray; he is a flatterer, so that he can have the opportunity to deceive; he can never love, for he is never faithful; he is a firebrand and torch for igniting the conflagration of rebellion; he is a tornado and tempest for causing shipwrecks of the faith; he is the foe of quiet (*hostis quietis*), the adversary of tranquility (*tranquillitatis adversarius*), the enemy of peace (*pacis inimicus*).²⁸⁷

The bishop laid bare the unfavourable traits of the former presbyter, namely his voracious avarice (*avaritia, rapacitas*), his arrogance (*adrogantia*), and the stupidity (*stupor*) of his swollen pride (*superbia*). Moreover, Cyprian described his adversary as always being on the look out for subversion (*rerum novarum semper cupidus*) and ready to betray, flatter and deceive (*prodat ... adulatur ... fallat*). Novatus was singled out as the driving force behind the sedition (*seditionis incendia*) and as such he should be regarded as a 'foe of quiet' (*hostis quietis*), an 'adversary of tranquility' (*tranquillitatis adversarius*), and an 'enemy of peace' (*pacis inimicus*). In many ways, Cyprian's portrayal of the presbyter was deeply indebted to the art of Roman polemical writing. He closely followed the literary conventions that were associated with this genre. Both the emphasis on defects of character and the declaration of enmity tie in with the corresponding literature. In addition to that, the

²⁸⁶ Apart from Novatus, Cyprian devoted two brief passages to the deacon Nicostratus and to the bishop Evaristus, who both were followers of Novatian (*Ep.* 52.1.2). In his depiction, the bishop closely followed the information provided by Cornelius (*Ep.* 50.1.2). In Novatus' case, however, he could draw on first-hand experience with the presbyter to fashion his characterization.

²⁸⁷ *Cypr. Ep.* 52.2.1: ... *Novatus ostendi rerum novarum semper cupidus, avaritiae inexplebilis rapacitate furibundus, adrogantia et stupore superbi tumoris inflatus, semper istic episcopis male cognitus, quasi haereticus semper et perfidus omnium sacerdotum voce damnatus, curiosus semper ut prodat, ad hoc adulatur ut fallat, numquam fidelis ut diligit, fax et ignis ad conflanda seditionis incendia, turbo et tempestas ad fidei facienda naufragia, hostis quietis, tranquillitatis adversarius, pacis inimicus.* For the following see BRÄNDLI 2013, 97f.

manifold references to the alleged moral depravity of Novatus (that is, his *avaritia*, *rapicitas*, *adrogantia*, *stupor*, and *superbia*) seem to be taken from a ready-made stock of themes that could easily be used for a variety of different situations.²⁸⁸ Particularly interesting in this context, is the phrase *rerum novarum cupidus*, which indicated an inward urge or desire to overthrow an established order. Such craving for political change was considered to be a negative trait in a person. In Novatus' case, the reference to his subversive ambitions moreover made a fitting pun on the adversary's name (*Nov-atus ... nov-arum*).²⁸⁹ But there was much more to it, for the phrase has powerful literary reverberations. Julius Caesar, for instance, famously referred to the Celtic chieftain Dumnorix, whom the Romans suspected of subversive activities, as *cupidus rerum novarum*. When Caesar took him hostage in the run-up to his campaign to Britain in 54 BC, Dumnorix attempted to flee but was eventually killed by pursuing Roman troops.²⁹⁰ Another famous example is M. Aemilius Lepidus who engineered a short-lived revolt in 78/77 BC. After the demise of Sulla, he tried to undo the provisions of the latter's regime and eventually marched on Rome where he was defeated at the Milvian Bridge. His adversaries considered him to be the 'worst and most shameless of all' (*pessume omnium atque impudentissumè*) and the historian Florus later equally referred to him as *cupidus rerum novarum*.²⁹¹ The presbyter Novatus was thus seen to be on eye level with men who had made themselves a name as persistent troublemakers and would-be revolutionists. In his case, however, the urge for subversion did not target the stability of the *res publica* but the divinely sanctioned order of the church.²⁹²

²⁸⁸ JACQUES 1982, 925-928.

²⁸⁹ CLARKE 1984-89, vol. II, 287f. n. 2 and 9.

²⁹⁰ Caes. *BGall.* 1.18.3; 5.6.1.

²⁹¹ Flor. 2.11.2; Sall. *Hist.* 2.15 (= *Orat. Phil.*).

²⁹² Further references to the phrase include Cic. *Sest.* 104; *Att.* 9.12.3; *Rab. Post.* 33; Sall. *Cat.* 28.4; 48.1; *Iug.* 66.2; Tac. *Hist.* 3.4.2. JACQUES 1982, 925 pointed Catilina and Mark Antony who both were depicted as subversive characters.

Subsequent to the delineation of Novatus' character, Cyprian goes on to name a number of specific charges in connection with the presbyter. Some of the accusations were linked to his recent activities in Carthage and Rome. For it was in these two cities that Novatus, according to Cyprian, had worked towards schism and conducted unlawful ordinations.²⁹³ Other charges, however, remain entirely unconnected with this course of events. To begin with, the presbyter was accused of robbery and fraud. Apparently, he had 'robbed the orphans' (*spoliati pupilli*) and 'defrauded the widows' (*fraudatae viduae*) by plundering church funds.²⁹⁴ Even though the embezzlement of monies could indeed have been a valid accusation, we are left wondering whether the allegations were true. For, as the example of Nicostratus demonstrates, Novatus did not remain the only person in the letters that was described that way.²⁹⁵ The joint occurrence of *rapina* and *fraus* in different literary contexts then suggests that the accusations were owed to the rhetorical strategy of the bishop, and as such they need not necessarily be legitimate allegations. This is particularly true with respect to some other charges that the bishop brought forward against his adversary:

Moreover, his father died of hunger in the streets, and after his death he did not even see to his burial. His wife's womb he kicked with his heel, causing a premature and abortive birth, and the murder of his child.²⁹⁶

According to Cyprian, Novatus had committed horrific crimes. For one thing, he let his father starve to death in the streets and did not even bother to bury the dead body. For another, he kicked his pregnant wife in her belly and, in the process, caused the death of

²⁹³ Cypr. *Ep.* 52.2.2-3.

²⁹⁴ Cypr. *Ep.* 52.2.5.

²⁹⁵ See the remarks of JACQUES 1982, 927 and 948f. regarding Hippolyte's depiction of the Roman bishop Callixtus.

²⁹⁶ Cypr. *Ep.* 52.2.5: *Pater etiam eius in vico fame mortuus et ab eo in morte postmodum nec sepultus. Uterus uxoris calce percussus et abortione properante in parricidium partus expressus.*

the unborn child. The bishop thus drew the picture of a reckless and cruel man whose atrocities remain unparalleled. All details of the graphic depiction – that is, the neglect of the elderly father, the denial of a proper burial, the act of violence toward his wife, and the murder of unborn life – associated Novatus with the scandal of *impietas* towards his own next of kin. Despite Cyprian’s additional contention that a thorough enquiry into the matters was underway, we are safe to assume that the charges were the product of the bishop’s rhetorical ingenuity.²⁹⁷ For, disregard towards the *paterfamilias* and outrage against the pregnant wife belonged to the commonplaces of the Graeco-Roman historiographic tradition. Herodotus, for instance, reports that the Persian king Cambyses had caused the death of his pregnant sister-wife by kicking her in her womb.²⁹⁸ In Roman historiography, it is Tacitus who recounts an almost identical progression of events in connection with the death of Nero’s pregnant wife Poppaea. Apparently, the emperor struck her with a sudden blow with his heel.²⁹⁹ A slightly different version is preserved for Domitian. Suetonius blamed the emperor for the death of his niece and rumoured lover Julia, whom he had forced to procure an abortion.³⁰⁰ As for Novatus’ behaviour towards his father, many examples could be enumerated from both Greek and Roman literature that mark a child’s misconduct towards his parents as blameworthy. Particularly noteworthy in this context is the example of Tullia, who was commonly regarded as the personification of *impietas*.³⁰¹ As daughter of the legendary king Servius Tullius and wife to his successor L. Tarquinius Superbus, she was involved in the murder of her own

²⁹⁷ Cyprian reports that he had summoned a hearing to discuss Novatus’ case, but that the proceedings had to be suspended due to the outbreak of the Decian persecution (Cypr. *Ep.* 52.3). On the one hand, the reference to the treatment of the matter adds credibility to the previous allegations, however unlikely they are. On the other, the provision of additional information could also have forestalled any critique that may have come around regarding the ordination of a suspected murderer.

²⁹⁸ Hdt. 3.32.

²⁹⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 16.6.

³⁰⁰ Suet. *Dom.* 22. See JACQUES 1982, 928-931 and CLARKE 1984-89, vol. II, 292 who listed the relevant historical examples.

³⁰¹ Val. Max. 9.11.1.

father. Livius reports that Servius, after Tarquinius had him removed from the *curia*, was slain by the henchman of his son-in-law (but rumour had it that this happened at the suggestion of Tullia). While the dead body was lying in the street (at a place that was later referred to as *sceleratum vicum* to mark the heinous crime), Tullia deliberately drove over the remains to express her utter contempt for her father. Moreover, when Tarquinius assumed power, he even denied his deceased father-in-law to be properly buried (*sepultura prohibuit*).³⁰² Cyprian's reference to the dishonourable death in the streets and the denial of even minimal burial rites then strongly reverberates with Livius' narration.

Apart from local presbyters, the opposition also attracted the members of the lower clergy such as the deacon Felicissimus. Together with Novatus, he appears as one of the main instigators of the schism at Carthage. Despite his relatively humble clerical rank, he took a leading role in the struggle against the bishop. Cyprian perceived him as ringleader of the opposition and thus referred to him as 'leader of the faction' (*dux factionis*) and 'head of the sedition' (*seditionis princeps*).³⁰³ When his activities came to the attention of the bishop, Felicissimus eventually belonged to the first who faced excommunication. The decision to exclude the unwanted deacon from communion remained provisional for as long as Cyprian stayed in exile but the bishop had his verdict later confirmed by the spring synod of 251.³⁰⁴

About a year earlier, the local authorities had just begun to move against the Christians and Felicissimus was among the first victims of the persecution, earning himself the title of a confessor. By contrast, bishop Cyprian received notice about the *impetum primum*, the 'first attack' against the Christian community in Carthage, while

³⁰² Liv. 1.48-49; cf. Cic. *Rep.* 2.44-46 and Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.39.

³⁰³ Cypr. *Ep.* 41.2.1.

³⁰⁴ Cypr. *Ep.* 41.1-2 pronounced the excommunication of Felicissimus and an otherwise unknown Augendus. In reply to bishop's letter, *Ep.* 42 communicated the enforcement of the sentence added a few more names to the list. The post-synodal *Ep.* 45.4.1 then confirmed the verdict against Felicissimus and made reference to the above group of five presbyters who were excommunicated too (cf. *Ep.* 59.1.1; 9.1).

hiding in a secret place.³⁰⁵ Later, a second group, which included women and children, was apprehended and sent to prison where they awaited their trial.³⁰⁶ In this situation, the bishop addressed the imprisoned Christians directly with a letter. He congratulated them for their confession and admonished them to persevere in the faith. Moreover, he encouraged them to follow the example of the presbyter Rogatianus who, along with Felicissimus, had prepared the prison for the new arrivals, making it into their ‘lodging place’ (*hospitium*). Cyprian’s phrasing suggests that their incarceration had preceded that of the others. The bishop particularly highlighted the ‘religious excellence’ (*religiosa virtus*) and ‘divine honour’ (*divina dignatio*) of Rogatianus, which made the presbyter stand out in his pioneering role as confessor and potential martyr. Felicissimus, on the other hand, is respectfully referred to as ‘our brother’ (*frater noster*), and Cyprian even added a favourable moral judgment on his behalf that singled him out as ‘ever calm und prudent’ (*quietus semper et sobrius*).³⁰⁷

The most recent commentator of the Cyprianic correspondence doubted that the confessor Felicissimus is to be identified with the same-named deacon of the later letters. Clarke’s argument rests on the observation that Cyprian’s later reference to long-known crimes that antedate the time of the persecution do not fit the positively connoted image of Felicissimus in this instance.³⁰⁸ We could accept this interpretation if we were sure that Cyprian’s letters provided an accurate description of the antagonist. But as we have previously seen, the rhetorical disposition of the bishop’s works suggests the contrary. Cyprian’s depiction of Felicissimus did in fact not aim at a nuanced picture of his former deacon but was steered by the rules of invective. It is thus entirely possible that the two

³⁰⁵ Cyp. *Ep.* 6.4. My reading follows CLARKE 1984-89, vol. II, 196f. who conjoins *primum* with *impetum* rather than with the following *hospitium*.

³⁰⁶ Cyp. *Ep.* 6.3.1 refers to *feminae* and *pueri*.

³⁰⁷ Cyp. *Ep.* 6.4.

³⁰⁸ CLARKE 1984-89, vol. II, 196 who compares the depiction of Cyp. *Ep.* 6 with that of *Ep.* 41 and 43.

Felicissimi were one and the same person despite the seemingly contradicting portrayals. An argument in favour of this reading is that the confession of the 'early' Felicissimus would help to better understand his leading position in the Carthaginian opposition.³⁰⁹ At the time of the outbreak of the persecution, we are however still far from the troubles that later marked the relationship between bishop and deacon. Accordingly, Cyprian's depiction of Felicissimus shows no apparent sign of disagreement. Like so many others, including Novatus or Nicostratus, he was regarded as an ordinary *frater noster*. In addition to that, his public confession of the faith highlighted his laudable qualities and moral excellence (*quietus, sobrius*). Indeed, such a commending picture formed a marked contrast to the image that was later advertised.

The situation in Carthage had changed by the same time a year later. While the opposition appears to have made promising progress in building up their own following, Cyprian struggled to maintain relations to the community from his hiding place. Eventually, the bishop's opponents were strong enough to openly challenge his authority. In the meantime, a significant portion of the clergy had dissociated themselves from Cyprian, while others remained in communion with him. This divide, running through the clerical body, can nowhere else be better demonstrated than in the case of the former inmates Rogatianus and Felicissimus, who had taken opposite sides. Under the direction of the eminent bishop and confessor Caldonius, Cyprian sent out a delegation that consisted of loyal clerical personnel, including the presbyter Rogatianus. One part of their assignment involved the distribution of funds to the brethren, whereas the other aimed at the preparation of a register that was supposed to list the current situation of each

³⁰⁹ The prominence of a mere deacon as head of the opposing party has caused a lot of amazement among scholars. Some have seen in him a wealthy laymen with the necessary resources to challenge the bishop. But there is hardly enough evidence to either prove or disprove the suggestion. See CLARKE 1984-89, vol. II, 204 with further references.

community member.³¹⁰ The main purpose of these tasks appears to have been the renewal of patronal relations that had previously tied the *plebs* to the bishop. Cyprian intended to ensure the loyalty of the local Christians by means of monetary payments and the pledge of a future career in the church.³¹¹ The immediate response of the opposition at Carthage, however, rendered the plan of the bishop unsuccessful. For the main part, it was the intervention of Felicissimus that prevented the delegation from fulfilling their commission. He impeded their work by publicly proclaiming that anyone who chose to be obedient to the bishop should not be in communion with him. From his perspective, Cyprian's initiative must have appeared as a bold attempt to buy off solid bedrock of support. The bishop, on the other hand, spoke of a 'wicked power' (*potentatus inprobis*) and a 'violent terror' (*terror violentus*) with which Felicissimus threatened the *fratres nostri* who willingly accepted the offerings of the bishop.³¹² Due to the deacon's agitation, Rogatianus and the other episcopal envoys saw no other option than to abort their current pursuit and report back to Cyprian the failure of the mission.³¹³ In the eyes of the bishop, Felicissimus was eventually to be given what he had pronounced in the first place: the sentence of excommunication.³¹⁴

In his reply to the envoys at Carthage, Cyprian fashioned an image of Felicissimus that could not be more different from the honourable confessor and *frater noster* of previous

³¹⁰ Cypr. *Ep.* 41.1.2. The names of the envoys are recorded in the header of the letter. Here Cyprian mentions his *collegae* Caldonius and Herculanius as well as the *compresbyteri* Rogatinaus and Numidicus.

³¹¹ BOBERTZ 1988, 208-211.

³¹² Cypr. *Ep.* 41.1.2: ... *comminatus sit etiam fratribus nostris qui primi expungi accesserant potentatu inprobo et terrore violento quod se cum in morte non communicarent qui nobis obtemperare voluissent*. I follow the reading CLARKE 1984-89, vol. II, 206f who posits *in morte* in favour of the variant *in monte*. The former simply underscores Felicissimus' determination in this matter. Alternatively, it could be read as a literal reference to the duties of a deacon (that is, to withhold the *viaticum*). The latter implies a distinct area (*in monte*) from where loyalists should be banished. Such reading requires two topographically distinguishable parties in Carthage. This seems highly unlikely to me.

³¹³ The letter has not been preserved but the negative results of their mission can be gathered from Cypr. *Ep.* 41.1.2.

³¹⁴ Cypr. *Ep.* 41.2.1. The bishop moreover refers to an otherwise unknown Augendus as another likely candidate for excommunication (41.2.2). The envoys were to inform the persons concerned of the verdict. *Ep.* 42 proves that they actually did what they were told. The addendum moreover lists a couple more persons and reports their excommunication.

days. The distinguished brother now became a constant troublemaker and ringleader of a seditious movement. In so doing, the bishop pursued a twofold strategy: on the one hand, he tried to undermine the moral integrity of Felicissimus by associating his name with serious crimes; on the other hand, his usage of combat terms that were commonly used in Roman polemical writings labelled the ecclesiastical opponent, along with his following, as adherents of an illegitimate cause. According to Cyprian, Felicissimus was to be held responsible for ‘many evil and treacherous deeds’. Above all, he had put a part of the Christian community at odds with its bishop. This accusation directly related to the activities of Felicissimus in Carthage, yet the bishop seemed to be informed about further offences as he moreover added the charges of fraud and robbery (*fraudes veteres et rapinae*). These belonged to a time long past as the adjective *vetus* indicates but Cyprian reinforced his allegations by claiming that he had been aware of the misconduct for quite some time.³¹⁵ In addition to that, the bishop also advanced the charge of adultery. In contrast to the previous accusations, the offence of *adulterium* had only recently come to the attention of Cyprian. He claimed that ‘eminent men’ among the brethren (*fratres nostri graves viri*) were able to prove the novel allegations.³¹⁶ Felicissimus was thus revealed to be not so much a one-time offender but a persistent criminal who had accumulated quite an impressive record of wrongdoings over the years. Some have taken the mention of *fraudes veteres* as a reference to the background of Felicissimus as a wealthy layman.³¹⁷ This assumption implies that the allegations were accurate. In my opinion, however, the charges must rather be seen in the context of Cyprian’s overall rhetorical strategy as an

³¹⁵ Cyp. *Ep.* 41.1.1: *nunc nuntietis Felicissimum multa inprobe et insidiosae esse molitum, ut praeter fraudes veteres et rapinas, de quibus iam pridem multa cognoveram, nunc quoque cum episcopo portionem plebis inlidere ...* . *Ep.* 59.1.2 further specifies the charge of fraud and calls Felicissimus a *pecuniae commissae sibi fraudator*.

³¹⁶ Cyp. *Ep.* 41.2.1: *... ut abstentum se a nobis sciat, quando ad fraudes eius et rapinas quas dilucida veritate cognovimus, adulterii etiam crimen accedit, quod fratres nostri graves viri deprehendisse se nuntiaverunt et probaturos se adseveraverunt.*

³¹⁷ CLARKE 1984-89, vol. II, 204.

attack against the moral integrity of the targeted person. This cannot be proven definitely but there are indications that the bishop deliberately shaped the image of a criminal.

First, the accusations of *fraus*, *rapina*, and *adulterium* belonged to the standard repertoire of Cyprian's derogatory rhetoric. The formulaic reiteration of always the same allegations then suggests the work of a professional rhetor, who was well-versed in the art of writing polemics. Apart from Felicissimus, we have already come across the examples of Nicostratus and Novatus who both shared the same fate of being accused of fraud and robbery. Their depiction in Cyprian's letters as criminals shows close resemblance to that of Felicissimus and it is therefore more than likely that these latter charges were owed to the bishop's literary strategy. Second, the above charges can closely be linked to the tradition of Roman oratorical invectives, in which case a ready-made stock of accusations was being used for the purpose of damaging somebody's reputation.³¹⁸ As such, the charges need not necessarily be true if they were in support of one's own argument. From the rhetor's view, all that counted was that his argumentation made a persuasive case. For instance, Cicero's unfavourable depiction of G. Fannius Chaerea in his pleading for the celebrated comic actor Q. Roscius Gallus insinuated a causal link between the physical appearance of the accuser and his alleged moral depravity. Among other things, the late Republican orator charged Fannius with *fraus*.³¹⁹ A popular target in Roman literature was L. Sergius Catilina whom Cicero had already portrayed as murderer, robber, deceiver, and adulterer.³²⁰ Along similar lines, Sallust reports that he was a ruthless man who, from his youth onward, took great pleasure in atrocities like civil wars, murder, robbery, and discord. Here, the accusation of *rapina* is prominently placed in a long row of offences that were named in connection with Catiline.³²¹ Also, the charge of

³¹⁸ For further references see ARENA 2007, 149-160; OPELT 1965; NISBET 1961, 192-197; KOSTER 1980.

³¹⁹ Cic. *QRosc.* 20.

³²⁰ See for instance Cic. *Cat.* 2.7.

³²¹ Sall. *Cat.* 5.2.

adulterium is well attested in the respective literature. Asconius, for example, famously related to rumours that purported the adultery of Catilina with a woman whose daughter he later married. Consequently, the alleged *adulterium* came close to the offence of incest since the former mistress was identical with the later mother-in-law.³²²

The second point in question concerns expressions of political antagonism, which keep reappearing throughout in Cyprian's correspondence. Felicissimus was singled out as the head of the opposition and thus referred to as *dux factionis* and *seditionis princeps*.³²³ At the same time, he is portrayed as the leading character in a conspiracy against the bishop. Hence, anyone who joined the *conspiratio et factio eius* cannot be in communion with Cyprian, the appointed and rightful leader of the local church.³²⁴ Such expressions very much remind us of the language in Roman invectives. The word *factio* conveyed the idea of an association or group that was opposed to something or somebody. As such, it was often used in a political context to grasp the agitation of an ill-disposed opposition against one's own interests.³²⁵ Sallust, for instance, termed Catilina and his following a *factio*. Cicero's personal enemy, on the other hand, equally referred to his adversaries as 'party of the enemies' (*factio inimicorum*).³²⁶ It thus lay in the eye of the beholder to decide whether or not an alliance earned such derogatory name. Cyprian adopted this language and made it applicable to his own situation. In the process, the ecclesial opposition around Felicissimus was successively identified with the agitation of one person and hence referred to as *Felicissimi factio*.³²⁷ Similar observations can be made with respect to words like *seditio* or *conspiratio*. They both tie in with the same vocabulary. Generally, the term

³²² Asc. 91-92C.

³²³ Cypr. *Ep.* 41.2.1.

³²⁴ Cypr. *Ep.* 41.2.2. With reference to Augendus, the bishop noted that he had associated himself *cum illo conspiratione*, that is, the conspiracy of Felicissimus.

³²⁵ For the term *factio* see HELLEGOUARC'H 1963, 99-109 and SEAGER 1972, 53-58.

³²⁶ Compare Sallust's reference to the *opes factionis* at *Cat.* 32.2 with Catilina's mention of the *factio inimicorum* at 34.2.

³²⁷ Cypr. *Ep.* 43.2.1. Further references to Felicissimus's party include *Ep.* 43.7.2 (which has *haeretica factio*) and *Ep.* 59.14.1 (where Cyprian refers to the opposition as *conventiculum perditae factionis*).

seditio conveyed the idea of separation and as such it described the result of the rivalry between two hostile factions. The word *conspiratio*, on the other hand, signified the secret machinations of a specific group that intended to do harm to somebody or something.³²⁸ Valerius Maximus, for instance, called the movement of Gaius Gracchus a *conspiratio*, while Cicero referred to the followers of his archenemy Clodius as *quisquiliae seditionis Clodianae*, the ‘dregs of Clodius’s sedition’.³²⁹ In a similar way, Cyprian depicted Felicissimus as the driving force behind the sedition in Carthage and construed the activities of the opposition as a conspiracy against his authority. As the bishop acknowledged, it was Felicissimus and his followers who revolted (*rebelletur*) against the *consilium* that he had taken regarding the *lapsi*. The disregard of his instructions then constituted a serious offence against the authority and power that the episcopal office represented. From the perspective of the bishop, the ultimate goal of their *factiosae conspirationes* then was the undermining of Cyprian’s *auctoritas et potestas* as appointed leader of the Carthaginian church.³³⁰

As a close reading of the correspondence suggests, the principle of *unitas* had far-reaching consequences on an interpersonal level. Formerly respectable *fratres* like Nicostratus, Novatus, and Felicissimus were marked down as *personae non gratae* and subsequently turned into enemies of the church. The picture, which these pieces of invective advertised, was intended to damage the reputation of people who had openly challenged the authority of their bishop. Cyprian did not only target their moral integrity but also attempted to undermine their claim to authority, which threatened his own position of power at Carthage. Considering the bishop’s educational background as a Roman notable who was well-versed in literature and rhetoric, it may come as no surprise

³²⁸ HELLEGOUARC’H 1963, 98f. (*conspiratio*) and 135-137 (*seditio*).

³²⁹ Val. Max. 4.7.2; Cic. *Sest.* 94.

³³⁰ Cyp. *Ep.* 43.3.2.

that the language that he used to counter the claims of the opposition shows strong parallels with famous examples of Roman polemical writing. He did not simply leave it at passing on the sentence of excommunication, but actively shaped the image of persistent troublemakers, impertinent criminals, would-be revolutionists, and secret conspirators. Nicostratus, Novatus, and Felicissimus were all accused of *fraus* and *rapina*, and in the latter case the additional charge of *adulterium* was added to the record of the delinquent. According to Cyprian, they were no one-time offenders but had on several occasions proven their criminal intent. Such accusations were taken from a ready-made stock of themes, on which a well-trained rhetor could draw if the occasion called for it. As far as the presbyter Novatus was concerned, the phrase *rerum novarum semper cupidus* drew him close to the portrayal of perceived troublemakers and revolutionists like M. Aemilius Lepidus. Moreover, the charge of *impietas* toward his own father and wife eventually made him a new Tarquinius and a new Nero, who were both known for their proverbial cruelty and tyrannic regime. The deacon Felicissimus, on the other hand, was singled out as the ringleader of the opposition. Cyprian presented him as *dux factionis* and *seditionis princeps* who led a *conspiratio* that targeted the authority of bishop and church. Such language strongly reverberates with the literary depiction of infamous figures such as L. Sergius Catilina or P. Clodius Pulcher, whom Cicero had regarded as his personal enemies. The manifold references to the *mala exempla* of the Roman history tie in with the friend-enemy distinction that formed the basis of Cyprian's idea of *unitas*. In his case, however, the concern for the *res publica* and one's personal ambitions as member of an aristocratic elite was replaced by the preservation of the bishop's position of power in the church. Accordingly, the networks of *amicitia* that had marked political influence since the Roman Republic gave way to the biblical model of divine kinship, which constituted a community of unanimous *fratres*.

3.3 Stephen, the friend of heretics

The division of the communities in Rome and Carthage in competing factions later brought to light further difficulties. In the latter half of his episcopate, Cyprian faced the question of how to pursue with people who sought admission into communion but had previously been baptized outside of what the bishop was prepared to recognize as the established church. Cyprian's view on the matter was clear. Anyone who had received baptism *extra ecclesiam* was to be baptized on admission.³³¹ In his ruling, the bishop could rely on an established local tradition at Carthage, where bishop Agrippinus had instituted the practice of rebaptism in the 220s.³³² Despite the fact that the North African episcopal college was divided on the subject, Cyprian's main opponent turned out to be the Roman bishop Stephen, who had taken the see of the imperial capital in 254 after the deaths of his predecessors Cornelius and Lucius under emperor Trebonius Gallus.³³³ He argued in favour of the practice of laying on hands, which he seems to have understood as an act of reconciliation, while Cyprian misrepresented Stephen's position as the imparting of the Holy Spirit (a believe that was held by some of Cyprian's North African episcopal colleagues). Not unlike Cyprian, he could appeal to the tradition of the Roman church, whose practice differed from that of Carthage.³³⁴

³³¹ All those who had properly been baptized in the church before their declension were exempt from this rule. In their case, the laying on of hands was sufficient.

³³² Cypr. *Ep.* 71.4.1 and 73.3.1. The term 'rebaptism' does not adequately describe Cyprian's position. Since he did not accept the validity of baptism in schismatic movements, converts were not rebaptized but baptized. For the controversy see SAGE 1975, 295-335; BURNS 1993, 367-403; BURNS 2002, 100-131; DUNN 2006, 257-274; BRENT 2010, 290-327.

³³³ Cornelius and his successor Lucius died as martyrs in 253 and 254 respectively (*Lib. Pontif.* 22-23). The tenure of the latter lasted no longer than eight months. Cypr. *Ep.* 61.3.1 to bishop Lucius acknowledges the martyrdom of Cornelius and *Ep.* 68.5.1 to Stephen remembers the deaths of both.

³³⁴ Stephen's position can be glimpsed from Cypr. *Ep.* 74, which quotes from a lost letter of the Roman bishop. The anonymous work *De rebaptismate* moreover acknowledges that there were some, presumably in North Africa, who practiced the imposition of hands as a way of imparting the Holy Spirit. Cyprian however knew that Stephen's understanding was different from theirs (cf. *Ep.* 74.1.2). On this point see DUNN 2006, 264f.

Cyprian was for the first time urged to take a stance on the controversial subject when an otherwise unknown Magnus confronted the bishop with the question.³³⁵ Around the same time, a petition reached Carthage, in which a number of Numidian bishops sought for guidance in the matter. Subsequently, Cyprian summoned a gathering of thirty-two bishops and forwarded the synodal decision to the petitioners.³³⁶ The ruling of the assembly was in line with Cyprian's position, which favoured the practice of rebaptism over the laying on of hands. But the uncertainties among the North African bishops regarding the question did not abate and Cyprian was forced to convoke an additional synod in spring 256. This time the bishop managed to gather seventy-one of his colleagues, which can be regarded as a significant increase in support of his policy.³³⁷ Perhaps Cyprian and his followers were also aware of the potentially influencing role of the Roman church whose current bishop Stephen advocated the contrary point of view. This might have been reason enough for them to convey the ensuing synodal letter to Rome.³³⁸ We can assume that Cyprian drafted the document personally since he is the only bishop mentioned by name, while his colleagues are alluded to in the phrase *et ceteri*.³³⁹ The bishop informed the Roman prelate about the proceedings and highlighted the main point of contention in which case the ruling of the North African bishops was

³³⁵ Cypr. *Ep.* 69.

³³⁶ Cypr. *Ep.* 70.

³³⁷ The number of participants can be extrapolated from Cypr. *Ep.* 73.1.2: ... *episcopi numero septuaginta et unus*

³³⁸ CLARKE 1984-89, vol. IV, 213 believes that the position of the Roman church must have been known, while DUNN 2006, 262-265 argues that Cyprian was ignorant of Stephen's view when he sent his letter. At that time, the bishop of Rome did not occupy the same authoritative position as in the subsequent centuries. But there are indications in Cyprian's correspondence that the central role of the Roman church was generally acknowledged. There is for instance the case of bishop Basilides of *Legio et Asturica* in Spain who was deposed from his office for various offences. He did not accept his dismissal and went off to Rome in order to effect his reinstatement (Cypr. *Ep.* 67.5.3). In the case of Marcianus of Arles, who allied himself with Novatian's party, it was Cyprian who urged Stephen to take action (*Ep.* 68.3.1). On the authority of the Roman bishop at that time see DUNN 2007.

³³⁹ Cypr. *Ep.* 72.

definite: those who had received their bathing *extra ecclesiam* must be baptized before entering the church.³⁴⁰

Throughout the letter the tone remains decidedly respectful. As it was customary among Christians, the bishop of Rome is referred to as *frater* or *frater carissimus* on several occasions.³⁴¹ In addition to that, Cyprian marked Stephen's *gravitas* and *sapientia* as particularly commendable qualities and appealed to the *honor communis* and *simplex dilectio* that bound the bishops to one another.³⁴² It is only in the concluding passage that the bishop voiced his anxiety regarding 'certain people' (*quosdam*) who did not change their viewpoint but held on to their own custom. As could be demonstrated, this did not specifically aim at Stephen and the Roman practice but was meant as a hint at certain North African bishops who did not comply with the synodal decision.³⁴³ But from Stephen's perspective, the ambiguous reference to African dissenters could easily be taken as a veiled attack against his authority. This impression is further intensified if we consider the content of the letters that were enclosed to the writing at hand.³⁴⁴ Even though these additional documents had originally been drafted in view of a different audience, their contentions must have appeared as a downright provocation. Here, Stephen would have read of his *praesumptio* and noted that he honoured heretics more than Christians (*haereticis honorem dare*).³⁴⁵ In particular, however, it was Cyprian's daring analogy of Peter and Paul's struggle over circumcision that could not escape the attention of the Roman bishop. Whereas Cyprian portrayed himself in the role of the triumphant apostle Paul,

³⁴⁰ Cypr. *Ep.* 72.1.1. The other point concerned the case of renegade clerics returning to the church. They should be stripped off their office and were to be admitted as laymen (cf. 72.2.1).

³⁴¹ Cypr. *Ep.* 72.1.1; 2.1; 3.1-2.

³⁴² Cypr. *Ep.* 72.1.1; 3.1.

³⁴³ Cypr. *Ep.* 72.3.1. The language of the passage evokes *Ep.* 71.3.2 to the Mauretanian bishop Quintus where the persons concerned are identified as African bishops (cf. 71.1.3). See CLARKE 1984-89, vol. IV, 217f.

³⁴⁴ Cyprian appended copies of *Ep.* 70 and 71 to *Ep.* 72.

³⁴⁵ Cypr. *Ep.* 71.1.2-3.

Stephen would have recognized himself in the figure of the docile Peter.³⁴⁶ The message from Carthage could thus be read at various levels as it combined subtle criticism towards the Roman bishop with formulaic pleasantries.

Despite the courtesies that were woven into the cover letter, the package as a whole led to much indignation at Rome. We are only insufficiently informed about Stephen's reaction since his reply has not been preserved. Fortunately, however, we can gather a few details from Cyprian's correspondence with bishop Pompeius of Sabrata.³⁴⁷ Stephen seemed to have charged his North African colleagues with the corruption of a time-honoured tradition. Cyprian even quoted the corresponding passage from the original letter, which reads as follows: 'let nothing be innovated which has not been handed down' (*nihil innovetur nisi quod traditum est*).³⁴⁸ Stephen stated that heretics should be admitted to communion through the imposition of hands only. Any other practice was a violation of the *traditio*, and must therefore be regarded as unlawful *innovatio*. The charge must have been familiar to Cyprian who, only a few years earlier, had stamped the renegade presbyter Novatus a constant troublemaker with an innate desire to introduce novelties (*rerum novarum semper cupidus*). This time, however, the bishop of Carthage switched from the role of accuser to that of defendant. As part of his defence against the accusations, he attempted to turn back the blame on to Stephen. In so doing, he proceeded from the idea of *unitas*: since there was only one church, there could only be one baptism too. Anyone then who recognized a second baptism outside the church did not cling to the principle of oneness. It was therefore not the one who kept the unity (*unitatem tenens*) but the one who was forgetful about it (*unitatis oblitus*) that should be

³⁴⁶ Cypr. *Ep.* 71.3.1-2. See the illuminating remarks by CLARKE 1984-89, vol. IV, 213f.

³⁴⁷ Cypr. *Ep.* 74 to Pompeius. The identification of the addressee with the same-named bishop of Sabrata is not secure but very likely. See CLARKE 1984-89, vol. IV, 236.

³⁴⁸ Cypr. *Ep.* 74.1.2.

charged with unlawful innovation.³⁴⁹ The second point that seems to have formed part of Stephen's response was even more troublesome. For, a fleeting passage in Cyprian's letter suggests that the Roman bishop had threatened his colleagues with excommunication (*sacerdotes dei ... abstinendos putat*).³⁵⁰ The reference is fairly unspecific and we can only speculate about the implications of such course of action. A valuable hint at the occurrences may be preserved in a letter that arrived in Carthage later that year. It is the affirmative reply of Firmilian of Caesarea with whom Cyprian had sought an alliance to counter the allegations of the Roman bishop. There, Firmilian reported that Stephen had in fact broken with a number of bishops both in North Africa and the eastern provinces.³⁵¹ This reference then points to the further implications of the conflict, which eventually led to the intervention of the influential Alexandrian bishop Dionysius, who adopted a mediating role to prevent the rupture between Rome and the dissenting bishops in east and west.³⁵² As far as Cyprian and his supporters were concerned, Firmilian added the valuable information that Stephen had denied communion and hospitality (*non solum pax et communio sed et tectum et hospitium*) to an official delegation of North African bishops (*legati episcopi*).³⁵³ Though we cannot entirely be sure about the exact placement of the incident, it is possible that these were the *legati* who were sent to Rome earlier that year in order to convey the decisions of the spring synod.³⁵⁴

In his dispatch to Pompeius, Cyprian drew a picture of Stephen that was markedly different from that of his previous letter. The respectful salutation as *frater carissimus* had

³⁴⁹ Cypr. *Ep.* 74.2.2.

³⁵⁰ Cypr. *Ep.* 74.8.2.

³⁵¹ Cypr. *Ep.* 75.25.1

³⁵² For Firmilian and Dionysius's role in the conflict see BAUMKAMP 2014, 297-314.

³⁵³ Cypr. *Ep.* 75.25.1.

³⁵⁴ Another possibility would be to place the North African delegation to autumn 256, that is, in the aftermath of the synod that took place at the beginning of September. Since the letter to Pompeius (Cypr. *Ep.* 74) with its allusive language concerning the excommunicated *sacerdotes dei* predates that gathering, it is unlikely that Firmilian's report refers to such a late date. It is however possible that the commission of the episcopal envoys was entirely unconnected to either of the two possible synods. In this case, the incident must have occurred at some point in between spring and autumn of that year.

given way to sarcasm and the polite reference to the colleague's *gravitas* and *sapientia* had been replaced by rather unfavourable traits. To begin with, the Roman bishop is repeatedly referred to as *Stephanus frater noster*, yet the designation had become somewhat cynical.³⁵⁵ This is nowhere more obvious than in a passage in which Cyprian ridiculed Stephen's argumentative reasoning of the Roman custom. Here he spoke of the *plane ac legitima traditio* of 'our brother' Stephen and called the bishop's reference to the practice of heretics (who themselves eschewed to rebaptize converts) a 'suitable authority' (*idonea auctoritas*) for the church.³⁵⁶ At the same time, Cyprian underscored over and over again the stubborn and contracted behaviour of Stephen in the matter. It was his inclination to presumption (*praesumptio*), his obstinacy (*obstinatio, contumacia*), small-mindedness (*parvitas*), and innate blindness (*animi caecitas*), which hindered him from recognizing the truth. As a consequence thereof, he remained stagnant in his erroneous assumptions (*error*).³⁵⁷ On top of that, Cyprian shaped the image of a heretic that posed a serious threat to the church. To be sure, the Roman bishop is nowhere in the letter directly charged with heresy but the allusive language of Cyprian drew him close to such intolerable offence. In one instance, he is described as an advocate of the *haereticorum causa*; in another, the association *cum haereticis* followed as the logical consequence of his separation from the ecclesial *unitas*.³⁵⁸ Particularly interesting in this context is Cyprian's portrayal of Stephen as *haereticorum amicus et inimicus christianorum*.³⁵⁹ The implication was that, as 'friend of heretics', he had forfeited his place in the church and hence must be regarded as an 'enemy of the Christians'. Stephen had previously made clear his unwillingness to remain in communion with the North African churches (by denying the right of hospitality to

³⁵⁵ Cypr. *Ep.* 74.1.1; 4.1; 7.3.

³⁵⁶ Cypr. *Ep.* 74.4.1.

³⁵⁷ Cypr. *Ep.* 74.1.1; 9.2 (*error*); 74.3.1; 7.3; 10.1 (*praesumptio, obstinatio, contumacia*); 74.4.2 (*caecitas, parvitas*).

³⁵⁸ Cypr. *Ep.* 74.1.1; 11.1.

³⁵⁹ Cypr. *Ep.* 74.8.2. See BRÄNDLI 2013, 98-101.

their delegation). Now it seems that Cyprian too was no longer ready to regard the Roman prelate as one of his colleagues. The *frater carissimus* of previous days had eventually turned into an *inimicus christianorum* whose company must be avoided. As *amicus haereticorum* he clearly stood outside the church, sharing the erroneous beliefs and practices of the heretics. Only someone who clung to the divinely sanctioned *unitas* could truly be called a *frater*. Anyone then who ruptured this oneness was considered an *inimicus*. At the same time, the passage at hand also pointed to the origin of such thinking, for the juxtaposition of the antonyms *amicus* and *inimicus* suggests the notion of friendship as the underlying principle of Cyprian's model. To make his construct work, the bishop would simply have replaced the *amicus* with the biblical kinship terminology while retaining the language of enmity. In so doing, Cyprian eventually gained an effective tool for labelling 'friends' and enemies.

In late summer 256, a 'great number of bishops' (*episcopi plurimi*) flocked to Carthage, the provincial capital of *Africa proconsularis*, at the instigation of Cyprianus to discuss the swelling conflict with Stephen. As far as we know, the total number of attendants amounted to eighty-seven bishops who were accompanied by lower clerics. Additionally, our sources mention the presence of a large part of the local congregation, which was invited to follow the spectacle.³⁶⁰ The church representatives came together to consider the validity of baptism if it was performed outside the established church. Some regarded the bathing as null and void if conducted by an unauthorised person, that is, anybody who was not in communion with the established church. Others, however, accepted the validity of baptism administered in schismatic movements. According to their perspective, the practice of laying on hands as a sign of reconciliation was sufficient to grant admission. Still others also performed the imposition of hands but construed the

³⁶⁰ *Sent. episc. praef.* For the synod see FISCHER/LUMPE 1997, 264-307.

corresponding practice as the imparting of the Holy Spirit rather than an act of penance. The divide ran through the North African episcopal college, while Cyprian became one of the major proponents of the rebaptism practice. At the other end of the spectrum, we find Stephen of Rome, who practised the penitential laying on of hands. The final ruling of the North African conference opted in favour of Cyprian's position, of which we still possess the official records in the form of a verbatim transcript.

The main body of the *Sententiae episcoporum* consists of the individual votes of each bishop giving their verdict on the subject. These statements are bracketed by Cyprian's own remarks, who opened the session with a short introductory speech and concluded the dealings with his personal ruling.³⁶¹ One peculiar feature about the *Sententiae* is their unanimously voiced decision in favour of the rebaptism practice. Not a single dissenting voice can be found among the votes of the participants. Rather, the bishops are presented as being in complete agreement with the policy that was advocated by Cyprian. With this in mind, it is thus likely that the document as a whole was intended as a counter-statement to Stephen's initiative, severing the bonds between Rome and Carthage. As a demonstration of ecclesial unity, the *sententiae* of the bishop's spoke as one voice, directing the council's resolution toward the Roman prelate.³⁶² The idea of *unitas* was fundamental to Cyprian's understanding of the baptismal rite because it linked the principle of oneness with respect to God and church to an individual's initiation into the community. Since there was only one church, preaching one faith and practicing one baptism, there could be no baptism outside the church.³⁶³ In his personal statement, the bishop reinforced the verdict of his colleagues, acknowledging that heretics could only be made 'of adversaries, friends, and of antichrists, Christians' (*de adversariis amici et de antichristis christiani*) if they

³⁶¹ *Sent. episc.* praef.; 87.

³⁶² Similarly FISCHER/LUMPE 1997, 294f.; BAUMKAMP 2014, 297.

³⁶³ This is nicely summed up by the *sententia* of Nemesianus of Thubunae (*Sent. episc.* 5).

received the sacrament of baptism. The reception into the community through the baptismal rite was thus the necessary precondition for friendship with church and bishop.³⁶⁴ The phrase makes explicit what otherwise is only implied in Cyprian's writings. At the heart of his thinking lay a friend-enemy dichotomy that allowed the bishop to adequately render ecclesio-political opposition. Such division of the religious landscape into *amici* and *inimici* was borrowed from a language that had long been used to indicate political fellowship and open hostility. However, Cyprian had to make adjustments to the classical model in order to make the corresponding language work in an ecclesial context. Whereas the conceptual antithesis between *amicitia* and *inimicitia* remained one of the main pillars of the bishop's thinking, friendship was replaced by a terminology that was more suited to a Christian understanding of community. This language drew on the biblical notion of divine kinship and, in particular, the idea of *fraternitas* to express togetherness and unanimity among fellow believers.

³⁶⁴ *Sent. episc.* 87.

4. *Amicitia cum fratribus*: Ambrose of Milan and the power of friends

In the third century, Cyprian of Carthage pointed the way to dealing with ecclesial opposition. His idea of *unitas*, distinguishing between faithful brothers and enemies of the church, was fundamentally influenced by a mode of thinking that consciously divided the world into *amici* and *inimici*. About a century later, as we shall see in this chapter, the bishop of Milan Ambrose drew on similar notions in an attempt at restructuring the basis of the clerical community. He made recourse to Cicero and his writings about *amicitia*, proposing a model that aimed at a re-evaluation of the notion of *fides*. As in Cyprian's case, the resulting rhetoric established sharp boundaries between those whom he reckoned as friends and the rest that was dismissed as enemies. Both concepts of community crucially built on the principles of *amicitia*, and in particular a friend-enemy dichotomy, that could effectively be employed to label individuals and groups as being in opposition to a specific cause or a given order. As such, the rhetorical strategies of the bishops can both be seen as reactions to internal struggles that threatened the powerbase of the established church and, along with that, the authority of its leaders.

However, Ambrose's world was very different from Cyprian's. More than one hundred years lie between the bishops, in which the Roman empire, politically and religiously, underwent a considerable change. While Christians had previously been regarded as belonging to an illicit sect that, at times, suffered from persecution, the fourth century heralded the rise of Christianity, which gradually found entrance into the highest social circles of the empire. Cyprian then inhabited a potentially hostile world, as he himself experienced when he was forced to take refuge in order to escape repressive measures during the Decian persecution. Later, he personally fell victim to a renewed flare-up of anti-Christian sentiments under Valerian, which caused his death. These

interventions on the part of the imperial authorities amplified already existing tensions in the local Christian community that, since Cyprian's controversial election to the episcopate, threatened to undermine his position as appointed leader of the church. Ambrose, on the other hand, did not feel such restraints. His world was noticeably bigger than that of Cyprian whose lines of communication primarily focused on North Africa and Rome, connecting like-minded clerics with one another.³⁶⁵ The bishop of Milan maintained a network that, geographically and socially, was much more diverse. He cultivated contacts well beyond the confines of the North Italian provinces, counting not only clergymen but also emperors and high Roman officials among his correspondents. The religious controversies of the late fourth century had wider repercussions too. While Cyprian's main focus was on localised disputes in Carthage and Rome, Ambrose took part in an empire-wide argument that had its origins in the teachings of the Alexandrian priest, and later arch-heretic Arius. The controversy revolved around the question of how one was to understand the divinity of Christ in relation to God. By the time of Ambrose, in the late 370s, the debate had progressed to the point that some claimed that the Son was 'similar' (ὅμοιος) to the Father, while others maintained that Father and Son were of 'one substance' (ὁμοούσιος). The former view reflected the doctrine of those favouring the Homoian creed, as it had been proposed by the double synod of Ariminum and Seleucia in 359. Their claims, however, were highly controversial, drawing criticism from the advocates of a neo-Nicene theology that preferred the latter phrasing, which followed the proposition of the council of Nicea in 325.³⁶⁶

In the present chapter, the focus lies on Ambrose's involvement in the 'Arian' controversy, which featured neo-Nicene supporters like the Milanese bishop himself

³⁶⁵ This is not to say that Cyprian did not cultivate non-clerical contacts. See for instance the reference to the *amicitia antiqua* at Pont. *Vita Cypr.* 14.3 or the hostile letter to Puppianus (*Ep.* 66).

³⁶⁶ For the controversy and its different stages see HANSON 1988. For Ambrose's involvement see MARKSCHIES 1995 and the collected articles in DUVAL 1998.

against the Homoian opposition.³⁶⁷ In 374, Ambrose inherited the episcopate from his predecessor Auxentius who had been one of the leading spokesmen of the Homoian position in the Roman west for about two decades. The rather unexpected election of a proponent of the Nicene creed proved controversial as Ambrose was soon to learn, when he proceeded to dismantle the legacy of his predecessor. Later, the bishop turned his attention to the Danube region where churchmen like Palladius of Ratiaria or Auxentius of Durostorum raised their voice against the Milanese upstart whose religious credentials were openly challenged. In these struggles for the true Christian doctrine of God, the notion of friendship played a pivotal role. The constitution of *amicitia*-based networks to the exclusion of the doctrinal *inimicus* became an essential part of the political game.

Bulding on these observations, my discussion centres on the final paragraphs of Ambrose's *De officiis*, where the bishop gave a detailed exposition of friendship. The text offers counsel on how one ought to handle ecclesial opposition. In so doing, the bishop carefully distinguished between the *amicus infidus* on the one hand, and the *vir fidelis* on the other. While the latter's association with the clerical community and the truth of faith made him a valuable friend, the former deserved to be excluded from the amenities of friendship due to his deviating beliefs. Along these lines, the chapter provides a rereading of Ambrose's correspondence, showing that the bishop's vision of friendship *cum fratribus* was no mere theoretical exercise but manifested itself in a powerful clerical network that stood for a particular set of doctrines. Finally, the concluding section considers the case of exclusion by examining Ambrose's political manoeuvres at the council of Aquileia in 381. In particular, this concerned Palladius, the Homoian bishop of Ratiaria, whom Ambrose and his supporters condemned as *inimicus dei*.

³⁶⁷ The derogatory term 'Arian' marked certain theological positions down as heretical and as such the terminology had been used by Ambrose and others to associate the supporters of the Homoian creed with the charge of heresy. For a detailed discussion see HANSON 1988, 99-128.

4.1 Friendship and the truth of faith in the *De officiis*

Ambrose's *De officiis* was designed to be a handbook for clerics on appropriate behaviour. As such, the three volumes were modelled on the identically titled work of Cicero, who had instructed his son Marcus about the same matter more than four hundred years earlier with an eye toward the next generation of aristocratic leadership. The bishop retained the title and the basic structure of the work, and also his thematic choices were dependent on the late Republican template. Nevertheless, he took the liberty of rearranging the available material by aligning the Ciceronian perspective with the biblical message. In so doing, he came up with a Christian version of a Roman classic that sought to replace its model.³⁶⁸ Whereas Cicero had dedicated the work to his twenty-year-old son, Ambrose similarly construed his relationship to the clerical body at Milan as one between father and child: 'in the same way that Cicero wrote to instruct his son, I too am writing to mould you, my sons (*filios meos*)'.³⁶⁹ This was no mere borrowing of the Ciceronian language but ties in with the common use of family imagery in Christian literature, linking the teacher-pupil relationship between Ambrose and his subordinates with the biblical notion of divine kinship. Accordingly, the bishop fashioned himself in the role of the spiritual genitor whose claim to fatherhood was justified by his power to beget children to the church, that is, to grant baptism and, in a broader sense, also to conduct ordinations. The result was a dependent relationship between the executing authority and the receiving body that was translated into familial terms.

³⁶⁸ Ambr. *Off.* 1.29. For the composition of the work in relation to the Ciceronian model see DAVIDSON 2001, 33-44.

³⁶⁹ Ambr. *Off.* 1.24; cf. 2.155 and 3.132. Ambrose's immediate audience appears to have been the clergy of Milan. DAVIDSON 2001, 16 however points to specific passages such as the 'condemnation of speculation by grain-merchants in times of food-shortages' (3.37-44) or 'the banishment of foreigners from a city during a famine' (3.45-52) that were not of primary concern for clerics. MCLYNN 1994, 272 and 277 suggested the Symmachean circle as well as Ambrose's episcopal colleagues as potential readers of the work. Similarly, DAVIDSON 2001, 61-64 thinks of North Italian ecclesiastics, well-to-do Christian laymen, and non-Christian *litterati*.

It is impossible to situate the *De officiis* in a specific historical context. Neither the exact date of composition nor the circumstances of its publication can be determined with sufficient precision. Internal evidence suggests that Ambrose cannot have written the work prior to summer 386. Altogether, the references to identifiable events point to the late 380s as the most likely setting.³⁷⁰ Despite this lack of clear indications, we are able to discern early signs in our sources that point to Ambrose's efforts to establish a corps of like-minded clerics across Northern Italy that followed a particular behavioural code. Later on in this chapter, we will examine Ambrose's role at the council of Aquileia which, in 381, condemned two Homoian bishops on grounds of their doctrinal position. As main opponent emerged Palladius of Ratiaria who later criticized the inappropriate behaviour of some of the lower clerics who had dared to defile his episcopal dignity during the proceedings. In his view, they were only following the pattern provided by Ambrose as they were 'trained by you after your own character' (*a vobis pro moribus vestris institutorum*).³⁷¹ Their attacks then were seen as a shameful act of *impietas* that reflected badly on the responsible head of the Milanese church. At the same time, however, Palladius' comment on the institution of episcopally sanctioned *mores* can equally be read as a reference to the success of Ambrose's unification policy that yielded a powerful clerical alliance by determining a common enemy. A few years later, then, the bishop committed his principles to paper publishing them in three books *De officiis*. Particularly noteworthy in this context is Ambrose's recurring reference to the Homoian threat throughout the work. To be sure, the focus of the *De officiis* was by no means limited to the implications of religious strife but much of what Ambrose had to say can be interpreted in view of the late fourth century theological controversies.

³⁷⁰ For the dating see DAVIDSON 2001, 3-5.

³⁷¹ Pall. *Apol.* 116; cf. MCLYNN 1994, 253.

It is then not without reason that the bishop felt compelled to vindicate himself for a matter that took the reader back to a time when Ambrose was still struggling to consolidate his position at Milan. About four years after his election, probably in 378, he attracted the criticism of his Homoian opponents for selling church plate in order to ransom prisoners of war: ‘we incurred disapproval because we had broken up sacred vessels in order to ransom prisoners – the act was enough to annoy the Arians’ (*confregerimus vasa mystica ut captivos redimeremus, quod Arianis displicere potuerat*).³⁷² His course of action would not have been unusual if Ambrose had not diverted some of the money to finance other projects such as his church building programme. Moreover, the sale proved also to be controversial because the vessels belonged to an era when Ambrose’s Homoian predecessor was still in power. In the eyes of the opposition, the actions of the new bishop must thus have appeared as a bold attempt to eradicate the religious legacy of Auxentius.³⁷³ Elsewhere in the *De officiis*, Ambrose recalled ‘a certain friend of ours’ (*quemdam amicum*) whose candidacy to the Milanese clergy, despite his zealous determination, had been rejected solely on the basis of his improper gait. Apparently, this was no single incident since Ambrose also charged one of his own clerics with the same transgression, and consequently forbid the offender to walk in front of him. In both cases, Ambrose took the unseemly deportment as a sign of *perfidia* and, as it so happens, the later story of these men would eventually prove the bishop right in his judgement. While the latter left the clergy due to some illicit business, the former is said to have ‘deserted the faith at the time of the Arian onslaught’ (*Arianae infestationis tempore fidem deseruit*).³⁷⁴ This is most probably a reference to the Easter crisis of 385/86 when Ambrose continually refused to surrender a basilica to the court of Valentinian II. In conjunction with these

³⁷² Ambr. *Off.* 2.70-71, here 136-143.

³⁷³ BROWN 1992, 96; MCLYNN 1994, 55f.

³⁷⁴ Ambr. *Off.* 1.72.

events, the bishop also turned down an invitation to a public debate with Auxentius of Durostorum who, on this occasion, emerged as the spokesman of the Homoian party at Milan.³⁷⁵ Even a decade after his consecration, Ambrose was thus still confronted with an opposition that was strong enough to attract new followers such as the anonymous friend of the *De officiis*.

The reference to the faith-deserting *amicus* foreshadows Ambrose's concern for Christian friendship in the final passages of book three and thus points to the theological and ecclesio-political significance of the theme. As a concluding note to the entire work, the reflection on *amicitia* was given a prominent place in the *De officiis*. To be sure, friends and friendship also regularly occur elsewhere but it is only in the final volume that the bishop presents a sustained argument to his audience.³⁷⁶ At this point, Ambrose took up Cicero's thought regarding the limits of friendship and further expanded on the theme by integrating the Ciceronian perspective into a biblical frame. In so doing, he not only drew on the original version of the *De officiis* but also used biblical evidence and Cicero's *Laelius* as additional sources for his literary endeavour.³⁷⁷ This passage has much been discussed in recent scholarship. Whereas some have argued that Ambrose simply reproduced Cicero's position, others have pleaded for subtle changes indicating the Christianization of the classical concept. Carolinne White, for instance, noted that 'although Ambrose (...) placed (...) friendship in a recognisably Christian context, this transposition only effected a superficial change.'³⁷⁸ Luigi Pizzolato, on the other hand,

³⁷⁵ MCLYNN 1994, 185 with n. 98; DAVIDSON 2001, 4 and 511f. The course of events is highly complex and the chronology far from certain. A possible reconstruction is provided by MCLYNN 1994, 170-208. See BARNES 2000, 282-299 for an alternative view. For an introduction to the topic see LIEBESCHUETZ 2005, 124-136.

³⁷⁶ Ambr. *Off.* 1.167; 172-174 for instance discusses friendship under the heading of *benevolentia* and 2.36-37 refers to Jonathan and David as an example for ideal friendship.

³⁷⁷ DAVIDSON 2001, 891 notes the dependency of Ambrose's discussion on the *Laelius*; cf. his commentary on Ambr. *Off.* 3.128 (rebuke a friend, constancy of friendship); 3.133 (equality of partners); 3.134 (friend as *alter ego*); 3.135 (false friends and flattery).

³⁷⁸ WHITE 1992, 111. Similarly THAMIN 1895, 230; HOMES DUDDEN 1935, 532f.; TREU 1954, 430. DAVIDSON 2001, 898 reviews the literature on the topic and seems to concur with White's point of view.

maintained that the subsumption of friendship under the category of Christian love clearly added a new quality to *amicitia*.³⁷⁹ Along these lines, David Konstan recognized a departure from Cicero's position in the bishop's emphasis on self-disclosure, arguing that openness between friends would lead to 'a harmony of sentiment and collective loyalty within a community organized around a shared vision of life.'³⁸⁰ These studies share a common perspective: they all focus on modes of inclusion such as love and affection to account for Ambrose's friendship conception. Although scholars are certainly right in stressing the importance of inclusion in this context, they too often overlook its conceptual counterpart, exclusion, as a powerful tool in community building processes. By contrast, *amicitia* should be taken as an integrating force that was based on rules and principles, which dismissed as *inimici* those who did not conform to said principles. Thus, rather than examining the relation between Roman *amicitia* and Christian *caritas*, as previous scholars did, we have to pay close attention to the intricate interplay between the respective antonyms to properly understand Ambrose's train of thought in the concluding passages of the *De officiis*.

The starting point for the discussion is provided by Cicero's assessment of friendship as one area in life in which expediency often appears to conflict with the morally right course of action. Closely following the argument of his late Republican template, the bishop contends that *amicitia* is always preferable to profitable and useful goods such as wealth and power but that it takes second place in all those cases in which *honestas* was at stake.³⁸¹ A number of biblical examples were intended to clarify the point in question: on the one hand, Ambrose evoked the story of the influential Persian court

³⁷⁹ PIZZOLATO 1993, 272. Similarly BOULARAND 1972, 133; PIZZOLATO 1974, 203-215; CARMICHAEL 2004, 51.

³⁸⁰ KONSTAN 1997, 150-152; cf. KONSTAN 1996, 111.

³⁸¹ Ambr. *Off.* 3.125: *ea enim amicitia probabilis quae honestatem tuetur, praeferenda sane opibus honoribus potestatibus; honestati vero praeferrere non solet, sed honestatem sequi* (cf. Cic. *Off.* 3.43).

official Haman as *malum exemplum*. He had misused his good standing as the first among the king's friends (*praecipuus inter omnes amicos*) to put into action his plan to wipe out the entire Jewish people. When the conspiracy eventually came to the attention of the king, Haman was hanged and thus received the just punishment for his disregard of the honourable.³⁸² The implication is that friendships of this kind were flawed because they placed personal interests (that is, revenge on Mordechai and his people) above moral rectitude. As *bona exempla*, on the other hand, the bishop referred to Jonathan and the priest Ahimelech. They both held fast onto their friendship with David despite king Saul's attempts to kill his suspected rival. While the former chose to bear his father's indignation instead of sacrificing his most valued friendship, the latter even preferred to suffer death rather than betraying the right of hospitality.³⁸³ In their case, adherence to friendship was justified because Saul's course of action was morally wrong. Since *honestas* was not at stake, Jonathan and Ahimelech were correct in favouring friendship over what expediency would have demanded in their respective situations. Particularly interesting in this context is the order in which the chosen biblical examples were arranged. Starting off his discussion of friendship with the *malum exemplum* of Haman, Ambrose appears to be setting the tone for the following. Although the value of *amicitia* frequently features in his reflections, the main focus was on the case of betrayal.

Thus far, Ambrose's discussion had lacked a definition of that which is honourable. The crucial point was where one ought to draw the line between the expedient and the morally good. The bishop's response to this unanswered question would eventually reveal the limits of friendship in a Christian context. In this regard, it was again Cicero who served as Ambrose's main point of reference. His corresponding remarks suggested that, in an *amici causa*, one was never to act to the disadvantage of the state (*contra rempublicam*)

³⁸² Ambr. *Off.* 3.124; cf. Esth 3-7.

³⁸³ Ambr. *Off.* 3.125; cf. 1 Sam 20-21.

nor contrary to one's own oath or promise (*contra iusiurandum ac fidem*).³⁸⁴ These limitations preventing *viri boni* from placing personal interests over the well-being of the Roman Republic are key to the understanding of Ambrose's treatment of the topic. Closely following Cicero's argumentation, the bishop makes similar assertions:

Is it ever right for someone to plot against his country for the sake of a friend (*amici causa*), to please him, or is it not? Is it ever right to abandon faith (*fidem deserat*), when you are doing a favour for a friend and seeking to further his advantage? (...) For what if the cause of God (*Dei causa*) or the interests of our country compel a person to give evidence? Should friendship count for more than religion (*praeponderare ... amicitia religioni*)? Should it count for more than love for your fellow citizens?³⁸⁵

On comparing this to the original version of the *De officiis*, one quickly recognizes that Ambrose's adaptation of the Ciceronian language effected a considerable change. Although the bishop made brief reference to the *res publica* by evoking the *patria* and the *caritas civium*, his emphasis lies elsewhere. He certainly agreed with Cicero on the point that the well-being of the state must be valued higher than friendship, yet the *salus patriae* was not his main concern. As a devout Christian and leading representative of the church, he was much more interested in the term *fides*.³⁸⁶ Cicero had mentioned it in conjunction with the *iusiurandum* and defined it accordingly as *dictorum conventorumque constantia et veritas*, that is, constant truthfulness in everything that is said or agreed upon.³⁸⁷ The discussion of Ambrose revealed a somewhat different understanding of the concept. In his view, *fides* necessarily belonged to the realm of religion (*religio*) and as such it could not be separated from matters pertaining to God (*Dei causa*). The term retained its relational character and

³⁸⁴ Cic. *Off.* 3.43: *at neque contra rempublicam neque contra iusiurandum ac fidem amici cause vir bonus faciet*. For a commentary on the passage see DYCK 1996, 546f.

³⁸⁵ Ambr. *Off.* 3.126: *utrum amici causa quisquam contra patriam sentire necne debeat, ut amico oboediat; utrum oporteat ut fidem deserat, dum indulget atque intendit amici commoditatibus?* 127: *Quid enim si Dei causa, quid si patriae cogatur aliquis dicere testimonium? Numquid praeponderare debet amicitia religioni, praeponderare caritati civium?*

³⁸⁶ There is no mention of the *patria* anymore in the following discussion of the theme.

³⁸⁷ Cic. *Off.* 1.23; cf. Ambr. *Off.* 1.142.

basic meaning but was redirected toward a new object, for it was no longer the trust that one placed in another person but the belief in God that really mattered. Consequently, Cicero's persuasion was replaced with an understanding of *fides* that related one of the key pillars of *amicitia* not so much to the interaction with the actual friend but singled out loyalty and constancy toward God, as the basis upon which friendships ought to be built.³⁸⁸ This means that *fides* became the chief principle, determining whether one was to be counted among the faithful or allocated a place outside the community. The *amici causa* then was only compatible with Christian fellowship as long as its intents and purposes served the truth of faith. If this was not the case, friendship stood in direct opposition to the *Dei causa*. Thus, anyone who abandoned the faith (*fidem deserat*), that is, anyone who plotted against the cause of God, could not be a friend.

This conception of *fides* implicating adherence to the 'right' doctrinal stance as a necessary prerequisite for *amicitia* was unlikely to be the result of a purely intellectual game on the bishop's part but bears direct relation to the religious controversies of the late fourth century. The struggle between different competing Christian groups was in fact all about the assertion of a definite creed that was binding to all. It is then no surprise that Ambrose had a particular circle of people in mind who, from his point of view, did not deserve to be reckoned as friends. Although the bishop did not refer to them explicitly, it is his comment on an infamous biblical figure that eventually revealed the main target of his discussion:

(...) there is no one more detestable than the individual who damages this friendship (*amicitiam laeserit*). So, when the Lord confronted the one who betrayed him, this was the thing he found worst of all about his treachery (*perfidiam*), this was the crime he condemned most of all – the man had

³⁸⁸ The shift has been noted by WHITE 1992, 120f. and PIZZOLATO 1993, 273 without however recognizing its significance for the actual practice of friendship. DAVIDSON 2001, 902 points to the consequences that the conception of Ambrose might have had on an interpersonal level. For the relational character of *fides* as opposed to the contentual elements of the Christian faith see the important study of MORGAN 2015.

shown no gratitude at all for all that he had received, but had mixed his evil poisons (*venenum malitiae*) while sitting at the very table of friendship (*conviviis amicitiae*).³⁸⁹

The unnamed ‘traitor’ (*proditor*) to whom Ambrose referred was of course Judas Iscariot and the mention of the ‘table of friendship’ (*convivium amicitiae*) alluded to the biblical narration of the last supper. By a single kiss, Judas revealed the identity of Jesus to the soldiers who had come to take him prisoner.³⁹⁰ The sudden transformation from a follower and close friend to an enemy was thus marked by a gesture whose close association with love and affection pointed to the milieu from where enmity arose.³⁹¹ Prior to the incident, Jesus had already predicted the ‘treachery’ (*perfidia*) which was to happen while he was sharing his meal with the disciples.³⁹² Ambrose took the example of Judas as a warning sign for other Christians, demonstrating that a friend – however respected he may be – could easily turn into an enemy. In addition to that, the bishop’s reading of the biblical narrative suggested that the greatest threat often originated from those who were considered to be one’s closest allies. If we try to translate this into the ecclesio-political situation of the late fourth century, we get a clearer picture of the intended meaning of Ambrose’s admonition. From his point of view, it was by no means non-Christians and their rejection of God that posed the most acute challenge to church but the *perfidia* emerging from within the community itself. People who fashioned themselves as fellow Christians – such as the Homoians – were far more dangerous than the pagans, for their dissident views acted like ‘mischievous poison’ (*venenum malitiae*) from within the clerical ranks and thus threatened the *convivium amicitiae* of the Milanese church.

³⁸⁹ Ambr. *Off.* 3.137: ... *neque quisquam detestabilior quam qui amicitiam laeserit. Unde in proditorem Dominus hoc gravissimum invenit quod eius condemnaret perfidiam, quod gratiae vicem non repraesentaverit et conviviis amicitiae venenum malitiae miscuerit*

³⁹⁰ Matt 26:47-50; Mark 14:43-46.

³⁹¹ For the kiss as a distinguishing marker see PENN 2005, esp. 63-67 on heretics.

³⁹² For the biblical depiction of the last supper see Matt. 26:20-29; Mark 14:17-25; Luke 22:14-23; and John 13:1-30.

Along these lines, the bishop strove to redefine both the limits of friendship and the boundaries of the Christian community. He made plain that *fides* was the one thing that should not be sacrificed for the sake of friendship (*non ut fides propter amicitiam destruat*) and openly stated that anyone who proved unfaithful toward God was to be discounted as a potential friend (*non potest enim homini amicus esse, qui Deo fuerit infidus*).³⁹³ *Amicitia* could thus only be enjoyed if the principles of the faith remained unimpaired. If friends however disagreed upon matters pertaining to God, the bonds of friendship were to be dissolved. The main target of Ambrose's considerations was the enemy who originated from within the community itself. An upright Christian who adhered to the principles of faith ought to be embraced as an *amicus*; someone, however, who advocated differing beliefs was to be considered an *inimicus*. As such, he was regarded as a new Judas, and was therefore closely tied to the wickedness of the archetypal enemy. The difficulty was that any enemy from within was not identifiable as such. Ambrose was well aware of this fact and consequently acknowledged that it is always easier to avoid an avowed enemy (*inimicus vitari potest ...*) than to be prepared for the concealed attacks of a so-called friend (*... amicus non potest, si insidari velit*).³⁹⁴ After all, the adversary had been a fully integrated member of the community whose doctrinal position had to be challenged before he could openly be declared an enemy of the church. In any case, non-compliance with the bishop's rule and doctrines could potentially have far-reaching consequences. Ambrose resorted to medical imagery to make his position understood. As in the case of an experienced physician who after a long period of medical treatment had to cut off parts of the body that were beyond recovery, a 'good bishop' (*episcopus bonus*) would do anything conceivable to heal those who suffer from illness (*sanare infirmos*). When they could not be cured, the bishop would

³⁹³ Ambr. *Off.* 3.133.

³⁹⁴ Ambr. *Off.* 3.137.

however not hesitate to cut them off the body of the church (*cum dolore abscidere*).³⁹⁵ Ambrose's redefinition of the boundaries of the Christian community, dividing the Christian world into friends and enemies, was thus supplemented with a practicable catalogue of measures, which were supposed to be taken if the occasion called for them. Whereas disciplinary measures such as the implementation of penance were foreseen to reintegrate unruly Christians, excommunication was the last and indeed most powerful instrument available to a bishop to prevent adversaries from participating in the community of the church.

Ambrose's rhetoric of inclusion and exclusion established clear boundaries between the *amicitia* in the clerical community and the doctrinal *inimicus*. As such, it had wider implications for contemporary church politics. One of the still unsolved questions in this regard concerns Ambrose's position of authority in the North Italian episcopal college. Scholars have often pointed to his ability to exert power over his colleagues and have tried to find reasons for the alleged dominance. Some have attributed his political achievements to the sheer force of his personality while others have assumed metropolitan status for the Milanese church, which would have given its bishop the formal power to intervene in the internal affairs of other congregations. Neither of these propositions proved entirely convincing.³⁹⁶ By contrast, Rita Lizzi saw the reason for Ambrose's success in the installation of a powerful ecclesiastical network in Northern Italy, which enabled the bishop to wield authority over his episcopal colleagues. This web of relationships can best be glimpsed from the Ambrosian correspondence, which hints at

³⁹⁵ Ambr. *Off.* 2.135.

³⁹⁶ The former point of view overstates the influence of the individual on political developments and takes the Ambrosian position at face value. A good example is PALANQUE 1933. The latter view projects a grade of institutionalization onto the early church, for which we can find only little support in our sources. See MENIS 1973, 271-294 arguing the case in favour of Milan's metropolitan status and CATTANEO 1982, 175-187 who objects to this view.

the regular exchange between the bishop of Milan and a carefully selected circle of like-minded clerics. Along these lines, Lizzi construed the *De officiis* as a handbook that obligated the individual members of the network to a unifying code of conduct. The treatise prescribed the image of the ideal cleric, allowing Ambrose to mould the minds of a new generation of church leadership according to his own image. As the foundation of his guidelines, he chose the time-honoured behavioural code of the Roman aristocracy, the *De officiis* of Cicero, and made it applicable to the church. Such a transformation of traditional values would then not only have provided common ground for an emerging ecclesiastical elite in and beyond Northern Italy but also contributed to the approximation of ecclesial standards to ‘the conduct and language typical of the senatorial nobility’.³⁹⁷

The strength of Lizzi’s argument lies in her sensible treatment of the available material, situating Ambrose and his clerical colleagues in the social and political landscape of Northern Italy without resorting to categories such as strength of character or the assumption of an institutionalized authority as explanatory models to account for the exertion of influence. She thoroughly dealt with the shape of the network as illustrated by the surviving *Epistulae*, and pointed to the foundation of a shared identity in the *De officiis*, which built on a common agreement on clerical conduct, duty, and the truth of faith. At the same time, however, her study paid only little attention to ‘the practical means by which the influence was formulated and transmitted’ and – even more importantly – did not explicitly address ‘the question of how controversial Ambrose’s claims to leadership actually were.’³⁹⁸ This assessment brings us back to our point of departure: Ambrose’s construal of *amicitia* in the final passages of the *De officiis*. Friendship

³⁹⁷ LIZZI 1988, 3-13. The argument is further developed in LIZZI 1989, 28-36. The quote is taken from LIZZI 1990, 166.

³⁹⁸ MCLYNN 1990, 258 reviewing Lizzi’s study.

can in fact be seen as the driving force behind the network and as such it was an essential part of the *usus epistularum*, the mutual exchange between Ambrose and his associates.³⁹⁹ It embodied, conveyed, and enforced the rules and principles by which the clerics were obligated to one another. The advertisement of the *De officiis* would then have put the bishop in a position of influence, from where he could shape the future appearance of the clerical body. In this regard, the display of *amicitia* can be taken as an indicator for the agreement that had been reached between the involved parties, while expressions of *inimicitia* point to the opposite. According to Ambrose, the bond of friendship was thus a precious good that must be preserved:

So, my sons (*fili*), take good care of the friendship you have entered into with your brothers (*cum fratribus amicitiam*): in the whole range of human life, there is nothing more wonderful than this. It really is a comfort in this life to have someone to whom you can open your heart, someone with whom you can share your innermost feelings, and someone in whom you can confide the secrets of your heart; to have at your side a man who will always be faithful to you (*ut colloces tibi fidelem virum*), someone who will rejoice with you when things are going well, sympathize with you when circumstances are hard, and encourage you in times of persecution.⁴⁰⁰

The bishop turned to his spiritual sons (*fili*), the clerical body at Milan, while highlighting the laudable qualities of friendship. Many facets of Ambrose's praise tie in with Cicero's description of friendship in the *Laelius*. The image of the open heart (*apertum pectus*), the juxtaposition of prosperity and adversity (*in prosperis ... in tristibus ... in persecutionibus*), and the tendency to idealization (*nihil melius, nihil iucundius, nihil praestabilius*) can similarly be found in the work of the late Republican orator.⁴⁰¹ The crucial point, however, is that true and lasting friendship could only be enjoyed if the *amicus* was a *vir fidelis*, that is,

³⁹⁹ For the expression see Ambr. *Ep.* 33.1.

⁴⁰⁰ Ambr. *Off.* 3.132: *Servate igitur, filii, initam cum fratribus amicitiam, qua nihil est in rebus humanis pulchrius. Solatium quippe vitae huius est ut habeas cui pectus aperias tuum, cum quo arcana participes, cui committas secretum pectoris tui, ut colloces tibi fidelem virum qui in prosperis gratuletur tibi, in tristibus compatiatur, in persecutionibus adhortetur*

⁴⁰¹ DAVIDSON 2001, 901 with reference to Cicero's *Laelius*.

someone who was trustworthy in the sense that he clung to the truth of faith. Such a man stood in marked contrast to the *amicus infidus* who ceased to be a friend at the moment when he abandoned the principles of the faith.⁴⁰² While the linkage of *amicitia* with *fides* hints at Ambrose's vision of a community of clerical brothers that were all united by a single faith, the reference to the frequent *infidelitas* parading under the name of a friend serves as an indicator for the internal opposition that hampered the bishop's task.

4.2 Friends and brothers

One of the characteristic features of Ambrose's conception is his association of friendship with the notion of divine kinship. In the *De officiis*, he speaks of the *initam cum fratribus amicitiam*, the friendship that one has entered with his brothers.⁴⁰³ The two concepts were placed alongside each other without any indication that the bishop might have considered them as incompatible with one another. Rather, it seems that the image of the brother could interchangeably be used with the idea of the faithful friend. Moreover, the mention of *fraternitas* in the text is presented as a given fact that needed no further explanation on the bishop's part. This was different from the notion of *amicitia*, which took centre stage in Ambrose's attempt at translating Cicero into Christian terms. Elsewhere in the *De officiis*, the bishop had much more to say about the *appellationes necessitudinum* that marked Christian fellowship. Here he drew particular attention to the community of the church (*coetus ecclesiae*), which manifested itself in a shared faith, a common initiation through baptism, reception of the divine grace, and partaking in the holy mysteries. In this context, it was the 'respect of sons' (*reverentia filiorum*), the 'authority and responsibility of fathers' (*auctoritas et pietas patrum*), and the 'close bond of brothers' (*germanitas fratrum*) that

⁴⁰² Ambr. *Off.* 3.133.

⁴⁰³ Ambr. *Off.* 3.132.

were presented as hallmarks of the Christian experience.⁴⁰⁴ Peculiar about Ambrose's idea of community is the absence of women, though there would have been the opportunity to make mention of the fellow sister or the mother church in this passage. Instead his discussion perpetuated a decidedly androcentric perspective that depicted the relationship between bishop and his dependents – be it clerics or laymen – as one between father and son. Ambrose similarly used gendered language to describe the community as a whole. Rather than leaving the semantically neutral *germanitas*, whose range of meanings would have comprised the relations between both male and female siblings, he gave his representation a decidedly male twist by adding the term *frater*. This view ties in with the rules and expectations of a male dominated society that tended to edit out female voices from its records.

Nevertheless, we have to bear in mind that the main target of the *De officiis* were the members of the clerical body. These were all men, which eventually made *amicitia* a distinctively male property that could only be achieved *cum fratribus*. This was also the view of Cicero who construed friendship as a matter that concerned men only; and not just any men, but the powerful and wealthy classes to which he collectively referred as *viri boni*. In this case, as has rightly been observed, 'the generic masculine is not only generic' and Cicero's choice of adjective 'comes with not only ethical but social connotations' to denote 'the better classes of men.'⁴⁰⁵ Similarly, Ambrose pictured the members of the clergy as belonging to a homogenous group of virtuous men that recognized each other as equals (though in both cases, Ambrose and Cicero, social distinctions were usually implied by either rank or seniority). In other respects, however, the character of the bishops' idea of friendship differed significantly from Cicero's model. His sense of community was influenced by concepts that, to Roman thinking, were commonly

⁴⁰⁴ Ambr. *Off.* 1.170.

⁴⁰⁵ WILLIAMS 2012, 23f. with reference to Cic. *Amic.* 18; 56; *Off.* 1.55.

associated with women. Peter Brown described Ambrose's vision as a non-sexualized community that committed itself to abstinence.⁴⁰⁶ Practically, such policy was not always viable as most potential candidates for the clergy had a previous life as husbands and fathers. But the least that could be expected from them was post-marital continence. As a role model for this way of life served the perpetual virginity of Mary and along with that, the vows of Christian virgins who were brought to Milan to follow her example.⁴⁰⁷ In Roman public perception, the bishop's propagation of sexual continence must have appeared strange – to say the least. For ideal masculinity did usually not involve virtues belonging to the sphere of women.⁴⁰⁸

If the vow of abstinence caused irritation, the deliberate association of *amicitia* with the brother terminology did not. As we have seen earlier, the identification of one with the other is a common theme in Roman literature and cannot exclusively been tied to the Christian tradition.⁴⁰⁹ In case of Ambrose, such overlap between seemingly distinct concepts has caused a lot of amazement among modern readers of his texts. Some have even tried to construe close family relations between the bishop and the pagan aristocrat Q. Aurelius Symmachus on grounds of their belonging to the same *gens*. The assumption rests on the interpretation of two passages concerning Ambrose's brother Satyrus. He is referred to as 'our common brother' (*frater communis*) in a letter from Symmachus to his brother Celsinus Titianus, and Ambrose fashioned Symmachus as 'your parent' (*tuo parente*) in his funeral speech on Satyrus.⁴¹⁰ This evidence is however far from being conclusive, for it can easily be demonstrated that the occurrence of family language in

⁴⁰⁶ BROWN 1988, 357-359 with reference to Ambr. *Off.* 1.258; *Ep. extra coll.* 14[63].62; 66.

⁴⁰⁷ Ambrose even enlisted the help of his sister Marcellina whose name features prominently among the letters as the only female correspondent. See Ambr. *Ep.* 76[20] and 77[22].

⁴⁰⁸ BROWN 1988, 357-359 points to the novelty of Ambrose's claims, which led to some controversy even inside the Christian community.

⁴⁰⁹ See SCHELKLE 1954, 632 and WILLIAMS 2012, 156-173, who provides a thorough discussion of the problem.

⁴¹⁰ Symm. *Ep.* 1.63 and Ambr. *Exc. Sat.* 1.32. For this reading see BARNES 1992, 7-13.

our texts does not necessarily imply the existence of kinship ties.⁴¹¹ If we take a closer look at Symmachus' correspondence, we can see that his letters are full of brothers, most of which could not claim consanguinity with the Roman aristocrat. Sometimes Symmachus even changed the form of address within the lines of the same letter, moving back and forth between the brother terminology and expressions of friendship. For instance, he referred to a certain Acutianus as *frater meus* only to call him *mihi familiaris* half a sentence later. The letter was addressed to Symmachus' own brother Celsinus Titianus, who was expected to conform to the petitioner's request in his capacity as vicar of Africa.⁴¹² Obviously, Symmachus reckoned both as his brothers and left it to the reader to spot the difference between kinship and friendship. In another instance, Symmachus urged Ambrose to act on behalf of a high official named Marcianus, whose involvement with the short-lived reign of the usurper Eugenius made him a victim of repressive measures by the succeeding regime. Symmachus referred to the man as *frater meus* and exhorted the bishop to come to the defence of his troubled friend (*ad amici defensionem*).⁴¹³ Again, we find the same interdependence between expressions of friendship and the use of familial language, and in particular the juxtaposition of the *amicus* with the *frater*. In the *De officiis*, it seems, Ambrose was thus simply following the example of other authors when he projected the values of friendship onto the clerical body of the church.

As a Roman notable, Ambrose was of course well justified in turning to classical and contemporary pagan literature if he wished to reason the use of family imagery in case of friendship. The *De officiis*, for instance, amply demonstrate his familiarity with

⁴¹¹ MCLYNN 1994, 263-275 rejects Barnes' construal. The fact that both Ambrose and Symmachus belonged to the same 'clan' is not helpful either. The *gens Aurelia* was so widely ramified that it comprised countless people who could not claim consanguinity with one another.

⁴¹² Symm. *Ep.* 1.69. The semantic field of *familiaris/familiaritas* evokes a sense of belonging to a domestic group (cf. *familia*), yet the same language could also be used to denote friendship (cf. *amicus/amicitia*). See WILLIAMS 2012, 40-44.

⁴¹³ Symm. *Ep.* 3.33. He is commonly identified with the same Marcianus who is said to have traded his Christian faith for the office of a proconsul (*Carmen contra paganos*, 86). For the episode see MCLYNN 1994, 361-363.

Cicero's oeuvre, who also made use of the brother terminology to mark friends as particularly close. Symmachus, on the other hand, was a contemporary of Ambrose and as such much closer to the bishop's everyday experience. They maintained friendly relations with one another as can be seen from Symmachus' letter collection, which includes the remnants of a larger correspondence with Ambrose. Another obvious link is provided by the famous Altar of Victory controversy, which featured the protagonists on opposite sides.⁴¹⁴ As a Christian bishop, however, Ambrose was equally obligated to the tradition of the church and the biblical writings. Like the grandees of Roman literature, Scripture also provided cues for the use of the brother image in connection with friendship. In particular, David and Jonathan served as a foil to the most celebrated friendships of the Graeco-Roman world. Despite the lack of explicit friendship language in the biblical narrative, their relationship had often been construed as an ideal friendship that set an example for others to follow.⁴¹⁵ As we have already seen, Jonathan is said to have loved David 'as his own soul' (*quasi animam suam*); a phrase that strongly reverberates with the ancient friendship tradition and its idealizing picture of the friend as another self.⁴¹⁶ But David could also refer to Jonathan as 'my brother' (*frater meus*) describing his friend's love as going well beyond 'the love of a woman' (*super amorem mulierum*). Since David had previously married into the house of Saul and thus became the brother-in-law of Jonathan, this expression seems a straightforward choice. But then again, the reference to the inferior *amor mulierum* rather points to the ideal friendship of virtuous men.⁴¹⁷ The

⁴¹⁴ Eight letters have been preserved as part of Symmachus' collection (Symm. *Ep.* 3.30-37). For the Altar of Victory controversy see Ambr. *Ep.* 72[17]; 72a[17a] (= Symm. *Relat.* 3); 73[18].

⁴¹⁵ See for instance Ambrose's own reading at *Off.* 2.36-37, which construes the relationship between David and Jonathan as an *amicitia fidelis*.

⁴¹⁶ 1 Sam 18:1-5 (Vulgate text). The construal of the friend as 'another self' goes back to a saying that was commonly attributed to Zeno (Diog. Laert. 7.1.23).

⁴¹⁷ 2 Sam 1:26 (Vulgate text). Cic. *Amic.* 19-20 argues that friendship surpasses all social relationships in value.

relationship is thus presented as a case, in which grown friendship coalesced with acquired kinship.

Another feature of Ambrose's friendship conception is the linkage of *amicitia* with a distinctively Christian understanding of *fides*. This can best be seen from the bishop's letter collection. The connection between the *Epistulae* and the *De officiis* is particularly strong because of a number of reasons: first, one of the letters in the collection takes up the main topic of the *De officiis* and thus cross-references one work with the other. Second, both the Ambrosian correspondence and the *De officiis* make recourse to famous classical models aligning them with a decidedly Christian perspective. Finally, the bishop's rhetoric of inclusion, associating *amicitia* with the notion of divine kinship, became one of the main structuring elements of the letter collection. To begin with, we must bear in mind that it was Ambrose himself who established a link between the two works by placing one item among his letters that demonstrated the bishop's concern for the fulfilment of clerical duties.⁴¹⁸ In the *De officiis*, Ambrose gave some thought to the question whether it was at all legitimate to speak of *officia* in Christian terms. From Panaetius to Cicero, there certainly were sufficient grounds to deal with the theme from a philosophical perspective but a bishop was equally bound to the scriptural evidence. The biblical writings, however, have only little to say about *officia* and therefore provide almost no starting point for a Christian treatment of the topic. In the whole text of the New Testament, the noun is attested in three places only.⁴¹⁹ Ambrose had justified his literary venture with reference to Luke 1:23, where it is said that the priest Zacharias returned home when 'the days of his *officium* were completed'.⁴²⁰ The main problem with

⁴¹⁸ Ambr. *Ep.* 17[81]. Since the letter is addressed to the clergy, it has been assumed that Ambrose was absent from Milan. The year 393/94, when the bishop spent some time in Bologna and Florence in order to avoid an encounter with the usurper Eugenius, seems to be the most likely setting. For the dating see the appendices of NAUROY 2012, 65 and 125.

⁴¹⁹ Luke 1:23; 2 Cor 9:12; Hebr 9:6. The Vulgate text also has thirty-one Old Testament occurrences.

⁴²⁰ Ambr. *Off.* 1.25.

this reading is that the Latin term for the indicated ministry corresponds to λειτουργία in the Greek text. Cicero, however, the purported model of Ambrose's treatise, used *officium* as the closest equivalent for the Greek καθήκον. Whereas the former signified the performance of priestly duties, the latter reflects the terminology of Stoic philosophical thought and is best described as 'appropriate behaviour'. By adding the scriptural evidence, Ambrose thus tacitly expanded the ethical implications of the term *officium* by its functional aspects.⁴²¹ This focus on the more practical sides of the priestly ministry can be felt throughout the *De officiis* and it is also the main concern of the aforesaid letter. Here, the bishop alluded to disturbing developments among the clerical ranks at Milan that called for an intervention on the bishop's part. He referred to the failure to fulfil one's duty, which was only acceptable if it concerned non-clerics. All those however who directed themselves to the pursuance of 'divine matters' (*qui rei divinae intendunt*) were required to perform their clerical function as demanded.⁴²² Apparently, there were some among the clerics who saw no gain in their current pursuit and sought other means of making a living. According to Ambrose, such thinking proved that the sense of duty of these people was void of the appropriate moral disposition (*boni mores ab officio retrahuntur*), for the settlement of one's personal expenses should not be of primary concern for a cleric but the enlisting of divine support for the hereafter.⁴²³

As for the second point in question, we have already seen in what way Ambrose modelled his version of the *De officiis* on the work of Cicero. In case of the *Epistulae*, it has been noted that the overall design of the compilation bears strong resemblance to another classical template: the correspondence of Pliny the Younger. The manuscript tradition of the Ambrosian letters clearly shows that the letter collection was divided into ten books,

⁴²¹ DAVIDSON 2001, 470.

⁴²² Ambr. *Ep.* 17[81].1.

⁴²³ Ambr. *Ep.* 17[81].2.

of which the entire book three and parts of book two and four have been lost. There are good reasons to believe that this structural feature goes back to Ambrose himself. For one thing, the bishop of Milan openly referred to the publication project in a letter to his episcopal colleague Sabinus, calling it the *libri nostrarum epistularum*.⁴²⁴ For another thing, the correspondence shows clear signs of editing, which points to the careful handling of the material through an authorial hand. The letter, which Ambrose wrote to emperor Theodosius as a reaction to the Callinicum affair in 388, then, is preserved in two slightly different versions. The original text was passed down to us *extra collectionem* as an attachment to a letter, which the bishop had sent to his sister Marcellina. At the same time, we have an altered version, which presents a more determined picture of Ambrose's intervention during the episode. This seems to suggest that the former letter had never been cleared for publication while the latter was eventually made part of the collection.⁴²⁵ Building on these observations, Michaela Zelzer has famously argued that Ambrose took Pliny's correspondence as the model for his own compilation, dividing the volumes into nine books of 'private' letters, which were followed by a tenth that illustrated his public relations, notably with the emperors Valentinian II. and Theodosius.⁴²⁶ This view has however been challenged. Hervé Savon observed that in many instances Zelzer's suggested order does not match the Plinian model. Firstly, the inclusion of two letters to emperors in book five and six contradicts the assumption that the first nine volumes were dedicated to 'private' letters only. Secondly, the artistic feature of *varietas* that was claimed for the first nine books can only sporadically be detected in the Ambrosian collection. Both the repetition of the correspondents' names in consecutive letters and the existence

⁴²⁴ Ambr. *Ep.* 32[48].7.

⁴²⁵ Ambr. *Ep. extra coll.* 1a was attached to *Ep. extra coll.* 1[41]. For his letter collection, the bishop modified the text into that of *Ep.* 74[40].

⁴²⁶ Zelzer developed her hypothesis while preparing a new edition of Ambrose's letters for the CSEL (a project that was started by the late Otto Faller) and published her insights in a series of articles. See her most recent contribution on the topic in ZELZER 2002, 393-405.

of thematically interlinked letter dossiers points to other ordering principles. Finally, the seeming disorder in book ten can hardly be compared to the well-structured exchange of Pliny with Trajan.⁴²⁷ Despite these reservations, we should not too readily dismiss the Plinian formula of nine plus one as a suitable model for Ambrose. After all, there was no need for the bishop to meticulously follow the structural features of his classical model in order to depict himself in the fashion of a *Plinius Christianus*.⁴²⁸ As in the case of the *De officiis*, we would expect his borrowings to be rather selective, juxtaposing classical motives with Christian elements. The result was a unique blend of the two traditions that was more than just a mere reproduction of a Roman classic.⁴²⁹

Though there are still many uncertainties and unanswered questions regarding Ambrose's correspondence, we are safe to assume that an authorial hand purposely put together the original collection according to a specific plan. There is moreover a high probability that it was the bishop of Milan himself who arranged the letters the way in which they had been passed down to us through the centuries. The details of the overall design, however, remain still unexplained and are the matter of an on-going scholarly debate. In the following, I will offer a fresh reading of the collection, which accentuates the parallels between the *Epistulae* and the *De officiis*. The latter work, as we have seen, postulated the notion of *fides* as determining factor deciding on *amicitia* and *fraternitas*. The same structural element also marked the organization of the letters. In fact, we can read the final paragraphs of the *De officiis* as a commentary to the *Epistulae*, and the letters themselves as a demonstration of Ambrose's success in building an *amicitia*-based community of brothers. Overall, seventy-seven letters have been preserved as part of the collection, though there is a considerable lacuna in-between. Apart from letters of

⁴²⁷ SAVON 1995, 3-17.

⁴²⁸ ZELZER 1989, 203-208 suggested the name.

⁴²⁹ See ZELZER 2002, 396 n. 13 and NAUROY 2012, 60.

friendship and brief notes of affection, we also find letters that rather take the form of exegetical essays. The collection moreover contains instructions for newly appointed bishops, letters of legal advice and admonition, consolatory letters, and various documents that touch on political matters. Throughout the correspondence, we can discern groups of letters that appear to belong together. Thematic overlaps and cross-references between the enclosed items invite us to read sequences of letters as self-contained dossiers rather than each individual letter independently.⁴³⁰ At the same time, there is an apparent divide between the design of the books one to nine and that of book ten. The former comprise letters to various correspondents such as Ambrose's clerical colleagues, high officials, and emperors, whereas some of the items in the concluding volume were no letters in the strict sense of the word. Rather, the book contains other types of documents like the famous third relation of Q. Aurelius Symmachus concerning the Altar of Victory controversy, Ambrose's polemic against Auxentius of Durostorum, and his funeral speech on emperor Theodosius.⁴³¹ They all defy being classified as epistolary literature but were eventually made part of the Ambrosian collection.

At the outset of the correspondence, the very first letter is setting the tone for the collection as a whole. It suggests a conversation between distant partners (*epistulares fabulae; sermo absentium*) that concerned 'the interpretation of the heavenly oracles' (*interpretaatio oraculi caelestis*).⁴³² In this particular case, the proposed discussion about 'divine matters' (*de divinis rebus sermo*) signified the epistolary exchange between the bishop of Milan and his episcopal colleague Iustus of Lyon. In a broader sense, however, the statement can

⁴³⁰ SAVON 1995, 9-12 and more recently SAVON 2012, 75-91 (for the dossiers see p. 75 n. 2). Also ZELZER 1990, 215f. noted thematic overlaps. A good overview is provided by NAUROY 2012, 46-59 who deals with each book separately.

⁴³¹ Ambr. *Ep.* 72a[17a] (=Symm. *Relat.* 3); *Ep.* 75a[21a] (=Ambr. *Serm. c. Aux.*); and the *De obitu Theodosii oratio*, which is not included in the CSEL-edition of the letters but, according to most manuscripts, was placed in between *Ep.* 76[20] and 77[22]. See ZELZER 2002, 396.

⁴³² Ambr. *Ep.* 1[7].1: *Pulchre admones, frater, ut epistulares fabulas et sermonem absentium ad interpretaationem conferamus oraculi caelestis, interrogans me, quid significet illud didrachmum, cuius dimidium Hebraeus praecipitur offerre pro redemptione animae suae. Quid enim tam consociabile quam de divinis rebus sermonem contexere?*

equally be read as a reference to the ensuing letters of the collection, most of which concern matters of faith and biblical exegesis. To clarify his intentions, Ambrose appended a longer exegetical exercise to the opening paragraph, which specified his understanding of that *sermo*. Seizing on Iustus' initial question as to the meaning of the half shekel in Ex 30:12-16, the bishop gave his personal interpretation of the passage, pointing out the link between the Exodus narrative and the parable of the lost coin at Luke 15:8-10. He preferred an allegorical reading of the biblical text that construed the piece of money as a symbol of faith (*fides*), grace (*gratia*), and mercy (*miseriordia*). In Ambrose's view, the story was thus not about wealth and money (*pecunia*), as a literal understanding would suggest, but concerned the virtues (*virtus*) by which a righteous man was supposed to live his life.⁴³³ Such a conversation about the *res divinis* was not open to all but reserved to 'brothers', that is, men like Ambrose and Iustus who were not only sufficiently trained in the interpretation of Scripture but also shared a core of doctrines that separated them from other schools of thought. Accordingly, the bishop of Milan referred to his addressee as his *frater*. At the same time, however, his idea of the *sermo absentium* ties in with the usual lamentation about a friend's physical absence among ancient letter writers.⁴³⁴ As we shall see in the following, this alternation between implicit and explicit friendship language in connection with divine kinship and the truth of faith is distinctive of Ambrose's thinking and can be observed throughout the collection.

One of Ambrose's other associates was bishop Felix of Como who, along with the Milanese bishop and other clerics, acted in support of a Roman synod under Siricius that found the monk Jovinian a heretic.⁴³⁵ The correspondence includes two letters to Felix,

⁴³³ Ambr. *Ep.* 1[7].2-4.

⁴³⁴ For the commonplace see THRAEDE 1970, 162-179.

⁴³⁵ See Ambr. *Ep. extra coll.* 15[42], which has the name of Felix listed among the numbers of participants. This letter is the response to Siricius' *Epistula diversis episcopis*, which has also been preserved *extra collectionem* (=Maur. 41a).

one of which was made part of the opening book while the other was placed among the items of book seven. The first reports a meeting between Ambrose and Bassianus of Lodi, a fellow bishop who had hoped to secure the attendance of his episcopal colleagues to celebrate the consecration of a newly built church, which he had dedicated to the memory of the apostles.⁴³⁶ At the same time, the letter also mentions Felix's announcement regarding the upcoming anniversary of his ascension to the episcopal office, which was a matter that did not only concern him personally but also involved Ambrose as the authority that had conducted the ordination in the first place.⁴³⁷ Apparently, both events were close at hand. But since the suggested dates did not interfere with one another, Ambrose saw no reason why Felix could not attend the ceremony in Lodi and therefore made a promise on his behalf without consulting him in advance. In so doing, the bishop of Milan showed himself at the very heart of a local network of clerics that reached out to other church leaders in Northern Italy.⁴³⁸ These relationships were measured in terms of divine kinship, making Bassianus 'our brother' (*frater noster*) while Felix's consecration was referred to as *dies natalis tui*.⁴³⁹ Implicitly, the construal of the ordination ceremony as the recipient's day of birth instituted Ambrose as the spiritual father of his protégé, and thus established a relationship of dependency between the two.

By contrast, the bishop's second letter to Felix is written in a markedly different tone. In this case, Ambrose conveyed his best thanks to his colleague, who had sent him a quantity of exceptionally large truffles, admitting that he had shared some of them with his friends (*partem direxi amicis*) while keeping the rest to himself.⁴⁴⁰ The remainder of the letter then is covered with commonplaces that were typical of the ancient friendship

⁴³⁶ Ambr. *Ep.* 5[4].1.

⁴³⁷ Ambr. *Ep.* 5[4].1: ... *simul quia celebrem utrique nostrum adnuntiasti diem adfore, quo suscepisti summi gubernacula sacerdotii* ...; 6: ... *ordinatio non repraehendetur, quam accepisti per inpositionem manum mearum*

⁴³⁸ Ambr. *Ep.* 5[4].2: *Promisi ergo de te* See MCLYNN 1994, 281f.

⁴³⁹ Ambr. *Ep.* 5[4].1-2.

⁴⁴⁰ Ambr. *Ep.* 43[3].1.

discourse: Ambrose's complaint (*querela mea*) for not having received a visit in a long time (*nos tamdiu amantes tui nequequam revisas*) and the expressions of yearning toward the correspondent (*desiderium tui*) eventually culminate in the final assertion that Felix's absence cannot adequately be compensated by sending presents.⁴⁴¹ It has long been recognized that the style, in which the letter was drafted, meticulously obeyed to the rules and conventions of aristocratic letter writing.⁴⁴² Particularly striking are the similarities in comparison to an example by Ausonius, who exchanged friendship letters with his pupil Paulinus on a regular basis. In this case, the latter had sent oil and some fish sauce to his master in order to enlist the help of the talented poet for one of his own literary projects. Not unlike Ambrose, Ausonius thus returned thanks to the sender for the culinary delights, promising that he would give Paulinus' poem a thorough makeover.⁴⁴³

The letters to Simplicianus, who, at a very old age, became Ambrose's successor to the episcopal throne, are another example to demonstrate the interdependence between theological compatibility, divine kinship, and friendship. In this case, however, the issue at hand concerned neither the dedication of a church nor the annual celebration of a bishop's ordination but the interpretation of Scripture. Already among his contemporaries, Simplicianus was regarded as an erudite man with a broad knowledge of the biblical writings.⁴⁴⁴ As a veteran priest, he had served the church well before Ambrose took office in Milan. We know that he operated in Rome in the 350s, where he was instrumental in converting the famous rhetor and philosopher Marius Victorinus to Christianity. It is quite possible that Simplicianus' presence in the capital at that time is indicative of his outsider position in the Christian community at Milan where Auxentius'

⁴⁴¹ Ambr. *Ep.* 43[3].2-3. For the commonplaces see THRAEDE 1970, 165-173.

⁴⁴² MCLYNN 1994, 281.

⁴⁴³ Aus. *Ep.* 19[25].

⁴⁴⁴ Aug. *Conf.* 8.1.1.

regime was still continuing until the early 370s.⁴⁴⁵ But he was back in the city when Ambrose assumed the episcopal office and played a pivotal role in the novice's ascension to power. In total, four letters to Simplicianus have been preserved as part of the Ambrosian collection. One letter is prominently placed at the beginning of book two and proposes a revision of the ideal of the stoic sage as someone who remains happy and free regardless of the circumstances. The opening line of the second letter then makes explicit reference to the subject of the first and continues the discussion by looking at further evidence.⁴⁴⁶ On the basis of the Pauline letters – most notably 1 Cor 7:23 – the bishop accepted the argument of the philosophers that true liberty lies ‘in the knowledge of wisdom’ (*in cognitione esse sapientiae*) and that *insapientia* makes a person a slave. However, he disagreed with them on how one was to obtain this knowledge, for not the pursuit of philosophy paved the way to liberty but the wisdom of the Christian faith.⁴⁴⁷

The discussion about the conversion from philosophy to Christian *sapientia* was no theoretical exercise but found a concrete example in Simplicianus. For he was one of these men with whom Ambrose cared to engage in a fruitful exchange about the biblical testimony. In the correspondence, the bishop made explicit reference to the *veteris adfectum amicitiae*, the ‘feelings of long friendship’ for one another, and acknowledged that the *familiaris sermo* that they shared was marked by the ‘intimacy of a long-standing affection’ (*cum veteris amoris usu*). At the same time, however, Ambrose equally construed his relationship to Simplicianus as one between father and son. Accordingly, he referred to the *paternae gratiae amor* and the *patrius amor* of Simplicianus suggesting that his friend's ‘paternal love’ exceeded the feelings of ordinary *amicitia*.⁴⁴⁸ This co-occurrence of

⁴⁴⁵ MCLYNN 1994, 36. The story of Marius Victorinus' conversion is told at Aug. *Conf.* 8.2.3-5.

⁴⁴⁶ Ambr. *Ep.* 10[38].1.

⁴⁴⁷ Ambr. *Ep.* 7[37].4-45, citing a number of ‘Christian’ examples, biblical and non-biblical, that either antedate or outweigh the testimony of wise men such as the famous gymnosophist Kalanos.

⁴⁴⁸ Ambr. *Ep.* 7[37].1-2.

paternal imagery with friendship may in fact point to Simplicianus' involvement in Ambrose's baptism ceremony in 374. As a still unbaptized individual, the future bishop was to receive baptism as well as to pass through all clerical ranks up to the priesthood before he could eventually attain the highest ecclesial office. Apparently, the marathon programme was achieved in a matter of days and Simplicianus seems to have taken a vital part in it.⁴⁴⁹ This is confirmed by Augustine whose reference to Simplicianus as *pater in accipienda gratia* closely ties in with Ambrose's own diction. The deacon Paulinus, on the other hand, who authored the posthumous *Vita Ambrosii*, mentions that Ambrose insisted in being baptized by a 'catholic' bishop.⁴⁵⁰ This assertion then appears to exclude Simplicianus as the chosen man because he merely held the rank of a presbyter. However, there are good reasons to believe that Augustine's testimony better reflects the actual happenings. For Paulinus' claim is shown to be following a specific agenda, as an illustration of Ambrose's determination to take sides with the neo-Nicene position.⁴⁵¹ Thus, the idea of Simplicianus' paternity that we can glimpse from both Ambrose and Augustine appears indeed to be linked to the administration of baptism. In the letters, such language was coupled with explicit references to their long-standing friendship, adding a familial and respectful tone to the intercourse between the *amici*.

Sabinus was another émigré from Milan who left the city while the local Christian community was under Auxentius' rule. Starting off as an unpretentious member of the Milanese clergy, holding the rank of a deacon, he eventually made a career as bishop of the neighbouring Piacenza. It is likely that his ascent to the highest ecclesial office was owed to Ambrose, though we have no evidence that would confirm such an involvement

⁴⁴⁹ On the circumstances of Ambrose's election see MCLYNN 1994, 1-52 (cf. p. 54 for Simplicianus' possible involvement).

⁴⁵⁰ Aug. *Conf.* 8.2.3; Paulin. *Vita Ambr.* 9.2.

⁴⁵¹ See WILLIAMS 1995, 117-119 who understates how controversial his baptism and subsequent ordination was.

on the bishop's part. We know, however, that Sabinus took part in a Roman synod in 371, which condemned the creed of Rimini along with its supporters. The decision mainly targeted against Auxentius of Milan whose supremacy over one of the most important cities in the Roman west was to the displeasure of many pro-Nicene followers. They chose Sabinus as the official legate of the assembly who was to convey the synodal results to their episcopal colleagues in the eastern provinces.⁴⁵² In the course of this journey, he travelled to Egypt and Cappadocia where he made the acquaintance of the renowned theologians Athanasius of Alexandria and Basil of Caesarea.⁴⁵³ When Ambrose assumed the episcopal office after Auxentius' death in 374, Sabinus was free to return to Milan and resume his duty as a member of the local clergy. Not long thereafter, he became bishop of the nearby city of Piacenza and, as such, he attended the council of Aquileia in 381 to condemn the doctrinal views of the Homoian bishop Palladius. As the proceedings indicate, he was no mere bystander but took an active role in the exposure of the 'blasphemies' of the Illyrian opponent.⁴⁵⁴ It was thus on this occasion that he revealed himself as one of the closest allies of Ambrose.

The close link between the bishop of Milan and his colleague in Piacenza can equally be seen from Ambrose's correspondence, which includes no fewer than six letters to Sabinus that are all distributed over book six and seven.⁴⁵⁵ As becomes apparent from this evidence, the promotion of the *recta fides* was a major concern of their exchange. In one instance, Ambrose even made explicit reference to the terms of their friendship:

⁴⁵² Two versions of the synodal letter have been preserved: Soz. *H. E.* 6.23.7-15 and Theod. *H. E.* 2.21.2-12 have a Greek translation that is addressed to the Illyrian bishops. Besides, a Latin letter (Dam. *Ep.* 1=*Confidimus quidem*) is directed towards the eastern bishops and subscribed with the acknowledgment of Sabinus' mission.

⁴⁵³ The letters (Bas. *Ep.* 90-92) that Basil had sent in reply to the synodal decree make repeated reference to the deacon Sabinus and his mission (90.1;91;92.1). They moreover attest to his journey via Alexandria (90.1).

⁴⁵⁴ *Act. conc. Aquil.* 10; 37-39; 42-43; 45; 48-49; 51; 58. His name also appears among the signatures that conclude the document.

⁴⁵⁵ The *liber sextus* comprises Ambr. *Ep.* 27[58]; 32[48]; 33[49]; 34[45] to Sabinus while the *liber septimus* has *Ep.* 37[47] and 39[46].

... let us entertain each other by letters (*interludamus epistulis*); the advantage whereof is that although severed from each other by distance of space we may be united in affection; for by this means the absent have the image of each other's presence reflected back upon them, and conversation by writing unites the severed. By this means also we interchange thoughts with our friend, and transpose our mind into his (*in quibus etiam amico miscemus animum et mentem*). Now if ... there is any savour of ancient writings in our letters, not only do our minds seem to be united by this progress in true doctrine (*non solum animi conglutinari videntur per verae doctrinae profectum*), but also the form and fashion of a more intimate converse seems to be set forth, in that the discussion which is thus entered upon by mutual inquiry and reply appears to place in presence of each other those friends (*amicos locare*) who in this manner challenge and engage one another.⁴⁵⁶

The passage expresses multiple attitudes towards the sending and receiving of letters. For one thing, Ambrose understood the letter as yielding mental presence despite a friend's physical absence. In so doing, the bishop established an inherent connection between the *usus epistularum* on the one hand and the practice of *amicitia* on the other.⁴⁵⁷ At the same time, such exchange of letters along with the mutual pledge of affection and friendship was firmly tied to the *verae doctrinae profectum*, the advance in sound faith. In this context, faith appears as the unifying element aligning the search for the true Christian doctrine with classical views about friendship, such as the aforesaid presence and absence theme or the idea that friends share a single soul.⁴⁵⁸ For Ambrose, the main model for this kind of exchange is provided by the apostles themselves who, by way of writing letters, were not only able to create presence out of absence (*praesentes se esse, cum absentes scriberent*) but also 'instilled faith into the minds of the people' (*fidem infuderunt populorum mentibus*). In this

⁴⁵⁶ Ambr. *Ep.* 37[47].4-5: ... *interludamus epistulis, quarum eiusmodi usus est, ut disiuncti locorum intervallis affect adhaereamus, in quibus inter absentes imago refulgent praesentiae et collocutio scripta separatos copulat, in quibus etiam amico miscemus animum et mentem ei nostram infundimus. Iam si ... aliquid et de veteribus scriptis redoleat in epistulis, non solum animi conglutinari videntur per verae doctrinae profectum, sed etiam plenoris colloqui species et forma exprimi, ut inter quaerendi et respondendi mutuas vices assumpta concertatio in unum conducere et coram videatur amicos locare, qui tali se lacessunt et complectuntur munere.*

⁴⁵⁷ For the expression see Ambr. *Ep.* 33[49].1: ... *nostrarum usus epistularum ...*

⁴⁵⁸ For the aphorism that friends are of one soul see Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 9.8.2 (1168b) who cites the corresponding proverb.

regard, the bishop lay special emphasis on the example of Paul whose letters produced an *imago presentiae suae* and bore testimony to his work as successful promoter of the Christian message.⁴⁵⁹ Along these lines, the apostolic letter was taken as a suitable template for the bishop's vision of an *amicitia*-based exchange between Christian *fratres*.⁴⁶⁰

The remainder of Ambrose's correspondence with Sabinus is illustrative of this view. A rather obvious but nevertheless important point concerns the use of the letter as a device that allowed clerics to keep one another up to date about recent developments regarding the propagation and vindication of the Christian message. A fitting example is a letter in which Ambrose reached out to Piacenza to inform his colleague about the conversion of the Aquitanian nobleman P. Meropius Paulinus who, together with his wife Therasia, decided to renounce all worldly ambitions in order to embrace the simple life of Christian asceticism. The chosen abode for their withdrawal was the city of Nola, near Naples in Campania, where Paulinus was later to attain episcopal dignity.⁴⁶¹ In another instance, Ambrose reported the public demolition of a man who had openly criticised the bishop for his interpretation of Scripture.⁴⁶² He referred to his adversary as the 'originator of slanderous speech' (*maledici seminator sermonis*) and associated him with 'the venom of Apollinaris' (*virus Apollinaris*) who held that Christ had no human soul but that his nature was wholly divine.⁴⁶³ The main point of contention seems to have been Christ's state of being a slave (*servitus*), which was propagated by Ambrose and rejected by his opponent. Dogmatically speaking, the emphasis on servanthood would render Christ more human while its denial accentuates his divine qualities. For Ambrose, this was a serious matter that concerned the very 'bulwark' or 'hedge of our faith' (*hoc munimentum, haec sepes est fidei*

⁴⁵⁹ Ambr. *Ep.* 37[47].6-7 citing 1 Cor 5:3 and 2 Cor 10:10-11.

⁴⁶⁰ Sabinus was to Ambrose not only a friend but a brother in the faith as can be seen from *Ep.* 32[48].7: *Vale frater et dilige amantem tui, quia plurimum te diligo.*

⁴⁶¹ Ambr. *Ep.* 27[58].1-2.

⁴⁶² Ambr. *Ep.* 39[46].3: *Hic igitur, ut arroderet aliquid de meis scriptis, eam sibi amplam repperit*

⁴⁶³ For Apollinaris of Laodicea and his theology see BERGJAN 2015.

nostrae), not least because the promise of salvation hinged on that question.⁴⁶⁴ It appears that the suspected Apollinarist was not at all an unknown person, for Sabinus had already warned his Milanese colleague in advance about the arrival of the troublemaker. This is at least the implication of the second-person singular of *scribere* at the very outset of the letter, which suggests an on-going epistolary exchange between the two sees. Ambrose then got back to his colleague in order to give a detailed report about the encounter, not without triumphantly parading his argumentative ingenuity.⁴⁶⁵ Particularly important, however, is the bishop's reference to the *fides nostra*, which sets Ambrose and Sabinus apart from Apollinarist views. They were united in a common creed that differed from the beliefs of the opposition and must therefore be defended against the attacks of blasphemers.

A final point concerns the mutual discussion of scriptural themes and the exchange of exegetical works and theological treatises between Milan and Piacenza. Ambrose not only discussed his personal interpretation of biblical passages and books with his colleague from the neighbouring see but also passed on to him his own works to have them thoroughly checked prior to publication. In one letter, the bishop used his own rhetorical figure about physical absence and epistolary presence as a pretext to ponder over the biblical evidence for solitude, concluding that God's presence becomes perceptible in moments of seclusion. In another instance, we see Ambrose responding to an enquiry concerning the paradise narrative in *Genesis*.⁴⁶⁶ Elsewhere, the bishop hinted at the regular exchange of written drafts between the bishops. Ambrose had just received

⁴⁶⁴ Ambr. *Ep.* 39[46].1.

⁴⁶⁵ See for instance Ambrose's remark at *Ep.* 39[46].7: *Concluditur Apollinarista nec quo se vertat habet, suis clauditur retibus*. It is indeed possible that the criticism that had been raised by Ambrose's opponent targeted at either *De fide* 5.8 or *De spiritu sancto* 3.15. Both of these works cite and comment on Matt 11:25, the very passage that had led to the Apollinarist attacks in the first place (as the bishop was forced to acknowledge at *Ep.* 39[46].3).

⁴⁶⁶ Ambr. *Ep.* 33[49] and 34[45].

a number of his writings that were returned to him and thus sent forth ‘others’ (*alios*), which still needed the approval of Sabinus before they could be put into circulation.⁴⁶⁷ Despite the lack of explicit references to the works in question, Ambrose was very specific about his friend’s assignment. Sabinus was supposed to review the writings with a view to ‘sound faith’ (*fidei sinceritas*) and ‘sober confession’ (*confessionis sobrietas*). More specifically, this meant that he had to mark down words of ‘doubtful weight’ (*dubii ponderis*), which were ‘deceitful in the scales’ (*fallacis staterae*); so that no *adversarius* could use them to his own advantage.⁴⁶⁸ The ‘adversary’, in this case, were the followers of other Christian schools of thought such as the Sabellians, Arians, Photians, or Apollinarists. They threatened the neo-Nicene movement with their own concept of the triune God.⁴⁶⁹ It is for this reason that Ambrose took every precaution before publishing his own works, even supplying his associate with detailed instructions on how the job was to be done. For if a word of doubtful meaning was detected one should assess it in light of that *fidei sententia*, which distinguished the neo-Nicene position from other doctrines. Ambrose’s letter to Sabinus thus included a brief summary of the bishop’s faith to prevent any misrepresentation of theological claims on the part of others.⁴⁷⁰

Ambrose’s *Epistulae* envision a clerical community that was committed to the vindication and propagation of the religious truth. The language that the bishop employed then strongly reverberates with his friendship conception in the *De officiis*, which posited *amicitia* as a common bond among the clerical brothers (*cum fratribus*). At the very heart of this conception, we find the *vir fidelis* whose congruity in matters of faith made him a valuable friend. In this respect, loyal clerics like Sabinus or Simplicianus,

⁴⁶⁷ Ambr. *Ep.* 32[48].1.

⁴⁶⁸ Ambr. *Ep.* 32[48].3: *Adsume igitur benivolenti animo aurem versutiae et pertracta omnia, sermones vellica, si in his non forenses blanditiae et ‘suasoria verba’, sed fidei sinceritas est et confessionis sobrietas. Notam adpone ad verbum dubii ponderis et fallacis staterae, ne quod pro se esse adversarius interpretetur.*

⁴⁶⁹ These are the movements that are mentioned by Ambrose at *Ep.* 32[48].4 and 5.

⁴⁷⁰ Ambr. *Ep.* 32[48].4-6.

who had both served under Ambrose for some time, set the example for others to follow. Accordingly, the letters exhibit the same conflation of implicit and explicit friendship language with the notion of divine kinship as the *De officiis*. On a larger scale, such diction is indicative of a widely ramified network of valuable contacts and associates that all acted in accordance with the principles of the faith. At the centre of this circle of like-minded clerics, we find the bishop of Milan who, by way of forming *amicitiae*, reached out to other cities and regions, presenting himself as an influential spokesman of a particular doctrine. This picture is of course fundamentally shaped by the overall design of the correspondence, which was purposely put together by Ambrose himself. In the following, we will therefore have a closer look at the bishop's ecclesiastical activities to see whether the self-image of the letters is also reflected in contemporary church politics.

4.3 Friendship in action

As far as we know, Ambrose was for the first time able to set his network of like-minded clerics in motion when, in September 381, a synod was held in the North Italian capital of Aquileia. The council was announced the year before by emperor Gratian, under whose guidance the leaders of the church – from both the western and the eastern provinces – were supposed to meet in order to settle their theological differences. Aquileia seemed like an obvious choice. At that time, the city was a centre of some political weight and strategic importance that could provide the necessary infrastructure for such an event.⁴⁷¹ Moreover, Aquileia's location at the Adriatic coast, connecting the Po valley with the Danubian plain ensured not only accessibility by sea but also feasible travel

⁴⁷¹ The emperors did not choose Aquileia as their permanent seat but the city accommodated a *palatium* that was sporadically used as imperial residence. See HUMPHRIES 1999, 40 with n. 94; TAVANO 2001, esp. 535-537.

distances for both westerners and easterners. Aside from these practical advantages, also political considerations had to be taken into account. When Gratian ordered the general assembly, he may have seen himself in the tradition of his grandfather-in-law Constantine, whose council of Nicea – the first empire-wide church gathering to be held under the aegis of a Roman emperor – set the example for his successors to follow. Likewise, Gratian may have sought to determine the fate of the church through his personal intervention.⁴⁷² But times had changed since the days of Constantine's reign. In 378, an entire Roman army under emperor Valens was defeated by Gothic troops at Adrianople, creating a political void in the region that had to be filled. Theodosius, a former high-ranking military figure, was called out of his self-imposed retirement to calm the situation and regain power over the lost territories.⁴⁷³ He acted as Gratian's co-emperor in the east and, as such, he forestalled his colleague's initial plan of a general council, when he invited the representatives of the eastern churches to a conference at Constantinople that was scheduled for May 381. The announcement of two competing councils that were separated only by a short space of time was no coincidence but demonstrated Theodosius' ambitions as a new political player. For Gratian, however, such course of events must have felt like a major embarrassment.⁴⁷⁴

Although our knowledge about the emperors' intentions is rather limited, we may assume that the announcement of two separate church gatherings must have had grave religio-political consequences. Luckily, we are better informed about the synodal proceedings at Aquileia itself. On the one hand, we are given the official records of the proceedings in the form of a verbatim transcript along with the correspondence that testifies to the efforts of the Ambrosian party to enforce their synodal decision with the

⁴⁷² For Constantine's role at the council of Nicea see for instance GIRARDET 2007, 171-203.

⁴⁷³ See WILLIAMS/FRIELL 1995, 13-35.

⁴⁷⁴ I follow the reading of MCLYNN 1994, 106-124 who takes the famous edict *Cunctos populos* (*CTh* 16.1.2) of 27 February 380 as a first sign of Theodosius' religio-political ambitions.

backing of the imperial authorities.⁴⁷⁵ On the other hand, the fragments of an apology by Palladius has been preserved that, along with his refutation of Ambrose's *De fide*, counters the view of the Milanese bishop. Except for the synodal letters, all these texts are part of a fifth century manuscript that belongs to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (BN Lat. 8907). It consists of a collection of fourth century treatises, which give a vivid account of the trinitarian controversy that marked the era. Apart from some of the writings of Hilary of Poitiers, including his major dogmatic work *De Trinitate*, the manuscript contains the first two volumes of Ambrose's *De fide* as well as the acts of the council of Aquileia. Alongside these central pieces, we find a compilation of late fourth, early fifth century texts in the margins of the *Parisinus Latinus*, which can be read as a direct response or critical commentary to the works in the main body. It was due to the work of Roger Gryson, who provided the first modern edition of these texts, that the earlier material could be separated from the later pieces. He convincingly argued that the fifth century scholia must be attributed to the Homoian bishop Maximinus who, in 427/28, challenged Augustine to a public debate on the faith. The earlier pieces, on the other hand, include a letter of Auxentius of Durostorum on the life of the gothic bishop Ulfila and the previously mentioned works of Palladius of Ratiaria, to which Maximinus' later comments make reference.⁴⁷⁶ Together with the acts of the council, the Palladian fragments give a fairly detailed idea about the tactics that had been employed during the proceedings to assert one's claim to religious truth. As we shall see, the notions of friendship and enmity played an important part in this context.

⁴⁷⁵ That is the *Gesta concilii Aquileiensis, Acta* (henceforth *Act. conc. Aquil.*) and Ambr. *Ep. extra coll.* 4-6[10-12]; 8-9[13-14].

⁴⁷⁶ For the circumstances of the transmission see GRYSO 1980, 25-100; cf. also the palaeographical study GRYSO/GILISSEN 1980. Gryson's work should be read together with the critical remarks by MCLYNN 1991, 52-76.

The conflict between Ambrose and his opponents had brewed for quite some time. In the winter of 379/80, the bishop of Milan was swamped with work. Gratian had asked from him a profession of faith, which he was to deliver on the emperor's return to the North Italian capital in March. Eventually, the bishop came up with a massive two-volume work *De fide*, which, in its size and scope, went far beyond the brief statements that were usually circulated on such occasion.⁴⁷⁷ The reason for Gratian's initiative was doubts about Ambrose's orthodoxy that were raised by third parties. In his work, the bishop made explicit reference to those to whom he was due to answer. For the main part, this was not the emperor but the Homoian bishops Demophilus of Constantinople, Auxentius of Durostorum, and above all Palladius of Ratiaria. Ambrose openly referred to their *perfidia*, employing nautical imagery to blame them as the authors of the 'wreckage of faith' (*naufragia fidei*) that had turned so many faithful believers into castaways. Calling them by the name of heretics (*communi nomine hereticos ... nominabo*), he compared their activities to that of sea monsters such as the mythical hydra or Scylla.⁴⁷⁸ This frontal assault on the doctrinal stance of distinguished church dignitaries did not go unchallenged. Palladius reviewed the two books *De fide* and issued a refutation, of which only fragments have been preserved. One of the points of criticism concerned Ambrose's careless use of non-Christian literature, notably his reference to ancient fables, which showed consideration for neither Scripture nor the 'apostolic faith' (*apostolica fides*). For Palladius, Ambrose's indulgence in fancy poetry betrayed his own *naufragia fidei* rather than theirs.⁴⁷⁹ It appears that the pamphlet raised some valid points of criticism, for Ambrose was forced to clarify his positions at the emperor's behest. The bishop's response

⁴⁷⁷ See for instance Ulfila's profession of faith as recorded by Auxentius's letter *De vita et obitu Ulfilae*, which became part of the same scholia that also included the Palladian fragments.

⁴⁷⁸ Ambr. *Fid.* 1.45-46. The bishop also mentioned Arius, Aetius, and Eunomius of Cyzicus by name. These are however unlikely candidates for a petition – even more so as Arius and Aetius had already long been dead. The inclusion of their names was rather owed to their reputation as arch-heretics.

⁴⁷⁹ Pall. *Ref.* 84-87.

included another three volumes *De fide*, to which he added an instalment on the Holy Spirit.⁴⁸⁰ In his work, he made clear that it was due to certain agitators and their ‘perverse mind’ (*mens prava*) that he had to take up his pen again. Specifically, he defended his comparison of heresy with the legendary sea monsters of the fables, contending that such criticism was born out of necessity only because the accuser was unable to prove his creed wrong (*cum in fide nihil, quod vituperare possit*).⁴⁸¹ By spring 381, positions had been taken while the final confrontation was reserved for the upcoming council. While Palladius was preparing the stage for the demolition of a disagreeable adversary, Ambrose had to mobilise all his capacities as bishop and former politician to avert defeat.

The writings concerning the council unanimously show that the means to enforce one’s doctrinal claims required not simply persuasion through argumentation but a strong ecclesiastical following. One’s connections to influential political players and other church leaders, that is, one’s ability to mobilise *amicitiae* was thus crucial to success. In spring 381, Palladius seemed ready to meet the challenge of Ambrose whose claim to orthodoxy he had undermined in the previous years. During the council, he would later recall an audience with Gratian that took place at Sirmium presumably in September 380. He claimed that, on this occasion, the emperor had confirmed in his presence the format of the council, consisting of both eastern and western representatives of the church.⁴⁸² This setting must have played into the hands of the bishop of Ratiara, whose bedrock of support lay in the eastern part of the empire. Palladius himself acknowledged that his ‘associates’ (*consortes*) were the ‘eastern bishops’ (*orientalis episcopi*). Moreover, the

⁴⁸⁰ Gratian’s *Epistula ad Ambrosianum Mediolanensem*. The traditional view has been that Gratian was seeking spiritual guidance and that Ambrose’s *De fide* and *De spiritu sancto* provided directions as requested. Crucial to this argumentation is the interpretation of the affective language in Gratian’s letter to Ambrose. Many scholars have taken this as an indication for Ambrose’s influence over the young emperor. MCLYNN 1994, 115-118, however, has demonstrated that such language merely followed the conventions of ancient letter writing and did therefore not implicate special closeness with the emperor. On Ambrose’s relationship with Gratian see moreover WILLIAMS 1995, 128-153; HUMPHRIES 1999, 119f.

⁴⁸¹ Ambr. *De fide* 3.2-3.

⁴⁸² *Act. conc. Aquil.* 8 and 10.

De fide mentions his name in a row with Auxentius of Durostorum and Demophilus of Constantinople, the Homoian bishop of the eastern capital.⁴⁸³ Thus, it was not simply the weak spots in Ambrose's creed but also the emperor's personal assurance that the easterners would be invited too, which made him feel safe about upcoming event. Unfortunately for him, Theodosius' announcement of a second conference in Constantinople rendered Gratian's initial plan of a general council redundant. In this situation, Ambrose stepped in and approached the emperor in order to suggest a modified setting for the Aquileian council. According to the imperial rescript that was read out at the outset of the formal proceedings, he had proposed a regional council that was much smaller in scale. It mainly consisted of North Italian bishops that were all loyal to Ambrose.⁴⁸⁴ The bishop's initiative solved two problems at once. With a view to the council at Constantinople, it saved Gratian from cancelling his own conference, which would have been an embarrassment for the emperor. At the same time, the rearrangements helped Ambrose to shift the balance of power to his own advantage. Not Palladius but the bishop of Milan and his associates would eventually dictate the council's terms.

Ambrose's own connections were exposed by Palladius. During the proceedings, the bishop duly noted the changed circumstances and, as a consequence, refused to acknowledge the authority of the council. Yet the real reason for the absence of his colleagues remained unknown to him until after his condemnation.⁴⁸⁵ Later, in his *Apologia*, he seemed to have gathered more information, accusing his adversary of misusing his relations to the emperor to secretly alter the original plans for the council. It was thus 'through human patronage' (*per humanum patrocinium*) that Ambrose had gained

⁴⁸³ Ambr. *De fide* 1.45; *Act. conc. Aquil.* 6.

⁴⁸⁴ *Act. conc. Aquil.* 4.

⁴⁸⁵ *Act. conc. Aquil.* 6.

an advantage and such course of action was ‘in violation with religion itself’ (*in iniuram ipsius religionis*). Palladius pointed to the involvement of Syagrius, the then acting praetorian prefect of Italy, who may have operated as an intermediary between bishop and the imperial court.⁴⁸⁶ Ambrose confirmed that it fell within his responsibility to inform the participants about the changes. Officially, it was left to the eastern bishops whether they decided to attend the council. Given the short space of time between the conferences at Constantinople and Aquileia, the Milanese bishop and his supporters could rest assured that they did not.⁴⁸⁷ This reading suggests that Palladius and his only companion Secundianus were deliberately kept in the dark about the new plans for Aquileia so that they turned up without proper support. To this end, the complex situation on the Danube may have played into the hands of Ambrose and his associates. Letters could easily get lost on their way to more distant regions of the empire, especially since prolonged Gothic raids rendered overland communications a delicate task.⁴⁸⁸

Palladius equally questioned Ambrose’s connections to the see of Rome. Damasus, along with many other western bishops, did not attend the council. Instead, he sent his excuses in the form of three letters, which were read out by Ambrose during the council. For Palladius, this procedure seemed suspicious. In the absence of a Roman representation, he recognized the arrogance of Damasus, who liked to think of himself as *princeps episcopatus*, as if his position earned him some kind of a privilege. In the public presentation of the letters, on the other hand, he saw a poor attempt to give this gathering of mostly North Italian clerics the appearance of a full-fledged council with the Milanese bishop as its duly appointed judge.⁴⁸⁹ In Palladius’ view, Ambrose and his gang were

⁴⁸⁶ Pall. *Apol.* 121. A similar expression is used to describe Ambrose’s consecration to the see of Milan. Palladius complained that his rival had gained his position thanks to the *amicali gratia suffragio* [..] *humano*, that is, friendly influence and human approbation (120).

⁴⁸⁷ *Act. conc. Aquil.* 7.

⁴⁸⁸ MCLYNN 1994, 125f.

⁴⁸⁹ Pall. *Apol.* 122-124.

nothing more than Damasus' subordinates, belonging to his 'friends and insignificant clients' (*familiares et clientuli*) who had no claim to authority.⁴⁹⁰ Despite all the scorn and derision running through the pages, the bishop of Ratiaria might have been right in pointing to the *familiaritas* connecting Milan to Rome. The reference stressed to the importance of clerical networks that built on friendship. More specifically, however, Palladius' comment aimed at Ambrose as the most likely beneficiary of Damasus' absence. He was given plenty of scope in his judgment and could proceed as he pleased without the restraint of a superior authority. It may therefore well be possible that secret arrangements had been made in the run-up to the council, which would have prepared the stage for Ambrose's revenge.⁴⁹¹

With hindsight, Palladius described the spirit in which the debate at Aquileia was conducted as 'unfriendly' (*non amica*), claiming that Ambrose was only on the lookout for 'strife' (*dissensio*).⁴⁹² The bishop's choice of words is remarkable as the Latin *non amica* expresses two sentiments at once. On the one hand, the adjective *amica* conveys the idea of a council that would have allowed for discussions to be conducted in a 'friendly' environment. Palladius thus anticipated an encounter that adhered to the most basic rules of *amicitia*. If he had granted the same courtesy to his adversaries, in case their roles were reversed, is of course a different question. In fact, we can only speculate about Palladius' expectations for the meeting. Judging from his comments during and after the proceedings, we are to imagine a religious debate that respected the principles of ecclesial hierarchy and brotherly collegiality. Even Ambrose himself acknowledged that Palladius

⁴⁹⁰ Palladius portrayed Ambrose in the role of a lower cleric because he was reading the letters personally (*Apol.* 122). Apparently, such work did not befit the rank of a bishop. The theme is taken up again, when Ambrose is counted among those who humbly approve of the Roman bishop's eccentricities (123).

⁴⁹¹ This would also explain why Ambrose took the lead during the proceedings, even though Valerius of Aquileia was listed as the council's official chairman. The heading and the list of signatures at the end of the *Acta* name him in the first place. He was also the first to pronounce sentence against Palladius (*Act. conc. Aquil.* 54) and Palladius has him seated on an elevated podium during the preliminary discussions (*Apol.* 89).

⁴⁹² Pall. *Apol.* 95: ... *cui et religiosa disputatio non amica et dissensio idcirco optabilis ...* .

and his companion Secundianus had come to Aquileia ‘as Christians to Christians’ (*Christiani ad Christianos venimus*). The statement suggests that they were still prepared to regard their opponents as colleagues and Christian *fratres*, despite the current disagreements. This point was later highlighted by the fifth century commentator Maximinus, who saw them acting in accordance with Scripture, when they embraced their opponents as *fratres nostri*.⁴⁹³ Moreover, Palladius and Secundianus could appeal to their senior status as holders of the highest ecclesial office. As advocates of the Rimini creed, whose terms were negotiated under emperor Constantius II in 359, they belonged to a different era, facing a Milanese upstart whose inexperience in ecclesial matters was no match for their episcopal dignity.⁴⁹⁴ On the other hand, the negation of the word *amica* through a single *non* points to the bishop’s actual experience, which could not be further from what he had expected. The loss of deference toward the opposition, then, appears indeed to have been a characteristic feature of the proceedings. Instead of experiencing brotherly collegiality, Palladius had to protest that Secundianus’ case was debated as if he were inferior (*inpar*) in rank and dignity. Apparently, he was forced to stand upright in front of the assembly like a criminal, while Ambrose and his associates brusquely told him to keep his mouth shut (*porro taceat*).⁴⁹⁵ Similarly, their claim to seniority seems to have found no affirmative response. Rather than receiving the treatment that his age deserved, Palladius suddenly faced the scathing remarks of lower clerics who dared to openly attack the church dignitary on grounds of his ‘detestable hoariness’ (*canities exsecranda*) and ‘abominable senility’ (*senectus abominabilis*).⁴⁹⁶ Both the denigrating expressions themselves and the fact that they came from mere ‘readers and ministers’ (*lectores et ministri*) who were

⁴⁹³ *Act. conc. Aquil.* 12; *Diss. Max.* 67 with reference to Is 66:5.

⁴⁹⁴ See Pall. *Apol.* 116-117 where the bishop ostentatiously displayed the long period of his service: eleven years as presbyter, thirty-five years as bishop. Similarly, in Secundianus’ case, Palladius highlighted that he had been a member of the clergy since his youth.

⁴⁹⁵ Pall. *Apol.* 117.

⁴⁹⁶ Pall. *Apol.* 116.

on Ambrose's payroll but far below Palladius' ecclesial rank could only be taken as an affront to basic human decency.

Along these lines, the *Apologia* depicts the council as a struggle between two factions that were violently opposed; both regarding the opposite side as their avowed enemy. Palladius made explicit reference to the competing *partes*, one of which denied the other the right to speak and thus treated them as *pars inimica*. Elsewhere, he hinted at his own following that included the aforementioned bishops Demophilus and Auxentius, and we may presume also his companion Secundianus. The passage moreover suggests the existence of an extended group of people that shared the same doctrines but is not mentioned by name (e.g. the reference to Palladius' *consortium*). They are presented as being in opposition to Ambrose and his associates (*tibi tuisque*), to whom Palladius referred as 'enemies of the faith' (*inimici fidei*).⁴⁹⁷ As we have seen above, the bishop of Ratiaria drew particular attention to the inner workings of the Milanese circle and its connections to other political and clerical players in the western half of the empire. By exposing the bonds of friendship and patronage (*familiaritas, clientela, patrociniū*) that brought Ambrose an advantage for the proceedings, Palladius claimed that his defeat had nothing to do with his doctrinal position but was due to the coterie of a deceitful enemy. At the same time, the bishop's repeated reference to enmity (*inimica* as opposed to *amica*) also pointed to Ambrose's handling of ecclesial opposition. Following the suggested model in the *De officiis*, his actions established sharp boundaries that sought to differentiate friends from enemies, orthodoxy from heresy. Any dissenters who were opposed to his doctrinal position then received the treatment that they deserved.

⁴⁹⁷ Pall. *Apol.* 88: ... *adque sciebas horum* (sc. Palladius, Demophilus, and Auxentius) *conflictum adunato suo consortio tibi tuisque ad disputationem fidei necessarios fore.* 99: ... *ut inimicis fidei* 118: *Et adhuc dicis concilium fuisse, sed et disputationem ex aequo inter partes habitam, ubi et infidelitas grassata et in iuraim] fidei a parte parti dominatione i[ni]mica interclus[us] sermo probatur.*

This is moreover implied by Palladius' narration of events, which suggests a highly volatile situation. Shortly after his arrival in Aquileia, he and his colleague were brought into the sacristy adjacent to the basilica, where the opposition had already been waiting for them. Ambrose was seated next to the enthroned Valerianus of Aquileia, who acted as the council's president. Palladius could spot no more than twelve or thirteen bishops in the room and figured that they tried to exaggerate their numbers by placing some lower clerics in their midst. But even if the strength of the Ambrosian party was not as daunting as they made it appear, those numbers were still sufficient to meet the resistance of two seemingly isolated bishops. Right from the start, it was thus painfully demonstrated to them that they were outnumbered. The choice of a small-scale building as the venue for their first encounter must have even added to this impression.⁴⁹⁸ The next clash, then, is recorded for the preparatory stage and concerned Ambrose's rather abruptly implemented transition from the preliminaries to the formal proceedings. According to Palladius, the bishop of Milan had placed some of his clerics behind their backs in order to snatch compromising utterances that could be used to their disadvantage. All of a sudden, he declared the meeting closed and ordered his subordinates to come forward so that they could attend to their duty as minute takers for the subsequent proceedings. Palladius and Secundianus were trying to leave the room in protest over Ambrose's actions. But at the very moment, when they made their attempt, they were physically forced to stay (*iniecta manu; inlideretis*). In the eyes of Palladius, such an act of violence was unheard-of and brought to light the downright hostile intentions of the Ambrosian party (*adversis inimicisque sensibus*).⁴⁹⁹ During the proceedings, then, Ambrose's approach

⁴⁹⁸ Pall. *Apol.* 89 and 96 with GRYSON 1980, 283 n.1 and MCLYNN 1994, 127. As far as we can tell, there was only one other participant sympathizing with the Homoian bishops: a presbyter named Attalus (*Act. conc. Aquil.* 44-45), who is later described as a pupil of Iulianus Valens (Ambr. *Ep. extra coll.* 4[10].9)

⁴⁹⁹ Pall. *Apol.* 97: ... *sine ullo respectu repente clericos uestros notarum peritos, quos tamen post terga eorum aucupes captatoresque simplicum verborum posueratis in medium progredi iussisti ... Sicuti hoc viso statim idem, ut tu nosti, surrexerunt, insidiosa[m] conspirationem vestram ut iam evidens ac publicu[m] latrocinium evasuri. Quos confest[im] vos iniecta man[u]*

involved the thorough interrogation of the Homoian bishops. In the main, he quoted from a letter, which the designated arch-heretic Arius had penned more than half a century earlier. He went through each theological claim with regard to Christ's godhead successively, challenging the opposition to either approve or refute the statements.⁵⁰⁰ Palladius remained silent or alternately rejected to answer to the loaded questions, mainly because he did not recognize the authority of the council. But even when he tried to engage in a discussion, Ambrose could always fall back on the support of his associates who were prepared to hurl a unanimously voiced anathema 'with great clamour' (*magna cum vociferatione*) at their opponent whenever needed.⁵⁰¹ After finishing his interrogation, which was designed to determine Palladius' guilt, Ambrose proceeded to accomplish the exclusion of his opponent. For this purpose, he asked for the verdict of each participant successively. Unsurprisingly, all of the twenty-four bishops, who according to the *Acta* had pronounced sentence, condemned their former colleague.⁵⁰²

With the acts of the council and Palladius' apology, we have two texts that cast a very different light on the events surrounding the debate at Aquileia. On the one hand, Ambrose's account tried to establish the erroneous beliefs of Palladius while showing that the proceedings were conducted in a rightful manner and that the final sentence of the two bishops was valid. The Palladian perspective, on the other hand, contested the legitimacy of the procedure, pointing not only to procedural irregularities but also to the

ita avide detine[n]dos duxistis, ut et iniurose iam a[d]versis inimicisq[ue] sensibus inluder[e]tis By contrast, see the reference at *Act. conc. Aquil.* 2, which shows the bishops in perfect agreement with Ambrose's plan to take minutes (*fiant acta*). Nothing is said about any dissenting voices.

⁵⁰⁰ This piece of evidence did not reflect the standpoint of Palladius as he pointed out at *Apol.* 90-91. Arius' letter was presumably read out during the preliminaries. Ambrose commenced reciting its contents at *Act. conc. Aquil.* 5

⁵⁰¹ *Pall. Apol.* 98, which is corroborated by multiple instances in the *Acta* (21; 26; 30; 32; 36; 39; 52; 53). Also others used this means of discouragement (13; 27; 50 for Eusebius of Bologna; 15 for Justus of Lyon). Palladius' challenge to Ambrose's authority, as well as that of the council in general, can be glimpsed from a number of instances but is maybe most directly formulated at *Act. conc. Aquil.* 11.

⁵⁰² *Act. conc. Aquil.* 54-64. The other participants either remained silent or the stenographers failed to record their statements. None of the them, it seems, spoke out in favour of Palladius.

coterie that, at various levels, worked to the advantage of Ambrose. In the immediate aftermath of the council, then, the publication of two competing versions of the event was intended to sway public opinion on the matter.⁵⁰³ At the same time, the very existence of a Homoian testimony casts doubt on the success of Ambrose's intervention. Even though he had secured himself a position of dominance during the proceedings, the later evidence suggests that he ran into troubles while trying to implement the synodal decision. Shortly after the conference, the college of mostly North Italian bishops began to publicly announce their verdict. In these letters, Ambrose presented himself as spokesman of a collective of brothers that was in complete agreement about their judgement. To the *fratres dilectissimi* of the provinces of Vienne and Narbonne, who were present at Aquileia with a detachment of their own, they wrote that Palladius and Secundianus, the 'adversaries and enemies of God' (*adversarii and inimici dei*), were convicted of 'impiety' (*impietas*).⁵⁰⁴ We can expect that also other church leaders received similar statements, confirming the condemnation of Palladius and Secundianus. Particularly noteworthy in this context is the emphasis on *unanimitas* among the *fratres*, which stood in marked contrast to the *impietas* of the *adversarii et inimici dei*. Apart from their episcopal colleagues, Ambrose and his associates also approached Gratian, urging him to enforce their sentence. Palladius and Secundianus were 'to be deposed from their priesthood' at the emperor's behest.⁵⁰⁵ Subsequent letters, however, indicate that Gratian was in no hurry to take action. The bishops around Ambrose desperately tried to persuade themselves that 'the decrees of the synod will not fail to be effective.' Moreover, they called to the emperor's mind that now that a decision has been reached 'your

⁵⁰³ MCLYNN 1994, 127f. This would also explain the document's focus on the condemnation of Palladius, while the case of Secundianus is left aside.

⁵⁰⁴ *Gest. conc. Aquil. Ep.* 1[9]. The *legati Gallorum* are Constantius of Orange and Proculus of Marseille. In the acts of the council, Justus of Lyon is mentioned as a further envoy (*Act. conc. Aquil.* 15).

⁵⁰⁵ Ambr. *Ep. extra coll.* 4[10].8.

clemency must graciously take measures.⁵⁰⁶ As successful as Ambrose's preparation was in the run-up to the council, as difficult turned out to be the subsequent implementation of measures that would have ensured the deposition of sworn enemies.⁵⁰⁷

Even if the excommunication of Palladius and Secundianus had a limited impact, Ambrose's appearance at the council of Aquileia revealed a way of dealing with the Homoian opposition that did not have a sober discussion about the principles of the faith in mind but aimed at the demolition of deviating credal statements. In this case, the fate of the two Illyrian bishops is indicative of a wider theme that also targeted other Christian schools of thought (see for instance the defeated Apollinarist of Ambrose's letters). Particularly noteworthy in this context is Palladius reconstruction of events in the *Apologia*, which draws a picture of the council that was marked by hatred and hostility toward a *pars inimica*. While *amicitia* formed the basis of Ambrose's network of like-minded clerics, expressions of enmity indicated the exclusion of the doctrinal opponent. This depiction ties in with Ambrose's later conception of friendship in the *De officiis*, which used the notion of *fides* as an indicator for either association or dissociation with the clerical community. Anyone then who strayed from the right path forfeited his place in the community and thus lost the friendship with the clerical brothers. Subsequently, he was marked an *amicus infidus* whose disavowal of the religious truth made him an avowed enemy.

⁵⁰⁶ Ambr. *Ep. extra coll.* 5[11].1; 6[12].3.

⁵⁰⁷ See MCLYNN 1996, 479-484 pointing to Maximinus who, some fifty years later, gives testimony to the continuing vigour of the Homoian movement in the Danube region. At Pall. *Apol.* 139, Palladius even dared to propose a rematch that should take place in Rome under the auspices of the senate. It is unlikely that these were the words of a deposed bishop.

5. *Amicitia mundi*: the complexity of friendship in late antiquity

The previous chapter argued that Ambrose used *amicitia* as a means to maintain close relations with clerical circles in Northern Italy and adjacent regions. By way of letter writing, he gained access to networks of influence that bound Christian *fratres* to one another according to their faith. Along these lines, his understanding of friendship suggested a religious group affiliation that clearly distinguished between believers and infidels. In so doing, the *De officiis* were not so much concerned with the ‘unbelief’ of non-Christians as with competing Christian schools of thought, which were trying to assert their own claims to religious truth. As such, Ambrose’s model of friendship appears as an effective tool to establish and perpetuate boundaries between different Christian factions, which had formed in the wake of contemporary disagreements about the divine nature of Christ. However, in the late fourth century, there were also other voices that did not make *amicitia* dependent on a particular doctrinal position. Rather, late antique letter writers like the Roman aristocrat Q. Aurelius Symmachus or the poet D. Magnus Ausonius stood for an understanding of friendship that was guided by the legacy of the classical past. Whereas Ambrose’s work issued new standards for other clerics to follow, members of the aristocratic elite usually harked back to Roman classics such as Cicero’s *De officiis*. Here they found the embodiment of a cultural code that was perfectly in line with their own claims to wealth and power. For them, religion was just one aspect in a competitive world that had the nobility of ancestral lineage and the distinction through public honours as the main markers of success.⁵⁰⁸ Accordingly, their aristocratic lifestyle primarily revolved around the holding of high offices, the management of family estates,

⁵⁰⁸ For the lifestyle and values of the late Roman aristocracy see NÄF 1995; SCHLINKERT 1996; NIQUET 2000; SALZMAN 2002, esp. 19-68.

and the conduct of business relations. Friendship with them implicated a language that was markedly different from the bishop's usual communication with fellow clerics.

This model of *amicitia* did not require a particular religious group affiliation. Rather, the pagan Symmachus and the Christian Ausonius cultivated a long and fruitful relationship that was not hampered by differing religious convictions. As such, the testimony of their correspondence forms a marked contrast to the common overvaluation of Christian-pagan conflicts in modern scholarship, which usually perpetuates the contrastive language of our Christian sources. Along these lines, Ausonius has until recently been depicted as a 'nominal Christian' or 'half-Christian' whose connection to the pagan past remained stronger than his commitment to God. More recent studies have however shown that, rather than doubting his religiosity, we have to see in him an advocate of a form of Christianity that was different from that of Ambrose's kind.⁵⁰⁹ For him, like Symmachus, *amicitiae* were not to be organized around the principle of religion but belonged to the habitual exercise between members of a social elite who shared the same vision of life. Beside these two authors, we can also cite Ambrose himself as another example for classical *amicitia*. This may be surprising at first, yet the two-faced nature of the Ambrosian letter collection reveals his double dependency. To be sure, in his role as bishop and Christian controversialist, Ambrose followed the proposed model of the *De officiis* to the letter. Yet, as a member of the aristocratic elite, who had previously pursued a career in the public service, the bishop was perfectly able to adjust his tone if the occasion called for it. Accordingly, we find single pieces of letter writing among the items

⁵⁰⁹ See DAUT 1971, 186 and SIVAN 1993, 110 for the previous position. More recently BROWN 2012, 202, recognized a generational shift between Ausonius' Christianity and that of younger aristocrats like Paulinus or Sulpicius Severus. Particularly helpful in this regard is REBILLARD 2015, 293-317 who distinguishes between a hierarchical and a lateral arrangement of group membership sets to overcome the simplistic division between the 'religious' and the 'secular'. Along these lines, the model can fruitfully be employed to understand Ausonius' 'Christianness'. In his case, *amicitiae* were not governed by religion (hierarchical) but accommodated also other membership sets depending on each situation (lateral).

of his correspondence that are deeply indebted to a traditionalist view on *amicitia*.⁵¹⁰ In these instances, the congruity in matters of faith was of subordinate concern. Thus, in form and content, some letters remind us more of a Symmachean or an Ausonian style of letter writing than they do with respect to the bishop's clerical correspondence.

The aim of this chapter is to describe and compare two distinct views on friendship that were not always compatible with one another. For this purpose, Symmachus' correspondence with Ausonius is introduced as a particular example demonstrating the cultivation of *amicitia* between late Roman aristocrats. In their case, a total number of thirty-two letters have been preserved, covering a timespan of about ten years from the late 360s to 379/80.⁵¹¹ As a point of reference serves Ambrose whose letter collection provides further evidence for the classical model of friendship. In particular, the discussion centres on crucial aspects such as the initiation of *amicitia*, the equal involvement of partners in the exchange of letters and services, and the handling of differences in age and rank. A concluding note is moreover devoted to Symmachus' way of tackling the case of conflict, which forms a marked contrast to the sharpness of Ambrose's friend-enemy distinction in the *De officiis*. The second part of the chapter then presents the epistolary exchange between Ausonius and Paulinus as a particular case, in which the classical and the clerical model of friendship came into conflict.⁵¹² The starting point is provided by four letters of Ausonius, which belong to a time prior to Paulinus' turning to ascetic Christianity. As such, they take up the main points of the previous section, illustrating the usual day-to-day business between late Roman aristocrats. This

⁵¹⁰ These letters have not come into view thus far. See most notably Ambr. *Ep.* 61[89] to Faltonius Probus Alypius; *Ep.* 42[88] to Nonnius Atticus Maximus, praetorian prefect at Milan in 384; *Ep.* 45[52] to the *magister officiorum* Titianus; and *Ep.* 60[90] to Claudius Antonius, prefect of Italy and Africa in 377/78.

⁵¹¹ Symm. *Ep.* 1.13-33; 9.88. For their relationship see BOWERSOCK 1986, 1-15; SOGNO 2006, 5-8; and SALZMAN 2011, 35-90 with text and translation of the letters.

⁵¹² Auson. *Ep.* 17-24 ed. R. P. H. Green (= *Ep.* 23-29 ed. H. G. Evelyn-White); Paulin. *Carm.* 10-11 (= *Ep.* 30-31). For the epistolary exchange see for instance KNIGHT 2005, 361-403; EBBELER 2007, 303-315.

sample is then set against a second letter dossier that highlights the differences between Ausonius and Paulinus' conception of friendship after the latter's conversion. On the one hand, we have Ausonius whose grasp of key concepts like *fides* and *pietas* followed a classical interpretation of *amicitia*. On the other hand, this notion is contrasted with Paulinus' view that presupposed a mutual understanding in God as the basic requirement for friendship.

5.1 Classical friendship in late antiquity: Symmachus and Ausonius

In an influential article on the letters of Symmachus, John F. Matthews argued that the aristocrat's lack of direct references to the political upheavals of his own time was due to a particular style of writing, meticulously abiding to a definite set of rules, that intended not to be informative but had a much more practical objective in view: namely, to provide the fertile ground on which *amicitiae* could flourish. On the one hand, Symmachus' strict observance of the unwritten rules of ancient letter writing provided every opportunity to keep the continual flow of courteous attentions between friends going. Even the occasional disregard of these conventions necessitated further exchange by reminding a negligent *amicus* of his duties. On the other hand, Symmachus' allusive language, which generally avoided bluntness in favour of ambiguity, was tailored to the needs of the individual recipient so as to not offend valuable contacts and potent friends.⁵¹³ If true, such understanding of *amicitia* certainly formed a marked contrast to Ambrose's corresponding views in the *De officiis*, propagating a model of friendship that was intended to establish and perpetuate clear-cut boundaries between rival Christian factions. The bishop's perspective, dividing the religious landscape into *amici* and *inimici*, appealed to a

⁵¹³ MATTHEWS 1974, 58-99. See also BRUGGISSER 1993 on book 1 of the correspondence.

friend-enemy distinction that may not have been unfamiliar to an experienced political player such as Symmachus. But the tone of his letters was decidedly different as their author anxiously tried to avoid the obstructive interruption of relations.

Even Ambrose, however, sent out ambivalent signals with the publication of his letters. While his clerical correspondence was preoccupied with religious matters, his communication with high Roman officials was written to different ends. One example pays close attention to the ‘duties of friendship’ (*amicitiae munia*). Apparently, Ambrose was involved in some unknown business with Faltonius Probus Alypius, an influential figure from the Anician clan, who may at that time have occupied the urban prefecture of Rome.⁵¹⁴ Letters were going back and forth between Milan and the capital, and when one of Alypius’ messages crossed with two letters from Ambrose, the bishop did not hesitate and furnished the letter bearer Antiochus with a brief note in return. The letter highlighted the importance of reciprocal exchange in friendships. Having received a message, the *amicitiae munia* called for some written response, even though the bishop had already sent two letters to Rome that had not yet been acknowledged. Rather than just ‘accommodating’ (*remetienda*) his duty, Ambrose thus liked to think of his additional courtesy as ‘increasing’ (*cumulanda*) his credit with the potent friend.⁵¹⁵ This example, as we shall see in the following, demonstrates the familiarity of Ambrose with both the expectations generated by friendship and the conventions of late antique letter writing. At the same time, the letter also shows with what ease the bishop moved about the highest circles of the Roman society. He exactly knew what was expected and that it was up to him to respond appropriately. Along these lines, the friendly note was never intended to inform the correspondent about the current state of their business but aimed for the continuity of their *amicitia*. With such ambiguity in Ambrose’s correspondence in mind,

⁵¹⁴ For the career of Faltonius Probus Alypius see PLRE I: 49.

⁵¹⁵ Ambr. *Ep.* 61[89].

it has thus been suggested to envisage the bishop as a mediator between different worlds, confronting the relatively modest background of the clergy with the sheer wealth and power of the Roman aristocracy.⁵¹⁶ As someone who himself never belonged to the highest aristocratic circles but whose status far exceeded the humbleness of most of his clerical colleagues, Ambrose took a middle-position enabling him to appropriate the cultural values of the former and making them applicable to the latter. Thus, the appropriation of Cicero's *De officiis*, the epitome of a cultural code that was held in high esteem by Roman aristocrats, heralded the arrival of a new force. Similarly, the inclusion of single letters to high officials among mostly clerical recipients in the *Epistulae* tacitly elevated the latter to the status of the former.

Symmachus was one of those Roman grandees whose wealth and power made him the perfect advocate for the advancement of all sorts of people. The maintenance of a large network of acquaintances that reached almost every corner of the Roman empire was an essential part of what he did and he, very much like his fellow aristocrats, was well-versed in the intricacies of this task. Symmachus' vast collection of letters demonstrates his respective abilities. The correspondence reads like a who is who of the late Roman world, comprising about 900 letters to well over 100 recipients. Even by modern standards with all its technological advantages, these are impressive numbers, considering that only a selection of Symmachus' correspondents eventually made it into the collection and that a portion of the surviving letters remains anonymous due to the lacking header.⁵¹⁷ One of his better known correspondents was Ausonius, a provincial aristocrat and teacher of rhetoric from Bordeaux who made a successful career in the imperial bureaucracy in the 360s. He and Symmachus appear to have for the first time met in Trier, when the young Roman senator was part of an official delegation that

⁵¹⁶ MCLYNN 1994, 277.

⁵¹⁷ See the arrangement of the letters by SEECK 1883, lxxiii-ccix.

attended Valentinian's fifth anniversary of his ascension to the throne.⁵¹⁸ As was customary, the envoys did not only convey the congratulations of the entire Roman senate but also presented to the emperor the *aurum oblativum*, a gift of money that was given to the reigning ruler on that occasion. In addition to that, Symmachus was entrusted with the delicate task to give a speech of praise in honour of the emperor, who seemed to have been so impressed by the performance that he asked for further proof of the senator's skills.⁵¹⁹ At that time, Ausonius resided at the imperial court in Trier too. Since the mid-360s, when he was appointed tutor of Valentinian's son Gratian, he was in charge of the rhetorical training of his protégé.⁵²⁰ For Symmachus and Ausonius, the occasion must have presented the perfect opportunity to meet in person, and it seems that they actually did: they presumably both accompanied the emperor's train on a tour along the Rhine frontier that was intended to demonstrate the readiness of the Roman army in that region. Both were later to evoke their shared experience in their writings.⁵²¹

Further indications however suggest that the foundation of their *amicitia* predates the personal encounter at Trier. Based on internal evidence, Sergio Roda has made a compelling case for the identification of Ausonius as the recipient of an anepigraphic letter in book nine of Symmachus' correspondence. The reference to an unnamed *imperialis magister* makes it sufficiently clear that Symmachus meant no one else than the teacher of rhetoric from Bordeaux, who, at the time, served as the appointed tutor of the young prince Gratian. Moreover, the mention of the *Gallicanae fecundia* and an unnamed *senex* who is described as *Garumnae alumnus* seem to be further proof for an Ausonian

⁵¹⁸ MATTHEWS 1975, 32f.

⁵¹⁹ Symm. *Or.* 1-3.

⁵²⁰ Ausonius mentions his vocation to the imperial court at *Praef.* 1.23-34

⁵²¹ Symm. *Or.* 2.2; 18 and *Ep.* 1.14.3. For a description of Valentinian's campaign and the fortifications at the Rhine frontier see Symm. *Or.* 2.28-30. Moreover, Auson. *Mos.* 1-11 gives account of a journey from Bingen on the Rhine over the Hunsrück to Neumagen on the Moselle that could have taken place around the same time (MATTHEWS 1975, 32 with n. 5). The passage has however also been construed as a literary construct rather than a reference to an actual event (GREEN 1991, 456).

connection.⁵²² According to this letter, it was for Ausonius to initiate the friendship. Symmachus' reply then reassured his newly gained correspondent that, even though he wished to write sooner, he did not dare to do so out of modesty. But when Ausonius took the initiative, Symmachus saw no reason to remain silent any longer and gratefully accepted the invitation: 'I will enter the open doors of your friendship (*patentes amicitiae tuae fores ... intrabo*).'⁵²³ In many ways, this was a friendship between unequal partners. Whereas Ausonius was an established teacher of rhetoric who got promoted to an influential position at the imperial court, Symmachus was still a young man who had just ventured on a political career. By the time of their encounter at Trier, he had only held the quaestorship and praetorship, and, in 365/66, the governorship of the province *Lucania et Bruttium*.⁵²⁴ The relationship's inherent asymmetry can however also be turned upside down. For, in another way, the fame of Symmachus' ancestry far exceeded the, by comparison, modest background of Ausonius' family. Symmachus hailed from one of the wealthiest and most powerful families in the Roman west. They did not only possess large landholdings in Italy, Sicily, and Mauretania but could also pride themselves on their long and distinguished lineage. Ausonius, on the other hand, was son of a mere doctor and most of his relatives seem to have been small local landowners in the region of Bordeaux. Over the years, he had acquired several substantial estates in the vicinity of his hometown but his background was certainly no match for the *nobilitas* of the Symmachii.⁵²⁵

⁵²² RODA 1981A, 219-22 and 1981B, 273-78. A majority of scholars follows Roda's identification. See BOWERSOCK 1986, 2; SOGNO 2006, 6; SALZMAN 2011, 37. For a contrasting view see COSKUN 2002A, 120-128.

⁵²³ Symm. *Ep.* 9.88.1.

⁵²⁴ CIL VI 1699 = ILS 2496 gives the *cursus honorum* of Symmachus. The inscription was found on the *mons Caelius* and once belonged to an honorary monument that was erected by Symmachus' son, Q. Fabius Memmius Symmachus, at the ancestral seat of the family. For Symmachus and Ausonius' political careers see PLRE I: 140f. and 865-870 respectively.

⁵²⁵ For Ausonius see BROWN 2012, 185-207.

This was however not the way Symmachus chose to present his relationship with Ausonius in this opening letter. Neither noble birth nor influence in the imperial bureaucracy was the distinguishing moment. Instead, the relationship was shaped as one between teacher and pupil. On the one hand, we have the renowned professor of rhetoric. On the other, there was the inexperienced student. Accordingly, Symmachus appealed to Ausonius' forbearance while the *magister imperialis* examined the produce of 'poor eloquence' (*linguae inopis*).⁵²⁶ He moreover acknowledged that his new friend had already read some of his writings, making the promise of 'more numerous pages' (*crebrioribus paginis*) to come, even though he feared the weighty judgement of the rhetorician.⁵²⁷ Eventually, it was the obliging nature of friendship (*gratiosa amicitia est*) that encouraged Symmachus to stand by his promise, for the affection (*caritas*) for one another, as he eloquently put it, smoothed 'harsh examination' and turned it into 'more caressing feelings' (*a severo examine ... in blandiores sensus*).⁵²⁸ In a very skilful manner, Symmachus thus depicted himself as the inferior partner whose inaptitude in the art of writing was no match for the ingenuity of Ausonius.

Just because their friendship was marked by asymmetry, this did not mean that their relationship resulted in a one-way flow of favours. Quite the contrary was true. The friendship of Ausonius and Symmachus was built on a strong sense of reciprocal exchange. This is not only implied in Symmachus' promise for a continual flow of letters (*adsiduas tibi epistulas spondeo*) but also finds expression in his demand for 'streams of Gallic eloquence' (*Gallicanae facundiae haustus*) in return.⁵²⁹ The message is clear: they shall both engage in a mutual exchange of letters. After all, there was much to be gained by both parties. Symmachus was seeking powerful friends in high positions who could be of help

⁵²⁶ Symm. *Ep.* 9.88.2.

⁵²⁷ Symm. *Ep.* 9.88.1 and 3.

⁵²⁸ Symm. *Ep.* 9.88.2.

⁵²⁹ Symm. *Ep.* 9.88.1 and 3.

to advance his career (or those of his other friends). Ausonius, on the other hand, was lacking the grandeur of Symmachus' kind; a fact that he could at least partially make up by sticking to people like the young Roman senator. This would also explain why it was Ausonius who had taken the initiative in establishing the contact. Another reason might have been that they shared a common *amicus* in the rhetor Tiberius Victor Minervius. In the last part of his letter, Symmachus referred to an 'old man' (*senex*) who used to be his teacher some time ago. He is designated a 'nursling of the Garonne' (*Garumnae alumnus*) who belonged to the same school as Ausonius.⁵³⁰ Another source informs us that Minervius taught in Rome around the year 353 and could therefore well have been a personal acquaintance of the Symmachii.⁵³¹ If the identification of the unnamed *senex* with the rhetor is correct, he may have acted as an intermediary between the two parties. As former teacher of Symmachus, it is possible that he passed on some writings of his pupil to Ausonius who would have then used the received items as a welcome excuse to dispatch an inviting letter to the young senator.

In accordance with the rules of ancient letter writing, Symmachus presented friendship as a relationship that was built on reciprocal exchange. In this regard, also the letters of Ambrose form no exception. When he wrote to the urban prefect Alypius, he explicitly referred to his obligation to write back. As such, the principle of reciprocity was an important part of what the bishop summed up as *amicitiae munia*.⁵³² In another instance, Ambrose addressed one Antonius, an influential figure in the imperial bureaucracy who is probably to be identified with Flavius Claudius Antonius. As praetorian prefect of Italy, he resided in Milan in the late 370s, which must have made

⁵³⁰ Symm. *Ep.* 9.88.3

⁵³¹ Jer. *Chron.* s.a. 353. For Minervius' role as a teacher of Ausonius and many other influential people see Auson. *Prof. Burd.* 1.8-12

⁵³² Ambr. *Ep.* 61[89] with my discussion above.

him an indispensable liaison for Ambrose.⁵³³ The only letter that has been preserved as part of the bishop's correspondence lays particular emphasis on the *officii vicissitudo*, the interchange of courtesy. Accordingly, the epistolary exchange is presented as a means able to create some form of presence, uniting friends through the continual flow of the written word. In so doing, Ambrose hinted at a number of commonplaces that were typically associated with *amicitia*, such as that friends are of one soul (*quoniam semper animis haeremus*), that they are tied together by affection (*amoris usu*) or that they should open their hearts for one another (*aperte cum individuo pectoris mei loquar*).⁵³⁴ As in the case of Alypius, the main purpose of his writing was not to convey information but to perpetuate a valuable contact.

Ambrose was not the only one highlighting the importance of the principle of *vicissitudo*. While writing to Ausonius, Symmachus for example complained that he was kept unaware of the promotion to high office of the poet's son Hesperius. Instead of receiving word of the good news, he had to learn about the appointment from rumours that had spread around the city. As a result, Symmachus lectured Ausonius about the basic rules of letter writing: 'every time a letter has been handed to me, I have responded immediately with equal conscientiousness (*pari religione*), for neither the practice of our correspondence (*rescriptorum ratio*) nor the mutuality of our affection (*amoris vicissitudo*) allowed me to defer action any longer.'⁵³⁵ Symmachus launched an appeal to Ausonius' sense of duty emphasizing that he himself had always observed the principle of writing back.⁵³⁶ It was however not only the *rescriptorum ratio* that compelled him to do so but also

⁵³³ For Antonius' career see PLRE 1: 77 and SALZMAN 2011, 161f.

⁵³⁴ Ambr. *Ep.* 60[90]. For the commonplaces see THRAEDE 1970, 109-125 (friend's are of one soul); 125-146 (love and friendship).

⁵³⁵ Symm. *Ep.* 1.16.1: ... *ut epistulis ad me cura propensiore, vel sero rescribam. Quibus ego, ut quaequae mihi redditae sunt, actutum pari religione respondi, quia neque rescriptorum ratio neque amoris vicissitudo sinebat me diutius desiderare.*

⁵³⁶ In this context, the term *religio* does not relate to the reverence of gods but points to the maintenance of one's social obligations. See MATTHEWS 1974, 81f.

the *amoris vicissitudo*, the mutuality of their love, which made him address his friend. By making plain the neglect of his correspondent to inform him in due time, Symmachus put himself in a position of moral authority enabling him to act as guardian of their friendship. In another instance, Symmachus appears to have been neglecting the duty of writing letters himself. He acknowledged that his sense of responsibility was suspended for the time that he had spent in Campania but that, as soon as he returned to Rome, he resumed the practice of exchanging letters: ‘So I am sending you the respectful greetings that I owe you, and ask for two things: that a deserved pardon be granted for my previous silence and that a response be returned for my current attentions.’⁵³⁷ Symmachus’ negligence certainly required an excuse on his part. Yet the constant complaining in ancient letter writing about friends failing to observe social conventions and rules of conduct should not be taken too literally. To some degree, the rules were expected to be broken.⁵³⁸ For any instance of neglect or misconduct provided the opportunity to send a next letter in order to ask or grant pardon. In so doing, Symmachus and Ausonius were able to perpetuate their friendship even if, for some reason, the continual flow of letters was interrupted.

The principle of reciprocity was however not limited to the interchange of polite attentions. It was equally applicable to more tangible services, which could be of great benefit for the person who acquired them. In a letter, Symmachus expressed his gratitude for a gift that Ausonius had bestowed upon him: ‘I have received four passes for the public post, which are extraordinarily useful for the goings and comings of my people.’⁵³⁹ Since only specifically authorized persons were permitted to use the *cursus publicus*, it certainly was a great privilege for Symmachus to obtain four of the much-desired certificates

⁵³⁷ Symm. *Ep.* 1.35: *ergo debito te honore salutationis inperitio utrumque deposcens ut et silentio superiori venia iusta praestetur et praesenti obsequio vicissitudo respondeat.*

⁵³⁸ MATTHEWS 1974, 81.

⁵³⁹ Symm. *Ep.* 1.21: *Accepi evectiones quattuor inmane quantum commodas in excursus et recursus meorum.*

(*evectioes*) that enabled him to gain access to the imperial transportation system.⁵⁴⁰ In any case, this achievement required powerful friends in high offices. At that time, Ausonius obviously was in a position allowing him to bestow such favours upon his friends. One may think of him as praetorian prefect of Italy, Africa and Gaul or as *consul designatus* for the year 379, though the date of the letter cannot be ascertained. In another instance, Symmachus wrote a recommendation for the talented rhetorician Palladius. In this letter, he praised the skilful declamation of the ‘Athenian guest’ (*Athenaei hospitis*) before a wider audience. The rhetor appears to have impressed those who were present with his performance.⁵⁴¹ Hence, Symmachus enclosed his most favourable judgement of the man and recommended him for further service. By introducing Palladius to Ausonius, he acted as an intermediary between two *amici*; one seeking to further his own career, the other able to provide such advancement. In this particular case, we actually know that Symmachus’ intervention on behalf of Palladius proved to be advantageous for the rhetor. For, in 379, Palladius was summoned to the imperial court at Trier.⁵⁴² We may imagine a similar setting when only few years later, in 384, an ambitious young rhetorician from Carthage came to Rome in order to advance his career. As Augustine stated in the *Confessiones*, his Manichean friends introduced him to Symmachus, who, at that time, held the urban prefecture of Rome. The senator had him deliver a speech so that he could put to test Augustine’s rhetorical skills. As in the case of Palladius, the performance eventually convinced Symmachus of the rhetor’s qualifications and he recommended him for a post in Milan.⁵⁴³

Apart from mutual exchange, another important point that had been raised by Symmachus’ affirmative reply to Ausonius’ friendship offer concerned the proper

⁵⁴⁰ For the *cursus publicus* in general see KOLB 2000, 49-226.

⁵⁴¹ Symm. *Ep.* 1.15.2.

⁵⁴² See Symm. *Ep.* 1.94; 3.50 and Sid. Apoll. *Ep.* 5.10.3.

⁵⁴³ Aug. *Conf.* 5.13.23.

handling of social differences. As the letter demonstrates, the individual correspondents were ascribed certain roles that they were supposed to observe. Whereas the younger Symmachus in this case played the inferior part of a keen student who relied on the expertise of more advanced writer, the much older Ausonius found himself in the role of the experienced teacher that was able to provide guidance as desired. Social distinctions and differences in age, it seems, required an appropriate language that accounted for the visible asymmetry between friends. Such counterbalancing seemed all the more important since common opinion tended to picture friendship as a bond between equal partners. Following Cicero's corresponding remarks in the *Laelius*, Ambrose referred to *amicitia* as 'teacher of equality' (*aequalitatis magistra*) that was capable of levelling out the differences of the human condition.⁵⁴⁴ Particularly interesting in this context is his recourse to kinship imagery to account for the disparities in age and rank. In the previous chapter, we have seen how writers like Symmachus employed the brother-friend analogy to indicate familiarity with their social peers. Similarly, in case of relationships that involved some sort of inequality between partners, kinship terminology could be used to label distinctions. In a Christian context, such language tied in with the biblical tradition that made extensive use of family imagery as a means to relate to God and other human beings. Ambrose for instance was used to referring to fellow bishops as *fratres*, while he portrayed the members of the lower clergy as his *fili*. At the same time, he counted them among his *amici* because their doctrinal position was in line with his own.⁵⁴⁵ But also in non-clerical contexts, the bishop showed his familiarity with such language. In a letter to one Titianus, he referred to his correspondent as *filius*, while depicting himself in the role of the caring parent (*parentes*).⁵⁴⁶ The case concerned a conflict between Titianus and his

⁵⁴⁴ Ambr. *Off.* 3.133 (cf. Cic. *Amic.* 69-74).

⁵⁴⁵ See for instance Ambr. *Ep.* 1[7].1 to Iustus and *Off.* 3.132, addressing lower clerics.

⁵⁴⁶ Ambr. *Ep.* 45[52].

son-in-law, which revolved around adverse opinions regarding the marriage of Titianus' granddaughter. Both parties managed to enlist the help of powerful advocates to secure their respective claims. While the former successfully approached the Milanese bishop Ambrose, the latter gained the support of the influential *magister officiorum* Flavius Rufinus. Titianus might have hoped to persuade Rufinus of his position through Ambrose, who reckoned the high official as one of his *amici*. Eventually, the problem could be resolved in an unexpected way: in 392, Flavius Rufinus, the acting consul for that year, was appointed praetorian prefect of the east, and as such he was ordered off Titianus' case.⁵⁴⁷ At any rate, the use of kinship imagery nicely summed up the distinctions between petitioner and mediator (though other factors may also have played a role). Moreover, the very nature of the conflict itself as a family matter suggested the use of kinship imagery to tackle the issues at hand.

The correlation of friendship and kinship language can also be observed in other instances. Symmachus' letters play with the conceptual overlap on various levels. On the one hand, it represents a particular feature of the overall structure of book one. On the other hand, the same overlap is also indicative of the language of the single letters. Recently, Michele R. Salzman has argued for the publication of book one by Symmachus senior himself.⁵⁴⁸ Her argumentation rests on the observation that none of the letters of the opening book can securely be dated to the time after 384, which suggests a publication date still in the 380s. More importantly, the careful organization of the letters in the first volume is distinct from the structure of the remaining books, which points to Symmachus as the author of the compilation.⁵⁴⁹ Book one is arranged according to correspondents

⁵⁴⁷ For the career of Flavius Rufinus see PLRE I: 778-781.

⁵⁴⁸ There has been much speculation about the possible publication of the correspondence during Symmachus' lifetime, or posthumously by his son, Q. Aurelius Memmius Symmachus. For a detailed discussion see SOGNO 2006, 60-63 and SALZMAN 2011, liii-lxviii.

⁵⁴⁹ ID., liv-lviii.

and includes, amongst others, letters to Roman grandees such as Symmachus' friend and fellow pagan campaigner Vettius Agorius Praetextatus (*Ep.* 1.44-55) and the powerful Christian aristocrat Sextus Petronius Probus (*Ep.* 1.56-61). In this distinguished company, the letters to Ausonius were awarded the second place (*Ep.* 1.13-43), right after Symmachus' father L. Aurelius Avianus Symmachus who died as *consul designatus* in 376 (*Ep.* 1.1-12). Beside the prominent placement of the two dossiers at the head of the correspondence, they moreover include the correspondent's own words in the form of a single letter.⁵⁵⁰ By contrast, all other letters in book one are unidirectional in the sense that they only preserve Symmachus' voice, writing to various friends and acquaintances of his network. Both features combined seem thus to highlight the significance of Ausonius' role in Symmachus' life. At the same time, the inclusion of a sample of their own writing suggests a connection between Ausonius and Avianus whose true nature is only revealed if we take the arrangement of the remaining letter dossiers into account. Whereas the letters to Avianus and Ausonius stand at the head of the whole collection introducing a group of four successive dossiers (Avianus, Ausonius, Praetextatus, Probus), the names of Celsinus Titianus and Hesperius were at the top of a second group (Titianus, Hesperius, Antonius, Syagrius), which forms a complementary set. Since Celsinus Titianus and Hesperius were the sons of Avianus and Ausonius respectively, the letters to them introduced the reader to a new generation of aristocratic leadership. The referentiality of the father-son paradigm did however not stop there. By juxtaposing his father Avianus and his brother Celsinus Titianus with Ausonius and Hesperius, Symmachus closely tied kinship to friendship. The organization of the letters then suggests Ausonius as a second father, while Hesperius is ascribed the role of a brother.⁵⁵¹

⁵⁵⁰ Symm. *Ep.* 1.2 (Avianus to Symmachus) and 1.32 (Ausonius to Symmachus).

⁵⁵¹ SALZMAN 2011, 37f.

This view is confirmed when we take a closer look at the single letters. For that is where Symmachus explicitly referred to Hesperius as his brother. To be sure, Hesperius was by no means the only correspondent who was granted such privileged name.⁵⁵² Nevertheless, the congruity of the brother terminology with the intended message of the correspondence's overall composition seems to be no coincidence. In one of the previously discussed letters, we saw Symmachus complaining about Hesperius' failure to inform him of his recent appointment to high office. It is possible that this was either the proconsulate of Africa in 376/77 or the prefecture of Gaul in 378, though nothing definitive can be said about the exact setting. Instead of receiving the news first hand, Symmachus had to learn from rumours about the promotion. It was in this context that he referred to Ausonius' son as *frater meus Hesperius*, while equally pointing to the affection (*amor*) that bound them to one another. This was no sign of actual kinship as some scholars have tried to infer in other instances.⁵⁵³ Rather, Symmachus' allusive language is indicative of the fluent boundaries between friendship and kinship. If we now turn to Ausonius, we can observe similar linguistic traits that tie in with the overall structure of book one. The only Ausonian epistle (*Ep.* 1.32) that Symmachus' had placed among his letters was sent in direct response to *Ep.* 1.31. There, Symmachus defended himself against the complaint that he shamelessly exploited the situation when he put into circulation one of Ausonius' works without prior consent of the poet. This was no cause for displeasure as is demonstrated by Ausonius' follow-up letter, which was full of praise for his correspondent's eloquence. At the same time, the poet referred to his recipient as *dominus* and *mi filius Symmachus*, which brings out the intricacies of the social distinctions involved. Age and experience certainly placed Ausonius above Symmachus, yet ancestry

⁵⁵² For the frequent use of the word *frater* and its derivatives in the letters see the references in LOMANTO 1983, 346-348.

⁵⁵³ Symm. *Ep.* 1.16.2 with SALZMAN 2011, 51 n. 4. For Hesperius' career see PLRE I: 427-428.

and wealth reversed the roles in Symmachus' favour. Both ascriptions derived from the sphere of the Roman household: the term *dominus* as opposed to *servus* highlighted the authority and power that was commonly associated with a Roman householder, while *filius* as opposed to *pater* or *parens* implicated fatherly care and filial obedience. Correspondingly, Ausonius saw himself in the role of a 'parent and friend' (*parens et amicus*) toward his protégé.⁵⁵⁴ This diction is then perfectly in line with how the letters were later organized as a statement of friendship, tying the house of Ausonius to Symmachus' own family.

The above discussion has introduced Symmachus' correspondence with Ausonius as a particular case, illustrating a traditional view on friendship that significantly differed from contemporary clerical assumptions. To be sure, there were also obvious points of contact. Even for Ambrose the cultivation of *amicitia* was dependent on a strong sense of reciprocity, which demanded from each party an equal involvement in the exchange of letters and services. This basic principle ensured the continual flow of giving and receiving, which perpetuated an established bond between friends. Another point that has been highlighted concerns the use of kinship imagery as a means to translate overt social differences into more intimate terms. Also here we can perceive similarities with Ambrose's idea of clerical friendship, even if in his case kinship is understood as a reference to the divine household. A significant departure from the classical model is however indicated by the bishop's construal of *fides*, making religion the predominant factor for *amicitia*. By contrast, the friendship between Symmachus and Ausonius did not rely on a specific religious commitment. Rather, their exchange revolved around other aspects of life such as political advancement and the display of rhetorical skills.

⁵⁵⁴ Symm. *Ep.* 1.32.4. In this context, Ausonius specifically referred to the disparity in age (*aevo dispari*) and experience (see the wordplay with *veteranus* and *tirocinium*) that separated them. For the father-son relationship see BRUGGISSER 1993, 152-155.

Particularly interesting in this regard is the position of Ausonius who, as a Christian, was perfectly capable of pursuing close ties with non-Christians. His understanding of friendship did not require a mutual agreement in matters of faith but allowed for situational choices. The same is true for Ambrose who, as a bishop and former provincial governor, was familiar with clerical as well as with aristocratic circles. The two-faced nature of his correspondence then reveals his ability to differentiate between distinct audiences. Whereas his clerical correspondence is dominated by a strong concern not only for religion but also for a particular doctrinal position, his letters to Roman officials are completely void of such apprehensions. Instead, these latter pieces draw a picture of a man who was well-versed in the art of cultivating *amicitiae* through letter writing.

As outlined above, Matthew's article on the Symmachean letters primarily focused on the aspect of inclusion, which found expression in words like *unanimitas*, *religio*, or *amicitia*. He suggested that such language could have been used by Symmachus and his peers to mask disagreements and animosities so as to not offend valuable acquaintances. If not friendship, it should at least be possible to remain on speaking terms with people that advocated adverse opinions. This is however not to say that Symmachus knew nothing of strife and enmity. As a senator who got frequently involved in political controversies, and as a powerful patron who raised his voice in the name of others, he must have had a great deal of experience with people who attracted his disdain. In fact, Matthews later realized the shortcomings of his approach and delivered an additional article that dealt with the aspect of exclusion in Symmachus' correspondence. By focusing on specific cases that show indications of conflict, he was able to discern a language that revolved around words like *livor*, *invidia*, *inprobi*, *aemuli*, *insidiae*, or *mendacia*.⁵⁵⁵ This finding is important as it

⁵⁵⁵ MATTHEWS 1986, 163-175.

puts into perspective the overly optimistic view regarding the inclusiveness of Symmachus' *amicitia*.

A particular example can be found in a letter, which concerned a complicated case regarding a wedding project that was cause for animosities between members of the aristocratic elite. Iulianus, who had previously agreed to marry off his daughter to one Herculius, suddenly began to have second thoughts about the arrangement, which seems to have delayed the project significantly. Herculius, on the other hand, was unwilling to give up without a fight and thus enlisted the help of his friends to put pressure on the purported father-in-law. Symmachus was not the only one who was dragged into the conflict. He himself urged Nicomachus Flavianus to intervene, and also a certain Valentinus took sides with Herculius.⁵⁵⁶ In his own letter, Symmachus referred to Herculius as 'my great friend' (*amicissimo meo*), pledging his unrestricted support for the petitioner's case. Iulianus, on the other hand, was insistently warned about any breach of the *senatoria fides*, which would have represented a betrayal of his initial promise: 'you will deny that to which you have consented not without earning reproach' (*non sine contumelia placita denegabis*).⁵⁵⁷ This was certainly no empty threat, but the prospect of losing the bonds of friendship over disagreements was real and must have made Iulianus rethink his position. At the same time, we can draw a direct line to the previously discussed letter of Ambrose to Titianus, which shows close resemblance to the Symmachean piece. In both instances, the point of contention concerned the arranged marriage between members of the aristocratic elite. While we do not know anything specific about the outcome of Herculius' insistence, we learn from the Ambrosian letter that the conflict could be

⁵⁵⁶ Symm. *Ep.* 6.44 to Nicomachus Flavianus (my own translation).

⁵⁵⁷ Symm. *Ep.* 9.43.2. See SOGNO 2010, 70 who conjoins *Ep.* 9.43 with *Ep.* 6.44.

resolved in Titianus' favour. But even the bishop made explicit reference to the *invidia* that such cases were likely to cause.⁵⁵⁸

Matthews' article has shown that the handling of conflict and strife, as much as the cultivation of *amicitiae*, belonged to the usual business of a late Roman aristocrats. Even in a well-established friendship, as the one between Symmachus and Ausonius, tensions and disagreements could arise that had to be sorted out before relations could be normalized. A particular case can be found in a letter, which gives some thought about the aspects of trust and trustworthiness between friends. It is worth noting that, not unlike the previous example, the question of *fides* was at the very heart of the discussion. Since the letter lacks any clear indications, it remains uncertain what might have been the cause for the tensions. Symmachus' phrasing, however, suggests that hard feelings had arisen, which needed to be soothed if they were not to jeopardize their friendship. He thus openly stated: 'I was at times angry (*suscensui*) with your state of mind (*animo tuo*)', and furthermore: 'I was not able to hide the fact that I was aggrieved (*dolui*).'⁵⁵⁹ Despite his temper, it was Symmachus' hope that they could overcome the current difficulties. For this purpose, he referred to the sphere of 'public affairs' (*negotiis*) as an example showing that accusations (*expostulatio*) could indeed be resolved 'without destroying concord' (*sine labe concordiae*).⁵⁶⁰ To appease the delicate situation, he introduced a well-known commonplace of the ancient friendship discourse: open and honest friendship is preferable to flattery. On the one hand, he stated that mutual 'love nourishes trust' (*amor fiduciam nutrit*) and asked if there is anything else 'as open as friendship' (*quid tam liberum quam amicitia*). On the other hand, he acknowledged that 'they can inspire no trust (*cassa fide sunt*) who continually flatter' (*qui iugiter blandiuntur*).⁵⁶¹ Symmachus' argumentation

⁵⁵⁸ Ambr. *Ep.* 45[52].1 (cf. above p. 179f.).

⁵⁵⁹ Symm. *Ep.* 1.37.2.

⁵⁶⁰ Symm. *Ep.* 1.37.2.

⁵⁶¹ Symm. *Ep.* 1.37.2.

seems thus to have been that, if necessary, true and lasting friendship compelled him to rebuke a dear friend. He was just fulfilling his duty as a true friend when he spoke his mind openly. The message seems clear enough. It is better for Ausonius to face the criticism of a friend than listen to the ever charming but deceitful words of flatterers. For whereas flattery is void of *fides*, mutual love between friends nourished it. In an attempt to normalize relations, Symmachus hence went to great lengths to underscore the trustworthiness of his friend Ausonius: ‘if anyone possesses real trustworthiness (*fides seria*), I think it is you. How many parade their trustworthiness in words but fall short in deeds.’⁵⁶² Friendship, and not flattery, was thus the place where trust was to be found, and if *fides* was in place, neither criticism nor reproach could do any harm to the mutual bond between friends.

This way of conducting conflict stands in a marked contrast to Ambrose’s ecclesial dealings. The bishop’s views about friendship in the *De officiis* suggest a handling of ecclesial opposition that aimed at the exclusion of dissenting voices. To this end, he endorsed sharp boundaries that qualified some as *amici* and dismissed others as *inimici* solely on the basis of their doctrinal position. As the council of Aquileia demonstrated, this inimical disposition toward deviating beliefs did not remain a mere theoretical exercise but translated into political manoeuvres that were perceived as downright hostile. Also in the correspondence, we at times get a glimpse of the harsh reality of Ambrose’s model. As an example may serve the previously discussed report about a religious debate with an Apollinarist, whom Ambrose associated with the *virus Apollinaris* while calling him an originator of *maledici sermonis*.⁵⁶³ This outspokenness on the bishop’s part is alien to Symmachus’ handling of conflict and strife. Rather than labelling opponents as avowed enemies that deserve to be treated as such, his diction is informed

⁵⁶² Symm. *Ep.* 1.37.1.

⁵⁶³ Ambr. *Ep.* 39[46].1 (cf. above p. 150).

by a studied politeness that preferred veiled threats and hidden criticism to bluntness of speech. This is of course not to say that conflicts and rivalry among aristocratic circles could not potentially have devastating consequences, as Symmachus himself was to learn when he publicly endorsed the reign of Magnus Maximus shortly before the usurper's downfall.⁵⁶⁴ But the subtlety, with which he framed his attacks, is distinctly different from Ambrose's rhetoric. The main reason for these differences are to be found in the diverging views on friendship that determined Symmachus and Ambrose's conduct. While the former perspective allowed for situational choices in finding connecting factors between friends, the latter posited a particular belief as the necessary prerequisite for the cultivation of friendly relations.⁵⁶⁵ Following this explanatory model, Symmachus would have even been able to find common ground with people, with whom he disagreed in other matters. Ambrose, on the other hand, had not the same room to manoeuvre. As his understanding of friendship subordinated *amicitiae* to a particular set of doctrines, his rhetoric was bound to set up sharp boundaries. In other contexts, however, in which the truth of faith was not at stake, the bishop did not feel the need to uphold such divisive language. Hence, his ability to cultivate relationships with people of Symmachus' standing, which demonstrates remarkable resourcefulness on Ambrose's part.

5.2 Competing models of friendship: Ausonius and Paulinus

The above discussion has revealed two different models of friendship. One was primarily concerned with an aristocratic lifestyle that harked back to the classical past. The other instituted novel principles in view of current disagreements about the true nature of

⁵⁶⁴ MATTHEWS 1986, 186. For the Magnus Maximus episode and Symmachus' subsequent political rehabilitation see SOGNO 2006, 67-78.

⁵⁶⁵ See REBILLARD 2015, 303-305 and his important remarks about Augustine's letter exchange with Macedonius.

Christ. That these perspectives were not always compatible with one another is demonstrated by another epistolary exchange recording the friendship of Ausonius with P. Meropius Paulinus. Paulinus hailed from a wealthy, aristocratic family from Bordeaux that owned properties not only in their homeland Aquitaine but also in the adjacent region of Spain as well as on Italian soil, in Campania. As a young man, he received his training at Bordeaux where Ausonius was based as a professor of rhetoric. It was on this occasion that they first met and entered into a friendship that should last until the much older Ausonius died, presumably in 394. At first, Paulinus' career took the course, which one might expect from a nobleman of his standing. Most probably at the instigation of his influential mentor, Paulinus held the suffect consulship of 378 and became governor of Campania in 381.⁵⁶⁶ Sometime after he had left his last appointment, however, a remarkable change in Paulinus' life occurred that had far-reaching consequences. For reasons that are not entirely clear, he turned his back on his career and committed the rest of his life to ascetic Christianity. It has been suspected that his wife Therasia had something to do with his change of mind. This was at least Ausonius' guess.⁵⁶⁷ Yet it is much more likely that the tragic fate of Paulinus' brother, who had died a mysterious death, affected his decision, especially since Paulinus himself confirms that his own life and property were in danger at that time.⁵⁶⁸ Whatever the reasons may have been, Paulinus and Therasia withdrew to a secret place in Spain (apparently, the location was unknown to Ausonius) where they began selling their properties as a symbol of their commitment to God. Hence, in 394, Paulinus was ordained priest in Barcelona from

⁵⁶⁶ For Paulinus' career and background see PLRE I, 681-683 and TROUT 1999, 23-52.

⁵⁶⁷ Auson. *Ep.* 22.10-35.

⁵⁶⁸ Paulin. *Carm.* 21.416-420. According to FABRE 1949, 33f. not much more can be said than that Paulinus' brothers died a violent death and that Paulinus had to fear repercussions. WITKE 1971, 43 holds that Paulinus was suspected of murder. COSKUN 2002B, 103 suggests that Paulinus' brother was convicted of a capital crime. Another reason for Paulinus' conversion may have been the loss of an infant son. See TROUT 1999, 84f.

where he, together with his wife, moved to Nola near Naples in order to establish a monastic community. It was at this place that Paulinus would later make a name for himself as bishop.⁵⁶⁹

Paulinus and Therasia were certainly not the first aristocratic couple to renounce their wealth because of their commitment to God. We have only to remind us of the ascetic circle of powerful aristocratic women gathering around Jerome in Rome, or of Ambrose and his sister Marcellina who also devoted their lives to the ascetic cause. Whereas he, after pursuing a promising career in the public service, became bishop of Milan in 374, his sister chose a life as a consecrated virgin.⁵⁷⁰ Still, news spread like wildfire when Paulinus and Therasia announced their intents. This was no conversion out of mere inward deliberation and self-reflection but a publicly performed act that could well be exploited for propagandistic purposes. It is then no surprise that we find Ambrose conveying the breaking news to his colleague and friend Sabinus, who occupied the episcopal seat in the neighbouring town Piacenza. The letter refers to the noblemen, the *proceres viri*, who will not be pleased to hear that ‘a man of his family, his ancestry, his genius, gifted with such eloquence, should have seceded from the senate.’⁵⁷¹ Ambrose further reports that Paulinus had not only sold his own property but also that of his wife so as to spend the revenues on the poor: ‘while he himself having become poor instead of rich ... he has bid farewell to his home, his country, and his kindred, in order to serve God more diligently.’⁵⁷² While Ambrose’s account remains schematic at best, the correspondence between Ausonius and Paulinus gives a deep insight into the conversions’ cause and effect.

⁵⁶⁹ For his ecclesiastical career see ID., 78-132.

⁵⁷⁰ For Jerome and his circle in Rome see REBENICH 1992, 141-208 and more recently CAIN 2009, 68-98. For Marcellina see MCLYNN 1994, 33-35; 60f.; 287 and VIGGIANI 2000.

⁵⁷¹ Ambr. *Ep.* 27(56).3.

⁵⁷² Ambr. *Ep.* 27(56).1. BROWN 2012 rightly pointed out that we are dealing with a ‘specific semiotics of wealth’ from which Paulinus abjured. His poverty was rather ideological than factual.

The order and dating of the exchange has much been discussed in recent scholarship, without however reaching a consensus.⁵⁷³ What remains undisputed is the obvious division of the correspondence into two separate parts: one, comprising a selection of presumably unrelated letters belonging to the time prior to 389; the other, featuring an exchange of letters that must be ascribed to the years between 390 and 394. Whereas the first dossier exemplifies the usual dealings between late Roman aristocrats, the second relates to a more troubled phase of their friendship. It is especially the letters of this second dossier whose sequence remains contested among scholars. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to assume that, after Paulinus and Therasia had left Aquitaine for Spain, Ausonius tried to reach his *amicus* several times. Judging from Paulinus' later reply, it appears that he had received some of the letters only with considerable delay and others not at all. At this point, however, Ausonius' frustration about not having received a single word had already resulted in harsh criticism (Auson. *Eph.* 21; 22). Paulinus, on the other hand, was reluctant to just ignore the allegations and responded accordingly (Paulin. *Carm.* 10). This prompted Ausonius to reaffirm his previous accusations by issuing another letter (which has been preserved in two different versions as Auson. *Eph.* 23 and 24). On a final note, then, Paulinus adopted a more conciliatory tone, which suggests that their *amicitia* outlasted the quarrel (Paulin. *Carm.* 11).⁵⁷⁴

Considering the first of the two extant letter dossiers, we are given a deep insight into the usual day-to-day business between two aristocratic *amici* in Aquitaine of the late fourth century. As such, the exchange is comparable to the previously discussed Symmachean letters. Here, too, we get the idea of a relationship that was built on the principle of reciprocity. In one instance, it appears that Paulinus had previously sent a letter along with a poem about a now lost work by Suetonius, requesting that Ausonius

⁵⁷³ See FABRE 1948; GREEN 1991, 647-649; COSKUN 2002B, 99-111; MRATSCHEK 2002, 205-208.

⁵⁷⁴ COSKUN 2002B, 110f.

may comment on his literary achievement. Ausonius' judgement was favourable: 'I can absolutely take my oath that for fluency in verse none of your Roman youths is your equal.'⁵⁷⁵ He even quoted a lengthy passage of the poem itself and begged Paulinus to 'bestow on me such favours constantly (*munere frequenter*).'⁵⁷⁶ In exchange for the piece of poetry, Paulinus received not only the guidance from the celebrated teacher of rhetoric but also the fatherly concern for his personal development. In another instance, the continual giving and receiving becomes even more evident: 'Fearing that the oil you sent had not given satisfaction, you repeat the gift (*munus iterasti*) and, by the addition of some Barcelona sauce called *muria*, increase its measure.'⁵⁷⁷ From these lines, it appears that Paulinus had sent two gifts in close succession: first, a quantity of oil and, second, some fish sauce from Barcelona. Both were intended to please Ausonius and, apparently, they did. The polite attentions did however not go without asking a favour in return as Ausonius reveals later on in the letter: 'As for the work itself, I will do as you bid (*ut iubes*). I will work over the whole minutely, and although it has received the highest finish at your hands, I will apply my chisel to give a superfinish however needless.'⁵⁷⁸ The verbal construction *ut iubes* makes sufficiently clear that Paulinus' attentions were closely connected with his insistence to get the work polished up to the point where it reached perfection. While Paulinus was giving delicacies so that he may obtain a revised poem in return, Ausonius thankfully acknowledged the receipt of the said attentions, agreeing to provide his skills as a poet to get the job done. As a concluding note to the letter, he moreover added some verses of his own, again taking up the theme of reciprocity. In these lines, Ausonius envisaged the ways his 'greeting' travelled to Paulinus who seems

⁵⁷⁵ Auson. *Ep.* 17.30-31: *liquido adiurare possum nullum tibi ad poeticam facundiam Romanae iuventutis aequari.*

⁵⁷⁶ Auson. *Ep.* 17.33: *affice me, oro, tali munere frequenter ...*

⁵⁷⁷ Auson. *Ep.* 19.2a-4: *veritus displicuisse oleum quod miserat, munus iterasti; addito etiam Barcinonensis muriae condimento cumulatius praestisti.*

⁵⁷⁸ Auson. *Ep.* 19a.17-19: *de quo opusculo, ut iubes, faciam: exquisitum universa limabo et quamvis per te manus summa contigerit, caelum superfluae expolitionis adhibebo ...*

currently to have dwelled on his estate in Hebromagus. When reaching its destination, the letter shall ‘bid him *hail*, then demand of him a return; ... then in haste fly hither straight without delay, bringing back meanwhile some little gift from the abundance of that storehouse of poetry.’⁵⁷⁹ Thus, Reciprocity did not simply imply a one-time exchange of favours but a continual flow of giving and receiving, ever actualizing the bond of friendship. The letter then was used as a means to reassure and remind one another of the mutual solidarity that found expression in the pursuit of shared interests such as poetry.

As in the case of the Symmachean letters, the principle of mutuality also allowed to call in favours that were more work-intensive than the quick exchange of letters and gifts. A particular case concerns an urgent matter involving Philo, the *procurator* of Ausonius’ estates. It appears that Philo had run into trouble over a matter that remains unspecified in the letter. While buying up produce on various estates in the region, the bailiff got stuck at Hebromagus, where he had stored his shipment on Paulinus’ estate. The main purpose of his travel activity appears to have been to supply Ausonius’ own estate at Lucaniacus with urgently needed food provisions, which he could not deliver without the proper means of transportation. Ausonius therefore asks his friend to furnish Philo with a suitable vessel so that he could transport the goods down the river to ease the current shortage in supplies.⁵⁸⁰ Indeed a serious matter, one might think. The gravity of the situation did however not prevent Ausonius from adding a versified parody on the delusions and shortcomings of Philo to his request, which may also contain a clue to the reason why he thinks so badly of his employee. Apparently, Philo had made promises as to the volume of the harvest, which he could not keep either because of unfortunate

⁵⁷⁹ Auson. *Ep.* 19b.14-18: *fer hunc salutem praepes et volucripes / Paulini ad usque moenia, Ebromagum loquor, / et protinus, iam si resumptis viribus / alacri refecti corporis motu viget, / salvere iussum mox resposce mutuum.* 44-46: *haec fare cursim nec moratus pervola, / aliquid reportans interim munusculi / de largitate musici promptarii.*

⁵⁸⁰ Auson. *Ep.* 20a.2-11.

weather conditions or because he miscalculated the seedtime.⁵⁸¹ As a last resort, he had to buy up food supplies from other estates, villages and towns in order to provide Lucaniacus with the necessary coverage. This was of course a highly expensive undertaking, which, as Ausonius rightly observed, must have changed profits into losses.⁵⁸² However, Ausonius' portrayal of Philo was obviously steered by a sense for invective rather than by a sober reflection of the situation. Philo is presented as a trickster who seizes on every opportunity to enrich himself to the disadvantage of his employer.⁵⁸³ Some modern commentators have gone along with Ausonius' depiction.⁵⁸⁴ In my opinion, there are however many inconsistencies that do not increase the credibility of his story. For one thing, it seems odd that Ausonius refers to Philo as *procuratoris quondam mei*, only to call him further down *meis vilicatus praediis*.⁵⁸⁵ Was Philo still Ausonius' employee, or did he quit his job and was now focusing on his own business? Also, his assignment to bring food provisions to Lucaniacus does not add up with Ausonius' story of a former employee who tried to trick him in every possible way. Why would he bother to help Philo out of a difficult situation if he was no longer on the payroll? In my view, it is much more likely that Ausonius, fearing a potential food crisis, sent his *procurator* on a mission to buy and collect urgently needed provisions. Such an undertaking not only posed a financial risk but also caused organizational problems. It may well have been the case that an argument occurred as to whether the bailiff was to be held responsible for the troubling situation, but Ausonius certainly tended to exaggerate the *causa Philonis* in front of his friend Paulinus. Whether the latter handled the situation in the way he was

⁵⁸¹ Auson. *Ep.* 20b.13-18.

⁵⁸² Auson. *Ep.* 20b. 27-34.

⁵⁸³ Auson. *Ep.* 20b.33-34: *ad lucra damnis, damna mutans fraudibus / se ditat et me pauperat*. At *Ep.* 20b.10, Philo is compared to Terence's Phormio, the quintessential parasite.

⁵⁸⁴ See for instance GREEN 1991, 644.

⁵⁸⁵ Auson. *Ep.* 20a.4: *in cause Philonis procuratoris quondam mei*. In other instances, he speaks of Philo as *meis qui vilicatus praediis* (20b.1) or simply refers to him as his *vilicus* (20b.14). In the latter case, it is likewise implied that Philo no longer was Ausonius' bailiff.

expected is not known, but it seems fair to assume that Paulinus eventually acted in the interests of his friend.

Ausonius and Paulinus' concern for reciprocal exchange is however not the only feature that ties in with the previously discussed letters of Symmachus. For in their case, similar social differences were involved that rendered an equality-based relationship impossible. Apart from the fact that Ausonius was much older than Paulinus and that his merits in the imperial service far exceeded that of his younger friend, the former moreover used to be teacher of the latter. Not unlike other contemporary letter writers, they thus resorted to kinship imagery in order to translate the apparent asymmetry into familial terms. In one of the letters, Ausonius sums up the different roles that they were supposed to play. He sent his greetings while fashioning himself as 'your friend (*amicus*) and neighbour (*vicinus*) and your patron (*fautor*), the source of your honours (*auctor honoris*), the fosterer of your intellect (*altor ingenii tui*).'⁵⁸⁶ As renowned professor of rhetoric who, at the same time, happened to occupy key positions in the imperial bureaucracy, Ausonius was not only the one who introduced Paulinus to literature and poetry but also took a leading role in the advancement of his pupil's career. Accordingly, he deserved to be named 'master' (*magister*), 'father' (*parens*) and 'every caressing name of hallowed affection' (*caritatis nomina*).⁵⁸⁶ Whereas Ausonius, apart from being a close *amicus*, liked to think of himself as *magister* and *parens*, Paulinus was supposed to play the role of the docile pupil and obedient son. From Ausonius' point of view, he had thus every right to relate to his friend as 'my son Paulinus' (*Pauline filius*).⁵⁸⁷

While passing on his judgement on a piece of poetry that had been sent by Paulinus, Ausonius praised his pupil above all others, adding the words: 'if I am wrong, I

⁵⁸⁶ Auson. *Ep.* 19b.23-27: *dic '<te> valere', dic 'salvere te iubet / amicus et vicinus et fautor tuus, / honoris auctor, altor ingenii tui.'* / *dic et 'magister', dic 'parens', dic omnia blanda atque sancta caritatis nomina ...* .

⁵⁸⁷ Auson. *Ep.* 19a.2; 20a.2.

am your father (*pater sum*), bear with me and do not force from me a verdict which my natural feelings (*pietate*) reject. But in fact while I love fondly (*cum pie diligam*), I criticise (*iudico*) frankly and strictly.⁵⁸⁸ Ausonius conceded that he would hardly be able to deliver a harsh verdict on the poem because of his fatherly feelings for Paulinus. At the same time, he pointed to the dual role of any father, not only to love (*diligere*) but also to rule (here, to judge, *iudicare*) the members of his household. In so doing, he introduced *pietas*, a key concept for the understanding of Roman family relations, which accounted for both the legal powers and the moral obligations of the *pater familias*. It governed the relationships between family members and, in particular, between the head of the household and his dependents.⁵⁸⁹ Accordingly, Ausonius himself assumed the role of the guiding father, while Paulinus was seen as his son. In the following, the allocation of specific roles is worked out more elaborately. Ausonius quoted a fleeting passage from the poem in question, which alluded to the story of Icarus and Daedalus, one of the most celebrated father-son-relationships in Graeco-Roman mythology.⁵⁹⁰ Whereas Icarus and Paulinus were associated with youthful rashness (*audax, alacritas, temeritas*), the complementary pair – Daedalus and Ausonius – was ascribed notions of moderation and cautiousness (*moderatus, prudentia*). Unlike poor Icarus, however, who disregarded the warning words of his father, Paulinus flew high ‘in such a way that you do not fall’.⁵⁹¹ On the whole, Ausonius’ letter thus presented an idea of friendship that used kinship imagery to account for differences in age and rank. In this context, *pietas* emerged as key principle regulating the relationship between father and son. The scope of the term was however by no means limited to the bounds of the Roman family but equally included other social

⁵⁸⁸ Auson. *Ep.* 17.31-33: *si erro, pater sum, fer me et noli exigere iudicium obstante pietate. verum ego cum pie diligam, sincere ac severe iudico.*

⁵⁸⁹ See my discussion in chapter 2 (cf. above p. 40f.).

⁵⁹⁰ In Ovid’s *Ars amatoria*, the Icarus-narrative is similarly used as an analogy for the teacher-pupil relationship. See AHERN 1989, 273-296.

⁵⁹¹ Auson. *Ep.* 17.35-42; cf. Verg. *Aen.* 6.16-17 for lines 38-39.

relations such as *amicitiae*.⁵⁹² Thus, the ambiguity of the concept itself offered the possibility of presenting kinship and friendship as one and the same.

A final example can be found in a brief versified note, probably a New Year's greeting, that basically consists of a carefully wrought pun on Paulinus and Ausonius' names. The rules of Latin poetry served as the starting point for a laudation on the recipient's honours. For in order to construct the desired measure in the opening line of the letter 'metre so bids, placing you before me and setting your name in front of mine.' Instead of writing *Ausonius Paulino*, as Ausonius usually did in the salutation of his letters, the poem thus reads *Paulino Ausonius*.⁵⁹³ What follows is a lengthy list of compliments. Ausonius conceded that Paulinus not only took precedence because his name came first in the consular *fasti* but also because the fame of his *sella curulis* surpassed his own. Also in poetry, the pupil far exceeded the skills of his master. According to Ausonius, there was but one aspect placing him above his younger friend, and that was 'the glory of prolonged old age' (*honore senectutae*).⁵⁹⁴ This inversion of facts is remarkable and matches the inversion of names in the opening line. Ausonius seems to be referring to his own achievements rather than to the career of Paulinus. He was the one who was summoned to the imperial court because of his rhetorical skills and eloquence, and it was he who eventually became *consul ordinarius* of 379. Paulinus did neither of that. At best, he could pride himself of his suffect consulship in 378 but, in terms of prestige, his consular insignia remained far behind his friend's accumulation of fame and power. Moreover, as Ausonius acknowledged elsewhere, the relationship must have worked the other way round. He was the powerful man, occupying high offices in the imperial bureaucracy, who could act

⁵⁹² For the notion of *pietas* in Roman literature see SCHRÖDER 2012, 335-358. EBBELER 2007, 303-315 explores the theme in the correspondence of Ausonius and Paulinus.

⁵⁹³ Auson. *Ep.* 18.1-2: *Paulino Ausonius: metrum sic suasit ut esses / ut prior et nomen praegrederere meum*. The short poem is composed of elegiac distiches and Ausonius' usual salutary address is worked into the metric structure.

⁵⁹⁴ Auson. *Ep.* 18.3-7 and 11.

and intervene as a patron or *amicus maior* on Paulinus' behalf.⁵⁹⁵ Such inversion of facts thus allowed Ausonius to depict himself as the inferior party, even though in reality he could rest assured of his pre-eminence. The letter has thus to be read in the context of a brief exchange of flattering compliments, in the course of which ascribed social roles were momentarily inverted. Whereas Ausonius usually depicted himself as *pater*, *fautor*, or *magister*, in this case he chose to address his friend from a position of inferiority.

The first letter dossier reveals the *amicitia* between Ausonius and Paulinus as a relationship that was built on reciprocal exchange. Letters and polite attentions had to be requited with equal care. It is telling that, in Ausonius' case, the principle of giving and receiving was even translated into a piece of poetry that imagines the letter's way from one friend to the other, and vice-versa. Not unlike the Symmachean letters, the exchange was by no means limited to the practice of writing letters but also involved the provision of goods and services if needed. Such generosity was intended to generate gratitude, prompting the recipient to make a recompense on another occasion.⁵⁹⁶ Apart from that, Ausonius and Paulinus had to counter-balance the apparent asymmetry in their friendship by using kinship imagery. Differences in age and rank necessitated an appropriate language that was better suited to express inequality than the equality-based rhetoric of friendship. As in Symmachus' case, Ausonius embraced the role of the intellectual father, which made Paulinus his foster-son. This ascription of specific roles was moreover supplemented with a cluster of moral expectations that manifested themselves in the term *pietas*. The father's authority over his household was coupled with a son's duty to show obedience. As long as the involved parties lived up to established standards, the continual flow of giving and receiving remained unimpeded. That this was

⁵⁹⁵ At *Ep.* 19b.24-25 and 22.33-35, Ausonius confirms his role as *magister* and *patronus* of Paulinus.

⁵⁹⁶ On reciprocity see for instance HELLEGOUARC'H 1963, 202-208; SALLER 1982, 21; VERBOVEN 2002, 37-39.

not always the case is indicated by the second letter dossier, which records a more troublesome period. At the heart of the conflict were diverging opinions about the foundations of friendship. The letters demonstrate the potentially disruptive effects of an understanding of *amicitia* that makes one's associations dependent on religious matters. As such, Paulinus' perspective of a fresh convert to Christian asceticism stood against Ausonius' traditionalist view that saw no need for such restrictions. Rather than confining *amicitiae* to the sphere of religion, Ausonius had an idea of friendship in mind that acted to the inclusion of others whenever possible.

At the point when Paulinus stopped answering the letters of Ausonius, an increasing tension becomes noticeable that changed the tone of the interchange considerably. Expressions of affection and loyalty were now coupled with criticism. Initially, Ausonius hoped that 'complaint' (*querimonia*) and 'caressing reproof' (*blanda obiurgatio*) might bring Paulinus to reason. But not a single word had reached him. Paulinus remained silent.⁵⁹⁷ Ausonius urged his friend to maintain the mutual flow of giving and receiving.⁵⁹⁸ He was well aware that reciprocal exchange was an essential part of any friendship, without which *amicitiae* were only hard to sustain. From his point of view, Paulinus' silence represented a breach of duty that could potentially threaten their relationship. At the same time, Ausonius was left wondering about the reasons for Paulinus' silence. Was it because he had changed his nature (*vertisti tuos mores*), or was there a third party involved that kept him from getting in touch? Was he not allowed (*non licet*) to answer, or was he just ashamed 'to have a friend (*amicus*) still alive who claims a father's right (*iure paterno*), while you remain the dependent heir (*obnoxius heres*)?'⁵⁹⁹ As in other instances, Ausonius made recourse to the language of paternal authority in order to

⁵⁹⁷ Auson. *Ep.* 21.3-4; 21.26-28; 22.1-5.

⁵⁹⁸ Auson. *Ep.* 21.30-31; 22.9-10.

⁵⁹⁹ Auson. *Ep.* 21.32-33; 21.50; and 22.6-7: *anne pudet, si quis tibi iure paterno vivat amicus adhuc, maneatque obnoxius heres?*

remind Paulinus of his duties. He explicitly stated that his former pupil was bound to him by the *ius paternum*. While he ascribed to himself the role of the dutiful father, Paulinus is portrayed as docile heir who remained under Ausonius' influence as long as he was alive (*vivat*). This last bit of information is telling. For, according to Roman law, any *pater familias* exercised far-reaching legal powers over the members of his household. It was only after the death of the head of the household that such dependency was dissolved.⁶⁰⁰ Ausonius thus employed legal notions that, in combination with the moral implications that they entailed, were designed to remind Paulinus of the obligations, which a son and prospective heir owed to his father. He thus urged him not to disdain his father (*nec dedignare parentem*), even more so as Ausonius' paternity additionally comprised the role of a nourisher (*altor*) and tutor (*praeceptor*).⁶⁰¹ At the same time, the father-son analogy is closely tied to the notion of friendship. For Ausonius explicitly referred to himself as Paulinus' *amicus*. As a friend he could however not demand what the designated head of the family could: calling his dependents to obedience. The twofold role thus allowed him to convey a friend's concern, while insisting on a father's rights. Despite the passionate appeal to Paulinus' sense of duty, Ausonius suspected somebody else acting behind the scenes: a wicked (*impius*) person that, as a traitor (*proditor*) and inquisitor (*quaesitor*), kept his friend from drafting the much desired response.⁶⁰² In his view, it could have been no one else than Paulinus' wife Therasia. She thus became the dominant Tanaquil, whereas Paulinus is tacitly ascribed the role of the easily suggestible Lucius Tarquinius Priscus.⁶⁰³ In a patriarchally organized society as the Roman empire, this was not how a marriage was supposed to work. Rather than listening to the misleading suggestions of his wife, Paulinus should cherish the bonds of *pietas* to his intellectual father. Accordingly,

⁶⁰⁰ SALLER 2000, 863.

⁶⁰¹ Auson. *Ep.* 22.32-35.

⁶⁰² Auson. *Ep.* 21.62-63; 22.10-11.

⁶⁰³ Auson. *Ep.* 22.31; cf. Juv. 6.566. The story of Tanaquil is told at Livy 1.34; 39; 41.

Ausonius suggested manifold ways in which a message could secretly be conveyed, without her knowing of it.⁶⁰⁴

When Paulinus finally after a more than two-year-long period of silence responded, he acknowledged the receipt of three letters only. The remainder must have gone lost somewhere en route to the recipient.⁶⁰⁵ In addition to that, the letters which he did receive were filled with manifold complaints and criticism. Yet, at the same time, they also contained expressions of continuing love and affection. Paulinus thus rightly observed that ‘troubled love (*anxia pietas*) merged with rebuke (*censurae*)’ adding that ‘your fatherly gentleness (*mite patris*) remained more evident than harsh criticism (*ensoris acerbum*).’⁶⁰⁶ It is worth pointing out that, throughout his response, Paulinus addressed Ausonius as his father. The insertion of a single *pater* in sentences then indicates his continuing readiness to conform to the role, which he was supposed to play. Similarly, he drew on a list of potential attributions that highlighted his veneration for the friend, including words such as parent (*parens*), producer (*genitor*), patron (*patronus*), teacher (*praeceptor*), or lord (*dominus*).⁶⁰⁷ Still, he did not just ignore Ausonius’ accusations but was prepared to invalidate all charges. His defence unfolds in a lengthy passage that consumes almost two third of the letter.⁶⁰⁸ However, the verses are not exclusively devoted to the various reproaches against him and his wife (mainly that Paulinus chose to dwell in forsaken places and that Therasia behaved like a Tanaquil), but also contained a remarkable revelation on Paulinus’ part. For he readily admitted that he had changed his mind (*mens nova mi, fateor*) in a way Ausonius would never have imagined.⁶⁰⁹ The man

⁶⁰⁴ Auson. *Ep.* 22.21-22.

⁶⁰⁵ Paulin. *Carm.* 10.1-8 with MRATSCHEK 2002, 391.

⁶⁰⁶ Paulin. *Carm.* 10.9-11: ... *anxia censurae, miscuerit pietas. / sed mihi mite patris plus quam censoris acerbum / sedit* ...

⁶⁰⁷ Paulin *Carm.* 10.19; 90; 195 (*pater*); 96 (*patronus*); 109 (*genitor*); 189 (*parens*); 239 (*dominus*).

⁶⁰⁸ Paulinus changes the metric measure from iambs to heroic hexameters to separate the introductory part (1-102) from the part in which he unfolds his defence (103-331); cf. Paulin. *Carm.* 10.13-18.

⁶⁰⁹ Paulin. *Carm.* 10.131-133; 142.

whom Ausonius used to know did no longer exist. The Paulinus of old had converted into a new self, and the force that was able to accomplish such a conversion was God alone. Hence, he said: ‘but now another power (*alia vis*), a greater God (*maior deus*), inspires my mind (*mentem*) and demands another way of life (*aliosque mores*).’⁶¹⁰ To be sure, Paulinus’ family background was Christian. Not unlike others, he had however suspended his baptism until the late 380s before he eventually embarked on an ecclesiastical career as an ordained priest in 394. Such course of action represented nothing out of the ordinary, for adult baptism still remained the norm in the fourth century.⁶¹¹ Together with Ausonius, Paulinus cherished a Christian life that was compatible with classical culture, worldly ambitions, and wealth. Theirs was a world in which ancient literature and philosophy could still be cherished for what they were; in which the fame of a political career still counted for much; and in which the accumulation of wealth and power still formed part of the aristocratic self-image. Paulinus’ conversion, in the course of which he associated himself with a more rigorous, ascetic form of Christianity, thus concerned his dissociation of principles and values that had hitherto determined his life. In their place, another belief had come to the fore, one for which the renunciation of worldly goods and ambitions were the central concerns of a divine call.⁶¹²

The changed *mores* are then the predominant theme of the correspondence. Whereas Ausonius remained attached to the old order despite being Christian, Paulinus began to fashion himself in light of the Christian God. Eventually, the apparent change of mind found expression in the reappraisal of social core concepts such as *fides* and *pietas*. As we have previously seen, they played a pivotal role regulating a variety of diverse

⁶¹⁰ Paulin. *Carm.* 10.29-30: *nunc alia mentem vis agit, maior deus, / aliosque mores postulat*

⁶¹¹ Consider the example of Ambrose whose baptism preceded his ordination to priesthood, which was then followed by the ascension to the episcopacy. For adult baptism in general see FERGUSON 2009, 631-633 which should be read together with JENSEN 2012, 371-405.

⁶¹² For Paulinus’ act of renunciation see BROWN 2012, 208-223.

relationships, which among others included family relations and friendship. The broad scope of the vocabulary involved proved advantageous for Ausonius and Paulinus who combined kinship imagery with the language of *amicitia* to negotiate the exact terms of their relationship. Trust and reliability played a pivotal role in their friendship. It comes then as no surprise that either neglect of or adherence to the principle of reciprocity were indicative of the degree of *fides* that Paulinus and Ausonius were prepared to place in one another. *Pietas*, on the other hand, had its proper place in the household where it governed the relationships between family members. It was thus not without reason that Ausonius supplemented his claim to paternity with an appeal to Paulinus' sense of duty as his heir. In his response, Paulinus however proposed a different relational setup that did not focus on the actual partner but introduced God as a third party.

That faith (*quae*, referring to *fides* of the previous sentence) does not cast away as sacrilegious or cheap the riches we seem to scorn, but advises us to lend them to Christ our God, and have them stored in heaven (Matt 6:20). He has promised us more than we give, he has promised to pay back with abundant interest what we now scorn or rather lodge with him. God will guard that sum without defrauding us, and as debtor (*debitor*) will return (*reddet*) it augmented to his creditors (*creditoribus*). With greater generosity he will with abundant interest restore the money, which we spurned.⁶¹³

From these lines, two important themes emerge that need to be discussed in more detail. Whereas one is made explicit, the other is only implied. As regards content, Paulinus linked the notion *fides* to a distinctively Christian concern for the salvation of one's soul, which was to be achieved through the renunciation of worldly riches. In so doing, he used contractual language to depict the transactional nature of the procedure. God appears as

⁶¹³ Paulin. *Carm.* 10.70-80: *quae quas videmur spernere / non ut profanas abicit aut viles opes, / sed ut magis caras monet / caelo reponi creditas Christo deo, / qui plura promisit datis, / contempta praesens vel mage deposita sibi / multo ut rependat faenore; / sine fraude custos aucta creditoribus / bonus aera reddet debitor / multaue spretam largior pecuniam / restituet usura deus.*

debtor (*debitor*) of human creditors (*creditores*) who had given away their possessions. At the very heart, the relationship between humans and God was thus thought to be reciprocal. To achieve salvation, no self-sacrificing act on behalf of the poor was needed. Rather, anyone who followed the divine calling by renouncing his or her belongings could expect divine remuneration. The bond between God and mankind thus acquired the quality of a patron-client-relationship that was marked by an asymmetrical distribution of power.⁶¹⁴ Christians had to give what was considered God's due in order to earn the reward of eternal life in return. On a relational level such conceptualization of *fides* must have had an immediate effect on the conduct of relationships. If a divine force was to replace one's fellow human being as the main target for mutual exchange, the structure of interpersonal relations could not stay the same. What once was at the discretion of the partners involved, shaping their friendship according to certain rules and conventions, was now attributed to God. Accordingly, *amicitiae* could no longer be formed for the sake of a friend alone but required a mutual agreement in the concept of God. From Paulinus' perspective, God was thus not simply the target of an individual's devotion (by rejecting wealth and worldly ambitions) but he also acted as an intermediary between friends. He was the force that attached friends to one another.

With respect to the concept of *pietas* we can observe a similar shift in meaning. As we have seen, Ausonius used the corresponding language to shape the relationship with Paulinus as one between father and son. Whereas the fatherly role obligated the *pater familias* to love and rule those under his authority, a son was expected to show obedience in return. Paulinus, however, gave the rules according to which family relations were to be structured a decisively Christian twist:

⁶¹⁴ REBENICH 2001, 61-80, here esp. 68.

How can affection (*pietas*) be lacking (*abesse*) in a Christian? Being a Christian is the reciprocal guarantee of affection (*argumentum mutuum pietatis*), and the mark of impiety (*impiū*) is non-subjection to Christ (*non esse Christo subditum*). This is the affection I am learning to possess. How can I refrain from showing it to you, my father (*id est patri*), to whom God has willed I should acknowledge every sacred duty (*sancta iura*) and expression of affection (*cara nomina*)? To you I owe my training, my distinction, my literary skills, the glory of my eloquence, my secular career, my reputation; to you I owe my preferment, my sustenance, my education, for you are my patron (*patrone*), teacher (*praeceptor*), and father (*pater*).⁶¹⁵

Paulinus did neither contest nor reject Ausonius' place in his life, especially as far as educational formation and career advancement were concerned. At the same time, however, he also acknowledged that a new, far superior force had entered the stage with which one could not possibly compete. Ausonius remained the one to whom he owed both his career in the public service and his rhetorical training. Therefore, he deserved to be named not only *pater* but also *patronus* and *praeceptor*. Above all, however, *pietas* was owed to Christ.⁶¹⁶ According to Paulinus, God was the greater father that must be set before all social ties. Being Christian was thus thought to be the quintessential expression of *pietas*. It involved one's wholehearted commitment to the cause of God and the acknowledgment of his paternity. By contrast, the notion of *impietas* stood for disloyalty, that is, one's refusal to acknowledge his paternal authority (*non esse Christo subditum*). Along these lines, Paulinus construed a person's relationship to God as one between father and child. While God exercised paternal authority over the members of the divine household, the dependents under his protection were obliged to observe his commandments. As in the case of *fides*, the focus of *pietas* had thus been shifted from the sphere of interhuman

⁶¹⁵ Paulin. *Carm.* 10.83-96: *pietas abesse Christiano qui potest? / namque argumentum mutuum est / pietatis, esse Christianum, et impiū, / non esse Christo subditum. / hanc cum tenere discimus, possum tibi / non exhibere, id est patri, / cui cuncta sancta iura, cara nomina, debere me voluit deus? / tibi disciplinas dignitatem litteras, / linguae togae famae decus / proventus alius institutus debeo, / patrone praeceptor pater.*

⁶¹⁶ Paulinus' acknowledgement to honour the *sancta iura* seems to reflect Ausonius' reference to the *ius paternum* that set the tone for this renegotiation of the terms of their friendship.

solidarity to one's attachment with God. This did not necessarily mean that interpersonal relationships needed to be avoided, but that social relations were subjected to God's rule.

Even though Paulinus placed men's obligations towards God before all earthly ties, Ausonius was still reminded of his fatherly duties. *Fides* and *pietas*, as Paulinus pointed out, demanded that a father gave credence to neither rumours nor false reports but took a firm stand against such allegations. It was thus his duty to stand by and defend his son rather than to agree with the accusations of malevolent informers. Moreover, Ausonius' way of suggesting criticism, mingling 'jocose flattery' (*blanditiis*) with 'sharp-toothed satire' (*satirae mordacis*), was more appropriate to the demeanour of poets than the bearing of fathers.⁶¹⁷ For Ausonius, Paulinus' words must have appeared as harsh criticism. After all, he was accused of failing to live up to the principles of *pietas*. In Paulinus' view, however, Ausonius should have enquired into the intents and purposes of his conversion first before judging him prematurely. Paulinus moreover stated that anger (*ira*) was only fitting if he had gone astray and changed 'from piety to ungodliness' (*religiosa profanis ... mutatus*). Only in this case, it would have been Ausonius' duty 'to recall his fallen friend (*amicum*) to decent ways.'⁶¹⁸ But Paulinus did not see how a life in Christ could at all be considered a 'mental aberration' (*mentis ut errorem*), throwing back at Ausonius what seems to have been one of his most scathing accusations.⁶¹⁹ Ultimately, he concluded his letter with a message that could easily be taken as a threat: 'if you approve this (*si placet*) take pleasure in the rich hopes of your friend (*amici*). If you disapprove (*si contra est*), leave me (*linque me*) to win approval from Christ alone.'⁶²⁰ Paulinus made unmistakably clear that the pleasures of *amicitia* could only be enjoyed if Ausonius was willing to accept his conversion. Any disagreement upon religious matters would eventually lead to the

⁶¹⁷ Paulin. *Carm.* 10.260-270.

⁶¹⁸ Paulin. *Carm.* 10.271-277.

⁶¹⁹ Paulin. *Carm.* 10.282-284.

⁶²⁰ Paulin. *Carm.* 10.330-331: *si placet hoc, gratare tui spe divite amici, / si contra est, Christo tantum me linque probari.*

rupture of friendship. Ausonius was thus given the choice either to approve of Paulinus' new way of life or to leave him alone.

In response to this challenge, Ausonius drafted another letter, reasserting the central points of his complaint. According to the most recent editor of the text, two different versions of the letter have been preserved: a shorter text that has come down to us as part of Paulinus' collection of poems, and a longer version that can be found among the works of Ausonius only.⁶²¹ Given the circumstances of the text's transmission, it may then well be possible that it was the short version that was put into circulation rather than the much longer companion piece. But we cannot entirely be sure, especially because the last surviving letter of Paulinus seems to echo the text of the longer rather than that of the shortened version.⁶²² Moreover, we can only speculate about the reasons for such a reworking of the text. Yet it was not uncommon at all to find ancient letter writers revising and reworking their texts before publication.⁶²³ In essence, however, the two versions touch on the same points of criticism. Ausonius certainly had no choice but to accept Paulinus' decision to trade wealth and political influence for an ascetic way of life. At the same time, both versions of his response reveal a strong sense of estrangement. So, for instance, when Ausonius assessed the great loss resulting from his friend's plan to sell large parts of landed property, or when he blamed Paulinus for being forgetful of old friends (*veterum amicis*) while trusting (*fidere*) in strangers.⁶²⁴ He moreover employed the image of the yoke as a way of expressing the equal involvement of partners in a relationship. Eventually, Ausonius exclaimed: 'we are shaking off (*discutimus*) a yoke, Paulinus',⁶²⁵ for he strongly believed that Paulinus' sudden change of life was about to endanger the

⁶²¹ See GREEN 1991, 225-231 for the text and 654-663 for the commentary.

⁶²² Compare Auson. *Ep.* 24.8-11 with Paulin. *Carm.* 11.21-28.

⁶²³ GREEN 1991, 655 mentions *Ep.* 14 to Theon where Ausonius refers to an earlier version, which is not preserved.

⁶²⁴ Auson. *Ep.* 23.35-38 and 24.107-110.

⁶²⁵ Auson. *Ep.* 23.1 and 24.1: *Discutimus, Pauline, iugum (...)*.

unanimity that had marked their *amicitia* thus far. Even though the plural of the verb *discutere*, meaning to shatter or dash to pieces, may imply an equal involvement in the destruction of their friendship, Ausonius did not fail to point out that it was all Paulinus' fault: 'Yet it is being shaken off (*discutitur*), Paulinus; and that not through the fault of both, but of one alone – of you.'⁶²⁶ Here we may perceive a potential reason prompting Ausonius to work over the letter minutely before sending it to his friend. Whereas the lengthier version seems to leave more room to manoeuvre, the phrasing of the shorter text points very directly to the guilt of Paulinus: 'We are shaking off (the yoke) but you alone are to be blamed.'⁶²⁷ It may then well be possible that the shorter version represents the original text, while the longer underwent modifications that attempted to counterbalance the harsh criticism of the initial reaction.⁶²⁸

In any case, Ausonius launched a strong appeal to Paulinus' sense of duty when he touched on the fact that their fathers (*parentes*) had already taken on the yoke of friendship a long time ago, before passing it on to their dutiful heirs (*piis heredibus*). He moreover added that this relationship remained intact as long as 'there was joyous trust (*laeta fides*) and no laborious care (*cura laborat*) to maintain exchange of good offices (*officii servare vices*).'⁶²⁹ At this point, Ausonius' argumentation obviously joins in with Paulinus' preceding discussion of *pietas* and *fides*. But, in this case, it was not so much a radical reappraisal of social core concepts that was presented to the reader but the perpetuation of a traditionalist view that adhered to the moral standards of old. After all, he did not link the notion of *pietas* to God the Father, as Paulinus had done, but highlighted the

⁶²⁶ Auson. *Ep.* 24.19-20: *discutitur, Pauline, tamen, nec culpa duorum / ista, sed unius tantum tua.*

⁶²⁷ Auson. *Ep.* 23.6: *discutimus, sed tu tantum reus.*

⁶²⁸ This is the suggestion of GREEN 1991, 655. Also in other instances, the shorter version is more forceful than the long companion piece (compare *Ep.* 23.16-22 with *Ep.* 24.30-35).

⁶²⁹ Auson. *Ep.* 24.8-14: *tam placidum, tam mite iugum, quod utrique parentes / ad senium nostri taxere ab origine vitae / impositumque piis heredibus usque manere / optarunt dum longa dies dissolveret aevum. / et mansit, dum laeta fides nec cura laborat / officii servare vices, sed sponte feruntur / incustoditum sibi continuantia cursum.*

ancestral ties to their fathers and forefathers as worthy of honour. Likewise, the notion of *fides* remained earthbound, structuring the giving and receiving between human beings.⁶³⁰ Thus, Ausonius' understanding of trust and mutuality did not reach into the sphere of God but stayed within the realm of interpersonal relationships. Implicitly, he moreover reasserted one of his previous contentions that the neglect of reciprocal exchange was the main reason for the current estrangement. For Ausonius, there was no doubt that it was Paulinus who had to be blamed: 'Do you perceive your fault (*tuam culpam*), my dearest Pontius (*Ponti dulcissime*)?'⁶³¹ Along these lines, he identified Paulinus' course of action as the true cause for displeasure in this matter and did not miss out the opportunity to remind his negligent friend of the apparent misconduct.

At the same time, however, expressions of complaint were mingled with demonstrations of prolonged affection (as can already be seen from the chosen salutation *Ponti dulcissime*). Ausonius not only hoped that his 'errant comrade' (*profugum sodalem*) could be brought to reason but also that the *fides* to his old friend (*veteris amici*) may persist despite the current difficulties.⁶³² As far as he was concerned, he was even prepared to acknowledge that 'my loyalty (*fides*) remains steadfast and, never to be changed, my regard of the Paulinus of old days (*Paulini veteris*) endures, even as the harmony between my father and yours (*concordia patri*).'⁶³³ In addition to that, he counted their *amicitia* among the most celebrated friendships of the Graeco-Roman world: 'already they were about to enter our names (*nomina nostra*) in the lists of friends (*amicis*) belonging to nobler days of old.' Neither Orestes and Pylades, nor Eurylaus and Nisus, nor Damon and Pythias could match their achievements, and even the famous friendship between Scipio and Laelius,

⁶³⁰ See for instance the mention of the *senatoria fides* at Symm. *Ep.* 9.43 or the references to *fiducia* and *fides seria* at *Ep.* 1.37.1-2 as other examples for this understanding of the concept.

⁶³¹ Auson. *Ep.* 23.23 and 24.95: *agnoscisne tuam, Ponti dulcissime, culpam?*

⁶³² Auson. *Ep.* 23.16-18.

⁶³³ Auson. *Ep.* 23.24-26 and 24.96-98.

whom Cicero had presented as an example of true and lasting *amicitia*, could not compete with the fame of their names: ‘we, with pursuits and hearts the same (*studiis animisque isdem*), were marvellous to all, the more for this that we were equals though un-equal-aged.’⁶³⁴ This assertion, along with the mention of Scipio and Laelius as ideal friends, echoes Cicero’s classical definition that presented unanimity and affection as the basic ingredients for true friendship.⁶³⁵ In so doing, Ausonius placed himself and Paulinus in a time-honoured tradition of friendship that can be traced back as far as the Roman Republic.

In the last surviving letter of the correspondence, Paulinus adopted a more conciliatory tone in order to smoothen the previous tensions. Again he summarized the charges that Ausonius had brought against him: namely, that he persisted in speechlessness (*silentia linguae*), chose to live in hiding-places (*placitamque latebris desidiam*), that he feared his wife (*formidatamque iugalem*), and that he neglected the rules of friendship (*neglectaeque ... crimen amicitiae*). The dutiful care of a father, he concluded, should not be mingled with words of bitterness (*nec amara paternis admiscere velis*).⁶³⁶ Yet, this time, Paulinus quickly went over not only to restore the shrinking trust (*fides*) for one another but also to reinstate the bonds of *pietas*, which both had been put to the test. Accordingly, he said: ‘it was and it remains my abiding care to observe every duty towards you (*officiis te omnibus excolere*) and to show you faithful affection (*affectu observare fideli*).’ In the concluding passage of the letter, he moreover added: ‘though I be separated from you by a whole world or a lifetime, I shall never be divorced from you in mind (*numquam animo*

⁶³⁴ Auson. *Ep.* 24.32-39: ... iam nomina nostra parabant / inserere antiquis aevi melioris amicis. / cedebat Pylades, Phrygii quoque gloria Nisi / iam minor et promissa obiens vadimonia Damon. / nos documenta magis felicia, qualia magnus / Scipio longaevisque dedit sapientia Laeli; / nos studiis animisque isdem miracula cunctis, / hoc maiora, pares fuimus quod dispare in aevo.

⁶³⁵ Cic. *Amic.* 20.

⁶³⁶ Paulin. *Carm.* 11.1-7.

divisus agam).⁶³⁷ Nothing is left of the threat of the previous letter, in which he gave Ausonius the choice to either approve of his ascetic way of life or leave him alone. Instead, he took his proper place as the subordinate partner in the relationship: ‘you complain that I have taken off the yoke (*discussisse iugum*), which joined me to your literary pursuits. But I maintain that I never shouldered it, for equals (*pares*) undertake a yoke.’⁶³⁸ Paulinus conceded that he had never been Ausonius’ equal and therefore cannot be the one who was supposed to share the yoke with him. In so doing, he restored the friendship’s inherent asymmetry that had marked their exchange in less troubled times. The only yoke then that he was prepared to share with Ausonius was love (*amore*). For ‘sweet friendship’ (*dulcis amicitia*) was the only means able to level the apparent inequality ‘through our equal observance of perennial love towards each other (*paribus semper redamandi legibus*).’⁶³⁹ As he stated twice in this last letter, he and Ausonius were not only bound together by mutual affection, but also concurred in their views regarding God.⁶⁴⁰ For Paulinus, as he had previously indicated, this was the precondition for the continuation of friendship. After all, it seems that he was not prepared to deny Ausonius the sincerity of his faith.

The above considerations have indicated crucial differences in Ausonius and Paulinus’ conceptualization of socially relevant categories such as *fides* and *pietas*. While the former placed special emphasis on the actual relationship between friends, the latter presented God as a mediating third party through which *amicitiae* could only be established and maintained. From Ausonius’ perspective, *fides* was crucially tied to the

⁶³⁷ Paulin. *Carm.* 11.8-9: *cura mihi semper fuit et manet officiis te / omnibus excolere, affectu observare fideli.* 11.46-47: *toto licet abstrahar orbe vel aevo, numquam animo divisus agam.*

⁶³⁸ Paulin. *Carm.* 11.30-32: *discussisse iugum quereris me, quo tibi doctis / iunctus eram studiis. hoc ne gestasse quidem me / assero. namque pares subeunt iuga ...*

⁶³⁹ Paulin. *Carm.* 11.42-43: *dulcis amicitia aeterno mihi foedere tecum / et paribus semper redamandi legibus aequa.*

⁶⁴⁰ Paulin. *Carm.* 11.18-19: *inque tuum tantus nobis consensus amorem est, / quantus et in Christum conexa mente colendum.* See also Paulinus’ reference to their *communis pater* at 11.59.

continual flow of giving and receiving, which implicated a sufficient degree of trust to make the relationship work. *Pietas*, on the other hand, obligated Ausonius and Paulinus in their respective roles as father and son to one another. The experienced teacher of rhetoric was thus able to call to obedience his former pupil, reminding him of the moral duties that were legally defined by the *ius paternum*. By contrast, Paulinus' view after his conversion to an ascetic way of life was determined by a particular focus on religion. The principles of mutuality and trust were redirected toward the divine in the hope that one's generosity would eventually be remunerated by God. Similarly, his filial obedience did no longer aim at the continuity of social ties but envisioned God as celestial father and main authority of the divine household. Earthly ties, it seems, were given a subordinate role while Paulinus' focus stayed on the heavenly sphere. This also means that *amicitia* could only exist if friends shared the same conception of God, which resulted in Paulinus' threat toward Ausonius to either approve of his new way of life or to leave him alone. Such bluntness of speech formed a marked contrast to other aristocratic writers like Symmachus, who tended to voice criticism without taking the risk of losing valuable contacts. On the other hand, Paulinus' reappraisal of morally binding core concepts ties in with Ambrose's model of clerical friendship, which equally highlighted the importance of shared religious convictions as determining factor for Christian fellowship.

6. *Inimica amicitia*: Christian friendship and religious conviction

Implicated in Ambrose's version of a Roman classic was a transformation of *amicitia* that took one's statement of faith as the main determinant for either friendship or enmity. On an ecclesial level, such thinking made a real difference as those who did not share the bishop's doctrinal views were treated as avowed enemies. This is indicated by the example of Palladius who gained first-hand experience of the Ambrosian circle at the council of Aquileia in 381. In other contexts, however, the bishop of Milan was apt enough to adjust his tone if needed. While writing to aristocratic circles, the main focus was on the maintenance of amicable relations regardless of the religious affiliations involved. In this respect, Ambrose's letters reveal a familiarity with the rules and conventions of *amicitia* that is comparable to the style of writing exhibited by Roman grandees like Symmachus. These observations hint at the actual practice of friendship, which presented itself as a much more complex and diverse undertaking than is suggested by the theoretical considerations of the *De officiis*. At the same time, the findings also point to certain social contexts in which the harsh reality of the Ambrosian friend-enemy distinction became effective, while in others a more nuanced understanding of friendship can be discerned.

As long as questions concerning the faith were not at stake, *amicitiae* could still flourish despite religious incongruity. The evidence however also raises the question whether such handling of ecclesial opposition was limited to Ambrose and his North Italian episcopal colleagues, or if we are dealing with a phenomenon that had wider implications for individual relationships and the social cohesion in the church. The previously discussed letter exchange between Ausonius and Paulinus suggests that it did but we need to take into account further contemporary literature to put our hypothesis

on a sound basis. It is in this light that we now broaden the horizons of our investigation from the bounds of the Milanese church to other late fourth, early fifth century Christian writers and their views on friendship. The purpose of this is to show that Ambrose did not remain the only author, challenging the principles of a time-honoured philosophical concept. In particular, we have the testimony of Augustine, Paulinus, and Jerome, who all saw friendship as contingent on what they believed to be religious truth. If a consensus about the faith could not be reached, *amicitiae* were better dissolved. On the one hand, such interdependence of friendship and belief can be seen from Augustine who, like Ambrose, propounded a philosophical argument that systematically explored the potential of the concept. It may then be no coincidence that he, too, reverted to Cicero as the main authority to start his discussion. On the other hand, the writings of Paulinus and Jerome provide a rare insight into the actual practice of friendship as opposed to its conceptualization and theological underpinning. While the former's correspondence with Sulpicius Severus is to be read in conjunction with the Ausonian evidence of the previous chapter, illustrating the workings of a functioning relationship among Christian ascetics, the case of Jerome and Rufinus serves as an example for the disruptive effects of conflict and strife in Christian friendships. In both instances, the language of *amicitia* played a key role in the way how the parties communicated with one another.

6.1 Friendship and community in Augustine

All his life the trained rhetorician and later bishop of Hippo, Aurelius Augustinus, was drawn to friends and much of his thinking revolved around a vision of community that built on the principles of *amicitia*. Be it his boyhood friends at Thagaste, the Manichean circles of Carthage and Rome, the communal experiment at Cassiciacum, or the monastic community at Hippo, friendship was a constant companion in Augustine that

affected the bishop's views regarding the foundations of human solidarity and society. The prominence of this theme in Augustine's work has long been acknowledged and there is a fast growing literature on the subject that is increasingly difficult to grasp. Particular attention has been given to the relationship between friendship and Christian love, Augustine's epistolary networks, and the bishop's views on building community.⁶⁴¹ Less frequent are studies that treat friendship as existing in a dialectical opposition to *inimicitia*, though there are notable exceptions. Most important in this regard are the contributions of Alfons Fürst and Stefan Rebenich who both explored the theme of dissent and strife in Augustine's correspondence with Jerome.⁶⁴² It was particularly the latter who took *amicitia* as an indicator for orthodoxy, highlighting heterodox positions as deserving of *inimicitia*. The conflict between Augustine and Jerome then appears as a particular case, in which 'friendship ... no longer rested on identical philosophical or political assumptions (as in the Roman Republic or imperial Rome), but on discursively constituted religious and dogmatic norms.'⁶⁴³ Building on these observations, I will point to other instances in the bishop's oeuvre that establish friendship as a precious good that could only be attained if an agreement in matters of faith was reached. This view presupposes the existence of *inimici* at the other end of the spectrum, who did not share the same religious convictions. In particular, I will focus on different stages in Augustine's career, showing how his developing ideas regarding friendship affected the evaluation of past relationships. Central to his views on human solidarity and communal life is the identification of the main principles of *amicitia* with the the biblical precept of love. The

⁶⁴¹ On networks and the concept of friendship see the literature in chapter 1 (cf. above p. 6 with n. 8f.). For Augustine's idea of monastic community see LAWLESS 1987; VAN BAVEL 2003; BROWN 2012, 161-172; LANE FOX 2015, 372-375; 377-382; 386.

⁶⁴² FÜRST 1999 and REBENICH 2008, 11-31. Augustine's involvement in religious controversies has thoroughly been investigated. See the overview by HUMFRESS 2012, 323-335 with further references.

⁶⁴³ REBENICH 2012, 374.

point of departure is provided by Augustine's stay in Milan, where he came into contact with different concepts of life that crucially shaped his later vision of community.

When Augustine moved to the North Italian capital in late 384 to take up a position as professor of rhetoric, he made the acquaintance of the local bishop Ambrose, who had held his office for ten years already. In the *Confessiones*, their first encounter is described as warm and friendly, yet somewhat distant. For Ambrose, it seems, Augustine was just another potential client of whom there were only too many waiting in line to enlist the bishop's support. Consequently, Augustine's repeated attempts at engaging Ambrose in a conversation failed either due to the press of people who all wanted their share of the bishop's attention or because of Ambrose's unavailability. Augustine had to content himself with regular visits to the local church, where he could listen to the bishop's sermons.⁶⁴⁴ These were turbulent times for Milan. In 385, Ambrose clashed with emperor Valentinian II who claimed a basilica for the use of his Homoian entourage. In the following year, the conflict reached its climax as imperial demands were reiterated. The bishop organized the resistance by occupying the church building while Roman troops surrounded the place. Augustine was witness to the the turmoils that the city had experienced in the wake of Ambrose's intervention; and his mother Monica, who had joined her son in Italy, even took an active part in the bishop's display of power.⁶⁴⁵ The North African rhetor, however, seemed more concerned with his own personal path. Already before his arrival in Milan, he became increasingly disillusioned with Manichean dualism and turned to the study of the New Academy whose skepticism he later rejected. Eventually, he came into contact with neoplatonic thought, most notably the works of Plotinus, which taught him that a supreme divinity was the source of all things and that

⁶⁴⁴ Aug. *Conf.* 5.13.23; 6.3.3-4. For Augustine and Ambrose see BROWN 2012, 120-147 and LANE FOX 2015, 181-199.

⁶⁴⁵ Aug. *Conf.* 9.7.15-16. See FUHRER 2013, 17-36 who argues for a connection between Ambrose's intervention and Augustine's subsequent conversion.

evil had no positive existence. At the same time, and probably under the influence of his mother, Augustine tightened his connections with the church. As his liaison acted the priest Simplicianus, in whom he found a loyal servant of God to talk to.⁶⁴⁶ He moreover resumed his Christian education, for which he had first been enrolled while being a child in his hometown Thagaste. During the Sunday services, he was particularly impressed by Ambrose's allegorical reading of the stories of the Old Testament patriarchs, which helped him see the ostensibly unsavoury narratives in a different light.⁶⁴⁷ Ultimately, Augustine's personal crisis culminated in a conversion experience that is vividly described in the *Confessiones*. He was standing in a garden ground while an unseen child told him to take up and read the Pauline texts that he had with him. What he found in these pages was the imperative that he had 'to put on the Lord Jesus Christ' (*induite dominum Iesum Christum*) rather than indulging in the pleasures of this world.⁶⁴⁸

Augustine's turning to a neoplatonic interpretation of the Christian God had immediate consequences for his personal life. During summer 386, he decided not only to quit his post as rhetor but also to put into action a long-cherished plan that fundamentally built on the premises of friendship. Together with his *amici*, most notably the affluent patron Romanianus, Augustine had for some time already entertained the idea to form a community that should be characterized by the 'sincerity of friendship' (*amicitiae sinceritas*) and joint property.⁶⁴⁹ In late August 386, after a failed attempt, the plan was put into practice by Augustine and some of his North African companions, including his friend Alypius who would later become bishop of Thagaste. They moved to Cassiciacum in the immediate vicinity of Milan, where Verecundus – a grammarian

⁶⁴⁶ Aug. *Conf.* 8.1.1-2.5.

⁶⁴⁷ Aug. *Conf.* 5.14.25; 6.4.6.

⁶⁴⁸ Aug. *Conf.* 8.12.28-30. When Augustine opened the book, his eyes immediately fastened on Rom 13:13-14.

⁶⁴⁹ Aug. *Conf.* 6.14.24.

and friend of Augustine – owned a villa.⁶⁵⁰ In seclusion, far from the nearby capital, they engaged in philosophical discussions, studied poetry, made extended walks through the meadows, and even did some occasional farmwork.⁶⁵¹ The product of this period of deliberation and self-reflection were Augustine’s dialogues *Contra Academicos*, *De beata vita*, *De ordine*, and the *Soliloquia*. These works convey a picture of Augustine and his companions at Cassiciacum that came close to fulfilling the initial plans of a community based on friendship. It is particularly Augustine’s own presentation that contributes to this impression. His choice of the dialogue as the appropriate form to render his pursuits ties in with a well-established literary tradition that recalls famous examples such as Cicero’s *Hortensius*. Each dialogue is presented as a conversation between friends, while Augustine’s interlocutor in the *Soliloquia* was his own *ratio*. Similarly, the rural setting on and around a country estate, where the discussions allegedly took place, and the emphasis on ‘leisure time’ add to this impression, thereby evoking an aristocratic lifestyle that typically oscillated between business activities in the city and the more pleasurable pursuits that could be enjoyed in the countryside (*negotium – otium*).⁶⁵² Most revealing, however, is Augustine’s emphasis on shared property that does not only tie in with the ancient friendship tradition but also points ahead to the bishop’s monastic project at Hippo, which built on the ideal of sharing too. At the centre of his conception, we find the biblical depiction of the Jerusalem community which, according to Acts 2:44 and 4:32, was characterized by unanimity of mind and joint property. On the one hand, as we have repeatedly seen, such thinking echoed the age-old Pythagorean maxim that friends have all things in common (κοινὰ τὰ τῶν φίλων), and it is therefore no surprise to

⁶⁵⁰ Aug. *Conf.* 9.4.7-12. For previous attempts at identifying the exact location see O’DALY 1994, 773f.

⁶⁵¹ See for instance the description at Aug. *Acad.* 2.10.

⁶⁵² O’MEARA 1951, 162f.; TROUT 1988, esp. 136f.; O’DALY 1994, 774f. There has been much discussion whether the settings of the dialogues represent actual events or are literary constructs. MADEC 1986, 207-231 argued the case for their historicity while CONYBEARE 2006 is more sceptical.

see Augustine making the connection to what he called *amicitiae sinceritas*. On the other hand, the attentive reader of the *Confessiones* would also have recognized in Augustine's claim to oneness of mind and community of goods the very foundation, according to which life in the bishop's monastic establishments was organized. For the *Praeceptum* for the monastic community at Hippo explicitly stated that the *fratres* ought to be of 'one heart and one soul' (*anima una et cor unum*) and that they were to 'possess everything in common' (*sint vobis omnia communia*).⁶⁵³

Friendship provided not only the pattern on which the communal life at Cassiciacum was built. It was moreover the subject for the sort of philosophical discussions and solitary reflections that marked the daily routine. In the *Soliloquia*, for instance, Augustine saw *amicitia* founded in a shared love for wisdom. Consequently, he declared that his friends 'will be all the closer to me, the more the object of our love is shared among us'.⁶⁵⁴ The reason for the community's being together and hence the basis of their friendship was identified with the participants' shared desire for *sapientia*. Augustine thus saw himself drawn to his friends by a common cause, which was their philosophical quest for wisdom. In the dialogue *Contra Academicos*, such agreement in common pursuits is demonstrated by the example of Alypius.⁶⁵⁵ During the alleged exchange, Augustine finds himself agreeing with his interlocutor's previous remark that only a divine entity could reveal truth to man. This consensus in the nature and attainability of truth eventually resulted in a longer celebration of friendship:

I find my most intimate friend (*familiarissimus amicus meus*) agreeing with me not only on probability as a factor of human life (*de probabilitate humanae vitae*), but also on religion itself (*de ipsa religione*) – a point which is the clearest sign of a true friend (*quod est veri amici manifestissimum indicium*); for

⁶⁵³ Aug. *Reg.* 1.2-3 with reference to Acts 4:32; 35. For the role of the Jerusalem community see VAN BAVEL 2003.

⁶⁵⁴ Aug. *Sol.* 1.22: *tanto mihi amiciores futuri, quanto erit nobis amata communior.*

⁶⁵⁵ See the commentary by FUHRER 1997, 281f.

friendship (*amicitia*) has been rightly and with just reverence defined as agreement on things human and divine combined with goodwill and love (*rerum humanarum et divinarum cum benivolentia et caritate consensio*).⁶⁵⁶

The definition to which Augustine referred in this passage was taken from Cicero's *Laelius*, which stated that *amicitia* ought to be built on *consensio* and affection (*benevolentia et caritas*). Such consensus was moreover expected to comprise both human and divine matters (*res humanarum et divinarum*).⁶⁵⁷ In *Contra Academicos*, Augustine then applied this characterization to his relationship with Alypius that had already been marked by an agreement in the *probabilitas* of human existence. Now, as the friend expressed his thoughts about the attainability of truth, the Ciceronian maxim seemed ultimately to be complemented by a consensus in religion (*religio*) too. Accordingly, the passage described Alypius as *verus amicus* whose attitudes towards matters human and divine concurred with Augustine's views. Even though the term *religio* remained unspecified here, the idea that religion formed one, if not the foremost, precondition for true friendship later became one of Augustine's chief principles. At this point, however, God was still interpreted in light of Augustine's neoplatonic reading as an impersonal, divine force rather than the personal God that the later bishop would come to embrace.⁶⁵⁸

About the same time as Ambrose, Augustine thus suggested a vision of human solidarity that equally harked back to Cicero's views on *amicitia*. Given the fact that the rhetor and the bishop knew each other, it is tempting to establish a connection between the two conceptions: on the one hand, the clerical model of brotherly friendship (*amicitia cum fratribus*) that drew its strength from the proclamation of the religious truth; on the other, the philosophically inspired circle of friends withdrawing from the city in order to

⁶⁵⁶ Aug. *Acad.* 3.6.13: *mecum enim familiarissimus amicus meus non solum de probabilitate humanae vitae verum etiam de ipsa religione concordat, quod est veri amici manifestissimum indicium, si quidem amicitia rectissime atque sanctissime definita est rerum humanarum et divinarum cum benivolentia et caritate consensio*; cf. Cic. *Amic.* 20.

⁶⁵⁷ See my discussion in chapter 1 (cf. above p. 12f.).

⁶⁵⁸ Hence Augustine's reference to the *numen* at *Acad.* 3.6.13.

seek wisdom. The dating of the *Contra Academicos* and the *De officiis* appear to resist such an interpretation. For the former preceded the composition of the latter, making it an impossible source, even if the exact placement of Ambrose's treatise remains uncertain.⁶⁵⁹ Moreover, as has rightly been observed, Augustine knew very little about the *De officiis* even at a very late date. The bishop's reference in a letter to Jerome suggests a familiarity with Ambrose's work that does not go beyond a rudimentary understanding of its contents. He certainly did not own a copy of the *De officiis* and his knowledge about the 'useful instructions' that it contained was rather limited.⁶⁶⁰ However, this does not exclude the possibility of Augustine's retreat being inspired by other contemporary models of communal life. Even if the *De officiis* has to be placed to the late 380s, the intellectual reach of Ambrose's clerical and monastic community must still have been felt well before the bishop put his principles into writing. To be sure, Augustine's initial plan was consistent with the kind of lifestyle that was usually associated with potent aristocratic circles who, whether Christian or non-Christian, devoted their 'leisure time' to philosophy and literature. Notable examples included Augustine's compatriot Romanianus as well as his Milanese friends Manlius Theodorus and Zenobius, to whom the rhetor dedicated his early dialogues.⁶⁶¹ But shortly before his conversion experience, Augustine also came to know other forms of communal life that equally built on the notion of friendship. A man named Ponticianus, apparently a North African compatriot holding a high position at the imperial court, told him of Ambrose's monastic community outside the city walls that was 'full of faithful brothers' (*plenum bonis fratribus ... sub Ambrosio*

⁶⁵⁹ A specific timeframe of late 386/early 387 can be established for Augustine's *Contra Academicos*. See FUHRER 1997, 3f. with Aug. *Conf.* 9.4.7 and *Retr.* 1.1.1. Ambrose's *De officiis*, however, is much harder to date. The late 380s seem to be the most likely setting. See DAVIDSON 2001, 3-5.

⁶⁶⁰ Aug. *Ep.* 82.21 with DAVIDSON 2001, 98. The point of departure is provided by a quarrel between Augustine and Jerome over the interpretation of Gal 2:11-14. Augustine's summary of his correspondent's argumentation as *officiosum mendacium* offered the opportunity to briefly mention Ambrose's *De officiis*. For the dating of the letter to the year 405 see FÜRST 2002, 16-21.

⁶⁶¹ Aug. *Acad.* 1.1; *Beata v.* 1.1; *Ord.* 1.1. For Augustine's connections to Milan's intellectual circles see LANE FOX 2015, 213-218.

nutritore). This must have drawn the attention of the rhetor who ‘listened in rapt silence’ (*et nos intenti tacebamus*) to what Ponticianus had to say, knowing that this way of life closely resembled his own vision.⁶⁶² The subsequent project at Cassiciacum still clung to a platonic view that had friends as fellow wisdom seekers. Yet later, back in Thagaste and Hippo, Augustine (not unlike Ambrose) was to form monastic communities that were based on brotherly love. The common denominator of these concepts was the idea of sharing, which resonates with both a philosophical ideal of friendship and the utopian life of the Jerusalem community.⁶⁶³

In time, Augustine’s principles regarding friendship were increasingly identified with the Christian message and the rites of the church. While his earlier writings construed God in light of the neoplatonic *numen*, his later views presupposed a basic understanding about the principles of the faith as the necessary prerequisite for true and lasting friendship. This is nowhere more obvious than in a letter to one Marcianus, where Augustine famously combined Cicero’s classic definition of *amicitia* with biblical thought. Unfortunately, we do not know much about the recipient other than his name. Augustine’s choice of address, referring to the *gravitas et prudentia tua* of Marcianus, at least suggests an elevated social standing.⁶⁶⁴ We moreover know that he was an *antiquissimus amicus* from a time well before Augustine’s conversion.⁶⁶⁵ After that, they seem however to have lost contact, until Marcianus wrote a now lost letter in order to re-establish the relationship. In the meantime, Augustine had not only progressed in his intellectual development but had also become a ‘servant of God’ in the North African church. We may think of him as bishop of Hippo, providing pastoral care and brotherly correction

⁶⁶² Aug. *Conf.* 8.6.15.

⁶⁶³ The differences between the Cassiciacum community and Thagaste were highlighted by LANE FOX 2015, 382.

⁶⁶⁴ Aug. *Ep.* 258.5; cf. DIVJAK 2002, 1007 n. 331. Repeated attempts at identifying Marcianus with the homonymous *proconsul Africae* of 393/94 have failed. For this Marcianus see PLRE I: 555f.

⁶⁶⁵ Aug. *Ep.* 258.1.

by way of writing letters, though the exact setting for the enquiry cannot be ascertained.⁶⁶⁶ Apparently, Marcianus had announced his intention to receive baptism but seems still to have been a catechumen waiting to be enlisted among the candidates for the ceremony.⁶⁶⁷ This provided the starting point for Augustine to engage in a detailed discussion about the foundations of their *amicitia*. Taking up his previous line of argument from the *Contra Academicos*, he resorted to Cicero's claim that friendship was contingent on an agreement in human and divine matters (*rerum humanarum et divinarum ... consensio*) and accompanied by goodwill and love (*cum benivolentia et caritas*).⁶⁶⁸ In the following, however, Augustine's outline went beyond what Cicero had proposed in his strong emphasis on the *res divinae*. As he himself acknowledged, the divine matters clearly represented 'the more important part of that definition'.⁶⁶⁹ Such subordination of the *res humanae* under the divine is due to Augustine's reading of the *Laelius* in light of the biblical commandment of love. His association of *amicitia* with Jesus' precept was not at all unprecedented. Also other authors based their understanding of human solidarity on the principles of Christian love. As we have seen previously, Cyprian's concept of the *unitas fraternitatis* and Lactantius' notion of *divina necessitudo* both drew their cues from Scripture.⁶⁷⁰ Augustine even quoted the relevant biblical passage, presenting the love of God (*diliges dominum deum tuum*) and the love of neighbour (*diliges proximum tuum*) as the most important biblical commandments. In particular, it was the rendering of Matt 22:36-40 that blends in with Augustine's treatment: here the love of God comes first as *maximum et primum mandatum*, while the love of neighbour takes second place. With a view to the

⁶⁶⁶ For his epistolary approach at communal correction see EBBELER 2012.

⁶⁶⁷ Aug. *Ep.* 258.4-5.

⁶⁶⁸ Aug. *Ep.* 258.1; cf. Aug. *Acad.* 3.6.13 and Cic. *Amic.* 20.

⁶⁶⁹ Aug. *Ep.* 258.1: ... *utique in maiore illius definitionis parte ...*

⁶⁷⁰ See above chapter 2 (p. 61-75 for Lactantius) and chapter 3 (p. 78-93 for Cyprian).

Laelius, Augustine thus identified Cicero's mention of the *res divinae* with the first and the *res humanae* with the second biblical commandment.⁶⁷¹

With this understanding of friendship in mind, Augustine proceeded to evaluate his relationship with Marcianus. He argued that, even though they had once been in agreement about human matters, their *amicitia* had always been deficient with regard to the aspect of the divine: 'you, my dearest friend (*mi carissime*), at one time agreed with me on things human ... but in things divine ... our friendship (*nostra amicitia*) limped along.'⁶⁷² But Augustine was not sure about their previous agreement on the *res humanae* either. Since no consensus had been reached in divine matters, their views could not possibly coincide with respect to things human: 'For one who holds things divine in contempt necessarily evaluates things human otherwise than he should, nor can anyone correctly love a human being who does not love the maker of that human being.'⁶⁷³ By implication, this means that *amicitia* could only exist if the love of God was in place. For this form of affection tied humans not only to the divinity itself but also to other humans who all shared a common origin in God. Thus, any form of human solidarity fundamentally built on the recognition of the proper object of love, which was God. For Augustine, it was moreover clear that this love had to be visibly demonstrated not only by a simple acknowledgment of the religious truth but also by subscribing to the doctrines and discipline of the church. As a catechumen, there can be not doubt that Marcianus shared a basic understanding of God with the bishop. It is possible that his current situation reflected that of Augustine in 386 when the rhetor resumed his own catechumenate while

⁶⁷¹ Aug. *Ep.* 258.4: '*Diliges dominum deum tuum ex toto corde tuo et ex tota anima tua et ex tota mente tua*' et: '*Diliges proximum tuum tamquam te ipsum; in his duobus praeceptis tota lex pendet et prophetarum*'. in illo primo rerum divinarum, in hoc secundo rerum humanarum est cum benivolentia et caritate consensio. For the twofold commandment of love cf. Matt 22:36-40; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:27.

⁶⁷² Aug. *Ep.* 258.1: *tu autem, mi carissime, aliquando mihi consentiebas in rebus humanis ... porro in rebus divinis ... nostra amicitia claudicabat.*

⁶⁷³ Aug. *Ep.* 258.2: *Necesse est enim, ut aliter, quam oportet, humana aestimet, qui divina contemnit, nec hominem recte diligere noverit, quisquis eum non diligit, qui hominem fecit.*

still viewing the Christian God through his reading of neoplatonic literature. But since Marcianus had not yet submitted himself to the baptismal rite, he was still lacking the commitment that Augustine sought in him. For that reason, he made a strong appeal to Marcianus ‘to receive now the sacraments of the faithful (*fidelium sacramenta*)’ so that ‘our friendship (*amicitia nostra*) will be true and everlasting.’⁶⁷⁴ Augustine thus clearly specified the terms and conditions upon which he was prepared to accept the renewal of old friendship. Only if Marcianus finally decided to undergo baptism, and hence fully embrace the love of God, could he truly be called a friend. Nevertheless, Augustine seemed to be convinced of the imminent completion of Marcianus’ conversion and therefore already referred to him as both *verus amicus* and *frater in Christo* – though the final commitment was still pending.⁶⁷⁵

The perspective of the bishop also affected the depiction of the early friendships in the *Confessiones*, where *amicitiae* were viewed through the prism of Augustine’s later conceptions. In retrospect, these relationships were deemed defective since they were maintained for the wrong reasons. Proceeding from this premise, Augustine told the story of his participation in a wicked deed. Together with his friends, he committed the crime of stealing fruit from a nearby pear tree. This episode of youthful imprudence served as Augustine’s starting point for a lengthy reflection about the reasons for his transgression. He was sure that he did not commit the theft because he took great delight in consuming sweet fruit. Apparently, the pears were not particularly appealing, either in shape or taste. Even worse, after trying out some, he and his companions decided to fling the rest to the swine. Augustine thus concluded that it was not the thing itself that he had desired but

⁶⁷⁴ Aug. *Ep.* 258.4-5: ... *amicitia nostra vera ac sempiterna erit ... quod ut fiat, exhortor gravitatem et prudentiam tuam, ut iam etiam fidelium sacramenta percipias.*

⁶⁷⁵ See for instance Augustine’s reference at *Ep.* 258.2 where he contrasted the *verus amicus* that he presently has with the *amicus* whom he only had in some way. For the brother terminology see *Ep.* 258.5 and the *salutatio*.

the very act of committing the evil deed.⁶⁷⁶ In the final analysis, he moreover acknowledged that he would not have done it if it was not for the influence of his friends. To Augustine's mind, his transgression had thus at least in part also to be explained by the *inimica amicitia*, the 'inimical friendship' that eventually spurred the desire to do harm.⁶⁷⁷ To be sure, friendships were not *per se* deemed to be harmful. The bishop also pointed to the advantages that were commonly associated with *amicitia*, namely its ability to create unity out of many souls (*amicitia ... propter unitatem de multis animis*). But like all other worldly goods – such as wealth, honour, and authority – the amenities of friendship should under no circumstances be placed higher than the *meliora et summa bona*, among which the bishop counted God (*deus noster*), his divine truth (*veritas tua*), and his law (*lex tua*).⁶⁷⁸ Thus, Augustine's main point was that no one was to forsake the *lex divina* but should stand true to the biblical precepts even if a friend told them to do otherwise. In so doing, he recalled the arguments of philosophers like Cicero who made friendship subject to certain limitations; apparently, the same limits that, in a modified form, also determined Ambrose's view in the *De officiis*. The episode about the pear-theft is then introduced as *malum exemplum*, demonstrating Augustine's departure from the divine law for the sake of friendship. On this view, the case of stealing was presented as a fitting example to illustrate the breach of the biblical commandment involved.⁶⁷⁹

The implications of Augustine's conception can also be glimpsed from another episode. At the age of nineteen, when he still considered himself a Manichaean, he lost a dear friend due to illness. This *amicus* remains unnamed in the *Confessiones*, though the two

⁶⁷⁶ Aug. *Conf.* 2.4.9-10.18. For the pear-theft see LE BLOND 1950, 56-88 and BOCHET 1982, 78-84.

⁶⁷⁷ Aug. *Conf.* 2.9.17: *Solus non facerem furtum illud, in quo me non libebat id quod furabar, sed quia furabar O nimis inimica amicitia, seductio, mentis investigabilis, ex ludo et ioco nocendi aviditas et alieni damni ... ;* cf. LANE FOX 2015, 68 commenting on 'misapplied friendship' tempting Augustine to commit evil deeds.

⁶⁷⁸ Aug. *Conf.* 2.5.10: *Amicitia quoque hominum caro nodo dulcis est propter unitatem de multis animis. Propter universa haec atque huius modi peccatum admittitur, dum immoderata in ista inclinatione, cum extrema bona sint, meliora et summa desereuntur, tu, domine deus noster et veritas tua et lex tua.*

⁶⁷⁹ See Ex 20:15 for the commandment that one should not steal. LANE FOX 2015, 64-69 construes the episode as a confession of past sins through prayer, which is performed toward God.

must have been close. They knew each other since childhood and were both the same age. Moreover, they coincided in their ‘inclinations’ (*studia*) regarding Manichaeism and Augustine even acknowledged that he was the driving force pushing his friend from the *fides vera* to the *superstitiosae et perniciosae fabulae* of the Manicheans.⁶⁸⁰ One day, this friend became terminally ill. Stricken with fever, he was lying unconscious for some time, and since there was no hope for him anymore, it was decided to have him baptized. Yet, contrary to all expectations, the friend recovered from his illness soon thereafter. When he became conscious again, Augustine began to turn into ridicule the fact that he had received baptism without him knowing of it. The comments were however not well received and the anonymous friend rebuked Augustine harshly: ‘He was horrified at me as if I were an enemy (*ut inimicum*), and with amazing and immediate frankness advised me that, if I wished to be his friend (*si amicus esse vellem*), I must stop saying this kind of thing to him.’⁶⁸¹ Augustine was baffled and decided to wait until he could confront the friend about the matter. Yet the man was running out of time. Only a few days later, he suffered a relapse, from which he did not recover. In the *Confessiones*, the bishop took the incident as a further reminder as to the foundations of true friendship. The friend’s unexpected response then implied that Augustine could only remain his *amicus* if he took the sacrament of baptism more seriously. Otherwise, he would even run the risk of being reckoned as a downright *inimicus*. This view incidentally concurs with the bishop’s own conception, claiming that *vera amicitia* was not possible ‘unless you bond together those who cleave to one another by the love which is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us (cf. Rom 5:5).’⁶⁸² With this in mind, Augustine’s early relationships

⁶⁸⁰ Aug. *Conf.* 4.4.7. LANE FOX 2015, 140 suggests that Augustine ‘was probably the young men’s teacher.’ For the episode see BOUTON-TOUBOULIC 1999, 58-69 and the commentary of O’DONNELL 1992 with a few interesting observations on naming patterns in the *Confessiones*.

⁶⁸¹ Aug. *Conf.* 4.4.8: *at ille ita me exhorruit ut inimicum, admonuitque mirabili et repentina libertate, ut, si amicus esse vellem, talia sibi dicere desinerem.*

⁶⁸² Aug. *Conf.* 4.4.7: *Sed nondum erat sic amicus, quamquam ne tunc quidem sic, uti est vera amicitia, quia non est vera, nisi cum eam tu agglutinas inter haerentes tibi caritate, diffusa in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis’.*

necessarily remained incomplete since they were not founded in God. Only if the kind of *caritas* was in place that bound men to God, was true friendship to be achieved. From the bishop's perspective this was also the reason why, after the friend's death, he failed to find comfort in his other friends (*aliorum amicorum solacia*) 'with whom I loved what I loved as a substitute for you', which were the teachings of Mani. Augustine thus argued that permanent relief could ultimately only be attained by somebody 'who loves you and his friend in you, and his enemy because of you (*amat te et amicum in te et inimicum propter te*).'⁶⁸³ If the friend was not loved for the friend's sake, or the enemy for the enemy's sake, who is it then that is loved? Clearly, for Augustine, God was the proper object of love and it was only in God that others could truly be loved.

The source of Augustine's corresponding views was Cicero, and more specifically the *Laelius*, where the late Republican rhetor had outlined his understanding of *vera amicitia*. The bishop's own reading of the dialogue in light of biblical thought interpreted Cicero's mention of the *res humanae et divinae* as a reference to the twofold commandment of love, that is, the love of God and the love of neighbour. In so doing, the bishop began to define the boundary between perfect friendship that was founded in God and ordinary *amicitiae* that were lacking a divine fundament. This divide is implied by Augustine's use of recurring antonyms. On the one hand, he pointed to the *inimica amicitia* that pressured his younger self into committing a crime against the divine law. On the other hand, his narration about the unnamed friend suggests a thin line between either being an *amicus* or becoming an *inimicus*. Both passages presume a shared understanding in God and the principles of the faith as the necessary prerequisite for friendship. Not unlike Ambrose, Augustine thus strove to redefine the limits of *amicitia*. Only if an agreement in divine matters was in place, could friendship truly be achieved. By contrast, enmity could easily

⁶⁸³ Aug. *Conf.* 4.8.13 *Maxime quippe me reparabant atque recreabant aliorum amicorum solacia, cum quibus amabam quod pro te amabam ...* ; 4.9.14: *Beatus qui amat te et amicum in te et inimicum propter te.*

arise if such understanding was lacking. This view may or may not be inspired by the communal life of monks and clerics under Ambrose's supervision who drew their counsel from the *De officiis*. Conceptually, Augustine's emphasis on the biblical precept of love certainly represents a departure from the *fides*-based community at Milan. Nevertheless, the foundations of Ambrose's *amicitia cum fratribus* were eventually echoed by Augustine's own monastic establishments, forming a 'holy society' (*sancta societas*) of brothers that was built around the ideals of unanimity and property sharing.⁶⁸⁴

6.2 Friends united by faith: Paulinus and Severus

P. Meropius Paulinus, whom we have already met as Ausonius' pupil and friend in the previous chapter, provides another important testimony to the ideas and practices of friendship.⁶⁸⁵ He was a man of influence who maintained a considerable network that stretched beyond the confines of his native Aquitaine. Staying in Nola, the chosen abode after his conversion, he also forged relationships with correspondents in Italy, North Africa, and Palestine. In 394, while turning his back on an aristocratic lifestyle, as embodied by Ausonius' epistolary outcry, he presented himself to clerical and ascetic circles as repenting sinner who was to embark on a new path. To Augustine, with whom he later shared a durable relationship, he commended himself as a 'small child' (*parvulus*) who was seeking the guidance of the experienced 'father' (*pater*). A little earlier also Ambrose had triumphantly noted Paulinus' publicly announced decision to trade wealth and office for a life in the service of God.⁶⁸⁶ Given the report about his conversion, it is no surprise that the works of the Aquitanian aristocrat and later bishop have received

⁶⁸⁴ Aug. *Reg.* 1.7.

⁶⁸⁵ See above chapter 5 (cf. p. 188-211).

⁶⁸⁶ Paulin. *Ep.* 4.3; Ambr. *Ep.* 27[58].1.

much scholarly attention. In recent years, a number of important studies have appeared that have greatly improved our understanding not only of the historical Paulinus but also of the intellectual world that surrounded him. On the one hand, Dennis Trout provided a masterful biography situating Paulinus in the late antique world. His study has later been complemented by Sigrid Mratschek's thorough investigation of the correspondence, which pays particular attention to networks of exchange.⁶⁸⁷ Catherine Conybeare, on the other hand, has taken a different approach. Rather than focusing on historical reconstruction, she engaged in a literary analysis of the letters highlighting emerging themes such as the formulation of a novel model of Christian *amicitia*.⁶⁸⁸ Tying in with previous research, my own analysis attempts to bridge the gap arising from the above approaches by viewing Paulinus' ideas against the backdrop of contemporary friendship practices. In so doing, I will focus on one particular case: the correspondence with Sulpicius Severus, which covers a timespan between 395 and 404.⁶⁸⁹

The surviving letters to Severus constitute an intriguing counter-example to the troubled friendship with Ausonius. Unlike a generation earlier, when the Christian teacher of rhetoric successfully pursued the path of aristocratic leadership, Paulinus and Severus both embraced the service to God as a different form of life. In fact, their lives show a number of parallels that are worth pointing out to better understand their conversion. Like Paulinus, Severus was offspring of a wealthy, landowning family with extended possessions in Aquitaine.⁶⁹⁰ As a young man, he obtained the usual training in literature and law, presumably in Bordeaux, where he appears to have for the first time

⁶⁸⁷ TROUT 1999; MRATSCHEK 2002.

⁶⁸⁸ CONYBEARE 2000, esp. 60-90 on friendship.

⁶⁸⁹ Only the letters of Paulinus have been preserved. For the dating see FABRE 1948 and LIENHARD 1977. SKEB 1998, 27-34 provides a helpful overview. See pp. 74-80 for the letter exchange with Severus.

⁶⁹⁰ Gennadius of Massilia described him as *vir genere et litteris nobilis* (*Vir. ill.* 19) and Paulinus of Périgueux referred to Severus as *nobilitate potens* (*Mart.* 5.199). According to Paulin. *Ep.* 5.5, the marriage into his wife's family brought additional financial means.

met Paulinus. Since then they cultivated what Paulinus would later call an *amicitia saecularis*.⁶⁹¹ Around the same time, in the early 390s, they both decided to devote their lives to asceticism. Severus' mother-in-law, Bassula, seems to have played a key role in the conversion of her stepson, while his own father objected to the plans.⁶⁹² Another driving force was Martin, bishop of Tours, whom Severus would come to immortalize as a wonder-working saint and champion of western asceticism.⁶⁹³ Ultimately, Severus renounced his right to paternal inheritance and began, not unlike Paulinus, selling landed properties, which he had gained through the marriage with his wife.⁶⁹⁴ Whereas Paulinus moved from Therasia's estates in Spain to Nola, where he, some years earlier, had acted as a *consularis Campaniae*, Severus decided to retire to his country estate at Primuliacum, presumably near Toulouse. Here he founded a monastic community that, in many respects, was analogous to the corresponding project at Nola.⁶⁹⁵ In this period of reorientation, Severus stayed in contact with Paulinus with whom he continued the previous friendship.

To be sure, their turn to asceticism did not result in a complete conversion of the practices involved. The cultivation of *amicitia* was still dependent on the mutual exchange of letters, goods, and services keeping relationships up and running. In the same manner as Ausonius, Paulinus could send a loaf of Campanian bread along with a wooden platter to please his friend. In return, he asked for some oil and moreover wanted Severus to supervise the relocation of his wine cellar from Narbo, near Toulouse, to Nola in Campania.⁶⁹⁶ The latter request was certainly a huge favour to ask. Paulinus was aware

⁶⁹¹ Paulin. *Ep.* 11.1.

⁶⁹² Paulin. *Ep.* 5.6.

⁶⁹³ For Severus and his portrayal of Martin see FONTAINE 1969, vol. I and STANCLIFFE 1983. The bishop of Tours recommended the example of Paulinus to his protégé as a suitable role model for his own conversion (Sulp. Sev. *Mart.* 25.1-4).

⁶⁹⁴ Paulin. *Ep.* 1.1; 5.6.

⁶⁹⁵ Paulin. *Ep.* 31.1 and 32.7 mention the place by name. However, the identification of Primuliacum remains disputed still. For further references see MRATSCHEK 2002, 141 with n. 28.

⁶⁹⁶ Paulin. *Ep.* 5.21.

of this fact and promised to grant further compensation for the accruing expenditures. Apparently, he could not rely on his own relatives, who were supposed to carry out the task, and therefore turned to his friend Severus for help. Part of the family seems to have objected to his conversion and thus interfered with Paulinus' plans. He, on the other hand, charged them with *impietas* and referred to the spiteful obstructors as *inimici hominis*, the enemies of men.⁶⁹⁷ Another important point concerned the handling of conflict among friends. Like in Ausonius' case, the relationship between Paulinus and Severus did not remain free from tensions. Rather, Severus' repeated turning-down of invitations led to some irritation. Shortly after Severus' announcement of his conversion, Paulinus made his first effort. At that time, he was still staying in Barcelona where he had been consecrated a priest on Christmas Eve 394.⁶⁹⁸ It appears that he had already made arrangements to leave that city soon after Easter day 395 in order to travel to Nola. Severus, on the other hand, stayed at his estate in Elusio near Toulouse, which was an eight-day journey away from Barcelona. Given the favourable circumstances, Paulinus suggested meeting either at Barcelona or somewhere en route to Nola.⁶⁹⁹ Severus, however, did not take the chance, sending a letter instead in which he offered his apologies for not being able to set forth on a longer journey due to some illness.⁷⁰⁰ In subsequent letters, Paulinus repeated his invitation, though he was well aware that now, as he lived in Campania, the travel distance was much more laborious than before.⁷⁰¹ At first, he was prepared to accept any excuse that came around without further ado. But after some time, he grew tired of Severus' evasiveness and dropped the previously held

⁶⁹⁷ Paulin. *Ep.* 5.22. Paulinus made his allegations by quoting Ps 14:3 and Matt 10:36. Note the change in the Latin from *inutiles* in the Vulgate text to *impius* in Paulinus' version.

⁶⁹⁸ Paulin. *Ep.* 1.10. For the date of Paulinus' ordination see FABRE 1948, 38; LIENHARD 1977, 166; SKEB 1998, 29f.

⁶⁹⁹ Paulin. *Ep.* 1.11. For the identification of Elusio see MRATSCHEK 2002, 141 with n. 27.

⁷⁰⁰ Paulin. *Ep.* 5.1; 5.8.

⁷⁰¹ Paulin. *Ep.* 5.13; 5.15; 11.14.

idea of a reunion at Nola: ‘Now that the hope of a meeting with each other is dashed, you have left but one avenue to our friendship; your words I repay with words.’ He did not even hide his frustration but reproached his friend openly: ‘How you can plead sickness rather than laziness or the shortage of persons, I do not know.’⁷⁰² This experience did however not lead to the discontinuation of relations but prompted an adjustment on Paulinus’ part. Whereas *amicitia* previously included the possibility of occasional face-to-face meetings, the implication was now that the cultivation of amicable relations remained confined to the exchange of letters.⁷⁰³

In other respects, however, their correspondence significantly differed from Ausonian examples of letter writing. Particularly, the emphasis on religious congruity, which was coupled with a characteristically Christian sense of domestic belonging, added a distinctive flavour to their friendship. The change is moreover reflected in the conversational topics that the two chose to discuss with one another. For instance, when Severus asked for help and further information about the history of Israel for his *Chronicorum libri*, Paulinus did not feel competent enough to answer questions regarding ‘the investigation and collation of historical information’ and therefore referred his friend to Rufinus of Aquileia, who was an established expert in the field of historical analysis and apparently ‘on terms of intimate friendship’ with Paulinus.⁷⁰⁴ The personal engagement in literary pursuits was certainly no novel development and belonged to the main areas of interests of an aristocratic lifestyle. But, in this case, the exchange over historical problems was committed to the Judaeo-Christian tradition rather than the Roman past. A second example concerns Severus’ building programme at Primuliacum,

⁷⁰² Paulin. *Ep.* 17.1: *Et invitando te et expectando defessi sumus, quod unum amicitiae communis spe praesentiae invicem nostrae amputata reliquisti, verba verbis rependimus* 17.4: *Causari infirmitatem magis quam pigritiam vel exceptionem personarum qui possis,*

⁷⁰³ On this see the contrasting views of CONYBEARE 2000, 84f. and MRATSCHEK 2002, 574-577.

⁷⁰⁴ Paulin. *Ep.* 28.5.

which included the construction of a new basilica with an accompanying baptistery. Paulinus was involved in the process by writing several epigrams for the dedication of the buildings. Moreover, he was asked to render a portrait of himself as a decorative piece for the baptistery; an additional honour, which he refused to accept out of humility.⁷⁰⁵ Rather than focusing on the management of one's properties, as Ausonius had done, Severus thus devoted his time to the erection and maintenance of sacred buildings, and thereby drew from all available resources to accomplish the task. Finally, the translation of relics formed another departure from the usual aristocratic habit. The supplementary blessing of a Saint or even Christ – so Severus' request – would have given the monastic community at Primuliacum an additional appeal, which others lacked. Paulinus did not fail his friend and eventually sent him a letter in which he recounted the alleged discovery of the true cross at Jerusalem by Constantine's mother, the empress Helena. The letter was supplemented with a tiny fragment of the very same cross, apparently a gift from the aristocratic widow Melania, which she had acquired from John of Jerusalem during her stay in the Holy Land. Certainly, to Severus' mind, his friend could not have sent a more worthy relic for the consecration of his 'family church' than an artefact that was said to have been in touch with Jesus Christ himself.⁷⁰⁶ Whereas the exchange of goods and services between aristocrats remained earthbound, Christian gifts could at times acquire a spiritual quality that transcended the bounds of human existence.

Apart from these practical aspects, also Paulinus' expectations toward Christian friendships were noticeably different from the Ausonian perspective. Particularly influential in this regard have been the claims of Pierre Fabre, who observed a sharp distinction between secular *amicitia* and the notion of Christian *caritas* in the works of Paulinus. Whereas the former usually signified relationships that were formed without

⁷⁰⁵ Paulin. *Ep.* 30; 32.

⁷⁰⁶ Paulin. *Ep.* 31.

mutual agreement in the Christian faith, the latter marked a superior love that was confined to the interaction among Christians alone. Fabre even went as far as to claim that Paulinus never used the word *amicitia* in connection with Christian friendships.⁷⁰⁷ Many scholars have accepted the basic premises of this hypothesis despite the fact that other studies raised to question Fabre's findings.⁷⁰⁸ Caroline White, for instance, demonstrated that, although there was a tendency to use *caritas* primarily in a Christian context, no such restriction can be discerned with regard to *amicitia*. Rather, Paulinus 'does occasionally use *amicus* without implying that he is talking to a non-Christian.' White thus concluded that 'while *caritas* is applied exclusively to the love in Christian relationships, *amicitia* can be used of either secular or Christian friendships.'⁷⁰⁹ As prime witness for her argument, she adduced instances from Paulinus' correspondence with Severus. In these cases, the author construed Sir 6:15 and its reference to the *amicus fidelis* in light of his relationship with Severus, referred to those participating in the household of God as *amici hominis*, and called Severus and himself friends.⁷¹⁰ This clearly contradicts Fabre's assumption that establishes a boundary between *amicitia* and *caritas*. A second point of criticism concerns the widespread tendency to treat the epistolary evidence available as if we are dealing with a sustained argument about the foundations of Christian *caritas* and 'secular' friendship. Dennis Trout has however rightly pointed out that 'Paulinus's letters to Severus do not offer us a treatise on friendship; they are the contrary fragments of its practice'.⁷¹¹ Thus, the main purpose of their correspondence was not the propagation of a theory but the cultivation of *amicitia*. We should therefore

⁷⁰⁷ FABRE 1949, 142-148. See also PÉTRÉ 1948, 30-98.

⁷⁰⁸ For instance, KONSTAN 1996, 97.

⁷⁰⁹ WHITE 1992, 158f. Fabre's distinction is rather indicative of the caesura indicating the 'before' and 'after' of the conversion, which is prominently stated by adjectives like *saecularis* versus *spiritalis* (Paulin. *Ep.* 11.1), or *carnalis* versus *aeternus* (11.2).

⁷¹⁰ Paulin. *Ep.* 11.1: ... *amico fideli nulla est comparatio* ...; 11.4: ... *sed rursus amici hominis domestici dei*; 11.6: ... *amicus nobis in caritate Christi* ...; 11.12: *Tu tantum nostri memento et nos respice, non retro spectans sed amici memor*.

⁷¹¹ TROUT 1999, 213 with n. 92.

approach the letters for what they were, that is, the items of an exchange between Christian friends, which was intended to produce results.

One of the prominent features in the correspondence is the linkage of friendship with the notion of divine kinship. It is not without reason that Paulinus can call Severus ‘my friend in the love of Christ’ (*amicus nobis in caritate Christi*) while, at the same time, referring to him as ‘my true brother in the rebirth achieved by God’ (*in dei regeneratione germanus*).⁷¹² The recognition of the spiritual bonds that tie humans to both God and others was an essential part of Paulinus’ rhetoric and went far beyond what could otherwise be considered a mere term of endearment indicating particular closeness. Plautus had already used a similar phrasing in connection with friendship. His Lysidamus said to his next-door neighbour Alcesimus, with whom he just came off a fight: ‘Now you are my friend in true brotherly fashion’ (*nunc tu mihi amicus es in germanum modum*).⁷¹³ Yet Plautus’ friend-brother paradigm was very different from Paulinus’ understanding of divine kinship. Whereas the former’s perspective was based on the experience of intimacy in a particular household, the latter had a kind of affinity in view that transcended all worldly ties.⁷¹⁴ With this in mind, Paulinus also weighed his previous friendship with Severus differently. He spoke of the ‘secular friendship’ (*saeculari amicitia*) that they previously shared and the partnership ‘in the spiritual brotherhood’ (*spirituali germanitate*) that they later adopted. Elsewhere, he similarly acknowledged that they had moved ‘from carnal familiarity’ (*a familiaritate carnali*) to an ‘eternal connection’ (*in aeternam necessitudinem*) that was only achieved through a higher love (*affectu potiore*). The ‘friendship of our earlier life’ (*prioris vitae amicitia*) thus already pointed to this later affinity that came into being

⁷¹² Paulin. *Ep.* 11.6.

⁷¹³ Plaut. *Cas.* 615.

⁷¹⁴ For the idea of the spiritual in Paulinus’ letters see CONYBEARE 2000, 91-110.

‘through God’s intervention’ (*interventu dei*).⁷¹⁵ For Paulinus, the spiritual bonds clearly outweighed all earthly ties, or the practice of the latter at least served as a preparatory phase for the coming fellowship in God. Accordingly, Severus was seen as a ‘brother’ (*frater* or *germanus*) because they both sprung ‘from a better father’ (*potiore parente*), which was God.⁷¹⁶ The *potior parens* that was the focal point of the divine household then matched the *potior affectus* that was seen as the glue binding together those who recognized the spiritual bonds. Whereas previously Paulinus’ *amicitia* with Severus had already been marked by affection, the partnership in God added a superior kind of love to their relationship. This was the *caritas Christi*, which ‘flows down from God and abides in him’, perpetuating the lives of those ‘in whom it rests’ (*ex deo defluit et in deo permanet omnemque, in quo maneat, hominem sua perennitate perpetuat*).⁷¹⁷ Paulinus saw no incompatibility of friendship with Christian love. Rather, he recognized in the *spiritalis germanitas* and the *Christi caritas* the potential for a nobler form of *amicitia* that was both true and real because it was founded in God.

The basis of this Christian friendship was a mutual understanding in the principles of the faith. In the previous chapter, we have seen in what ways the Paulinian *fides* came into conflict with Ausonius’ respective assumptions.⁷¹⁸ Now we consider the testimony of two Christian writers who concurred in their views. Already the first letter of the collection, which Paulinus had sent in reaction to Severus’ conversion, openly stated their agreement on religion. The chosen form of address highlighted that he and Severus were

⁷¹⁵ Paulin. *Ep.* 11.1: ... *pro hac etiam gratia, qua te nobis et in saeculari prius amicitia dilectissimum, in suis quoque rebus, quod incomparabilis pretii ducimus, individuum comitem atque consortem spiritali germanitate conexuit?* 11.2: ... *a familiaritate carnali, in qua iam nunc, ut intellegimus, huic nos foederi praeparaverat, in aeternam necessitudinem affectu potiore mutavit* ... 11.5: ... *quod praedestinos nos invicem nobis in caritate Christi iunctissima prioris quoque vitae amicitia signavit* ... *Sed tamen in hanc, qua modo interventu die nectimur, copulam per consuetudinem illius familiaritatis inolevimus* ...

⁷¹⁶ Paulin. *Ep.* 11.3: *De quo tu mihi frater genitus non solum ad praesens adiutorium sed et ad perenne consortium tanto superas omnem circa me corporalium necessitudinum affectionem, quanto potiore mihi parente germanus es quam illi quos caro tantum et sanguis mihi sociat.*

⁷¹⁷ Paulin. *Ep.* 11.2.

⁷¹⁸ See above chapter 5 (cf. p. 201-205).

‘in accord with their common faith in God the Father and in Christ Jesus our salvation’ (*secundum communem fidem in deo patre et Christo Iesu salutari nostro*). Later in the same letter, Paulinus invited his friend to stay with him so that Severus may receive ‘reinforcements of faith’ (*fidei supplementa*). At that time, Severus had just announced his conversion. Apparently, the decision was met with some resistance and Paulinus reached out to his fellow believer as ‘a brother who helps a brother’ (*frater fratrem adiuvans*).⁷¹⁹ The crucial word in these passages is the Latin term *fides*, which implicated a sense of loyalty and trust in personal relationships. As such, it was essential to both friendship and kinship relations. But rather than looking to the actual friend or brother as a trustworthy partner in life, Paulinus’ understanding of *fides* primarily meant constancy and loyalty toward God. This required a certain demeanour on Paulinus and Severus’ part and called for a particular set of doctrines to which clerical ascetic circles were bound. It is therefore no coincidence that Paulinus elsewhere referred to his companion as ‘faithful friend’ (*amicus fidelis*), quoting a well-known passage from Scripture. Along these lines, he repeatedly pointed to the ‘right disposition’ that they shared in their faith (*ex fide bonae voluntatis*).⁷²⁰ To be sure, Paulinus still conceived of *fides* as a relational term obligating friends to one another. But rather than striving for conformity in worldly matters – say, through a shared conception of life or common political goals – trust and trustworthiness became inextricably linked with one’s attitude toward God. This is nowhere better demonstrated than in one of the aforementioned passages, in which Paulinus compared their previous *amicitia* and *familiaritas* with the new fellowship in God. Here he acknowledged that ‘by loving each other faithfully (*fideliter*) even on that path of unbelief (*in infideli via*), we learnt to love also

⁷¹⁹ Paulin. *Ep.* 1: *Paulinus servus Christi Iesu Severo carissimo fratri secundum communem fidem in deo patre et Christo Iesu salutari nostro salutem.* 1.10: *Festina venire ad nos, in commune compendium accepturus et daturus fidei supplementa. Hoc enim acceptum coram deo, quia et frater fratrem adiuvans exaltibur.*

⁷²⁰ Paulin. *Ep.* 11.1: ... *quia amico fideli nulla est comparatio* (cf. Sir 6:15). 11.6: ... *neque ex operum praerogativa sed ex fide bonae voluntatis*. See also *Ep.* 17.4 for a similar phrasing. In this case, Paulinus spoke of the *mutuae affectus fidei* that he shared with Severus.

spiritually (*spiritaliter*).⁷²¹ The close association of the adverbial expression *fideliter* with its adjectival counterpart *infidelis* appears to form an indissoluble contrast if one considers the two chapters in their lives as one. For Paulinus, however, there were clearly two different kinds of *fides* at work: one was grounded in a shared aristocratic lifestyle, while the other followed the path of Christian asceticism. Accordingly, Paulinus copiously praised the unity of minds and pursuits that marked their present relationship. He stated that ‘we two are one’ (*duo unum sumus*) because there was ‘one spirit’ (*unus spiritus*) working in them and because they both were part of ‘one body’ (*corpus unum*). Moreover, he noted that, while this was certainly true for all other ‘brothers in Christ’ (*cum omnibus in Christo fratribus*), their *amicitia* was still somewhat special since it had previously paved the way for the eventual ‘gift of God’ (*dei munus*).⁷²²

By contrast, if somebody did not adhere to the principles of the faith, friendship and kinship relations were to be dissolved. As a counter-example to the unflawed relationship with Severus, any disturber of the religious truth was to earn Paulinus’ enmity. Along these lines, Paulinus’ language wavered between the acknowledgment of true and lasting *amicitia* (in conjunction with the bonds of spiritual brotherhood) and the overt display of *inimicitia*. In this regard, a particularly intriguing example is presented by the announcement of Severus’ conversion. Apparently, his commitment to an ascetic way of life did not go without the objections of his friends and family who tried to persuade Severus to reconsider his decision. Together with Paulinus, who had announced his own conversion presumably a few months earlier, he was supposed to explain himself for his

⁷²¹ Paulin. *Ep.* 11.5: ... *ut diligendo nos et in infideli via fideliter diligere etiam spiritualiter disceremus ...* .

⁷²² Paulin. *Ep.* 11.5: ... *et duo unum sumus, quia unus spiritus in duobus et nulla discretio, quorum corpus unum. Sed hoc, ut dixi, commune nobis cum omnibus in Christo fratribus; unum in te peculiariter nobis gratum atque gratandum est, in cuius amicitia beatissimum dei munus accepimus ...* . At *Ep.* 5.9, Paulinus took Severus’ illness as a ‘sign of our accord in all things’ (*signum concordiae in omnibus nostrae*) and similarly pointed to the working of ‘one spirit’ (*operantis in nobis spiritus unitatem*) though they were physically separated. For the notion of *unanimitas* see CONYBEARE 2000, 70.

course of action. Some contemporary voices probably rightly suspected that the *proceres viri* at Rome would not be particularly amused about hearing of Paulinus' decision to trade wealth and power for a life in Christ.⁷²³ Similarly, in the case of Severus, the need for self-declaration was pressing. Paulinus identified the detractors as *infideles*, which does not necessarily imply that they were pagans. On the contrary, citations from Scripture insinuating that the critics had only paid lip service to God (Tit 1:16 and 2 Tim 3:5) rather suggest that we are dealing with other Christian aristocrats.⁷²⁴ It is unclear as to who exactly stood behind the criticism but, from a later letter, we gather the information that Severus' rejection of paternal ties for the sake of a life in Christ eventually culminated in the loss of his future inheritance. In Paulinus' words, Severus had rightly 'put the heavenly Father before the earthly parent' (*caelestem patrem anteverteras terreno parenti*).⁷²⁵ Regardless of whether the suspected circles belonged to his friends or family, the suggestion was that Severus left behind the company of such men. Rather than the Christian *frater* who was to receive reinforcements 'in our faith' (*in nostram fidem*), the *infideles* were nothing less than 'false brothers' (*falsi fratres* with reference to Gal 2:4), or to put it more pointedly, each was to be regarded as 'an enemy in Christ' (*inimicus in Christo*).⁷²⁶ With a view to his personal conversion, which similarly upset a part of his own family, Paulinus drew on Matt 10:36 stating that 'a man's enemies are the members of his own household' (*inimici hominis domestici eius*). At the same time, however, he added that, by contrast, 'a man's friends are those of the household of God' (*amici hominis domestici*

⁷²³ Ambr. *Ep.* 27[58].3

⁷²⁴ Paulin. *Ep.* 1.7: *De ipsius etiam, quem etsi nomine confitentur, tamen actu negant, habentes speciem pietatis, virtutum eius abnegantes, ...* . For the use of the term *infidelis* see *Ep.* 1.2: *haec, mi frater, domini verba retinentes et in nostram fidem confirmemur et obprobria uel odia infidelium neglegamus*. 1.6: *Tu ergo, qui rationem quaeris reddere hominibus et his infidelibus, vide quid desideres ...* .

⁷²⁵ Paulin. *Ep.* 5.6; *... respuens patrimoniorum onera ceu stercorum ... quia caelestem patrem anteverteras terreno parenti ... relicto patre in navicula fluctuante, scilicet in huius vitae incerto cum retribus rerum suarum et implicatione patrimonii derelicto Christum secutus*.

⁷²⁶ See the mention of the Christian *frater* in connection with the *fides nostra* at Paulin. *Ep.* 1.2 and 4. By contrast, the *infideles* are collectively referred to as *inimicus in Christo* and *falsis fratres* at *Ep.* 1.5 and 9.

dei).⁷²⁷ This reveals Paulinus' understanding of friendship, which carefully distinguishes between *amici* and *inimici* on the basis of one's disposition toward God. He thus praised Severus, his friend and brother in Christ, as showing 'the anxious care of parents' (*parentum cura anxius*), 'the concerned love of a brother' (*fraterna dilectione sollicitus*), and most importantly 'the total loyalty of unfeigned friendship' (*tota non fictae amicitiae fide*), all of which was representative of their agreement in God. Anybody, however, who did not approve of Paulinus' change, was to be discounted as either an 'inhuman parent' (*parens inhumanus*), 'indifferent brother' (*frater neglegens*), or 'forgetful friend' (*amicus inmemor*).⁷²⁸

6.3 Declaring enmity: Jerome and Rufinus

Paulinus' letters are illustrative of the author's ability to maintain relations even under difficult circumstances. Toward the end of the fourth century, when a swelling conflict over the speculative theology of the third century writer Origen threatened to tear apart wide sections of the Christian world, Paulinus remained well connected, entertaining relations with both sides of the conflict. Particularly noteworthy are his leanings toward the circle of the monk and biblical scholar Rufinus of Aquileia, while equally staying in contact with his arch-enemy Jerome of Stridon.⁷²⁹ As erstwhile friends and fellow companions in the pursuit of Christian asceticism, Jerome and Rufinus were the controversy's most prominent victims. Even Augustine felt compelled to comment on their tragic fate. He pointed to the 'evil of discord' (*malum discordiae*) that resulted in the abandonment of the 'bond of friendship' (*amicitiae vinculo*), asking himself 'what friend

⁷²⁷ Paulin. *Ep.* 11.4: *Inimici hominis domestici eius, sed rursus amici hominis domestici dei*. See also *Ep.* 5.22 for a similar use of the same biblical passage.

⁷²⁸ See the contrasting language at Paulin. *Ep.* 11.3 and 4.

⁷²⁹ See TROUT 1999, 218-235 for a detailed discussion. Two letters to Rufinus have been preserved as part of Paulinus' collection whose authenticity remain disputed (Paulin. *Ep.* 46; 47). On the other hand, there are three letters to Paulinus still extant in Jerome's correspondence (Jer. *Ep.* 53; 58; 85).

(*amicus*) should not be feared as a future enemy (*futurus inimicus*) if there could arise between Jerome and Rufinus this hostility we deplore.⁷³⁰ His reference to the loss of friendship and future enmity then straightforwardly points to the paradox. For the surviving texts, testifying to Jerome and Rufinus' relationship, were all about demolishing a friend rather than cultivating friendly relations. It is the best documented case from this period, in which we can observe *amicitia* being transformed into its opposite, *inimicitia*. Unlike Augustine and Paulinus, who primarily dealt with friendship as a means to create solidarity (though the enemy was always lurking in the back), we are here given a rare insight into the complete abandonment of relations. In this context, the previously discussed nexus between *fides*, *amicitia*, and *inimicitia* becomes particularly pronounced, pointing to the social dimensions of the controversy, which was as much about theology than about friendship. To be sure, the main point of contention concerned the theological claims of Origen, which had already been controversial during his own lifetime. In the 390's, as a kind of sequel to the preceding trinitarian conflict, the reservations against his legacy resurfaced and became part of a larger struggle over asceticism, most notably in monastic communities in Egypt and Palestine.⁷³¹ At the same time, however, the conflict can only properly be understood in view of the social dynamics underlying the propagation of particular doctrines. With this in mind, Elizabeth Clark rightly noted that 'if there is anything surprising about the way the conflict developed, it is the degree to which the factions lined up precisely on the basis of old friendship and association.'⁷³²

⁷³⁰ Aug. *Ep.* 73.3.6 (=Jer. *Ep.* 110): *quo perlecto, fateor, multum dolui inter tam caras familiares que personas cunctis paene ecclesiis notissimo amicitiae vinculo copulatas tantum malum extitisse discordiae. ... quis denique amicus non formidetur quasi futurus inimicus, si potuit inter hieronymum et rufinum hoc, quod plangimus, exoriri?*

⁷³¹ Particularly, his concept of God, which was marked by an intrinsic subordinationism with respect to the divine persons, became subject of heated debates. Other problematic aspects involved his views on the resurrection of the body, the forgiveness of sins, and the incorporeality of God as well as his preference of allegorical exegesis over a literal reading of Scripture. For a learned introduction see CLARK 1992, 3-10.

⁷³² ID., 16.

This had disastrous consequences for Jerome and Rufinus who found themselves on different sides of the conflict despite their initially shared admiration for Origen.⁷³³

Jerome and Rufinus shared a long, common history, probably going back to their student days in Rome, where they received thorough training in grammar and rhetoric.⁷³⁴ Some time later, after Jerome's conversion to an ascetic way of life, their paths crossed again when they joined company with a clerical community at Aquileia.⁷³⁵ Here they came into touch with local forms of ascetic Christianity that ranged from communal monasticism to the insular lives of Christian hermits.⁷³⁶ Spurred by the glorious stories about the champions of eastern asceticism, Jerome and Rufinus were however drawn to the east. In the early 370s, they left Aquileia at roughly the same time. While Rufinus travelled to Egypt, Jerome headed for Palestine. From this period, a single document has been preserved that demonstrates the cultivation of *amicitia* before the falling-out between the two men. By sending this letter, Jerome wished to reaffirm the friendship with his 'dear friend' and 'brother' (*amicus dulcissimus; frater*) while he was en route to the Holy Land. In the meantime, he had received word that Rufinus was 'visiting the monks and going round God's family upon earth.' Apparently, his friend had made it to Nitria where he visited the much-celebrated Macarius and his community.⁷³⁷ In return, Jerome

⁷³³ Both were considered experts in the writings of Origen. Prior to the controversy Jerome even praised the *immortale ingenium* of the third century writer (*Vir. Ill.* 54).

⁷³⁴ For Jerome and Rufinus' early life and career see MURPHY 1945 and REBENICH 1992, 21-32.

⁷³⁵ Jer. *Chron.* s.a. 374 records the existence of a *clerici quasi chorus beatorum*, with which he entertained close relations (*Ep.* 6-9), Rufinus can be linked to the same circle. He received instructions in the faith by a certain Eusebius (*Apol. adv. Hier.* 1.4) who is to be identified with the eponymous deacon whose name prominently features among Jerome's correspondents (*Ep.* 7).

⁷³⁶ Apart from the clerical community at Aquileia, there was a collective of vowed virgins at Emona (*Ep.* 11) and a number of hermits who chose a life in seclusion (*Ep.* 9;12), with both of which Jerome maintained correspondence.

⁷³⁷ Jer. *Ep.* 3.1: *audio te aegypti secreta penetrare, monachorum invisere chorus et caelestem in terris circuire familiam.* 3.2: *rufinum enim nitriae esse et ad beatum perrexisse macarium crebra conneantium multitudo referebat.* Probably we are dealing here with the same Macarius who is said to have been a disciple of Anthony. Thanks to Athanasius of Alexandria, who had been in exile at Trier in the second half of the 330s, the *Vita Antonii* widely disseminated in the Roman West. It provided the pattern for subsequent generations of western would-be monks. See for instance Aug. *Conf.* 8.6.15, which recounts the story of two *agentes in rebus* who, after reading the *Vita* at Trier, converted to an ascetic way of life. COURCELLE 1950, 181ff. suggested that the two couriers should be identified with Jerome and Bonosus. This is possible but not proveable.

conveyed the latest news about his own voyage, which came to a halt at Antioch due to various maladies. While he himself suffered from ‘every possible kind of sickness’, his travel companions Innocent and Hylas even died on their way to the south.⁷³⁸ The rest of the letter is devoted to the lot of Jerome’s boyhood friend Bonosus, who pursued a different plan. Rather than going to Palestine or Egypt, as Jerome and Rufinus did, he chose to dwell on a desert island in the Adriatic Sea, where he could live a life in solitude without outside interference.⁷³⁹

These remarks about current pursuits point to the foundations of Jerome and Rufinus’ *amicitia*, which primarily built on a shared ideal of life that called for a rejection of worldly matters. Yet, as a brief reference to the ‘sudden whirlwind’ (*subitus turbo*) of their departure suggests, the bonds of friendship could not be taken for granted. Jerome’s allusive language hints at unpleasant circumstances that compelled him to depart from Italy. We cannot tell anything specific about the happenings, but it is possible that it came to some disagreement among the Aquileian circle of friends, probably over the proper ascetic way of life.⁷⁴⁰ While some stayed behind to form a clerical house community, others went to uninhabited places to live a life in solitude; still others, like Jerome and Rufinus, went to the eastern provinces to rival the lives of the heroes of Christian asceticism. This would also explain Jerome’s apparent anxiety about losing Rufinus as a friend. In the concluding passage to the letter, he noted that ‘a friend (*amicum*) is long sought, hardly found, and with difficulty kept’ and that ‘the friendship (*amicitia*) which can cease has never been real.’⁷⁴¹ These references to the fragility of true friendship then recall recent events prompting Jerome to draw himself closer to Rufinus, while other parts

⁷³⁸ Jer. *Ep.* 3.3.

⁷³⁹ Jer. *Ep.* 3.4-5.

⁷⁴⁰ REBENICH 1992, 76f. who argues against earlier interpretations who saw the main reason for Jerome’s departure in some outside influence.

⁷⁴¹ Jer. *Ep.* 3.6: ... *ne amicum, qui diu quaeritur, vix invenitur, difficile servatur amicitia, quae desinere potest, vera numquam fuit.* See CLARK 1992, 20 who, in light of later events, points to the irony of such statement.

of his network were in danger of breaking away. For now, his fear was unfounded. In the following years, the two friends stayed in touch. Rufinus even testified to occasional visits of Jerome at his monastery on the Mount of Olives.⁷⁴² Since Jerome's own monastic project, starting in 386, was based in Bethlehem, only about twenty miles away from his friend's abode, we may even assume a regular interchange.

That such sentiments were not permanent is demonstrated by the Origenist controversy of the 390s and the early fifth century. In 393, it was Epiphanius, the bishop of Salamis, who fired the conflict's first shot. He not only pronounced Origen a heretic but was also determined to associate his episcopal colleague John of Jerusalem with the teachings of the third century writer.⁷⁴³ At this point already, previous loyalties seem to have become effective. Jerome and Epiphanius knew each other from a joint journey to Rome which, in 382, brought them to the capital for a church council that was led by bishop Damasus.⁷⁴⁴ After two years in Damasus' service, Jerome left Rome together with Paula, a wealthy aristocratic widow, who was to become one of his main sponsors. On their way to the Holy Land, they stopped over in Cyprus to meet Jerome's former travel companion.⁷⁴⁵ By contrast, Rufinus and Melania the Elder, another potent Roman widow, had already realized their monastic project on the Mount of Olives by the end of the 370s – years before Jerome arrived in Bethlehem. Hence, they had sufficient time to build up strong ties to the local clerical elites, of which John of Jerusalem must have appeared as an obvious choice.⁷⁴⁶ One day, early in 393, a bunch of monks under Asterbius made their appearance at Jerome and Rufinus' door asking them to openly

⁷⁴² Ruf. *Apol. adv. Hier.* 2.11.

⁷⁴³ See Jer. *Ep.* 51.3 and 6 from Epiphanius to John.

⁷⁴⁴ For Epiphanius' journey to the west see Jer. *Ep.* 108.6; 127.7. For Jerome's relationship with Damasus see REBENICH 1992, 141-153 and more recently CAIN 2009, 43-67.

⁷⁴⁵ Jer. *Ep.* 108.7.

⁷⁴⁶ See the reference to John's *consortio romanum* at Jer. *Ep.* 82.7 and Epiphanius' mention of Rufinus at *Ep.* 51.6.

reject the doctrines of Origen. John Kelly suspected that Aterbius was not acting on his own initiative but that Epiphanius had ordered the area to be purged from Origenist influence.⁷⁴⁷ Later that year, on a visit in Jerusalem, the bishop seized the opportunity to deliver a speech against Origenism. John, on his part, responded with a discourse against anti-Origenist sentiments and later followed up with a complete exposition of the Christian doctrine, which appears to have even impressed Epiphanius.⁷⁴⁸ A further rapprochement was however quickly forstalled when the bishop of Salamis elevated Jerome's brother Paulinianus to priesthood while staying at Besanduc, his birthplace near Eleutheropolis.⁷⁴⁹ To John, this must have appeared as a blatant attack on his authority. Technically, the ordination was conducted outside Jerusalem's jurisdiction, but considering that Paulinianus was to serve as a priest in Bethlehem, John saw himself in the right in censuring the infringement. He excommunicated Jerome and with him the whole monastic community at Bethlehem.⁷⁵⁰

The excommunication had immediate effects on the community as they were cut from any support from Jerusalem. They were struggling to find proper burial places where they could lay to rest the dead and they had to send their catechumens to the distant city of Diospolis to have them baptized.⁷⁵¹ More worryingly, John succeeded in enlisting the support of Flavius Rufinus, the all-powerful *praefectus praetorio Orientis*, who decreed the expulsion of the community from Palestine. Fortunately for Jerome, the order was never put into effect, for major political developments shifted attention away from the local dispute. In 395, Hun invaders overran the eastern territories and the praetorian

⁷⁴⁷ Jer. *Adv. Ruf.* 3.33 and KELLY 1975, 198.

⁷⁴⁸ Jer. *C. Ioh.* 11-14.

⁷⁴⁹ Jer. *Ep.* 51.1.

⁷⁵⁰ Jer. *C. Ioh.* 42-43 and *Ep.* 82.10. Jerome further fueled the conflict by translating a letter from Epiphanius to John into the Latin (*Ep.* 51), which later circulated in Rome. The document comprises a lukewarm apology for the unlawful ordination of Paulinianus and was accompanied by a lengthy refutation of Origen, challenging John to openly reject his doctrines. For Jerome's vindication of his translation methods see *Ep.* 57.

⁷⁵¹ Jer. *C. Ioh.* 42-43.

prefect became victim of a conspiracy that resulted in his death.⁷⁵² After the failed removal of Jerome and his followers, John sought a way out of the situation and turned to his episcopal colleague Theophilus of Alexandria, who was supposed to act as a mediator between the quarrelling parties. After an unsuccessful attempt, he sent a diplomatic appeal to both parties, urging Jerome and John to lay aside their differences.⁷⁵³ Judging from Jerome's reply, he was willing to accept the proposal, which he framed as a matter of friendship. Thus, he spoke of 'a peace which will not reduce opponents (*non adversarios subicit*) but will unite friends (*amicos iungit*)'. Moreover, he stated that John 'will find me a friend and kinsman' (*amicos et parentes habeat*) who was prepared to acknowledge the bishop's authority.⁷⁵⁴ The resentments did of course not just vanish as Jerome went on blaming his adversary for the situation. But reconciliation was certainly preferable to the alternative.⁷⁵⁵ Eventually, the arrangement was celebrated with a highly symbolic gesture in a highly symbolic place. According to Jerome, he and Rufinus 'joined hands' (*dexteras iunximus*) in the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem on Easter day 397, and we may assume that also Epiphanius and John took part in the same ceremony, which marked what Jerome would later refer to as the 'restoration of our friendship' (*reconciliata amicitia*).⁷⁵⁶ A few months after the event, when Rufinus left Palestine for Italy, Jerome moreover gave his friend the sign of peace (*pacem dedimus*).⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁵² For a detailed analysis of Jerome's excommunication see NAUTIN 1973, 7-37. Jer. *C. Ioh.* 43 and *Ep.* 82.10 allude to Flavius Rufinus and the imminent expulsion of Jerome and his followers. Moreover, *Ep.* 77.8 gives a vivid depiction of the Hun invasion and *Ep.* 60.16 reports the death of the praetorian prefect, not without some degree of satisfaction.

⁷⁵³ Theophilus' first attempt failed because of a partisan letter by the emissary Isidore. See Jer. *C. Ioh.* 37 with *Adv. Ruf.* 3.16.

⁷⁵⁴ Jer. *Ep.* 82.1: ... *pacem, quae non adversarios subicit, sed ut amicos iungit.*

⁷⁵⁵ At the time, Jerome was preparing the treatise *Contra Iohannem* which, due to Theophilus' intervention, remained unfinished (the text breaks off at *C. Ioh.* 44).

⁷⁵⁶ Jer. *Adv. Ruf.* 3.33: ... *post reconciliatas amicitias ... ergo ideo in anastasi, immolato agno, dexteras iunximus.* For further references see Ruf. *Apol. adv. Hier.* 2.41 suggesting that the reconciliation had only been achieved 'with difficulty and much trouble.' See also Jer. *Ep.* 81.1 and *Adv. Ruf.* 1.1 where Jerome spoke of 'reconciled animosity' (*reconciliata similtas*).

⁷⁵⁷ Jer. *Adv. Ruf.* 3.24. KELLY 1975, 208 assumed that a simple compromise made the reconciliation possible.

The arrangement did however not last for long. When Rufinus landed in Italy, one Macarius, apparently a literate man of some standing, approached him requesting a Latin translation of Origen's *περὶ ἀρχῶν*, the most contested work of the third century writer.⁷⁵⁸ It contained exactly those theological speculations that, in the late fourth century, marked him a highly controversial, if not heretical figure. When Rufinus embarked on the translation project, he was well aware of the many pitfalls along the way to its completion. Especially the situation in Rome, where admirers of Origen like Rufinus rallied amid supporters of Jerome, must have appeared like a tinder box.⁷⁵⁹ In his translation, he therefore took every precaution by altering, omitting or substituting those passages in the text, which appeared to contain theological claims of dubious nature. Rufinus felt well justified in his approach, arguing that Origen's works had been subjected to extensive interpolations, which distorted the true meaning of the text.⁷⁶⁰ Despite all caution, however, Rufinus could not possibly anticipate the reaction of his opponents. Even worse, while working on the manuscript, a rough, not yet finished version of the translation made it into the hands of Jerome's friend Pammachius and the rest of the anti-Origenist circle in Rome.⁷⁶¹ After a cursory examination of its contents, they deemed the work dangerous. On the one hand, they questioned Rufinus' way of translating the Greek original, which distorted its theological contents. On the other hand, they were alarmed by the suggestion that Jerome was of the same conviction as

⁷⁵⁸ The episode is told at Ruf. *Apol. adv. Hier.* 1.11.

⁷⁵⁹ Jerome's Roman circle included Paula, Pammachius, Marcella, Fabiola, and Oceanus. Rufinus, on the other hand, could count on the support of Melania the Elder, Valerius Pinianus, Anicia Faltonia Proba, Macarius, and Turcius Apronianus. For the respective networks see the description of CLARK 1992, 20-38.

⁷⁶⁰ Rufinus explains the procedure in the *Praefatio in libros Origenis Periarchon* (prefaces to book I and III). His translation methods rest on the observations made in a short study that has been preserved as *De adulteratione librorum Origenis*. By attributing an early fourth century apology of Origen to Pamphilius, he moreover tried to enlist the name of the celebrated martyr for his cause. See Rufinus' *Prologus in Apologeticum Pamphili martyris pro Origine*.

⁷⁶¹ Apparently, it was Eusebius of Cremona who passed the manuscript on to Jerome's Roman friends. See Ruf. *Apol. adv. Hier.* 1.20; 2.44; Jer. *Adv. Ruf.* 3.20.

Rufinus.⁷⁶² In his preface, Rufinus made a brief reference to his old friend saying that ‘a dear brother and associate (*frater et collega*), at the request of Damasus translated from Greek to Latin his two homilies on the Song of Songs.’⁷⁶³ Even though the said *frater* remains anonymous, the reference to the famous sponsor and the commissioned work revealed the identity of the interpreter. Unsurprisingly, it was Jerome whose fruitful affiliation with pope Damasus in the 380s led to a Latin rendition of two of Origen’s homilies on the *Canticle of Canticles*. It seems that Rufinus merely wanted to demonstrate that his interests in scriptural translation and interpretation were not that different from those of Jerome, whose translation work was not deemed heretical. For the anti-Origenist circle in Rome, on the other hand, any doubts about the Jerome’s orthodoxy had to be removed. Since they were about to launch a campaign against Rufinus, they could not rely on a shaky associate in the east. Pammachius, together with Oceanus, thus urged Jerome to distance himself from Origen and moreover asked for a literal rendition of the work in question that would reveal Rufinus’ modifications.⁷⁶⁴

Jerome’s reaction was ambiguous as he tried to accommodate both of his friends. He provided the desired translation that was accompanied by a detailed statement of defence. Additionally, he wrote a personal letter to Rufinus, which expressed his desire to continue their friendship.⁷⁶⁵ The dossier was sent to Rome while each of the enclosed items carried a very different message. Jerome’s main argumentation was that he had never admired Origen as a speculative theologian but only as an exegete.⁷⁶⁶ This explanation allowed him to keep up his public image as an untainted proponent of

⁷⁶² Jer. *Ep.* 83 from Pammachius and Oceanus to Jerome.

⁷⁶³ Jer. *Ep.* 80.1 (= *Praefatio in librum I Origenis Periarchon*).

⁷⁶⁴ Jer. *Ep.* 83. For the campaign against Rufinus in Rome see Jer. *Ep.* 127.9 and Ruf. *Apol. adv. Hier.* 1.21. The immediate success seems however to have been limited. For Rufinus succeeded in convincing pope Siricius of his orthodoxy (Jer. *Ep.* 127.10).

⁷⁶⁵ Jer. *Ep.* 81 to Rufinus, and *Ep.* 84 to Pammachius and Oceanus.

⁷⁶⁶ Jer. *Ep.* 84.2.

orthodoxy while at the same time justifying his own translation work. As for Rufinus, he openly questioned his methods of translation as well as his justification thereof, without however mentioning him by name.⁷⁶⁷ As part of his statement of defence, he hinted at the difficulty of his position: ‘My friends (*amici mei*) have placed me in the awkward dilemma that if I say nothing I shall be held guilty, and if I offer defence I shall be accounted an enemy (*inimicus*).⁷⁶⁸ He was trapped between friendships. The mention of the *amici mei* obviously refers to his Roman friends, most notably Pammachius and Oceanus, who had urged him to respond. On the other hand, there was Rufinus, with whom he had just settled a bitter dispute. In light of these events, Jerome was justifiably worried about the prospect of gaining a new *inimicus*. As far as he was concerned, there could nonetheless be but one solution: ‘a quarrel (*simultas*) can be made up but blasphemy (*blasphemia*) can find no forgiveness.’⁷⁶⁹ Clearly, his commitment to a particular doctrinal position felt stronger than the bonds of friendship. While Jerome attempted to bridge the differences by enclosing a second letter that was drafted in a more conciliatory tone, he was soon to recognize that his understanding of *fides* left no room for the *amicitia* with Rufinus. At this point, however, he still entertained the hope that, like in Jerusalem a few years earlier, they would overcome the current difficulties. It is perhaps for that reason that his second letter presented the case strictly as a matter of friendship.⁷⁷⁰ Here he censured Rufinus for naming him as an authority in the field of scriptural interpretation, which tacitly associated him with the teachings of Origen. The letter then presented his criticism as a cause for rebuke among friends, which was the appropriate course of action

⁷⁶⁷ Jer. *Ep.* 84.7 and 12.

⁷⁶⁸ Jer. *Ep.* 84.12: *hoc mihi praestiterunt amici mei, ut, si tacuero, reus, si respondero, inimicus iudicer. Dura utraque condicio, sed de duobus eligam, quod levius est.*

⁷⁶⁹ Jer. *Ep.* 84.12: *simultas redintegrari potest, blasphemia veniam non meretur.*

⁷⁷⁰ This was also Jerome’s later view. Jer. *Adv. Ruf.* 3.38 acknowledges that he had written to Rufinus *quasi ad amicum*.

considering that ‘true friendship (*vera amicitia*) ought never to conceal what it thinks.’⁷⁷¹

Jerome thus declared that he would refrain from raging against his *amicus*, pointing out that he had kept the *amicitia reconciliata* ever since their meeting in Jerusalem.⁷⁷²

Jerome’s intentions seem clear enough. He did not send two independent letters to two different addressees but a carefully balanced dossier. It contained a piece whose language was powerful enough to avert the verdict of heresy, without however revealing the name of Rufinus. At the same time, he appended a letter of rebuke that, when read together with its counter piece, may have shielded their friendship from destruction.⁷⁷³ At the very least, though, the letter served as explanation for his course of action; namely that, in the current situation, he had no other choice than to go public. Unfortunately for Jerome, the second letter never reached its destination. Upon receiving the package, Pammachius and his consorts took matters into their own hands. While the statement of defence was widely circulated in and around Rome, the friendly note, which was intended to sooth the hurt feelings of an old *amicus*, remained suppressed. Rufinus was only much later to learn that there had actually been a second letter. In the meantime, however, he was kept unaware of Jerome’s intent. The reasons for the omission are not entirely clear. As Jerome later stated, he was told that Rufinus and his companions, at that time, were making serious charges against him. In light of these personal attacks, his friends in Rome deliberately refrained from passing on the message.⁷⁷⁴ More likely, however, is that this was a strategic move on the part of Pammachius and his associates who, after having received the two letters, were afraid that the friendly tone of the latter piece would draw Jerome too close to the main target of their anti-Origenist campaign. For there was much

⁷⁷¹ Jer. *Ep.* 81.1: *vera amicitia, quod sentit, dissimulare non debet*. See EBBELER 2012, 28-62 for Augustine’s practice of corrective rebuke in his letters.

⁷⁷² Jer. *Ep.* 81.1: *haec apud te potius amice expostulare volui quam lacessitus publice desaeuire, ut animadvertas me reconciliatas amicitias pure colere ...*

⁷⁷³ Jer. *Adv. Ruf.* 1.12 distinguishes between a public letter (*epistula publica*) and a short letter (*epistula brevis*).

⁷⁷⁴ Jer. *Adv. Ruf.* 1.12; 3.38.

more at stake than just the friendship of two biblical scholars. After the death of bishop Siricius in 399, the Roman church elected Anastasius as their new leader. While the former was sympathetic to Rufinus and his associates, the latter had first to be persuaded of either one or the other position.⁷⁷⁵ Particularly, it was Marcella, the influential patroness and disciple of Jerome, who successfully campaigned for Anastasius' support.⁷⁷⁶ Following a verdict by Theophilus of Alexandria, who had a synod deal with this matter, the Roman bishop likewise convoked a council, which eventually condemned Origen's work.⁷⁷⁷

Despite the actions that had been taken against Rufinus, leading up to the condemnation of Origen in Rome, Jerome's associates did not succeed in isolating the adversary. Their efforts probably also remained ineffective because Anastasius, who seemed determined to apply Theophilus' ruling to the west, died soon after the council. In 401, Rufinus launched a counter-attack in the form of a two-volume apology, picking apart Jerome's letter of defence, which had caused great excitement at Rome about two years earlier. This was his *Apologia contra Hieronymum*.⁷⁷⁸ Since Jerome was able to obtain information about the pamphlet's contents, his response followed immediately, perhaps even before Rufinus' account appeared in public. He likewise released an apology in two books, the *Apologia adversus libros Rufini*.⁷⁷⁹ Following this, Chromatius, the bishop of Aquileia, who knew both contestants very well, made a last attempt at mediation.⁷⁸⁰ But since a now lost letter of Rufinus did not only include a peace offer but was also full of

⁷⁷⁵ Jer. *Adv. Ruf.* 3.21; 24 and *Ep.* 127.10 imply that Siricius had sided with Rufinus.

⁷⁷⁶ Jer. *Ep.* 127.10 points to her involvement.

⁷⁷⁷ Anastasius, *Epistula ad Simplicianum* (=Jer. *Ep.* 96) 2-3. Sometime before the unfavourable verdict, Rufinus had already made an official appeal to Anastasius, delivering his *Apologia ad Anastasium*, in which he took a stance against the accusations. For Theophilus' activities in the east see KELLY 1975, 243-246.

⁷⁷⁸ Jerome was scoffing that it took Rufinus three years to complete his apology; cf. *Adv. Ruf.* 3.10.

⁷⁷⁹ Jerome's familiarity with the contents of his adversary's account is indicated at Jer. *Adv. Ruf.* 1.1; 3; 21.

⁷⁸⁰ Jer. *Adv. Ruf.* 3.2.

indignation, these efforts were condemned to failure.⁷⁸¹ In return, Jerome answered with a third volume of his apology, the *Liber tertius adversus libros Rufini*. Beyond this point no further interventions have been recorded and we may assume that the publicly performed clash came to an end at the expense of their friendship. In recent scholarship, Jerome and Rufinus' final statements have for the most part been treated as valuable source either to reconstruct the controversy's course of events or to map the respective doctrinal positions.⁷⁸² To my knowledge, it has however never been attempted to read these works as a last testimony to a long-standing and often troubled friendship. After all, it was through the publication of those treatises that any friendly sentiments that may have survived the previous struggles were eventually put to an end. Once and for all the bond of *amicitia* had been severed, while *inimicitia* had taken its place. It is then this transition, I believe, from a vulnerable friendship to open hostility that deserves close attention. At the same time, we have to bear in mind that both the revocation of *amicitia* and the declaration of *inimicitia* were made in the context of a theological argument that committed each author to a particular doctrinal position. For Jerome and Rufinus, friendship was thus inextricably linked with their own interpretation of the religious truth. Only if a consensus in religious matters was reached, could the bonds of *amicitia* be maintained.

In their apologetical accounts, both Rufinus and Jerome made repeated reference to their previous friendship. Given the fact that we are dealing with carefully wrought pieces of invective, which were intended to disprove the arguments of the opposition, the extensive use of terms of endearment such as 'brother' or 'friend' may come as a surprise. Rufinus set the tone for his apology at the very outset of the work. To Turcius

⁷⁸¹ Rufinus' peace offer is alluded to at Jer. *Adv. Ruf.* 3.41-42. For an attempted reconstruction of the letter's contents see KELLY 1975, 254f.

⁷⁸² Even CLARK 1992, who underscores the social dimension of the conflict, does not go beyond the above suggested scholarly approach in her reading of these texts.

Apronianus, the dedicatee of the treatise, he directed the words: ‘I have read the document sent from the east by our friend and good brother (*ab amico et fratre bono de Oriente*) to a distinguished member of the Senate, Pammachius, which you have copied and forwarded to me.’⁷⁸³ Rufinus was alluding to Jerome’s letter of defence that was to be read together with the supplementary friendly note, which had never been delivered. As we shall see in the following, it was exactly this event that was presented as the crucial moment that ruptured their friendship. For the moment, it may suffice to point to Rufinus’ ironically meant form of address, dubbing Jerome not only an *amicus* but also a *frater bonus*.⁷⁸⁴ In book two, he continued this practice, repeatedly referring to Jerome as ‘my brother’ (*frater* or *mi frater*) or ‘my friend’ (*amicus meus*).⁷⁸⁵ In light of Rufinus’ accusations, specifically targeting Jerome’s sudden turn from an admirer of Origen to a harsh censor of Origenism, his choice of words must have appeared as biting sarcasm. At the same time, however, such references served as a reminder to the previously shared bond of friendship. This can also be glimpsed from Rufinus’ remark ‘that in controversies of this kind there is no thought of sparing friends (*amicis*) if only enemies (*inimicos*) can be injured.’ Turning to Jerome, he accused his former friend of even going beyond this point ‘in your attempt to ruin not your enemies (*inimicos*) but your friends (*amicos*).’⁷⁸⁶ The message seems clear. Rather than merely attacking enemies, Jerome was accused of turning against a friend. To some degree, however, the constant shifting between the antonyms *amicus* and *inimicus* also reveals a certain uneasiness on Rufinus’ part about the still unchanged status of their relationship.

⁷⁸³ Ruf. *Apol. adv. Hier.* 1.1: *Relegi scripta, Aproniane fili carissime, quae, ab amico et fratre bono de Oriente ad virum nobilissimum Pammachium missa, transmisisti ad me.*

⁷⁸⁴ SIMONETTI 1957, 82f. with n. 3. Later on in book one, he employed the no less ironic *o magister* or simply *magister* to refer to his former friend; cf. Ruf. *Apol. adv. Hier.* 1.22; 39.

⁷⁸⁵ Ruf. *Apol. adv. Hier.* 2.9; 10; 12; 41 for the brother terminology, and *Apol. adv. Hier.* 2.40 for the language of friendship.

⁷⁸⁶ Ruf. *Apol. adv. Hier.* 2.24: *Sed contentio est quae nec amicis parcat, dummodo laedat inimicos: tu vero, etiam hoc supergressus, tibi ipsi non parcas, dummodo non inimicos conficias, sed amicos.*

In his account, Jerome went one step further. While Rufinus had desisted from using the language of enmity as a means to attack Jerome personally, the latter began to openly mark his target a personal enemy. He either plainly named Rufinus an *inimicus* or used the phrase ‘an enemy (*inimicus* or *hostis*) parading under the name of a friend (*sub amici nomine*)’ to indicate that, although they had once been friends, they were now enemies.⁷⁸⁷ Not unlike Rufinus, however, Jerome also employed sarcasm quite effectively. This becomes particularly obvious when he referred to ‘the neither pure nor innocent laudation of a most innocent friend’ (*simplicissimus amicus*), which alluded to Rufinus’ suspiciously laudable words in his preface. Along these lines, Jerome called his adversary ‘a very faithful friend’ (*amicus fidissimus*), ‘my very dear friend’ (*amicissimus*), or simply ‘my friend’ (*familiaris meus*; *amicus*) in several instances.⁷⁸⁸ Sometimes, he even liked to refer to himself as *amicus*. Yet, in most cases, Jerome did not fail to provide the appropriate temporal indicator, making plain that the cultivation of *amicitia* belonged to the past. Thus, he spoke of himself as ‘your erstwhile friend’ (*amicus quondam tuus*) and in addressing Rufinus directly, he used the past tense (*tu amicus eras*) to indicate the rupture that had occurred.⁷⁸⁹ In the final sentence to book two (that is, at the very end of Jerome’s first instalment), we find Jerome then openly declaring enmity. While initially acknowledging how worried he was about the prospect of receiving ‘the three volumes of my friend’ (that is, the two volumes of the *Apologia contra Hieronymum* plus the *Apologia ad Anastasium*) because of the ‘mass of charges’ (*congeriem criminum*) that they contained, he withheld the final blow against his adversary until the very last line. Here he concluded

⁷⁸⁷ Jer. Adv. Ruf. 1.1: *quod sub amici nomine inimici insidias deprehendi?* For a similar phrase see 2.35: ... *nisi quod levius est professum inimicum cavere quam hostem latentem sub amici nomine sustinere.*

⁷⁸⁸ Jer. Adv. Ruf. 1.2: *ecce obiciuntur mihi laudes eius et crimini datur simplicissimi amici non simplex nec pura laudatio.* 1.3: *unus Romae amicus.* 1.11: *homo innocens et amicus fidissimus.* 2.35: ... *familiaris meum ... expectans tria amici volumina ...* 3.37: *amice.* 3.41: *amicissimo.*

⁷⁸⁹ Jer. Adv. Ruf. 1.11: *amicum quondam tuum*; 2.35: *christiano et amico*; 3.1: *amicus quondam tuus*; 3.37: *tu amicus eras.*

that ‘it is easier to be on guard against an avowed enemy (*professum inimicum*) than to resist an enemy hiding under the name of a friend (*sub amici nomine*).’⁷⁹⁰ Again we can perceive the characteristic interplay between the respective antonyms *amicus* and *inimicus*. But, while Rufinus had exercised restraint in applying the language of enmity to his former friend, Jerome did not feel bound anymore by what he elsewhere called the *ius amicitiae*.⁷⁹¹ For him, it was easier to bear the bundle of accusations that was to go public any time soon, knowing that he was facing a *professus inimicus* rather than a false *amicus*. This is certainly a most imaginative way of employing a well-known aphorism of the ancient friendship tradition. In this context, however, Jerome’s preference for enmity over false friendship did not remain an empty platitude but had grave consequences for his relationship with Rufinus.

While comparing the two accounts, one quickly recognizes the prevalence of the friendship terminology in Jerome’s case. Rufinus kept the corresponding language to a minimum using words like ‘brother’ and ‘friend’ as a reminder of their previous relations. In Jerome, however, the reader is confronted with a sustained line of argument that built on the principles of *amicitia*. Hence, he did not only make frequent reference to Rufinus as an erstwhile friend but also effectively employed the *amicus-inimicus* opposition to present his apology as a formal revocation of friendship. In the main, we can discern two specific textual contexts, in which *amicitia*-related thought occurs: first, as a reference to the events that had eventually led to the rupture between former friends; and second, as a clarification of the very foundations of friendship.

Apparently, Rufinus had charged Jerome with *infidelitas* for an incident that had occurred *post reconciliatas amicitias*, at some point after the reconciliation of friendship.⁷⁹²

⁷⁹⁰ Jer. Adv. Ruf. 2.35: ... *expectans tria amici volumina et ad congeriem criminum eius tota mente suspensus, nisi quod levius est professum inimicum cavere quam hostem latentem sub amici nomine sustinere.*

⁷⁹¹ For the *ius amicitiae* see Jer. Adv. Ruf. 1.3; 3.37 and my discussion below.

⁷⁹² Jer. Adv. Ruf. 3.33: *Venio ad gravissimum crimen in quo post reconciliatas amicitias me infidelitatis accusas.*

Given the above course of events, the suggested breach of fidelity makes sense only as an allusion to the happenings that followed immediately after Rufinus' translation project had become known to outsiders. In this regard, the position of Rufinus was that the laudation, which he had included into the preface of his work, was genuine and that Jerome's vile attacks against him personally were completely unjustified. From his point of view, the letter of defence that had circulated in Rome shortly thereafter, formed a violation of the mutual trust that had previously marked their friendship.⁷⁹³ Jerome, on the other hand, presented a very different picture to his readers. From his perspective, the crucial point was not the public letter that he had sent to Rome in his own defence, but Rufinus' audacious attempt to undermine his orthodoxy by relating his previous work as a scriptural interpreter to Origen's erroneous teachings. As Jerome acknowledged, his Roman friends had already been convinced that Rufinus was a heretic and it was only a matter of time until the same accusation was turned against him if he had not publicly rejected the allegations.⁷⁹⁴ In his own account, Jerome went even as far as to portray himself as the true preserver of the 'law of friendship' (*ius amicitiae*) who, unlike his former friend, was not eager to make accusations (meaning the charge of *infidelitas*). Rather than personally attacking Rufinus as part of his statement of defence, he even added an extra letter that was intended to sooth tensions.⁷⁹⁵ For Rufinus, Jerome's mention of a second letter must have come as a surprise. He was still ignorant of the existence of such a complementary piece. Yet, in a now lost letter, he seems to have responded to the sudden

⁷⁹³ Ruf. *Apol. adv. Hier.* 1.1 sufficiently demonstrates that the two volumes followed as a direct reaction to Jerome's *Ep.* 84.

⁷⁹⁴ Jerome repeatedly dealt with these events in book one and three of his apology. See *Adv. Ruf.* 1.1-3; 11-12 and 3.33-38.

⁷⁹⁵ Jer. *Adv. Ruf.* 1.3: ... *sic amicitiae iura servavi ut me sine accusantis accusatione defenderem et, quod unus Romae amicus obiecerat, a multis in toto orbe inimicis dicerem.* 3.37: *Et tamen laesus amicitiae in te iura servavi et, quantum in me fuit, sic me defendi ut te non accusarem.* Jer. *Ep.* 81 is alluded to at *Adv. Ruf.* 1.12.

appearance of novel evidence. From Jerome's response, we can infer that Rufinus was not prepared to believe in the letters' authenticity, not after all that had happened.⁷⁹⁶

The mention of the *ius amicitiae* in connection with the charge *infidelitas* then points to the second point in question, the foundation of Christian friendship. For Jerome, the question of whether or not *amicitia* could exist crucially hinged on a friend's religious convictions. This is indicated not only by the meticulous reproduction of the main points of contention in the apology but also by their construal of the conflict as a matter pertaining to the 'law of friendship'. Accordingly, Jerome presented his treatise as a declaration of enmity. To be sure, we have to distinguish between the first instalment of the apology and the third volume, which was a later supplement. In analyzing the main structural landmarks of the text, we have to bear in mind this division. Particularly, book one and two form a unity and *amicitia* seems to have served as the key guiding principle. For the entire argumentation that is unfolded in these volumes is bracketed by two meaningful passages about friendship. Thus, Jerome presented his literary undertaking as follows:

It would have been the mark of a prudent man and of a friend, after the reconciliation of differences, to have avoided even the slightest indications of suspicions Whence, also, Cicero says in commenting on his reasons for defending Gabinius: 'I have always been of the opinion that all friendships (*omnes amicitias*) must be guarded very religiously and very faithfully (*summa religione et fide*), and in particular those friendships that have been restored to good standing after a falling out (*ex inimicitiiis revocatae in gratiam*). For any failure to do one's duty (*officium*), while friendship is intact (*integris amicitiiis*), is excused on the grounds of imprudence (*imprudientiae*), or (to use a stronger term) of negligence (*negligentiae*). But anything offensive committed after friendship has been conciliated is no longer reckoned as negligence, but rather as a violation (*violatum*), nor is it ordinarily imputed to impudence, but rather to perfidy (*perfidiae*).⁷⁹⁷

⁷⁹⁶ Jer. *Adv. Ruf.* 3.38.

⁷⁹⁷ Jer. *Adv. Ruf.* 1.1: *Prudentis fuerat et amici, post reconciliatam simultatem, etiam leves suspiciones fugere, Unde et Tullius, in commentariis causarum pro Gabinio: 'Ego - inquit - cum omnes amicitias tuendas semper putavi summa religione et fide, tum eas maxime quae essent ex inimicitiiis revocatae in gratiam; propterea quod integris amicitiiis officium praetermissum*

Jerome alluded not only to the reconciliation in Jerusalem that had marked the provisional end of a longer period of conflict but also to Rufinus' misplaced praise, which threatened to undermine his reputation as an orthodox interpreter and exegete of Scripture. His point was that Rufinus should have been more careful when he drafted his Latin rendition of Origen's work, especially in light of the quarrel that had almost led to the termination of friendship a few years earlier. As a historical analogy, he hinted at the example of Cicero and Aulus Gabinius who, after their falling-out, managed to restore amicable relations. Gabinius was second consul for the year 58 BC and as such he supported Cicero's exilement that had been instigated by Publius Clodius Pulcher. A few years later, however, when he was charged with capital crimes, Cicero came to his defence, pleading his cause in court.⁷⁹⁸ In this context, it is maybe not so important to know that the restoration of *amicitia* was part of a political gamble in which Cicero tried to please Pompey rather than defend a personal enemy. What is worth mentioning, however, is the way in which Cicero tried to explain his volte-face regarding Gabinius.⁷⁹⁹ His argumentation was that, once friendship had been restored, he had no other choice than to take side with the defendant, for, otherwise, he would have committed a breach of fidelity. As a matter of principle, friendship ought to be guided by the right sense of mutual trust and duty (*fides* and *religio*). Even though this basic rule applied to all *amicitiae*, it became much more important in the case of restored friendships where the slightest failure to observe the above principles could lead to grave consequences. Thus, the key terms of the fragment are *fides* and *religio* on the one hand, and *perfidia* and the verb *violare* on the other. While the former are inextricably linked to the bonds of *amicitia*, the latter

*imprudientiae vel - ut gravius interpretemur - negligentiae excusatione defenditur; post reditum in gratiam, si quid est commissum, id non neglectum, sed violatum putatur, nec imprudentiae, sed perfidiae adsignari solet.*⁷

⁷⁹⁸ For Gabinius' career see BADIEN 1959, 87-99.

⁷⁹⁹ Jerome's quotation is the only fragment of Cicero's speech *Pro Gabinio* that has come down to us. See KLODT 1992, 34 n. 60.

point not only to past *inimicitiae* but also to future animosities that were likely to resurface if the promise of friendship was not kept.

Jerome's interest in Cicero is twofold: first, the quote has to be read as a direct response to one of Rufinus' more scathing accusations; and second, the example of Gabinius served the purpose of charging the former friend with *perfidia*. In book two of his apology, Rufinus made the accusation that Jerome preferred the writings of pagan authors to the biblical testimony. Despite the publicly made pledge neither to use nor read the works of the ancients, he kept on citing them in his own writings: 'tell me whether there is a single page of it in which he does not again declare himself a Ciceronian, or in which he does not speak of our Tully, our Flaccus, and our Maro.'⁸⁰⁰ Jerome then seems to be responding to that charge by including a longer quote of Cicero's *Pro Gabinio* into his apology. As if this was not enough, he moreover followed with a line from Horace's letter to Florus: 'the ill-patched reconciliation in vain closes, and is rent asunder.'⁸⁰¹ It is as if Jerome wanted to let Rufinus know that, with respect to friendship, he could still learn much from the authors, which he condemns. Rather than blaming others for their use of pagan literature, he could have avoided the rupture if he had only read the ancients.⁸⁰² More important, however, than this attack against Rufinus, is the message of the passage itself. Jerome had taken Cicero's statement out of its literary context making it suit his own purposes. Thus, the employed terminology must be read in the context of the Origenist controversy whose points of contention were set forth in the main body of the apology. With this in mind, we have to pay close attention to the suggested meaning of words like *fides*, *religio* or *perfidia*. While the former two pointed to the fidelity and constancy toward God (as opposed to the mutual trust and reliability among friends), the

⁸⁰⁰ Ruf. *Apol. adv. Hier.* 2.7.

⁸⁰¹ Jer. *Adv. Ruf.* 1.1: *Male ... sarta gratia nequicquam coit et rescinditur*; quoting Hor. *Epist.* 1.3.31-32.

⁸⁰² Similarly, LARDET 1993, 15.

latter was associated with opposite notions such as faithlessness and the aberration from the religious truth. If friendship called for a sense of obligation and trustworthiness with regard to religious matters, enmity must have been the consequence of the opposite act of *perfidia*.

The accusation of disbelief, then, that Jerome hurled at Rufinus at the outset of his apology corresponded with the message of the final sentence of book two, where Jerome drew his conclusions after having listed his accusations in the main body of the work. I have already dealt with this passage previously but will cite it here again for the sake of clarity. Thus, Jerome concluded the argument of his first instalment with the following statement:

I, who had already attacked a nefarious heresy (*nefariam haeresim*) with my pen, have been forced to reply in my own defence, while I await the three volumes of my friend (*tria amici volumina*), and worry about the mass of charges; except that it is easier to be on guard against an avowed enemy (*professum inimicum*) than to resist an enemy hiding under the name of a friend (*hostem latentem sub amice nomine*).⁸⁰³

Previously, Jerome had counted Rufinus among the number of his friends. Now he openly declared him an *inimicus professus*. After associating his former friend with the charge of *perfidia* at the beginning of book one, he was laying out his evidence in the middle part, which was ultimately followed by the verdict. It is worth noting that Jerome's phrasing suggests an inherent connection between *haeresis* and *inimicitia*. Elsewhere in the same passage, he had called himself 'a friend and a Christian', and it is likely that the reference to the *amicus* in connection with *Christianus* was thought to be in opposition to

⁸⁰³ Jer. Adv. Ruf. 2.35: ... qui contra nefariam haeresim iam stilum fixeram, pro me respondere compulsus sum, expectans tria amici volumina at ad congeriem criminum eius tota mente suspensus, nisi quod levius est professum inimicum cavere quam hostem latentem sub amice nomine sustinere.

the enemy's (*inimicus*) association with heretical ideas.⁸⁰⁴ Even though the link between orthodoxy and friendship is merely implied here, we can adduce other instances that make the implications of Christian *amicitia* clear. It is particularly in book three of the apology that we find Jerome drawing the line between friendship and enmity. Here he acknowledged that 'if I cannot be your friend (*amicus tuus*) in any other way except by being also a friend of heretics (*haereticorum amicus*), it will be easier for me to bear your enmity (*tuas inimicitias*) than their friendship (*illorum amicitias*).'⁸⁰⁵ Rather than becoming a heretic for the sake of a friend, Jerome was prepared to bear Rufinus' enmity. The main determinant then that eventually decided over friendship or enmity is to be found in the notion of orthodoxy, which discounted all aberrations from the religious truth as heresy. Someone who was in line with the principles of the faith was deemed a friend. Anyone, however, who advocated false beliefs, was to be considered an enemy. For Jerome, Rufinus was an *inimicus professus* exactly because he failed to dissociate himself from the erroneous teachings of Origen. Nevertheless, in a final attempt to mitigate his previous verdict, he directed the following appeal toward Rufinus: 'Let us have the one and the same faith (*una fides*), and peace (*pax*) will follow promptly.'⁸⁰⁶ Only if the *una fides* was in place, the most basic requirement for friendship was fulfilled.

Despite Jerome's plea, the damage to their friendships was irreparable. As far as Rufinus was concerned, he kept on translating the writings of Origen in the years following the conflict, which seems to indicate that he did not suffer from prosecution or any other actions that may have been taken against him. Until his death in Sicily in 411, he continued his work focusing not only on the homilies and commentaries of the third

⁸⁰⁴ Jer. Adv. Ruf. 2.35: ... *et familiarem meum id a christiano et amico debere suscipere* Jerome's mention of a *nefarius haeresis* may be a reference to his work *Adversus Iovinianum*.

⁸⁰⁵ Jer. Adv. Ruf. 3.37: *Quod si aliter amicus tuus esse non possum nisi et haereticorum amicus fuero, levius tuas inimicitias quam illorum amicitias sustinebo.*

⁸⁰⁶ Jer. Adv. Ruf. 3.44: *Si inter nos una fides, et ilico pax sequetur.*

century writer but also providing a Latin rendition of Eusebius of Caesarea's church history, to which he moreover appended two volumes of his own. While pursuing the pioneering work of his predecessor until the year 395, he made frequent reference to celebrated Christian personalities, without however mentioning his former friend once. It seems that, since their paths had parted, he cast the veil of oblivion over Jerome.⁸⁰⁷ In Jerome, however, the parting appears to have triggered a very different response. Whereas Rufinus decided not to engage any further in the controversy, he treated his former friend as he said he would, like an *inimicus professus*. Jerome went on marking his adversary a personal enemy by calling him 'scorpion' (*scorpio*), 'silly old woman' (*anus delira*), or 'fat pig' (*crassa sus*).⁸⁰⁸ Moreover, in his later work and even after Rufinus' death, he labelled his former friend as 'the grunter' (*grunnius*),⁸⁰⁹ which may well be understood as an allusion to a strangely imaginative mid-fourth-century work featuring a fictional character called Marcus Grunnius Corocotta. It is the jocose story of a piglet bearing the *tria nomina* associated with members of the Roman upper class that dictates its will in the face of being butchered.⁸¹⁰ It is possible that Jerome was thinking of that humorous tale when he made Rufinus his very own personal grunter.⁸¹¹ In so doing, he was not only able to give vent to his anger over Rufinus' actions but also targeted the latter's name as a reputable scriptural interpreter.

⁸⁰⁷ KELLY 1975, 257.

⁸⁰⁸ REBENICH 1992, 207 with n. 417.

⁸⁰⁹ Jer. *Ep.* 125.18 to Rusticus and *In Hier.* prol. 4; 4.61.4-7.

⁸¹⁰ *Test. porc.* (= *Testamentum porcelli*). *Corocotta* is the latinized word for Greek κροκόττας or κροκούττας meaning a wild animal, most probably a hyena.

⁸¹¹ *Comm. in Is.* 12.4-8 shows that Jerome knew the work. He cited it as a particularly low example of popular literature, at the opposite side being Platon's *Timaeus*. CLARK 1992, 14 falsely asserts that the passage relates to Rufinus.

7. Conclusion

The point of departure for this thesis was provided by two interrelated questions: how did Christians shape their ideas about friendship conceptually, and how did these concepts relate to the actual practice of friendship. Chapter three and four have dealt with these questions by looking at two disparate historical settings, moving from Cyprian and third century Carthage to late fourth century Milan under Ambrose. In the following, the perspective has been broadened to include the testimony of other late fourth, early fifth century writers such as Symmachus and Ausonius, or Augustine, Paulinus, and Jerome. Along these lines, chapter five and six have presented a series of close readings of late antique texts that deepen our understanding of Christian friendship. They not only focus on the clerical and monastic perspective but also take into account non-clerical voices as point of reference outside the church. In examining the relevant sources, I pursued an approach that does not follow the usual premises of other studies on the subject. In particular, this concerned three important aspects that need further highlighting: first, the consideration of implicit friendship language; second, the relation between concept and context; and third, the principle of inclusion and exclusion as an analytical tool to account for the notion of *amicitia*.

Implicit friendship language: this study has investigated the use of friendship language in a wide range of different contexts starting with the early third through to the early fifth century. In so doing, I have not only considered explicit statements about *amicitia* but also taken into account implied references. Without actually using the corresponding language, early Christian writers were still able to convey ideas and thoughts that activated the ancient discourse on friendship. A fine example is provided by Tertullian who, in his *Apologeticum*, drew on the depiction of the Jerusalem community in order to

set it off against the practice of ‘pagan’ friendship. Also Augustine appealed to the same biblical narrative not only to describe his communal project at Cassiciacum but also to lay the foundation for his monastic communities at Thagaste and Hippo. In both cases, the connecting factor was provided by the ideas of property sharing and unanimity among the members of the community. These were high ideals that were firmly rooted in the Graeco-Roman friendship tradition. I am not the first to point to the provenance of such ideas and the multiple influences that determined the Christian perspective. Particularly with regard to the biblical writings, scholars were able to identify a number of themes that tie in with the respective thinking.⁸¹²

However, my own reading goes beyond the identification of single topoi by looking at patterns of thought and their impact on interhuman interaction. Cyprian’s *De unitate*, for instance, presents a sustained argument about the *unitas fraternitatis* that carefully distinguishes between those who were in line with the bishop’s rule and all others who forfeited their place in the community due to their resistance. The division of the Christian world into respected *fratres* and hated *inimici* rests on principles that were characteristic of the notion of friendship. In particular, this concerned the binary code of a friend-enemy distinction that tied in with the conventions of Roman oratorical invective. In the political arena, such language was commonly used to express antagonism toward individuals and groups that were opposed to one’s own position. Yet rather than making explicit reference to friendship, Cyprian’s conception replaced the *amicus* with the Christian *frater*, while retaining the image of the *inimicus* as a derogatory name for anybody who challenged the divinely sanctioned order of the church. Along these lines, the examination of implicit friendship language allows us to draw a more nuanced picture of Christian *amicitia*. Texts that had usually not been considered as potential sources can

⁸¹² KLAUCK 1991; MITCHELL 1997; FITZGERALD 2003.

now be viewed in a different light. This approach moreover puts into perspective a scholarly established boundary between imperial Rome and late antiquity that usually associates the reception of *amicitia*-related thought in Christian circles with the late fourth century.⁸¹³ My own contribution demonstrated that the narrow focus on late antique writers like Ambrose, Augustine, and Paulinus led to a distorted understanding of Christian friendship that overemphasized the religio-political turn under Constantine as the main catalyst for the incorporation of philosophical thought into the Christian discourse. Rather, earlier examples like Cyprian and Tertullian came up with similar ideas of community that equally built on the principles of the ancient friendship tradition.

Concept and context: Reinhart Koselleck understood concepts as ‘both indicators of and factors in political and social life’. He argued that they are no ‘immutable ideas’ whose meaning stays the same regardless of the circumstances. Rather, the study of historical semantics ‘deals with the use of specific language in specific situations, within which concepts are developed and used by specific speakers’.⁸¹⁴ This observation is important as it points to the inherent connection between language and context. To be sure, occurring events are never identical with their subsequent translation into language. But language provides the means to adequately respond to certain situations and thus relates to past events. Along these lines, my own study examined the interdependence between concept and context, arguing that normative texts such as Cyprian’s *De unitate* or Ambrose’s *De officiis* can only properly be understood in light of a particular socio-historical setting. Furthermore, it is my view that the formulation of specific norms and principles in these texts are reflected in the practices of social interaction. By contrast, previous scholars have tended to approach *amicitia* from two different angles: either as a subject for philosophical theorization or as a particular type of relationship that

⁸¹³ Amongst others, WHITE 1992, 45-60; REBENICH 2008, 18.

⁸¹⁴ KOSELLECK 1996, 61f.

performed crucial social functions. My own reading attempted to fill in the gap arising from these contributions. For instance, Cyprian's conception of the *unitas fraternitatis* has to be seen as a direct response to disturbing events in the Carthaginian community that saw the emergence of rebel clerics like Felicissimus and Novatus as a potential threat to the bishop's powerbase. At the same time, the propagated model of the *De unitate* can equally be found in Cyprian's correspondence where the image of the ill-disposed *inimicus* found its proper place. Similarly, Ambrose's struggle with the Homoian opposition inside and outside Milan suggests that these experiences influenced the later presentation of his views in the *De officiis*. Thus, his idea of *amicitia cum fratribus* that proclaimed friendship with the *vir fidelis* while dismissing the *amicus infidus* as a Christian's enemy ties in with his handling of ecclesial opposition. A particular example is provided by the bishop's appearance at the council of Aquileia in 381. Palladius of Ratiaria who, on this occasion, was found among the *inimici Dei* drew a picture of a church gathering that was dominated by hatred and hostility. A circle of powerful friends under the direction of the Milanese bishop was prepared to defend what they believed to be the religious truth by making use of their numerical superiority to dismantle the beliefs of their doctrinal enemies.

Inclusion and exclusion: My approach followed an understanding of friendships that viewed *amicitia* as existing in a dialectical opposition with its antonym, *inimicitia*. In so doing, I drew on the sociological concept of inclusion and exclusion by Niklas Luhmann. He argued that 'it is only the existence of non-integrable persons or groups that renders social cohesion visible and makes it possible to specify conditions for it.' This means that, insofar as the conditions for *amicitia* are specified, the opposite case of *inimicitia* can also be labelled. In the form of an antithesis, 'the opposite then conveys the meaning and justification of the form of social order.'⁸¹⁵ In scholarship, it has repeatedly been noted

⁸¹⁵ LUHMANN 2013, vol. 2, 17f.

that the notion of enmity, unlike friendship, did neither involve adherence to social obligations nor indicate membership with a particular group. Luhmann's model then allows us to adequately explain this lack of theorization by viewing *inimicitia* as the 'counter-structure' to the possibility of inclusion.⁸¹⁶ To be sure, the notion of exclusion is not always easy to grasp. For the primary goal of the available epistolary literature was to cultivate relationships rather than to record their failure. Moreover, in cases where letter collections were prepared for publication, apparent tensions may have been edited out as part of the selection process. Nevertheless, it is possible to adduce instances in which expressions of hatred and hostility can be perceived. Probably the best documented case from this period is the friendship of Jerome and Rufinus, which nicely illustrates the transformation of *amicitia* into *inimicitia*. We are here not only given a testimony to the workings of an intact friendship in the form of a single letter as well as a report about the restoration of friendly relations after a period of conflict, but we also have an apologetical account of Jerome that works as a formal declaration of enmity. It put a final end to an often troubled relationship that got caught in the crossfire of religious strife. Similarly, the writings concerning the council of Aquileia allow a deep insight into the strategies that had been employed to exclude doctrinal opponents from the church. Ambrose's position is best captured by his ability to capitalize on *amicitiae*, which manifested themselves in a chorus of like-minded clerics who was ready to shout down the interjections of the perceived *inimicus* at any given moment. Cyprian, too, made effective use of the notion of enmity as a means to express ecclesial opposition. His reference to the *frater inimicus*, which relates two mutually exclusive terms to one another, straightforwardly points to the milieu from where the opponents had emerged. To his mind, the community of brothers that faithfully abided by the principle of *unitas* was threatened by the machinations of

⁸¹⁶ HELLEGOUARC'H 1963, 186; EPSTEIN 1987, 2; MARSHALL 1987, 35.

subversive forces, to which he collectively referred as their enemy. In the process, he used the literary form of the letter as means to warn clerical correspondents about the potential threat that springs from people like Felicissimus and Novatus.⁸¹⁷ An entirely different question is whether their attempts at exclusion had an immediate impact on the lives of their opponents. The continued reference to the *Felicissimi factio* in Cyprian's letters or Ambrose's struggle to implement sanctions in the case of Palladius would suggest that their reach was rather limited. Nevertheless, the rhetoric of exclusion that made enmity an integral part of church politics was an effective tool to label ecclesial opposition.⁸¹⁸

The case of inclusion, on the other hand, can be seen from the surviving epistolary literature. Besides, normative texts testify to the specification of rules and principles that were deemed relevant for the participation in particular social and religious circles. Special emphasis has been given to individual relationships and networks of influence, which were usually maintained by the exchange of letters. The language that had been used in these letters to indicate solidarity did not only comprise words like *amicitia* or *amicus* but also resorted to kinship imagery as a sign of special closeness among the partners involved. In clerical circles, this conceptual overlap between friendship and kinship ties in with the diction of the Christian literary tradition, which construed the community of believers as belonging to a divine household. The interdependence becomes particularly obvious in Ambrose's idea of *amicitia cum fratribus*, which also marks one of the structural themes of his carefully arranged letter collection. Similarly, Paulinus could appeal to his friendship with Sulpicius Severus by calling him *frater*, *germanus* or *amicus*. Cyprian, on the other hand, primarily stayed with the biblical brother terminology

⁸¹⁷ Usually, the letter was not the proper place for polemics. Yet the inclusion of elaborate pieces of invective into one's correspondence was not unheard-of (cf. Bas. *Ep.* 223 against Eustathius).

⁸¹⁸ The notion of enmity could be linked to the discussion about Christian violence in the late antique period. As a starting point may serve MCLYNN 1992, 15-44. More recently, HAHN 2015, 379-404 has dealt with the problem.

to denote his clerical correspondents. Only a single instance could be adduced, in which the bishop explicitly referred to Christian *amici*, thereby associating the notion of friendship with the Christian *fraternitas*. Thus, his idea of community is indicative of the same conceptual overlap that, in other instances, is much more pronounced. Even if the notion of divine kinship is unique to the Christian tradition, the expression of friendship through kinship terminology can equally be found in other contexts. Late Roman aristocrats such as the non-Christian Symmachus or the Christian Ausonius used similar language to different ends. In their case, the designation *frater* could be used either to indicate *familiaritas* with a friend or as a means to sidestep questions of hierarchy. Words like *pater* and *filius*, on the other hand, were fit instruments to translate differences in age and rank into more familial terms.

Crucially, the cultivation of *amicitia* depended on a set of rules and principles that were expected to be observed by the parties involved. Equal involvement in the exchange of letters and services, mutual trust and reliance (*fides*), dutiful conduct (*pietas*), and the expression of affection (*amor, caritas*) were seen as cornerstones of every functioning friendship. While mere negligence on a friend's part was easily excused, the non-compliance to these unwritten rules could potentially threaten the continuation of good relations. Here we can perceive a crucial shift in clerical and monastic circles, which began to construe certain principles in light of a definite creed or religious commitment. Ambrose's *De officiis*, for instance, propounded an understanding of *fides* that does not primarily look for trustworthiness in a friend but demands reliability and constancy toward God. Similarly, Paulinus and Jerome emphasized the importance of *fides*, without which *amicitiae* between Christians could not be maintained. Any deviation from the religious truth, then, could lead to the abandonment of relations or, as a worst case scenario, to enmity. Along these lines, also the meaning of other basic elements had been

shifted under Christian influence. This can be seen from Paulinus' understanding of *pietas*, which denotes the dutiful conduct toward God subordinating all social ties to his paternity. Similarly, Augustine's reading of Ciceronian *caritas* in light of the biblical commandment of love effectuated a reorientation toward God, making the neighbour the consequential object of Christian love. These differences between the aristocratic and the clerical perspective are then indicative of distinct models of friendship that were not always compatible with one another. On the one hand, we have the aristocratic view of Symmachus and Ausonius propounding a understanding of *amicitia* that was inclusive insofar as it was not restricted to the sphere of religion. On the other hand, we are confronted with a clerical or monastic perspective that subordinated friendship to a particular religious commitment. Particularly interesting in this regard is the example of Ambrose who – as is indicated by his correspondence – successfully adapted the tone of his letters depending on the situation. As member of the aristocratic elite, he was obligated to a model of friendship that tried to avoid the disruptive effects of conflict and strife. As a representative of the church, however, who committed himself to a particular set of doctrines, he used *amicitia* to establish sharp boundaries between true believers and infidels. This restriction of friendship to particular religious circles with its emphasis on exclusion was markedly different from the studied politeness of contemporary aristocratic correspondences.

From these considerations, Christian friendship emerges as an indicator for religious agreement and orthodoxy. This is particularly true for a time of religious strife such as the fourth and the fifth centuries, in which different claims to religious truth were competing with one another. But also the mid-third century church bore the potential for conflict, even if on a smaller scale. In these contexts, the notion of friendship ties in

with a rhetoric of ‘us’ and ‘them’ that had been employed to differentiate between distinct doctrinal positions. In particular, the contrastive pair *amicitia* and *inimicitia* served as a tool to label certain people as true believers while others were dismissed as enemies. Accordingly, the use of friendship language in the considered texts point to specific contexts, in which questions of faith were debated. On the one hand, we have dealt with individual religious commitments. In this case, the binary code of ‘us’ and ‘them’ was usually translated into a ‘now’ and ‘then’ narrative that highlighted the before and after of a person’s conversion. Augustine, for instance, urged Marcianus to undergo baptism so that they can resume a friendship, which had previously been lacking a mutual share in the love of God. Only if the *antiquissimus amicus* decided to subscribe to the principles of the faith and the rules of the church, the bishop was prepared to consider Marcianus’ plea for a renewal of relations. Along these lines, their previous friendship was contrasted with the *vera amicitia* that required the fulfilment of clearly specified conditions. The dividing line, then, was represented by the liminal rite that marked not only a person’s initiation into the community of believers but also friendship with the bishop. In a broader sense, such commitment was usually accompanied with the rejection of previously held ideals in favour of a life in God. This course of action is probably best demonstrated by the example of Paulinus and Severus who both traded their worldly ambitions for an ascetic way of life. Accordingly, their friendship had gone from a *saeculari amicitia* to a *spiritalis germanitas* that had its origin in God. While fellow aristocrats like Ausonius identified themselves with a concept of life that built on a social elite’s claim to wealth and power, ascetic circles followed a rather different model. By contrast, they took the renunciation of worldly riches as a sign of their commitment to God. The changed *mores* of Paulinus thus play a pivotal role in his correspondence with Ausonius. Whereas the latter remained attached to the old order, the former readily admitted that he was

now inspired by a *maior deus* that demanded his share. Previous loyalties (*fides; pietas*) were redirected toward the divine, making God the greater father and patron who rivalled Ausonius' claim to fatherhood and friendship.

On the other hand, this general concern for a religious commitment in case of individual friendships points to a specific area of application, in which the need for doctrinal positioning became particularly pronounced. This was the field of church politics and theological controversy. The previous chapters have provided a number of examples that link the experience of friendship and enmity to the political sphere. This is in line with earlier periods (such as late Republican Rome), in which the corresponding language had been used to indicate either fellowship or antagonism. To be sure, the scope of *amicitia* was by no means limited to the political arena but the power struggles of the Roman elites were typically expressed in terms of friendship and enmity.⁸¹⁹ Yet unlike Cicero whose political activities had the *salus rei publicae* in view, church dignitaries primarily focused on the 'well-being' of the church. In the mid-third century, Cyprian's position of authority inside the Carthaginian community was challenged by charismatic leaders like Felicissimus and Novatus, who succeeded in establishing a following of their own. The bishop's response included a strong appeal to ecclesial *unitas* that indicated fellowship with bishop and church. Along these lines, the community was divided into *fratres* and *inimici*, depending on whether or not one was prepared to accept Cyprian's claim to leadership. While advertising a picture of his adversaries, which marked them down as impertinent criminals and avowed enemies, he publicly defamed certain individuals and groups as *personae non gratae*. In so doing, the bishop took his cues from a

⁸¹⁹ The dialectical opposition has been highly influential in western political thought. In the twentieth century, it was particularly the German theorist Carl Schmitt who based his concept of the political on the distinction of friend and enemy. See SCHMITT 2007, esp. 26, which should be read together with DERRIDA 1997, 75-111.

time-honoured tradition of writing polemical invective that serves as a further reminder of the political nature of the conflict.

Similarly, in the late fourth century, the struggle for a definite creed had not only theological but also political implications. Supporters of the neo-Nicene position like Ambrose were facing a Homoian opposition that challenged their claim to religious truth. Not unlike Cyprian, the Milanese bishop made recourse to a friend-enemy distinction that divided the Christian world accordingly. In this context, the notion of *fides* became the main determinant for either friendship or enmity. With reference to Cicero's discussion on the limits of *amicitia*, Ambrose's *De officiis* propounds an idea of Christian fellowship that ultimately hinged on the acknowledgement of a particular set of doctrines. This view had not only theoretical value but also found expression in the bishop's ecclesio-political actions. Church dignitaries like Palladius, who did not subscribe to the Nicene creed, were not regarded as fellow Christians anymore but treated as enemies of the church. Another example pointing to the interdependence between friendship and politics is provided by Jerome and Rufinus. As friends pursuing a shared ascetic ideal, they got enmeshed in a bitter dispute over the legacy of the third century writer Origen. Soon after the controversy broke out, they found themselves on different sides of the conflict, which put a strain on their *amicitia* that could be resolved only with great difficulty. Yet tensions quickly resurfaced, when Rufinus embarked on a daring translation project of Origen's principal work. The Origenist controversy had wide repercussions as not only monastic circles but also bishops, imperial officials, and members of the Roman nobility were drawn into the conflict. As a final blow, Jerome publicly declared Rufinus an enemy, arguing that he was rather prepared to bear the *inimicitia* of a former friend than to cultivate *amicitiae* with proven heretics. Crucially, his

decision over friendship or enmity hinged on the acknowledgment of the *una fides* that differentiated himself from Rufinus.

8. Bibliography

8.1 Primary sources

Ambrosius

- Ep.* *Epistulae*: CSEL 32.1 (ed. O. Faller, 1968, books 1-6); CSEL 82.2 (ed. M. Zelzer, 1990, books 7-9); CSEL 82.3 (ed. M. Zelzer, 1982, book 10 and *Epistulae extra collectionem*).
- Exc. Sat.* *De excessu fratris*: CSEL 73 (ed. O. Faller, 1955), pp. 207-325.
- Fid.* *De fide*: CSEL 78 (ed. O. Faller, 1962), pp. 3-307.
- Obit. Theod.* *De obitu Theodosii oratio*: CSEL 73 (ed. O. Faller, 1955), pp. 369-401.
- Off.* *De officiis*: ed. and trans. by I. J. Davidson, Oxford 2010.
- Serm. c. Aux.* *Sermo contra Auxentium* (= *Ep.* 75a): CSEL 82.3 (ed. M. Zelzer, 1982), pp. 82-107.

Anastasius

- Ep.* *Epistula ad Simplicianum*: CSEL 55 (ed. I. Hilberg, 1910-18), pp. 157-158.

Aristoteles

- Eth. Nic.* *Ethica Nicomachea*: ed. I. Bywater, Oxford 1894.

Arnobius

- Nat.* *Adversus Nationes*: CSEL 4 (ed. Reifferscheid, 1875).

Asconius

- Asc.* *In orationem in toga candida*: ed. A. C. Clark, Oxford 1907.

Athanasius

- V. Anton.* *Vita Antonii*: SC 400 (ed. G. J. M. Bartelink, 1994).

Augustinus

- Acad.* *Contra Academicos*: CCSL 29 (ed. W. M. Green, 1970).
- Beata v.* *De beata vita*: CCSL 29 (ed. W. M. Green, 1970).
- Conf.* *Confessiones*: CCSL 33 (ed. L. Verheijen, 1981).
- Div. qu.* *De diversis quaestionibus octaginta tribus*: CCSL 44a (ed. A. Mutzenbacher, 1975).

- Ep.* *Epistulae*: CSEL 34/1-2; 44; 57-58 (ed. A. Goldbacher, 1895-1923).
Ord. *De ordine*: CCSL 29 (ed. W. M. Green, 1970).
Sol. *Soliloquia*: CSEL 89 (ed. W. Hörmann, 1986), pp. 3-98.
Retr. *Retractationes*: CCSL 57 (ed. A. Mutzenbecher, 1999).
Reg. *Regula sancti Augustini, Praeceptum*: ed. and trans. by G. Lawless, Oxford 1987.

Aulus Gellius

- Aul. Gell.* *Noctes Atticae*: ed. C. Hosius, Leipzig 1903.

Ausonius

- Ep.* *Epistulae*: ed. by R. P. H. Green, Oxford 1991.
Praef. *Praefatiunculae*: ed. by R. P. H. Green, Oxford 1991.
Mos. *Mosella*: ed. by R. P. H. Green, Oxford 1991.
Prof. Burd. *Commemoratio professorum Burdigalensium*: ed. by R. P. H. Green, Oxford 1991.

Auxentius

- Ep.* *Epistula de fide, vita et obitu Ulfilae*: SC 267 (ed. R. Gryson, 1980), pp. 236-251.

Basiliius

- Ep.* *Epistulae*: ed. and trans. by Y. Courtonne, 3 vols., Paris 1957-1966.

Caesar

- BGall.* *Bellum Gallicum*: ed. W. Hering, Leipzig 1997, pp. 1-147.

Cicero

- Amic.* *Laelius de amicitia*: ed. J. G. F. Powell, Oxford 2006.
Att. *Epistulae ad Atticum*: ed. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, Stuttgart 1987.
Cat. *In L. Sergium Catilinam orationes*: ed. P. Reis, Leipzig 1938.
Fam. *Epistulae ad familiares*: ed. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, Stuttgart 1988.
Inv. rhet. *De inventione*: ed. E. Stroebel, Leipzig 1915.
Off. *De officiis*: ed. M. Winterbottom, Oxford 1994.
Nat. D. *De natura deorum*: ed. W. Ax, Leipzig 1933.
Rab. Post. *Pro C. Rabirio Postumo oratio*: ed. E. M. Olechowska, Leipzig 1981.
Rep. *De re publica*: ed. J. G. F. Powell, Oxford 2006.
Q. Rosc. *Pro Q. Roscio Gallo comoedo oratio*: ed. J. Axer, Leipzig 1976.
Sest. *Pro P. Sestio oratio*: ed. T. Maslowski, Leipzig 1986.

Codex Theodosianus

CTh *Codex Theodosianus*: ed. Th. Mommsen/P. M. Meyer, Berlin 1905.

Concilia

Sent. episc. *Sententiae lxxxvii episcoporum*: CSEL 3/1 (ed. W. Hartel, 1868), pp. 435-461.
Act. conc. Aquil. *Gesta concilii Aquileienseis, Acta*: CSEL 82/3 (ed. M. Zelzer, 1982), pp. 325-368.
Gest. conc. Aquil. Ep. *Gesta concilii Aquileienseis, Epistulae*: CSEL 82/3 (ed. M. Zelzer, 1982), pp. 313-324.

Cyprianus

Ad Donat. *Ad Donatum*: CCSL 3A (ed. M. Simonetti, 1976), pp. 3-13.
Domin. orat. *De dominica oratione*: CCSL 3A (ed. C. Moreschini, 1976), pp. 90-113.
Ep. *Epistulae*: CCSL 3B-D (ed. G. F. Diercks, 1994-96).
Laps. *De Lapsis*: CCSL 3 (ed. M. Bévenot, 1972), pp. 221-242.
Patient. *De bono patientiae*: CCSL 3A (ed. C. Moreschini, 1976), pp. 118-133.
Unit. eccl. *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate*: CCSL 3 (ed. M. Bévenot, 1972), pp. 249-268.
Ꝛel. *De zelo et livore*: CCSL 3A (ed. M. Simonetti, 1976), pp. 55-72.

Damasus

Ep. *Confidimus quidem*: ed. M. Richard, AIPh 11, 1951, pp. 323-340.

Diogenes Laertius

Diog. Laert. *Vitae philosophorum*: ed. R. D. Hicks, Cambridge Mass. 1972.

Dionysius Halicarnassensis

Ant. Rom. *Antiquitates Romanae*: ed. K. Jacoby, Leipzig 1885.

Epictetus

Diss. *Epicteti dissertationes*: ed. H. Schenkl, Leipzig 1916.

Eusebius

H. e. *Historia Ecclesiastica*: GCS 9/1-3 (ed. E. Schwartz 1903-09).

Florus

Flor. *Epitoma de Tito Livio*: ed. M. Malcovati, Rome 1972.

Gennadius

Vir. ill. *De viris illustribus*: ed. E. Richardson, Leipzig 1896, pp. 57-97.

Gratianus imperator

Ep. ad. Ambr. *Epistula ad Ambrosianum Mediolanensem*: CSEL 79 (ed. O Faller, 1964), pp. 3-4.

Hieronymus

Adv. Iovin. *Adversus Iovinianum*: PL 23, col. 221-352.

Adv. Ruf. *Apologia adversus libros Rufini*: CCSL 79 (ed. P. Lardet, 1982), pp. 1-72.

Chron. *Eusebii Caesariensis Chronicon, Hieronymi continuatio*: GCS 47 (ed. R. Helm, 1956), pp. 231-249.

Comm. in Dan. *Comentarii in Daniele*: CCSL 75A (ed. F. Glorae, 1964).

Comm. in Eccles. *Commentarius in Ecclesiasten*: CCSL 72 (ed. M. Adriaen, 1959), pp. 249-361.

Comm. in Gal. *Comentarii in iv epistulas Paulinas, Ad Galatas*: PL 26, col. 331-468.

Comm. in Is. *Commentarii in Isaiam*: CCSL 73, 73A (ed. M. Adriaen, 1963).

Comm. in proph. min. *Commentarii in prophetas minores*: CCSL 76, 76A (ed. M. Adriaen, 1969-70).

C. Ioh. *Contra Iohannem*: CCSL 79A (ed. J.-L. Feiertag, 1999).

Ep. *Epistulae*: CSEL 54-56 (ed. I. Hilberg, 1910-18); CSEL 88 (ed. J. Divjak, 1981).

In Hier. *In Hieremiam prophetam libri vi*: CCSL 74 (ed. S. Reiter, 1960).

Vir. ill. *De viris illustribus*: ed. E. Richardson, Leipzig 1896, pp. 1-56.

Horatius

Epist. *Epistulae*: ed. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, Leipzig 1995, pp. 251-309.

Irenaeus

Haer.

Adversus haereses: SC 293-94 (ed. A. Rousseau/L. Doutreleau, 1979, book 1); SC 210-11 (ed. A. Rousseau/L. Doutreleau, 1974, book 3); SC 100/1-2 (ed. A. Rousseau, 1965, book 4).

Iustinus

1 Apol.

Apologia prima: ed. Mirosław Marcovich, Berlin 1994.

Iuvenalis

Sat.

Saturae: ed. J. Willis, Stuttgart 1997.

Lactantius

Epit.

Epitome divinarum institutionum: CSEL 19 (ed. S. Brandt, 1890), pp. 675-761.

Inst.

Divinae Institutiones: CSEL 19 (ed. S. Brandt, 1890).

Mort. pers.

De mortibus persecutorum: ed. and trans. by J. L. Creed, Oxford 1984.

Liber pontificalis

Lib. pontif.

Liber pontificalis: ed. L. Duchesne/C. Vogel, 3 vols., Paris 1955-57.

Livius

Livy

Ab urbe condita: ed. W. Weissenborn/M. Müller, Leipzig 1932 (books 1-10).

Lucretius

Lucr.

De rerum natura: ed. J. Martin, Leipzig 1969, pp. 2-281.

Maximinus

Diss. Max.

Maximini episcopi dissertatio contra Ambrosium: SC 267 (ed. R. Gryson, 1980), pp. 204-327.

Minucius Felix

Oct.

Octavius: ed. B. Kytzler, Leipzig 1982.

Origenes

Princ. *De principiis (=Periarchon)*: GCS 22 (ed. P. Koetschau, 1913), pp. 7-364.

Ovid

Ars amatoria *Ars amatoria*: ed. R. Ehwald, Leipzig 1907, pp. 183-246.

Palladius Ratiarensis

Apol. *Apologia*: SC 267 (ed. R. Gryson, 1980), pp. 275-325.
Ref. *Refutatio*: SC 267 (ed. R. Gryson, 1980), pp. 264-275.

Passiones

P. Scill. *Passio sanctorum Scilitanorum*: ed. and trans. by H. Musurillo, Oxford 1972, pp. 86-89.

P. Perp. *Passio sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis*: ed. and trans. by Th. J. Heffernan, Oxford 2012.

Paulinus diaconus

Vita Ambr. *Vita sancti Ambrosii*: ed. A. A. R. Bastiaensen, Milan 1975, pp. 54-124.

Paulinus Nolanus

Carm. *Carmina*: CSEL 30 (ed. W. Hartel, 1894).

Ep. *Epistulae*: CSEL 29 (ed. W. Hartel, 1894); CSEL 34/1-2 (ed. A. Goldbacher, 1895-98).

Paulinus Petricordiae

Mart. *De vita sancti Martini*: CSEL 16/1 (ed. M. Petschenig, 1888).

Platon

Resp. *Respublica*: ed. S. R. Slings, Oxford 2003.

Ti. *Timaeus*: ed. J. Burnet, Oxford 1903.

Plautus

Cas. *Casina*: ed. G. Goetz/F. Schoell, Leipzig 1904, pp. 112-161.

Plutarchos

Cat. min. *Vitae parallelae*: ed. B. Perrin, Cambridge Mass. 1914.

Pontius diaconus

Vita Cypr.

Vita Cypriani: ed. A. A. R. Bastiaensen, Milan 1975, pp. 4-48.

Quintilianus

Inst. orat.

Institutio oratoria: ed. L. Radermacher/V. Buchheit, Leipzig 1971.

Rufinus

Apol. ad Anast.

Apologia ad Anastasium: CCSL 20 (ed. M. Simonetti, 1961), pp. 25-28.

Apol. adv. Hier.

Apologia: CCSL 20 (ed. M. Simonetti, 1961), pp. 37-123.

Apol. Orig.

De adulteratione librorum Origenis: CCSL 20 (ed. M. Simonetti, 1961), pp. 7-17.

Praef.

Praefatio in libros Origenis Periarchon: CCSL 20 (ed. P. Koetschau, 1961), pp. 245-248.

Prolog.

Prologus in Apologeticum Pamphili martyris pro Origene: CCSL 20 (ed. Simonetti, 1961), pp. 233-234.

Sallustius

Cat.

De coniuratione Catilinae: ed. A. Kurfess, Leipzig 1957, pp. 2-52.

Hist.

Historiae: ed. A. Kurfess, Leipzig 1957, pp. 148-164.

Iug.

De bello Iugurthino: ed. A. Kurfess, Leipzig 1957, pp. 53-147.

Scripture

NT

Novum testamentum Graece: ed. E. and E. Nestle/B. and K. Aland, Stuttgart 2012²⁸.

Vulg.

Biblia sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem: ed. R. Weber/R. Gryson, Stuttgart 2007⁵.

Vet. Lat.

Vetus Latina: ed. P. Sabatier, Freiburg i. Br. 1957-

LXX

Septuaginta: ed. A. Rahlfs/R. Hanhart, Stuttgart 2006.

Seneca

Clem.

De clementia: ed. E. Hosius, Leipzig 1914, pp. 210-251.

Sidonius Apollinaris

Ep.

Epistulae: ed. C. Luetjohann, Berlin 1885.

Sozomenus

H.E.

Historia ecclesiastica: GCS NF 4 (ed. G. C. Hansen, 1995).

Suetonius

Dom.

De vita Caesarum: ed. M. Ihm, Leipzig 1908.

Sulpicius Severus

Mart.

Vita Sancti Martini: SC 133 (ed. J. Fontaine, 1967), pp. 248-316.

Symmachus

Ep.

Epistulae: ed. O. Seeck, Berlin 1883 and J.-P. Callu, Paris 1972-2002.

Or.

Orationes: ed. O. Seeck, Berlin 1883.

Relat.

Relationes: ed. O. Seeck, Berlin 1883.

Tacitus

Ann.

Annales: ed. H. Heubner, Stuttgart 1994.

Tertullianus

Adv. Marc.

Adversus Marcionem: CCSL 1 (ed. E. Kroymann, 1954), pp. 441-726.

Apol.

Apologeticum: CCSL 1 (ed. E. Dekkers, 1954), pp. 85-171.

Bapt.

De Baptismo: CCSL 1 (ed. J. G. Ph. Borleffs, 1954), pp. 277-295).

Carn.

De carne: CCSL 1 (ed. E. Kroymann, 1954), pp. 873-913.

Coron.

De corona: CCSL 2 (ed. E. Kroymann, 1954), pp. 1039-1065.

Idol.

De idololatria: CCSL 2 (ed. A. Reifferscheid/G. Wissowa, 1954), pp. 1101-1124.

Mart.

Ad martyras: CCSL 1 (ed. E. Dekkers, 1954), pp. 3-8.

Monog.

De monogamia: CCSL 2 (ed. E. Dekkers, 1954), pp. 1229-1253.

Orat.

De oratione: CCSL 1 (ed. G. F. Diercks, 1954), pp. 257-274.

Pudic.

De pudicitia: CCSL 2 (ed. E. Dekkers, 1954), pp. 1281-1330.

Praescr.

De praescriptione haereticorum: CCSL 1 (ed. R. F. Refoulé, 1954), pp. 187-224.

Scorp.

Scorpiace: CCSL 2 (ed. A. Reifferscheid/G. Wissowa, 1954), pp. 1069-1097.

Spect.

De spectaculis: CCSL 1 (ed. E. Dekkers, 1954), pp. 227-253.

Theodoretus

H.E.

Historia ecclesiastica: GCS NF 5 (ed. G. C. Hansen, 1998).

Valerius Maximus

Val. Max.

Fact et dicta memorabilia: ed. C. Kempf, Leipzig 1888, pp. 1-472.

Varia

Carm. c. pag.

Carmen contra paganos: ed. A. Bartalucci, Pisa 1998.

Rebapt.

De rebaptismate: ed. G. Rauschen, *Florilegium Patristicum*, fasc. 11, 1916, pp. 42-73.

Test. porc.

Testamentum porcelli: ed. F. Bücheler, *Petronii opera*, Berlin 1922, 268-269.

Vergilius

Aen.

Aeneis: ed. O. Ribbeck, Leipzig 1895, pp. 211-835.

8.2 Translations

- Tert. *Apol.* Tertullian, Apology, *De spectaculis*, with an English translation by T. R. Glover, Cambridge Mass. 1931.
- Minuc. *Oct.* Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, with an English translation by Gerald H. Rendall, Cambridge Mass. 1931.
- Cic. *Inv. rhet.* Cicero, *De inventione*, *De optimo genere oratorum*, *Topica*, with an English translation by H. M. Hubbell, Cambridge Mass. 1949.
- Cic. *Off.* Cicero, On obligations, translated with an introduction and explanatory notes by P. G. Walsh, Oxford 2000.
- Cic. *Amic.* Cicero, *De senectute*, *De amicitia*, *De divinatione*, with an English translation by William A. Falconer, Cambridge Mass. 1923.
- Ambr. *Off.* Ambrose, *De officiis*, edited with an introduction, translation and commentary by Ivor J. Davidson, Oxford 2001.
- P. Perp.* The passion of Perpetua and Felicity, edited and translated with a commentary by Thomas J. Heffernan, New York/Oxford, 2012.
- Ruf. *Apol. adv. Hier.* Rufinus, Apology against Jerome, translated with notes and an introduction by W. H. Fremantle, Edinburgh 1892.
- Jer. *Adv. Ruf.* Jerome, Dogmatic and polemical writings, translated by John Hritzu, Washington 1965.
- Jer. *Ep.* Jerome, Letters and select works, translated by W. H. Fremantle, Edinburgh 1893.
- Aug. *Ep.* Augustine, Letters, translation and notes by Roland Teske, Hyde Park 2001-05.
- Paulin. *Ep.* Letters of St. Paulinus of Nola, translated and annotated by P. G. Walsh, New York 1966.
- Paulin. *Carm.* The poems of St. Paulinus of Nola, translated and annotated by P. G. Walsh, New York 1975.
- Aug. *Conf.* Augustine, Confessions, edited and translated by Carolyn J.-B. Hammond, Cambridge Mass. 2014-16.

- Aug. Acad.* Augustine, *Against the Academics*, translated and annotated by John J. O'Meara, Westminster 1951.
- Aug. Reg.* Augustine of Hippo and his monastic rule, edited and translated by George Lawless, Oxford 1987.
- Auson. Ep.* Ausonius, with an English translation by Hugh G. Evelyn-White, vol. 2, Cambridge Mass. 1921.
- Ambr. Ep.* The letters of Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, translated with notes and indices, Oxford 1896.
- Symm. Ep.* The letters of Symmachus, book 1, translation by Michele R. Salzman and Michael Roberts, Atlanta 2011.
- Ambr. Ep. extra coll.* Ambrose of Milan, political letters and speeches, translated by J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, Liverpool 2005.
- Sent. episc.* The writings of Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, translated by Robert. E. Wallis, London 1870-73.
- Cypr. Ep.* The letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage, translated and annotated by G. W. Clarke, New York 1984-89.
- Cypr. Unit. eccl.* Cyprian, *De lapsis* and *De ecclesiae catholicae unitate*, text and translation by M. Bévenot, Oxford 1971.
- Lact. Inst.* Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, translated with an introduction and notes by Anthony Bowen and Peter Garnsey, Liverpool 2003.

8.3 Literature

- AASGAARD 2004 Reidar Aasgaard, 'My beloved brothers and sisters!': Christian siblingship in Paul, London 2004.
- ADOLPH 1993 Anneliese Adolph, Die Theologie der Einheit der Kirche bei Cyprian, Frankfurt a. M./Bern 1993.
- AHERN 1989 Charles F. Ahern, 'Daedalus and Icarus in the *Ars amatoria*', in HSPH 92 (1989), 273-296.
- ARENA 2007 Valentina Arena, 'Roman oratorical invective', W. J. Dominik, J. C. R. Hall (eds.), A companion to Roman rhetoric, Oxford 2007, 149-160.
- BADIAN 1959 Ernst Badian, 'The early career of Aulus Gabinius (cos. 58 BC)', in Philologus 103 (1959), 87-99.
- BANNON 1997 Cynthia J. Bannon, The brothers of Romulus: fraternal pietas in Roman law, literature, and society, Princeton 1997.
- BARDILL 2012 Jonathan Bardill, Constantine, divine emperor of the Christian golden age, Cambridge 2012.
- BARNES 1976 Timothy D. Barnes, 'Sossianus Hierocles and the antecedents of the Great Persecution', in HSPH 80 (1976), 239-252.
- BARNES 1982 Timothy D. Barnes, The new empire of Diocletian and Constantine, Cambridge Mass. 1982.
- BARNES 1985 Timothy D. Barnes, Tertullian: a historical and literary study, Oxford 1985.
- BARNES 1992 Timothy D. Barnes, 'Augustine, Symmachus, and Ambrose', in J. McWilliam (ed.), Augustine from rhetor to theologian, Waterloo 1992, 7-13.
- BARNES 2000 Timothy D. Barnes, 'Ambrose and the basilicas of Milan in 385 and 386', in ZAC (2000), 282-299.
- BARNES 2001 Timothy D. Barnes, 'Monotheists all?', in Phoenix 55 (2001), 142-162.
- BARNES 2011 Timothy D. Barnes, Constantine: dynasty, religion and power in the later Roman Empire, Chichester 2011.

- BAUMKAMP 2014 Eva Baumkamp, *Kommunikation in der Kirche des 3. Jahrhunderts: Bischöfe und Gemeinden zwischen Konflikt und Konsens im Imperium Romanum*, Tübingen 2014.
- BÉVENOT 1971 Maurice Bévenot, *De lapsis and De ecclesiae catholicae unitate*, Oxford 1971.
- BERGJAN 2015 Silke-Petra Bergjan et al. (eds.), *Apollinarius und seine Folgen*, Tübingen 2015.
- BINDER 2002 Gerhard Binder, s.v. *Kuss*, in *DNP* 6, 939-947.
- BLAISE 1954 Albert Blaise, *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens*, Turnhout 1954.
- BOBERTZ 1988 Charles A. Bobertz, *Cyprian of Carthage as patron: a social historical study of the role of bishop in the ancient Christian community of North Africa*, Thesis (PhD) – Yale University 1988 (Microfilm: UMI Ann Arbor).
- BOBERTZ 1997 Charles A. Bobertz, *Patronal letters of commendation: Cyprian's epistulae 38-40*, in E. A. Livingstone (ed.), *Studia Patristica* 31, Leuven 1997, 252-259.
- BOCHET 1982 Isabelle Bochet, *Saint Augustin et le désir de Dieu*, Paris 1982.
- BOULARAND 1972 E. Boularand, 'L'amitié d'après saint Ambroise', in *BLE* 73 (1972), 103-123.
- BOUTON-TOUBOULIC 1999 Anne-Isabelle Bouton-Touboulic, 'De la mort de l'ami à la présence divine (*Confessiones* IV, 4, 7-12, 19)', *VL* 153 (1999), 58-69.
- BOWEN/GARNSEY 2003 Anthony Bowen, Peter Garnsey, *Lactantius*, Divine Institutes, Liverpool 2003.
- BOWERSOCK 1986 Glen W. Bowersock, 'Symmachus and Ausonius', in F. Paschoud (ed.), *Colloque Genèveois sur Symmaque*, Paris 1986, 1-15
- BRÄNDLI 2013 Adrian Brändli, 'Fratres et inimici Christianorum: Cyprian von Karthago im Spannungsfeld zwischen christlicher Nächstenliebe und kirchepolitischer Feindschaft', in *MH* 70/1 (2013), 74-101.
- BREMMER 2002 Jan N. Bremmer, 'Perpetua and her diary: authenticity, family, and visions', W. Ameling (ed.), *Märtyrer und Märtyrerakten*, Stuttgart 2002, 77-120.

- BRECHTKEN 1975 Josef Brechtken, *Augustinus Doctor Caritatis: Sein Liebesbegriff im Widerspruch von Eigennutz und selbstloser Güte im Rahmen der antiken Glückseligkeits-Ethik*, Meisenheim am Glan 1975.
- BRENT 2010 Allen Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage*, Cambridge 2010.
- BROWN 1988 Peter L. Brown, *The body and society: men, women, and sexual renunciation in early Christianity*, New York 1988.
- BROWN 1992 Peter L. Brown, *Power and persuasion in late antiquity: towards a Christian empire*, Madison 1992.
- BROWN 2000 Peter L. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: a biography*, Berkeley 2000.
- BROWN 2012 Peter L. Brown, *Through the eye of a needle: wealth, the fall of Rome, and the making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD*, Oxford/New York 2012.
- BRUGGISSER 1993 Philippe Bruggisser, *Symmaque ou le rituel épistolaire de l'amitié littéraire: recherches sur le premier livre de la correspondance*, Fribourg 1993.
- BRUNT 1988 Peter A. Brunt, *The fall of the Roman Republic and related essays*, Oxford 1988.
- BUCHHEIT 1979 Vinzenz Buchheit, 'Die Definition der Gerechtigkeit bei Laktanz und seinen Vorgängern', in *VChr* 33 (1979), 356-374.
- BURNS 1993 J. Patout Burns, 'On rebaptism: social organization in the third century church', *J ECS* 1/4 (1993), 367-403.
- BURNS 2002 J. Patout Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, London/New York 2002.
- BURTON 2013 Philip Burton, 'The Latin versions of the New Testament', in B. D. Ehrman, M. W. Holmes (eds.), *The text of the New Testament in contemporary research. Essays on the status quaestionis*, Leiden/Boston 2013, 167-200.
- BUSSE 1987 Dietrich Busse, *Historische Semantik: Analyse eines Programms*, Stuttgart 1987.
- CAIN 2009 Andrew Cain, *The letters of Jerome: asceticism, biblical exegesis, and the construction of Christian authority in late antiquity*, Oxford 2009.

- CARMICHAEL 2004 Liz Carmichael, *Friendship: interpreting Christian love*, London 2004.
- CASTILLO GARCIA 2001 Carmen Castillo Garcia, *Tertuliano: a los gentilos*, Madrid 2001.
- CASSIDY 1992 Eoin G. Cassidy, 'The recovery of the classical ideal of friendship in Augustine's portrayal of *caritas*', in Th. Finan, D. Vincent Twomey (eds.), *The relationship between Neoplatonism and Christianity*, Blackrock 1992, 127-140.
- CATTANEO 1982 Enrico Cattaneo, 'Il governo ecclesiastico nel IV secolo nell'Italia settentrionale', in *Antichità altoadriatiche* 22/1 (1982), 175-187.
- CLARK 1992 Elizabeth A. Clark, *The origenist controversy: the cultural construction of an early Christian debate*, Princeton/Oxford 1992.
- CLARK 1996 Gillian Clark, 'The bright frontier of friendship: Augustine and the Christian body as frontier', in R. Mathisen, H. Sivan (eds.), *Shifting frontiers in late antiquity*, Aldershot 1996, 217-229.
- CLARKE 1984-89 Graeme W. Clarke, *The letters of Cyprian*, New York 1984-89.
- CONRING 2002 Barbara Conring, *Hieronymus als Briefschreiber: ein Beitrag zur spätantiken Epistolographie*, Tübingen 2001.
- CONYBEARE 2000 Catherine Conybeare, *Paulinus noster: self and symbols in the letters of Paulinus of Nola*, Oxford 2000.
- CONYBEARE 2006 Catherine Conybeare, *The irrational Augustine*, Oxford 2006.
- COOPER 2007 Kate Cooper, *The fall of the Roman household*, Cambridge 2007.
- CORLEY 2002 Jeremy Corley, *Ben Sira's teaching on friendship*, Providence 2002.
- COSKUN 2002A Altay Coskun, *Symmachus, Ausonius und der senex olim Garumnae alumnus: auf der Suche nach dem Adressaten von Symm. Epist. 9.88*, in *RhM* 145/1 (2002), 120-128.

- COSKUN 2002B Altay Coskun, *Die gens Ausoniana an der Macht. Untersuchungen zu Decimus Magnus Ausonius und seiner Familie*, Oxford 2002.
- COURCELLE 1950 Pierre Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin*, Paris 1950.
- DAUT 1971 Winfried Daut, 'Die halben Christen unter den Konvertiten und Gebildeten des 4. Und 5. Jahrhunderts, in *Zeitschrift für Missions- und Religionswissenschaft* 55 (1971), 171-188.
- DAVIDSON 2001 Ivor J. Davidson, *Ambrose: De officiis*, 2 vols., Oxford 2001.
- DAVIES 1989 P. S. Davies, 'The origin and purpose of the persecution of AD 303', in *JThS* 40/1 (1989), 66-94.
- DERRIDA 1993 Jacques Derrida, 'Politics of friendship', in *American Imago* 50/3 (1993), 353-391.
- DERRIDA 1997 Jacques Derrida: *The politics of friendship*, London/New York 1997.
- DIDEBERG 1975 Dany Dideberg, *Saint Augustin et la première épître de Saint Jean: une théologie de l'agapè*, Paris 1975.
- DIGESER 1998 Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, 'Lactantius, Porphyry and the debate over religious toleration', in *JRS* 88 (1998), 129-146.
- DIGESER 2000 Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, *The making of a Christian empire*, Ithaca/London 2000.
- DIVJAK 2002 Johannes Divjak, s.v. *Epistulae*, in *AL* 2 (1996-2002), 893-1057.
- DUDDEN 1935 Frederick H. Dudden, *Saint Ambrose: his life and times*, Oxford 1935.
- DUNN 2006 Geoffrey D. Dunn, 'Validity of baptism and ordination in the African response to the rebaptism crisis: Cyprian of Carthage's synod of spring 256', in *ThS* 67 (2006), 257-274.
- DUNN 2007 Geoffrey D. Dunn, *Cyprian and the bishops of Rome: questions of papal primacy in the early church*, Startfield 2007.

- DUVAL 1998 Yves-Marie Duval, L'extirpation de l'Arianisme en Italie du Nord et en Occident: Rimini (359/60) et Aquilée (381), Hilaire de Poitiers (367/8) et Ambroise de Milan (397), Aldershot 1998.
- DYCK 1996 Andrew R. Dyck, A commentary on Cicero, *De officiis*, Ann Arbor 1996.
- EBBELER 2007 Jennifer V. Ebbeler, 'Mixed messages: the play of epistolary codes in two late antique latin correspondences', in R. Morello, A. D. Morrison (eds.), *Ancient letters: Classical and late antique epistolography*, Oxford 2007, 301-324.
- EBBELER 2012 Jennifer V. Ebbeler, *Disciplining Christians: correction and community in Augustine's letters*, Oxford/New York 2012.
- ENGEMANN 1991 Josef Engemann, s.v. Hirt, in *RAC* 15 (1991), 577-607.
- EPSTEIN 1987 David F. Epstein, *Personal enmity in roman politics, 218-43 BC*, New York 1987.
- ESLER 2005 Philip F. Esler, 'Paul and the *agon*: understanding a Pauline motif in its cultural and visual context', in A. Weissenrieder, F. Wendt, P. v. Gemünden (eds.), *Picturing the New Testament: studies in ancient visual images*, Tübingen 2005.
- FABRE 1948 Pierre Fabre, *Essai sur la chronologie de saint Paulin de Nole*, Paris 1948.
- FABRE 1949 Pierre Fabre, *Saint Paulin de Nole et l'amitié chrétienne*, Paris 1949.
- FERGUSON 2009 Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the early church: history, theology, and liturgy in the first five centuries*, Grand Rapids 2009.
- FISCHER/LUMPE 1997 Joseph A. Fischer, Adolf Lumpe, *Die Synoden von den Anfängen bis zum Vorabend des Nicaenums*, Paderborn/Zürich 1997.
- FISKE 1965 Adele M. Fiske, '*Hieronymus Ciceronianus*', in *TAPhA* 96 (1965), 119-138.
- FITZGERALD 2003 John T. Fitzgerald, 'Paul and friendship', in J. P. Sampley (ed.), *Paul in the Greco-Roman world: a handbook*, Harrisburg 2003, 319-343.

- FONTAINE 1969 J. Fontaine (ed.), Sulpicius Severus: Vie de saint Martin, 3 vols. (SC 133-135), Paris 1967-1969.
- FREND 1998 William H. C. Frend, 'St. Ambrose and other churches (except Rome)', in L. F. Pizzolato, M. Rizzi (eds.), *Nec timeo mori. Atti del congresso internazionale di studi ambrosiani nel XVI centenario della morte di sant'Ambrogio*, 4-11 Aprile 1997, Milan 1998, 161-180.
- FÜRST 1996 Alfons Fürst, *Streit unter Freunden: Ideal und Realität in der Freundschaftslehre der Antike*, Stuttgart/Leipzig 1996.
- FÜRST 1999 Alfons Fürst, *Augustinus Briefwechsel mit Hieronymus* (JbAC Erg.-Bd. 29), Münster 1999.
- FÜRST 2002 Alfons Fürst, *Augustinus-Hieronymus Epistulae mutuae*, 2 vols., Turnhout 2002.
- FUHRER 1997 Therese Fuhrer, *Augustin Contra Academicos (vel De Academicis)* Bücher 2 und 3: Einleitung und Kommentar, Berlin/New York 1997.
- FUHRER 2013 Therese Fuhrer, 'The Milan narrative in Augustine's Confessions: intellectual and material spaces in late antique Milan', in *Studia Patristica* 70 (2013), 17-36.
- GEERLINGS 1981 Wilhelm Geerlings, 'Das Freundschaftsideal Augustins', in *ThQ* 62 (1981), 265-274.
- GELZER 1912 Matthias Gelzer, *Die Nobilität der Römischen Republik*, Leipzig/Berlin 1912.
- GEORGES 2011 Tobias Georges, *Tertullian: Apologeticum*, Freiburg i. Br. 2011.
- GIRARDET 2006 Klaus Martin Girardet, *Die konstantinische Wende: Voraussetzungen und geistige Grundlagen der Religionspolitik Konstantins des Grossen*, Darmstadt 2006.
- GIRARDET 2007 Klaus Martin Girardet, 'Der Vorsitzende des Konzils von Nicaea (325) – Kaiser Konstantin d. Gr.', in H. Schlange-Schöningh (ed.), *Konstantin und das Christentum. Neue Wege der Forschung*, Darmstadt 2007, 171-203.
- GREEN 1991 Roger P. H. Green, *The works of Ausonius*, Oxford 1991.
- GRYSON 1980 Roger Gryson, *Scolies ariennes sur la concile d'Aquilée*, Paris 1980.

- GRYSON/GILISSEN 1980 Roger Gryson, Léon Gilissen, *Les scolies ariennes du Parisinus latinus 8907: un échantillonnage d'écritures latines du Ve siècle*, Turnhout 1980.
- HABERMEHL 1992 Peter Habermehl, *Perpetua und der Ägypter oder Bilder des Bösen im afrikanischen Christentum: ein Versuch zur Passio sanctorum Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, Berlin 1992.
- HALL 2004 Stuart G. Hall, 'The versions of Cyprian, *De unitate* 4-5. Bévenot's dating revisited', in *JThS* 55/1 (2004), 138-146.
- Hahn 2015 Johannes Hahn, *The challenge of religious violence: imperial ideology and policy in the fourth century*, in J. Wienand (ed.), *Contested monarchy: integrating the Roman Empire in the fourth century AD*, Oxford 2015.
- HANSON 1988 Richard P. C. Hanson, *The search for the doctrine of God: the Arian controversy, 318-381*, Edinburgh 1988.
- HARDWICK 1989 Michael E. Hardwick, *Josephus as a historical source in Patristic literature through Eusebius*, Atlanta 1989.
- HARNACK 1924 Adolf von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, 2 vols., Leipzig 1924^t.
- HARLAND 2003 Philip A. Harland, *Associations, synagogues, and congregations: claiming a place in ancient Mediterranean society*, Minneapolis 2003.
- HEFFERNAN 1995 Thomas J. Heffernan, 'Philology and authorship in the *Passio Sanctorum Perpetuae et Felicitatis*', in *Traditio* 50 (1995), 315-325.
- HEFFERNAN 2012 Thomas J. Heffernan, *The passion of Perpetua and Felicity*, New York/Oxford, 2012.
- HELDMANN 1976 Konrad Heldmann, 'Ciceros Laelius und die Grenzen der Freundschaft: Zur Interpendenz von Literatur und Politik 44-43 v. Chr.', in *Hermes* 104 (1976), 72-103.
- HELLEGOUARC'H 1963 Joseph Hellegouarc'h, *Le vocabulaire latin des relations et des partis politiques sous la République*, Paris 1963.
- HELLERMAN 2001 Joseph H. Hellerman, *The ancient church as family*, Minneapolis 2001.
- HINCHLIFF 1974 Peter Hinchliff, *Cyprian and the unity of the Christian church*, London 1974.

- HOFFMANN 2004 Andreas Hoffmann, 'Die Kiche – einig, heilsnotwendig, auf göttliches Gesetz gegründet: Grundlagen den Kichenverständnisses bei Cyprian von Karthago', in J. Arnold, R. Berndt, R. M. W. Stammberger (eds.), *Väter der Kirche: Ekklesiales Denken von den Anfängen bis in die Neuzeit*, Paderborn 2004, 365-388.
- HOFFMANN 2000 Andreas Hoffmann, *Kirchliche Strukturen und römisches Recht bei Cyprian von Karthago*, Paderborn 2000.
- HUMFRESS 2012 Caroline Humfress, 'Controversialist: Augustine in combat', in M. Vessey (ed.), *A companion to Augustine*, Chichester 2012, 323-335.
- HUMPHRIES 1999 Mark Humphries, *Communities of the blessed: social environment and religious change in northern Italy, AD 200-400*, Oxford 1999.
- JACQUES 1982 François Jacques, 'Le schismatique, tyran furieux: le discours polémique de Cyprien de Carthage', in *MEFRA* 94/2 (1982), 921-949.
- JAEGER 2010 C. Stephen Jaeger, 'Friendship of mutual perfecting in Augustine's Confessions and the failure of classical *amicitia*', in A. Classen (eds.), *Friendship in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: explorations of a fundamental ethical discourse*, Berlin/New York 2010, 185-200.
- JENSEN 2008 Robin M. Jensen, '*Mater ecclesia* and *fons aeterna*: the church and her womb in ancient Christian tradition', in A.-J. Levine, *A feminist companion to patristic literature*, London 2008, 137-155.
- JENSEN 2012 Robin M. Jensen, 'Material and documentary evidence for the practice of early Christian baptism', in *J ECS* 20/3 (2012), 371-405.
- JOHNSON 2008 Maxwell E. Johnson, 'Christian initiation', in S. Ashbrook Harvey, David G. Hunter (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of early Christian studies*, Oxford 2008, 693-710.
- KENDEFFY 2015 Gabor Kendeffy, 'Lactantius as Christian Cicero, Cicero as shadow-like instructor', in W. H. F. Altman, *Brill's companion to the reception of Cicero*, Leiden 2015, 56-92.
- KESSLER 1994 Andreas Kessler, 'Der Angriff auf die Augen Perpetuas: Versuch einer Deutung von *Passio Perpetuae* 3.3', in A.

- Kessler, Th. Ricklin, G. Wurst (eds.), *Peregrina curiositas: eine Reise durch den orbis antiquus zu Ehren von Dirk van Damme*, Göttingen 1994, 191-201.
- KIESEL 2008 Dagmar Kiesel, *Lieben im Irdischen: Freundschaft, Frauen und Familie bei Augustin*, Freiburg i. Br./München 2008.
- KLAUCK 1991 Hans-Josef Klauck, 'Die Kirche als Freundesgemeinschaft? Auf Spurensuche im Neuen Testament', in *Münchner ThZ* 49/1 (1991), 1-14.
- KLODT 1992 Claudia Klodt, *Ciceros Rede Pro Rabirio Postumo: Einleitung und Kommentar*, Stuttgart 1992.
- KLEIN 1957 E. Klein, *Studien zum Problem der griechischen und römischen Freundschaft*, Thesis (PhD) – Freiburg i. Br. 1957.
- KOLB 2000 Anne Kolb, *Transport und Nachrichtentransfer im Römischen Reich*, Berlin 2000.
- KONSTAN 1996 David Konstan, 'Problems in the history of Christian friendship', in *JECS* 4/1 (1996), 87-113.
- KONSTAN 1997 David Konstan, *Friendship in the classical world*, Cambridge 1997.
- KOSELLECK 1972 Reinhart Koselleck, 'Einleitung', in O. Brunner, W. Conze, R. Koselleck (eds.), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, vol. 1, Stuttgart 1972, xiii-xxvii.
- KOSELLECK 1979 Reinhart Koselleck (ed.), *Historische Semantik und Begriffsgeschichte*, Stuttgart 1979.
- KOSELLECK 1996 Reinhart Koselleck, 'A response to comments on the Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe', in H. Lehmann, M. Richter (eds.), *The meaning of historical terms and concepts: new studies on Begriffsgeschichte*, Washington 1996, 59-70.
- KOSELLECK 2006 Reinhart Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten: Studien zur Semantik und Pragmatik der politischen und sozialen Sprache*, Frankfurt a. M. 2006.
- KOSTER 1980 Severin Koster, *Die Invektive in der griechischen und römischen Literatur*, Meisenheim am Glan 1980.

- KNIGHT 2005 Gillian R. Knight, 'Friendship and erotics in the late antique verse-epistle: Ausonius to Paulinus revisited', in *RhM* 148/3-4 (2005), 361-403.
- LACEY 1986 Walter K. Lacey, '*Patria potestas*', in B. Rawson (ed.), *The family in ancient Rome: new perspectives*, London 1986, 121-144.
- LANE FOX 1986 Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean world from the second century AD to the conversion of Constantine*, Harmondsworth 1986.
- LANE FOX 2015 Robin Lane Fox, *Augustine: conversions and confessions*, London 2015.
- LARDET 1993 Pierre Lardet, *L'Apologie de Jérôme contre Rufin: un commentaire* (VChr Suppl. 15), Leiden 1993.
- LAWLESS 1987 George Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and his monastic rule*, Oxford 1987.
- LEADBETTER 2009 Bill Leadbetter, *Galerius and the will of Diocletian*, London 2009.
- LE BLOND 1950 Jean-Marie Le Blond, *Les conversions de saint Augustin*, Paris 1950.
- LIEBESCHUETZ 2005 John H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose of Milan: political letters and speeches*, Liverpool 2005.
- LIENHARD 1977 Joseph T. Lienhard, *Paulinus of Nola and early western monasticism: with a study of the chronology of his works and an annotated bibliography*, Köln 1977.
- LIENHARD 1990 Joseph T. Lienhard, 'Friendship in Paulinus of Nola and Augustine', in B. Bruning, J. van Houtem, M. Lambrigts (eds.), *Collectanea Augustiniana: Mélanges T. J van Bavel*, Leuven 1990, 279-296.
- LIZZI 1988 Rita Lizzi Testa, 'Codicilli imperiali e insignia episcopali: un'affinità significativa', in *RIL* 122 (1988), 3-13.
- LIZZI 1989 Rita Lizzi Testa, *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche nella città tardoantica (l'Italia Annonaria nel IV-V secolo d.C.)*, Como 1989.
- LIZZI 1990 Rita Lizzi Testa, 'Ambrose's contemporaries and the christianization of Northern Italy', in *JRS* 80 (1990), 156-173.

- LÖHR 2010 Winrich A. Löhr, 'Augustinus und sein Verhältnis zu Pelagius: eine Relecture der Quellen', in *Augustiniana* 60 (2010), 63-86.
- LOI 1970 Vincenzo Loi, *Lattanzio nella storia del linguaggio e del pensiero teologico pre-niceno*, Zürich 1970.
- LOMANTO 1983 Valeria Lomanto, *Concordantiae in Q. Aurelii Symmachi opera*, Hildesheim/Zürich 1983.
- LUHMANN 1997 Niklas Luhmann, *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*, vols. 2, Frankfurt a. M. 1997.
- LUHMANN 2013 Niklas Luhmann, *Theory of society*, vols. 2, Stanford 2013.
- MADEC 1986 Goulven Madec, 'L'historicité des dialogues de Cassiciacum', in *REAug* 32 (1986), 207-231.
- MARKSCHIES 1995 Christoph Marksches, *Ambrosius von Mailand und die Trinitätstheologie: kirchen- und theologiegeschichtliche Studien zu Antiarrianismus und Neunizänismus bei Ambrosius und im lateinischen Westen (364-381 n. Chr.)*, Tübingen 1995.
- MARKSCHIES 2012 Christoph Marksches, *The Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis and Montanism?*, in J. N. Bremmer, M. Formisano (eds.), *Perpetua's passions: multidisciplinary approaches to the Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, Oxford 2012, 277-290.
- MARSHALL 1987 Peter Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth: social conventions in Paul's relations with the Corinthians*, Tübingen 1987.
- MATTHEWS 1974 John F. Matthews, 'The letters of Symmachus', in J. W. Binns (ed.), *Latin literature of the fourth century*, London 1974, 58-99.
- MATTHEWS 1975 John F. Matthews, *Western aristocracies and imperial court, AD 364-425*, Oxford 1975.
- MATTHEWS 1986 John F. Matthews, 'Symmachus and his enemies', in F. Paschoud (ed.), *Colloque Genèveois sur Symmaque*, Paris 1986, 163-175.
- MCEVOY 1986 James McEvoy, '*Anima una et cor unum*: friendship and spiritual unity in Augustine', in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 53 (1986), 40-92.

- McGUIRE 1988 Brian P. McGuire, *Friendship and community: the monastic experience, 350-1250*, Kalamazoo Mich. 1988.
- McLYNN 1990 Neil B. McLynn, Rev. of *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche nella città tardoantica* by Rita Lizzi, in *JRS* 80 (1990), 257-258.
- McLYNN 1991 Neil B. McLynn, 'The Apology of Palladius: nature and purpose', in *JThS* 42/1 (1991), 52-76.
- McLYNN 1992 Neil B. McLynn, 'Christian controversy and violence in the fourth century', in *Kodai* 3 (1992), 15-44.
- McLYNN 1994 Neil B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: church and court in a Christian capital*, Berkley/London 1994.
- McLYNN 1996 Neil B. McLynn, 'From Palladius to Maximinus: passing the arian torch', in *J ECS* 4/4 (1996), 477-493.
- McNAMARA 1958 Marie A. McNamara: *Friendship in Saint Augustine*, Fribourg 1958.
- MEEKS 1983 Wayne A. Meeks, *The first urban Christians: the social world of the apostle Paul*, New Haven 1983.
- MEIER 1966 Christian Meier, *Res publica amissa: Eine Studie zur Verfassung und Geschichte der späten Römischen Republik*, Stuttgart 1966.
- MENIS 1973 Gian Carlo Menis, 'Le giurisdizioni metropolitiche di Aquileia e di Milano nell'antichità', in *Antichità altoadriatiche* 4 (1973), 271-294.
- MITCHELL 1997 Alan C. Mitchell, 'Greet the friends by name: New Testament evidence for the Greco-Roman topos on friendship', in J. T. Fitzgerald, *Greco-Roman perspectives on friendship*, Atlanta 1997, 225-262.
- MONAGLE 1971 John F. Monagle, 'Friendship in St. Augustine's biography', in *AugStud* 2 (1971), 81-92.
- MORELLO 2007 Ruth Morello, Andrew D. Morrison (eds.), *Ancient letters: classical and late antique epistolography*, Oxford 2007.
- MORGAN 2015 Teresa Morgan, *Roman faith and Christian faith: *pistis* and *fides* in the early Roman Empire and early churches*, Oxford 2015.

- MORGENSTERN 1993 Frank Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus von Hippo: prosopographische, sozial- und ideologiegeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, Bochum 1993.
- MOXNES 1997 Halvor Moxnes (ed.): *Constructing early Christian families: family as social reality and metaphor*, London/New York 1997.
- MRATSCHEK 2002 Sigrid Mratschek, *Der Briefwechsel des Paulinus von Nola: Kommunikation und soziale Kontakte zwischen christlichen Intellektuellen*, Göttingen 2002.
- MÜLLER 2014 Andreas Müller, 'Caritas im Neuen Testament und in der Alten Kirche', in M. Collinet (ed.), *Caritas – Barmherzigkeit – Diakonie: Studien zu Begriffen und Konzepten des Helfens in der Geschichte des Christentums vom Neuen Testament bis ins späte 20. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 2014, 17-48.
- MURPHY 1945 Francis X. Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia (345-411): his life and works*, Washington 1945.
- MUSURILLO 1972 Herbert Musurillo, *The acts of the Christian martyrs: introduction, texts, and translations*, Oxford 1972.
- NÄF 1995 Beat Näf, *Senatorisches Standesbewusstsein in spätrömischer Zeit*, Fribourg 1995.
- NAUROY 2012 Gérard Nauroy, 'Édition et organisation du recueil des lettres: une architecture cachée ou altérée', in A. Canellis (ed.), *La correspondance d'Ambroise de Milan*, St. Etienne 2012, 19-74; 99-128.
- NAUTIN 1973 Pierre Nautin, 'L'excommunication de saint Jérôme', in *Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études, Ve section: Sciences religieuses 80-81 (1972-1973)*, 7-37.
- NIQUET 2000 Heike Niquet, *Monumenta virtutum titulique: senatorische Selbstdarstellung im spätantiken Rom im Spiegel der epigraphischen Denkmäler*, Stuttgart 2000.
- NISBET 1961 Robin G. M. Nisbet, *M. Tulli Ciceronis in L. Calpurnium Pisonem Oratio*, Oxford 1961.
- NOCE 2002 Carla Noce, *Vestis varia: l'immagine della veste nell'opera di Origine*, Rome 2002.
- O'DALY 1994 Gerard J. P. O'Daly, s.v. *Cassiciacum*, in *AL 1 (1986-1994)*, 771-781.

- O'DONNELL 1992 James J. O'Donnell, *Augustine Confessions*, 3 vols., Oxford 1992.
- O'MEARA 1951 John J. O'Meara, 'The historicity of the early dialogues of St. Augustine', in *VChr* 5 (1951), 150-178.
- OSBORN 1973 Eric F. Osborn, 'Cyprian's imagery', in *Antichthon* 7 (1973), 65-79.
- OPELT 1965 Ilona Opelt, *Die lateinischen Schimpfwörter und verwandte sprachliche Erscheinungen: eine Typologie*, Heidelberg 1965.
- OSIEK/BALCH 1997 Carolyn Osiek, David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament world: households and house churches*, Louisville 1997.
- OSIEK/BALCH 2003 Carolyn Osiek, David L. Balch (eds.), *Early Christian families in context: an interdisciplinary dialogue*, Grand Rapids 2003.
- PAESLACK 1954 Meinhard Paeslack, 'Zur Bedeutungsgeschichte der Wörter φιλεῖν „lieben“, φιλία „Liebe“, „Freundschaft“, φίλος „Freund“ in der Septuaginta und im Neuen Testament', in *Theologia Viatorum* 5 (1954), 51-142.
- PALANQUE 1933 Jean-Rémy Palanque, *Saint Ambroise et l'Empire romain: contribution à l'histoire des rapports de l'église et de l'état à la fin du quatrième siècle*, Paris 1933.
- PAVAN 1978 Vincenzo Pavan, 'La veste bianca battesimale, indicium escatologico nella chiesa die primi secoli', in *Augustinianum* 18 (1978), 257-271.
- PENN 2005 Michael Ph. Penn, *Kissing Christians: ritual and community in the late ancient church*, Philadelphia 2005.
- PETERSON 1923 Erik Peterson, 'Der Gottesfreund: Beiträge zur Geschichte eines religiösen Terminus', in *ZKG* 4/1 (1923), 161-202.
- PÉTRÉ 1948 Hélène Pétré, *Caritas. Étude sur le vocabulaire latin de la charité chrétienne*, Louvain 1948.
- PETZER 1995 Jacobus H. Petzer, 'The history of the New Testament text: its reconstruction, significance and use in New Testament textual criticism', in B. Aland, J. Delobel (eds.), *New Testament textual criticism, exegesis, and early church history: a discussion of methods*, Kampen 1994, 11-36.

- PFITZNER 1967 Victor C. Pfitzner, Paul and the *agon* motif: traditional athletic imagery in the Pauline literature, Leiden 1967.
- PIZZOLATO 1974 Luigi F. Pizzolato, 'L'amicizia in sant'Agostino e il *Laelius* di Cicerone', in VChr 28 (1974), 203-215.
- PIZZOLATO 1993 Luigi F. Pizzolato, L'idea di amicizia nel mondo antico classico e cristiano, Turin 1993.
- PLUMPE 1943 Joseph C. Plumpe, *Mater ecclesia*: an inquiry into the concept of the church as mother in early Christianity, Washington 1943.
- POCOCK 1996 John G. A. Pocock, 'Concepts and discourses: a difference in culture? Comment on a paper by Melvin Richter', in H. Lehmann, M. Richter (eds.), The meaning of historical terms and concepts: new studies on Begriffsgeschichte, Washington 1996, 47-58.
- REBENICH 1992 Stefan Rebenich, Hieronymus und sein Kreis: prospographische und sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen, Stuttgart 1992.
- REBENICH 2001 Stefan Rebenich, '*Viri nobiles, viri deserti, viri locupletes*: von der heidnischen zur christlichen Patronage im vierten Jahrhundert', in A. Dörfler-Dierken, W. Kinzig, M. Vinzent (eds.), Christen und Nichtchristen in Spätantike, Neuzeit und Gegenwart: Beginn und Ende des Konstantinischen Zeitalters, Cambridge 2001, 61-80.
- REBENICH 2008 Stefan Rebenich, 'Freund und Feind bei Augustin und in der christlichen Spätantike', in Th. Fuhrer (ed.), Die christlich-philosophischen Diskurse der Spätantike: Texte, Personen, Institutionen (Akten der Tagung vom 22.-25. Februar 2006 im Zentrum für Antike und Moderne der Alberts-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg), Stuttgart 2008, 11-31.
- REBENICH 2012 Stefan Rebenich, 'Augustine on friendship and orthodoxy', in M. Vessey (ed.), A companion to Augustine, Chichester 2012, 365-374.
- REBILLARD 2015 Éric Rebillard, 'Late antique limits of Christianness: North Africa in the age of Augustine', in É. Rebillard, J. Rüpke (eds.), Group identity and religious individuality in late antiquity, Washington 2015, 293-317.
- REITERER 1995 Friedrich Reiterer (ed.), Freundschaft bei Ben Sira: Beiträge des Symposions zu Ben Sira, Salzburg 1995.

- RICHTER 1995 Melvin Richter, *The history of political and social concepts: a critical introduction*, New York 1995.
- RIVES 1995 James B. Rives, *Religion and authority in Roman Carthage from Augustus to Constantine*, Oxford 1995.
- RIVES 1999 James B. Rives, 'The decree of Decius and the religion of empire', in *JRS* 89 (1999), 135-154.
- RODA 1981A Sergio Roda, *Commento storico al libro IX dell'epistolario di Quinto Aurelio Simmaco*, Pisa 1981.
- RODA 1981B Sergio Roda, 'Una nuova lettera di Simmaco ad Ausonio? A proposito di *Symm. Ep. 9.88*', in *REA* 83 (1981), 273-280.
- ROBERT 1982 Louis Robert, 'Une vision de Perpétue, martyre à Carthage en 203', in *CRAI* (1982), 228-276.
- SEAGER 1972 Robin Seager, *Factio: Some observations*, in *JRS* 62 (1972), 53-58.
- SAGE 1975 Michael M. Sage, *Cyprian*, Cambridge Mass. 1975.
- SALLER 1982 Richard P. Saller, *Personal patronage under the early Empire*, Cambridge 1982.
- SALLER 1984 Richard P. Saller, '*Familia, domus*, and the Roman conception of the family', in *Phoenix* 38/4 (1984), 336-355.
- SALLER 1988 Richard P. Saller, '*Pietas*, obligation and authority in the Roman family', in P. Kneissl, V. Losemann (eds.), *Alte Geschichte und Wissenschaftsgeschichte. Festschrift für Karl Christ zum 65. Geburtstag*, Darmstadt 1988, 393-410.
- SALLER 2000 Richard P. Saller, 'Family and household', in *CAH* 11 (2000), 855-874.
- SALLER 2011 Richard P. Saller, 'The Roman family as productive unity', in B. Rawson (ed.), *A companion to families in the Greek and Roman worlds*, Chichester 2011, 116-128.
- SALZMAN 2002 Michele R. Salzman, *The making of a Christian aristocracy: social and religious change in the western Roman Empire*, Cambridge Mass. 2002.

- SALZMAN 2011 Michele R. Salzman, *The letters of Symmachus: book 1*, Atlanta 2011.
- SAVON 1995 Hervé Savon, 'Saint Ambroise a-t-il imité le recueil de lettres de Pline le Jeune?', in *ReAug* 41 (1995), 3-17.
- SAVON 2012 Hervé Savon, 'Un dossier sur la loi de Moïse dans le recueil des lettres d'Ambroise', in A. Canellis (ed.), *La correspondance d'Ambroise de Milan*, St. Etienne 2012, 75-92.
- SAXER 1986 Victor Saxer, *Bible et hagiographie: textes et thèmes bibliques dans les actes des martyrs authentiques des premiers siècles*, Bern 1986.
- SCHELKLE 1954 Karl Hermann Schelkle, s.v. Bruder, in *RAC* 2, 631-640.
- SCHLINKERT 1996 Dirk Schlinkert, *Ordo senatorius und nobilitas: die Konstitution des Senatsadels in der Spätantike*, Stuttgart 1996.
- SCHMITT 2007 Carl Schmitt, *The concept of the political*, translation, introduction, and notes by George Schwab, Chicago/London 2007.
- SCHRÖDER 2012 Bianca-Jeanette Schröder, 'Römische *pietas* - kein universelles Postulat', in *Gymnasium* 119/4 (2012), 335-358.
- SEECK 1883 Otto Seeck, *Q. Aurelii Symmachi quae supersunt*, Berlin 1883.
- SESSA 2012 Kristina Sessa, *The formation of papal authority in late antique Italy: Roman bishops and the domestic sphere*, Cambridge 2012.
- SHAW 1993 Brent D. Shaw, 'The passion of Perpetua', in *P&P* 139 (1993), 3-45.
- SHEEHAN 1978 James J. Sheehan, 'Begriffsgeschichte: theory and practice', in *Journal of Modern History* 50 (1978), 312-319.
- SHUVE 2010 Karl Shuve, 'Cyprian of Carthage's writings from the rebaptism controversy: two revisionary proposals reconsidered', in *JThS* 61/2 (2010), 627-643.
- SKEB 1998 Matthias Skeb, *Paulinus of Nola Epistulae*, 3 vol., Freiburg i. Br. 1998.

- SIGISMUND-NIELSEN 2012 Hanne Sigismund-Nielsen, 'Vibia Perpetua: an indecent woman', in J. N. Bremmer, M. Formisano (eds.), *Perpetua's Passions: multidisciplinary approaches to the Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, Oxford 2012, 103-117.
- SIMONETTI 1957 Manlio Simonetti, *Tirannio Rufino Apologia*, Turin 1957.
- SIVAN 1993 Hagith S. Sivan, *Ausonius of Bordeaux: genesis of a Gallic aristocracy*, London/New York 1993.
- SOGNO 2006 Cristiana Sogno, *Q. Aurelius Symmachus: a political biography*, Ann Arbor 2006.
- SOGNO 2010 Cristiana Sogno, 'Roman matchmaking', in S. McGill, C. Sogno, E. Watts, *From the tetrarchs to the Theodosians: later Roman history and culture, 284-450 CE*, Cambridge/New York 2010, 55-71.
- SOGNO/WATTS 2016 Cristiana Sogno, Edward J. Watts, *Late antique letter collections: a critical introduction and reference guide*, Oakland 2016.
- SPEYER 1981 Wolfgang Speyer, s. v. Gottesfeind, in *RAC* 11 (1981), 996-1043.
- STANCLIFFE 1983 Clare Stancliffe, *St. Martin and his hagiographer: history and miracle in Sulpicius Severus*, Oxford 1983.
- STEINBERGER 1955 Josef Steinberger, *Begriff und Wesen der Freundschaft bei Aristoteles und Cicero*, Thesis (PhD) – Erlangen 1955.
- STEINMETZ 1967 Fritz A. Steinmetz, *Die Freundschaftslehre des Panaitios nach einer Analyse von Ciceros *Laelius de amicitia**, Stuttgart 1967.
- STEINMETZ 2008 Willibald Steinmetz, '40 Jahre Begriffsgeschichte: the state of the art', in H. Kämpfer, L. M. Eichinger (eds.), *Sprache – Kognition – Kultur: Sprachen zwischen mentaler Struktur and kultureller Prägung*, Berlin 2008, 174-197.
- STEINMETZ 2011 Willibald Steinmetz (ed.), *Political languages in the age of extremes*, Oxford 2011.
- STICHWEH 2005 Rudolf Stichweh, *Inklusion und Exklusion: Studien zur Gesellschaftstheorie*, Bielefeld 2005.
- STOWERS 1986 Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter writing in Greco-Roman antiquity*, Philadelphia 1986.

- TAVANO 2001 S. Tavano, s.v. Aquileia, in RAC Suppl. 1 (2001), 522-553.
- THAMIN 1895 Raymond Thamin, Saint Ambroise et la morale chrétienne au IVe siècle: étude comparée des traités 'Des devoirs' de Cicéron et de Saint Ambroise, Paris 1895.
- THORSTEINSSON 2010 Runar M. Thorsteinsson, Roman Christianity and Roman stoicism: a comparative study of ancient morality, Oxford 2010.
- THRAEDE 1970 Klaus Thraede, Grundzüge griechisch-römischer Brieffopik, München 1970.
- TREU 1972 Kurt Treu, s.v. Freundschaft, in RAC 8 (1972), 418-434.
- TREU 1981 Kurt Treu, s.v. Gottesfreund, in RAC 11 (1981), 1043-1060.
- TROUT 1988 Dennis E. Trout, Augustine at Cassiciacum: *otium honestum* and the social dimensions of conversion, in VChr 42 (1988), 132-146.
- TROUT 1999 Dennis E. Trout, Paulinus of Nola: life, letters, and poems, Berkley/London 1999.
- TUORI 2013 Kaius Tuori, s.v. *Aequitas*, in EAH, 132-133.
- VAN BAVEL 1987 Tarsicius J. van Bavel, 'The influence of Cicero's ideal of friendship on Augustine', in J. den Boeft, J. van Oort (eds.), Augustiniana Traiectina: communications présentées au colloque international d'Utrecht, 13-14 Novembre 1986, Paris 1987, 59-27.
- VAN BAVEL 2003 Tarsicius J. van Bavel, La communauté selon Augustin, Bruxelles 2003.
- VAN DAM 2007 Raymond Van Dam, The Roman revolution of Constantine, Cambridge 2007.
- VANDER VALK 2009 Frank Vander Valk, 'Friendship, politics, and Augustine's consolidation of the self', in RelStud 45/2 (2009), 125-146.
- VERBOVEN 2002 Koenraad Verboven, The economy of friends: economic aspects of *amicitia* and patronage in the late Republic, Bruxelles 2002.

- VIGGIANI 2000 Maria C. Viggiani, *Santa Marcellina: una nobile romana a Milano, vita, opere e devozione della sorella di S. Ambrogio*, Genoa 2000.
- VISCHER 1953 Lukas Vischer, *Das Problem der Freundschaft bei den Kirchenvätern*, in *ThZ* 9 (1953), 173-200.
- WHITE 1992 Carolinne White, *Christian friendship in the fourth century*, Cambridge 1992.
- WILLIAMS 1995 Daniel H. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the end of the Nicene-Arian conflicts*, Oxford 1995.
- WILLIAMS 2012A Craig A. Williams, *Reading Roman friendship*, Cambridge 2012.
- WILLIAMS 2012B Craig A. Williams, 'Perpetua's Gender. A Latinist reads the *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis*', in J. N. Bremmer, M. Formisano (eds.), *Perpetua's Passions: multidisciplinary approaches to the *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis**, Oxford 2012, 54-77.
- WILLIAMS/FRIELL 1995 Stephen Williams, Gerard Friell, *Theodosius: the Empire at Bay*, New Haven/London 1995.
- WICKERT 1971 Ulrich Wickert, *Sacramentum unitatis. Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der Kirche bei Cyprian*, Berlin/New York 1971.
- WITKE 1971 Charles Witke, *Numen litterarum: the old and the new in Latin poetry from Constantine to Gregory the Great*, Leiden 1971.
- WILKEN 1979 Robert L. Wilken, 'Pagan criticism of Christianity: Greek religion and Christian faith', in W. R. Schoedel, R. L. Wilken (eds.), *Early Christian literature and the classical intellectual tradition*, Paris 1979, 117-134.
- WLOSOK 1960 Antonie Wlosok, *Laktanz und die philosophische Gnosis: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Terminologie der gnostischen Erlösungsvorstellung*, Heidelberg 1960.
- ZELZER 1989 Michaela Zelzer, '*Plinius Christianus: Ambrosius als Epistolograph*', in *Studia Patristica* 23 (1989), 203-210.
- ZELZER 1990 Michaela Zelzer, 'Zur Komposition der Briefsammlung des hl. Ambrosius', in *Studia Patristica* 18/4 (1990), 212-217.

ZELZER 2002

Michaela Zelzer, Klaus Zelzer, 'Retractationes zu Brief und Briefgenos bei Plinius, Ambrosius und Sidonius Apollinaris', in W. Blümer, R. Henke, M. Mulke (eds.), *Alvarium: Festschrift für Christian Gnilka*, Münster 2002, 393-405.