Kinship, conflict and unity among Roman elites in post-Roman Gaul:

the contrasting experiences of Caesarius and Avitus

Leslie Dodd

The fifth century saw the end of Roman imperial power in the West. Academic debate continues about whether the empire collapsed or transformed and survived in the form of the barbarian successor states in Gaul, Italy and Spain.[1] For the purposes of this chapter, the key matter is that the century began with structures of official power still apparently robust throughout the West and ended with both empire and structures seemingly supplanted by incoming barbarians.[2] Yet, while the process of invasion eventually vanquished Roman political authority, Roman provincial elites survived and strove to find new ways of preserving their social, political and economic status in this new post–Roman world.

As in earlier times, the fortunes of provincial elites in the later empire were intertwined with the power of the state in the form of the imperial civil service. It was through the state bureaucracy that local elites gained legal and political authority; in some instances, it was how they gained social advancement. This chapter focuses on the increasingly parochial nature of the world in which these elites found themselves. In a world where neither the church nor the new barbarian kings could provide opportunities and careers to match those of the Roman state, we will see that as competition grew for the few available posts, traditional forms of elite class consciousness came to be replaced by a strictly local form of loyalty and identity based more upon kinship than upon shared social status. Further, by examining the evidence of two of the most important figures of the early post-

---

1   For those requiring it, useful discussions of this debate can be found in Heather 2013 and Pohl 2013.

2   On the barbarian invasion of 406/7, see Heather 2009.

Roman period, Avitus of Vienne and Caesarius of Arles, we will see that this emergent and strictly local identity led to situations where elites from other regions came to be seen as outsiders and as potential threats to the 'native' elite's right to monopolise local offices and therefore official power.

Official power in barbarian Gaul

Roman elites, from the earliest periods in which we can usefully speak of 'empire', sought authority through the offices of state. The *cursus honorum* was a constant of Roman political life, whether under republic, principate or dominate.[3] Whatever else changed, state and elite in the Roman Empire were wedded to one another at the most fundamental levels. Scholarly orthodoxy holds that Roman elites in the post-Roman West, deprived of the traditional *cursus honorum*, sought power through ecclesiastical careers and particularly through the acquisition of important episcopal sees. Having lost their access to one source of official power and patronage, they turned to the only other source available to them: the church. Thus, while a Gallo-Roman noble could no longer dream of a consulship, he could yet aspire to become a bishop, an office which gave him unprecedented levels of authority over the lives of his congregants.[4]

This, of course, is not the whole story. The incoming barbarian kings generally retained, more or less unchanged, the structures of provincial administration which they inherited from the Romans. In its courts and civil service, the empire left behind some established and extremely efficient mechanisms for the extraction of revenue and the settlement of disputes, mechanisms of which the barbarian kings made full use. Indeed, even by the end of the sixth century, "Roman fiscal machinery" was still functioning in the Frankish kingdom.[5] In the Visigothic kingdom,

---

3   Callow and Harlow 2012, 229–230 observe that the *cursus honorum* changed in some quite meaningful ways by the late antique period but that it still existed nevertheless.

4   Liebeschuetz 2001, 139; see also Rapp 2005, 173.

5   Jones 1964, 261, though he notes "by this time it was somewhat out of gear owing to prolonged neglect".

meanwhile, where less of the Roman system had been inherited and where administration was correspondingly less complicated, the old Roman systems of taxation and provincial governance were still broadly maintained.[6]

This being so, an educated Roman might have found employment in barbarian service carrying out tasks which, at the local level, were broadly indistinguishable from those he would have performed for a Roman emperor.[7] Yet one very significant difference remained: under the empire, a Roman civil servant could rise very far, could go to many places in an empire that spanned large parts of three continents; under the barbarian kings, a Gallo–Roman administrator's professional horizons were curtailed by the narrow geographical confines of the kingdom he served.

Even today, the full scale of the Roman empire is not always easily grasped. At the dawn of the fifth century, its inhabitants were living within a truly universal empire. Any given city was just one community in a constellation of similar communities spread across an empire that stretched from Scotland to Iraq. For provincial elites, this had certain implications about the reach of their (often quite localised) influence, yet it also meant that the *cursus honorum* could take an ambitious man across Europe, Asia and North Africa and give him political power that could be applied at levels beyond the local and which was backed by imperial structures and authority that had stood for half a millennium.

Kelly puts the imperial civil service, following its expansion in the fourth century, at about 30-35,000 individuals across a "superstate" of fifty to sixty million people.[8] Heather estimates that there were around three thousand "good" civil service posts (that is, those which guaranteed the holder senatorial or top equestrian status) in each half of the late antique empire.[9] While there is more than a little guesswork about both sets of figures, they are nevertheless illustrative of the scale

---

6   Jones 1964, 257–8.

7   Cf. Jones 2009, 103–4.

8   Kelly 2006, 115.

9   Heather 1994, 184–5.

of official power in the later empire, power which ran the gamut from the pan-imperial authority of the emperor and his chief ministers to the almost parochial influence of decurions and their curial officers. In post-Roman Gaul that which survived of the old Roman civil service did so only at the local, *civitas,* level.[10] Thus, in the course of the fifth century, official power in the West underwent a drastic change in both nature and scope and, indeed, in its political and social meaning.[11]

A great many political and bureaucratic offices survived the empire's end, in name at least and in one form or another.[12] The Burgundian law code provides a detailed list of officials of the royal court: nobles (*optimates*), counsellors (*consiliarii*), bailiffs (*domesticii*), mayors of the palace (*maiores domus nostrae*), chancellors (*cancellarii*), Roman and Burgundian counts or deputy-judges of cities and countryside (*Burgundiones quoque et Romani civitatum et pagorum comites vel iudices deputati*) and military judges (*iudices militantes*).[13] On top of these, there were *pueri* (or *wittiscalci*) who executed royal judgments and collected fines.[14] At least some of these offices were open to (and, in some cases, perhaps reserved for) Romans and, from literary sources, we have accounts of Romans active in the barbarian kingdoms, whether holding official titles or not. Sidonius writes of his friend, Syagrius, as "a new Solon of the Burgundians in dispensing laws",[15] strongly suggesting that he was at least an active participant in the compilation of the Burgundian law code and possibly the prime author.[16] This Syagrius was a man of impeccable breeding, the

---

10   Wallace–Hadrill 1967, 73; see also Lewis 2000 on the *civitas* as the basis for identity in the post-Roman world.

11   Cf. Drinkwater 1989, 138.

12   Ward–Perkins 2005, 68–70

13   *Lex Burgundionum prima constitutio* 5 and *Constitutiones extravagantes* 22, 14; note that at least some of the Burgundian counts were Roman.

14   *Lex Burgundionum* 76.

15   Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae*, 5, 5, 3, *novus Burgundionum Solon in legibus disserendis*

16   Mathisen 1993, 124 insists that Syagrius had no official position and was merely

great-grandson of a Roman consul,[17] but chose to throw in his lot with the barbarians rather than trying to carve out some kind of career in the vestiges of the Western Roman state. He was not unique, though he may have been uncommon in terms of his professional success. As Harries says, "The new Solon, and many other Roman careerists like him, who chose the service of Germanic kings rather than that of Rome, could 'barbarise' the culture Sidonius held dear".[18] In fact, these careerists were, in a sense, the vanguard of the Gallo-Roman provincial aristocracy in adapting to new political realities which had swept away the old certainties built up over the better part of five centuries.

However, while barbarian offices provided careers and access to localised power, they were few in number and could never compensate for the loss of thousands of jobs in the old imperial bureaucracy. Even for the lucky few who gained such a post, their new job could not provide the opportunities for personal advancement that a fourth century Roman might have expected to receive during his bureaucratic career. In every conceivable way, official power in the post-Roman world had been truncated.

By the end of the fifth century, the average Gallo-Roman was living in a barbarian kingdom that, in some instances, covered a territory not much larger than a single *civitas*.[19] Into the whole

---

"reorienting his legal practice in response to the needs of the time" but the Solon reference clearly contradicts that. It is also conceivable that Sidonius intended his readers to recall the time that Solon spent with the barbarian kings Croesus and Cyrus, thus casting Syagrius as a kind of improving or civilising influence on the Burgundian kings.

17   Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae*, 5, 5, 1; this was Flavius Syagrius, consul for 381; the consul for 382, Flavius Afranius Syagrius, was also obviously a relative.

18   Harries 2000 51.

19   Halsall 2013, 120 makes the point that, had the legendary King Arthur of the Britons actually existed, he would have ruled "a realm no larger than a few modern parishes". As small as the barbarian *regna* in Gaul may have been, they were comparatively large by the standards of other

territory which the Romans knew, broadly, as Gallia, one could fit three or four barbarian *regna*, to say nothing of petty rump states like the Roman kingdom of Soissons or Riothamus' British kingdom in Armorica. All power and authority in Gaul (arguably in the West generally) devolved to the point where it was exclusively local and the very concept of community in this period was understood entirely in local terms.[20] Against this background, competition for offices, and therefore power, was intense. Few offices existed yet there were many potential candidates.

Imperial offices in post-Imperial Gaul

The last Western emperor was deposed in 476, at which point there ceased to be even the pretence of a Roman state in the West. Before that point, vestiges of imperial officialdom had survived in Gaul. Examples of the diminishing number of Gallo-Roman nobles who benefited from them include Sidonius who was urban prefect of Rome under Anthemius in 470 or Arvandus who, as praetorian prefect of Gaul (first under Libius Severus and then under Anthemius), was executed for plotting to deliver Roman land into barbarian hands.[21] These individuals occupied posts that were conceptualised as Roman and imperial. After 476, even these notionally Roman offices were lost.

Imperial offices thus survived only as gifts originating with the Eastern emperor and this, together with their sheer rarity, imparted a patina of the exotic. They spoke of a connection to a distant court, unimaginably powerful to the potentates of barbarian Gaul, and to a world beyond the limited and limiting boundaries of the post-Roman West. By its very nature, that connection

---

regions of the post–Roman West.

20   Bailey 2010, 43

21   Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae*, 1, 7; Barnwell 1992, 74 argues that Arvandus could have seen the Visigoths and Burgundian *reges* as Roman magistrates and thought it was better to surrender territory to their control than to "allow it to be ruled by the 'Greek' emperor". Teitler 1992, 309–317, deems Arvandus' actions treasonous, in execution and intent.

imparted a kind of prestige.[22] From the letters of Avitus of Vienne, we see that Roman titles and offices were actively sought by, and granted to, the Burgundian kings. Three successive kings – Gundioc (d. 473), Chilperic (d. 480) and Gundobad (d. 516) – held the office of *magister militum per Gallias*.23 The next king, Sigismund (d. 524) had been appointed *patricius* by 515,24 a title also awarded to his father, Gundobad, and his uncle, Chilperic, by Olybrius in 472.[25] An aristocratic title like this carried no power but was an indicator of imperial favour and gave its recipient the air of "one steeped in the formal hierarchy and ceremony of late antique Mediterranean politics".[26] Sigismund later wrote to the emperor, through Avitus, begging to be confirmed as *magister militum*.[27] This was important to the Burgundian kings because it was a manifestation of their relationship with the imperial court, a relationship which made the Burgundian *rex* "a Roman official as much as a German king".[28]

Sigismund said as much when he wrote to the emperor asking to be confirmed in his father's old office and declaring that, "While I appear to be king of my people, I believe I am nothing other than your soldier".[29] The same letter states, "My people are yours" (*Vester quidem est populus meus*), effectively a pledge to continue the Burgundian tradition of defending imperial interests in

---

22   Heather 2000, 22; while Heather is speaking about an earlier point in the 5th century, it is even more accurate when speaking of the late fifth and early sixth centuries.

23   Shanzer, Wood, 2002, 15–16.

24   Avitus, *Epistulae*, 9.

25 Barnwell 1992, 82-83; Shanzer, Wood 2002, 21; note that Gundobad's brother-in-law, the Romanised German Flavius Ricimer, was also made a patrician.

26   Amory, 1994, 8.

27   Avitus, *Epistulae*, 93, 94.

28   Wood 2002, 255.

29   Avitus, *Epistulae*, 93, *Cum gentem nostrum videamur regere, non aliud nos quam milites vestros credimus*. The use of *milites* is surely a deliberate reference to the office of *magister militum*. See Wood 2002, 256.

south-eastern Gaul. Sidonius, in fact, describes Chilperic as *tetrarcham nostrum* ("our tetrarch"),[30] a reference to the four praetorian prefectures of the empire, thus presenting Chilperic not merely as a mercenary general in Roman service but, in a sense, as the ultimate Roman official in the West. The relationship between the Burgundian kings and the Roman state is shown very clearly when we look at their coinage which bears a portrait of the Roman emperor Anastasius on the obverse and the monogram of the Burgundian *rex* on the reverse.[31]

In the absence of a Western emperor, truly Roman offices – which is to say, offices emanating from a Roman emperor and involving actual or notional service to the Roman state – were not generally available to ordinary Gallo-Roman nobles. Rather, these offices and titles were an aspect of imperial diplomacy rather than official power. They had become a decoration granted to amenable barbarian kings or a means to bind local rulers to Constantinople but were, in either case, no more than a tool of imperial policy.

Office, power and kinship in the Church

Turning back to local elites, we have seen that there were only a limited set of options for individuals wishing to access and direct official power. A great many Roman nobles responded to the situation by barbarising, which is to say, by adopting the rôle of barbarian *optimates* and becoming, in essence, an early medieval military aristocracy. The Visigothic army at the battle of Vouillé, for example, contained a sizeable Roman contingent;[32] the Visigothic *Forum iudicum*, meanwhile, sets out the Roman liability for military service, as well as the punishments for anyone – "Goth, Roman, freeman or freedman" – who fails to enlist when ordered.[33] Even the Visigothic

---

30   Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae*, 3, 7, 1.

31   Cf. Engel and Serrure 1964, 37–39; Jahn 1874, 1, 161–162.

32   Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, 11, 37.

33   *Forum iudicum*, 9, 2, 8–9.

army which besieged Sidonius' Clermont contained Romans.[34] For those who could not find a civil post and would not fight, a third option existed in the form of the church.

The rise of episcopal power in late antiquity had been more pronounced in the East than in the West. In fact, the rise of the Gallic episcopate was a fifth-century phenomenon.[35] Bishops rose to fill the void left by the retreat of the Roman state. In the period between the end of the empire and the emergence of the secular aristocracy of the Merovingian kingdom, the bishop was the single most authoritative figure in any Christian community. The episcopal office amounted to "the fusion of secular and religious models of leadership" and constituted one of the main pillars upon which late antique Gallic concepts of community rested.[36] Moreover, the bishop's power was accompanied by control over his church's finances and property and thus afforded many opportunities for patronage through doling out the lesser ecclesiastical offices in his see to relatives, allies and supporters.[37] As such, the episcopate naturally attracted elites whose ambitions had been denied secular outlets. It attracted elites who understood that the episcopate was one of the few remaining sources of official power in Gaul which was largely or entirely in Roman hands. Bishops were elected by Gallic congregations and anointed by Gallo-Roman bishops. Here, therefore, Romans

---

34   Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae*, 6, 12 on Calminius who was, according to Sidonius, forced to fight for the Goths against his will; whether this is a means by which Sidonius covered for his friend's barbarisation or whether it was the truth (in whatever degree), the point remains that Gallo–Romans fought under Gothic colours at Clermont.

35   Liebeschuetz 2001, 155.

36   Bailey 2010, 40; cf. Frend 1969, 6 on the bishop as the counterpart of the pagan *patronus* and *pontifex*.

37   On the use or misuse of church property, see Caesarius, *Sermo* 1, 9 where it is argued that bishops are more interested in spending extravagantly on themselves than on using the church's money to help the poor. See also Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae*, 4, 25, 2, on an episcopal candidate at Bourges who offered to let his partisans plunder church lands if elected.

had a space in which true political power resided and over which they, not the barbarians, had control. Here they found a mechanism for providing patronage to their families and friends without the involvement or approval of barbarian superiors.

On entering the church, aristocratic bishops brought their prejudices with them.[38] Bishops engaged in "a relatively traditional form of late Roman political behaviour, a continuation and a revival...of the aristocratic ethos".[39] The classical ideology of the aristocratic *boni* and *optimates*, the concept that morality and intellectual worth were class-based attributes,[40] was carried over into the church where it dovetailed with Christian theological concepts of the righteous and the wicked (the *boni* and the *mali*).[41] Faustus of Riez puts it in these terms, playing on the various meanings of *bonum* as noun and adjective: "Be a righteous man (*bonus*), who has possessions (*bona*). Riches are a good thing, gold is a good thing and silver is a good thing too; estates are good and possessions are good. All things of that kind are good".[42] Mathisen characterises the situation well when he says that, "This 'us' versus 'them' mentality contributed...to the sense of superiority that Gallo-Roman aristocrats wished to engender among themselves, and helped isolate them from what they considered to be non-elite persons or groups".[43] It was often explicitly stated that a bishop was

38   Cf. Bartlett 2001, 214–215; also Stevens 1933, 86–87.

39   Marcone 1998, 349.

40   Cf. Brown 1981, 13–18 for a critique of the ways in which this same attitude has been allowed to shape the modern view of late antique religion.

41   Mathisen 1993, 10–13.

42   Faustus Rhegiensis, *Sermo* 5: *esto bonus, qui habes bona. bonae sunt divitiae, bonum est aurum, bonum est et argentum, bonae familiae, bonae possessiones. omnia ista bona sunt.* See Bailey 2010, 54–55 for material wealth as metaphor in Gallic sermons of the period and Rapp 2005, 199–203 on wealth and ecclesiastical office.

43   Mathisen 1993, 13; Salzman 2002, 69–70 stresses social distinctions between older and newer aristocrat families.

morally and spiritually superior to his congregants simply by virtue of his birth and wealth.

Officially, of course, social class was not an obstacle for a would-be bishop,[44] but the intertwining of church and aristocracy is highlighted by Heinzelmann, who demonstrates that, of the 179 Gallic bishops whose social class can be ascertained, only eight were not members of the traditional aristocracy.[45] This is the background against which we see the emergence of what Gaudemet called the "épiscopat monarchique".[46]

The office of bishop afforded many opportunities for patronage within the community; indeed, patronage became a significant aspect of episcopal authority and the foundation upon which alliances were built with the community's other leading families.[47] Bishops could and did reinforce their own family's position within a see by handing ecclesiastical offices and other favours to other aristocratic clans, thereby simultaneously establishing alliances with the local elite (of whom the bishop was a member) and making them dependent on episcopal largesse. The significance of these alliances lies in the fact that while bishops were appointed and consecrated by other bishops, the will of the congregation could rarely be completely ignored. A successful episcopal election usually required the visiting clerics to reach a consensus with the leaders of the local community.[48] Elections, after all, were not always cut-and-dried affairs and could even devolve into violence between competing factions.[49] Furthermore, rival candidates were most likely to emerge from the community's elite families, so, by bringing those families into an extended network of allies, the likelihood of a challenge was reduced and the position of the bishop's family made that much

---

44   Rapp 2005, 173.

45   Heinzelmann 1975, 75–90.

46   Gaudemet 1958, 322–368.

47   Cf. Marcone 1998, 343 on "the bonds of power joining together the bishop and the richer classes of the city".

48   Jones 1964, 875, 915–916.

49   Whitby 2000, 487; Geary 1989, 133–134.

stronger.

Gregory of Tours (538–594) is a relatively late figure but, as such, allows us to see the dynastic chain in full. Of the previous eighteen bishops of Tours, at least thirteen were blood relatives and Gregory himself was named for his maternal great-grandfather, a saint and bishop of Langres. Further, he was raised by his paternal uncle, bishop Gallus of Clermont,[50] and educated by another relative and future bishop, Avitus of Clermont.[51] This same Avitus later appointed Gregory as deacon, thus beginning his ecclesiastical career. Needless to say, Gregory was also a relative of the Aviti clan and therefore of the emperor Avitus.[52]

Such episcopal dynasticism makes it practically tautological to speak of an aristocratic bishop in post-Roman Gaul; aristocracy and episcopate "formed an inseparable institution".[53] Indeed, if we look in detail at Sidonius' account of the election of Simplicius as bishop of Bourges (*c*.472), we see that a blood relationship with a previous bishop was *prima facie* evidence that one was entitled to become bishop in turn.[54] Sidonius states that there were so many candidates for the vacant see that they could not be accommodated by the available benches and each candidate was angered by the presence of so many competitors.[55] With no chance of finding an acceptable outcome, the congregation, in a surprising break with convention, passed all responsibility for choosing their new bishop to the visiting clerics.[56]

The man chosen was not one of the multitude of candidates but a layman called Simplicius.

50   Gregory, *Vita Patrum*, 2, 2.

51   Gregory, *Vita Patrum*, 2 *praefatio*.

52   Heinzelmann 2001, 13, 25.

53   Geary 1988, 123.

54   Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae*, 7, 9, 17.

55   Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae*, 7, 9, 2.

56   Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae*, 7, 9, 3.

This seems peculiar because Simplicius was not a cleric and had not even declared his candidacy.[57] In fact, as a layman, he could not have lawfully put himself forward as a candidate! Sidonius, however, explains that Simplicius was chosen because of "his illustrious family" and high status, apparently feeling that this information would vindicate the decision to ignore canon law and appoint an ineligible candidate as bishop.[58] One can, however, excavate a great deal about Simplicius' family from the sources. Simplicius was actually the son and son-in-law of the two previous bishops of Bourges.[59] The recently-deceased bishop was, in all probability, Simplicius' father.[60] So, the new bishop had been born into one episcopal dynasty and married into another. The fact that Simplicius had not yet begun his clerical career explains why there were so many applicants for the see: they believed that Simplicius could not become bishop and that, therefore, his family had lost control of the see through lack of a qualified candidate. The result was a kind of feeding frenzy as every eligible clergyman in the region rushed to claim Bourges for their own.

Simplicius, however, was a kinsman of Sidonius. Thus the "illustrious family" to which the successful candidate belonged was Sidonius' own.[61] The extended family's influence was so great that even Simplicius' ineligibility could not stop him from becoming bishop. He had only to wait for visiting clerics (also relatives of his) to hand him the see. His family and his marriage alliance meant that he no doubt had very many local allies as well, both in the church and in the wider community, who welcomed his appointment. The entire milieu recalls Venantius' late sixth century epigram for a bishop of Périgueux, "to whom the order of bishops flowed from either parent;/ the

---

57   Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae*, 7, 9, 16.

58   Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae*, 7, 9, 17.

59   PLRE 2, 821; Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae*, 7, 9, 24.

60   PLRE 2, 418.

61   Simplicius was also the recipient of a rather odd letter from Sidonius; see Grey 2011, 157. On Sidonius' uncle Simplicius and the charge of treason levelled against him in 474, see Harries 1994, 33.

priestly pinnacle came to the heir".[62]

A genuine ecclesiastical *cursus honorum* in this period might have given structure to the rise of new bishops and put an end to this kind of rank nepotism but, in its absence,[63] a man with the right connections could effectively bypass the electoral process. Sidonius says that many of the numerous candidates at Bourges were genuinely worthy of episcopal status "but they cannot all be bishops".[64] Regardless of their religious and spiritual virtues, they could not be bishops because they had not the network of allies and relatives, both in the wider church and in the local *civitas*, upon which Simplicius could rely. Holiness and even elite status were not enough to put one on the episcopal throne. One needed family. However, depending on context, an episcopal candidate, though entirely reliant on family and patronage, might actually downplay the part that blood and kinship played in his career; in fact, he might hide it as completely as he was able.

Kinship and the elections of Caesarius and Avitus

---

62   Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmina*, 4, 8, 7–8: *Ordo sacerdotum cui fluxit utroque parente/ Venit ad heredem pontificalis apex.*

63   Van Nuffelen 2011, 11 comments that "one could hardly become a bishop before the age of 45" and refers to the "clerical *cursus honorum* in the West" (by which he means, the theoretical requirements for clerics to spend specified amounts of time in various ecclesiastical offices before becoming a bishop). Whatever the theory, no such *cursus honorum* existed in the period or place under discussion and Dunn 2011, 157 notes that canon law on episcopal ordination was "flouted" in Gaul. Indeed, the example of Simplicius – who was made bishop though he had never been a clergyman – is illustrative. Caesarius attempted, at the Council of Arles (524) to impose a year's probation for new clerics (can. 2) only for this to be ignored by Agroecius of Antibes; see Caesarius, *Epistulae*, 19.

64   Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae*, 7, 9, 13: *sane id liberius dico, de multitudine circumstantium multos episcopales esse, sed totos episcopos esse non posse.*

Caesarius and Avitus were contemporaries – and, indeed, rivals – who lived in close proximity to each other (sufficiently close that they squabbled over which of them rightly controlled various suffragan sees north of the Durance). They also both owed their position as bishop to kinship but they differed starkly in how they presented that fact and that is something which sheds a great deal of light onto just how local the elites of this period had become and how important kinship was to the construction of elite unity within the barbarian kingdoms.

Alcimus Ecdicius Avitus presents a straightforward example of a man who owed his position, authority and power wholly to kinship. His own *Vita* is open and unabashed about the fact that he succeeded his father Hesychius to the episcopal throne of Vienne.[65] The very first sentence of his biography lays out the family's claim to Vienne and, in its second sentence, lays out their elite status saying, "This Hesychius was a man of senatorial rank".[66] In fact, he was that and a good deal more having held office within the rump Roman state before becoming bishop and with two of his sons also rising to the episcopate.67 In addition, he was related both to Sidonius Apollinaris and to Eparchius Avitus, the ephemeral Western emperor of 455/6.[68] The pedigree is impressive and it is

---

65   *Vita Aviti* 1: *Tempore Zenonis imperatoris beatus Avitus episcopus sapientia et doctrina mirabilis deo mortalibus favente Viennensem ecclesiam post patrem Isicium acque episcopum suscepit regendam.* ("In the time of the emperor Zeno, the blessed bishop Avitus, a man remarkable for his wisdom and learning, took up, through God's favour to mortals, the see and church at Vienne after his father, Hesychius, who was also bishop.").

66   *Vita Aviti* 1: *Hic Isicius vir primum fuit senatoriae dignitatis.* The *Vita Apollinaris episcopi Valentinensis* – the *Vita* of Avitus' brother who was bishop of Valence – also emphasises, in its first few lines, the family's aristocratic status.

67   PLRE 2, 555 states simply that "He held an unidentified secular post" but Shanzer & Wood, 2002, 4 identify Hesychius (probably correctly) with the *tribunus legatus* sent to Theoderic and mentioned in Hydatius, *Chronica*, 177.

68   In fact, Avitus' brother and one of his sons were named Apollinaris and both became bishop

not surprising that Avitus and his biographers were proud of it.

Avitus' father, Hesychius, became bishop of Vienne following the death of bishop Mamertus (brother of the theologian Claudianus Mamertus, who also started his career as a priest in Vienne).[69] While Hesychius and Mamertus were either not related or only distantly related, there is evidence in Avitus' homilies to suggest that the two families enjoyed extremely good relations. Avitus refers to Mamertus as "a spiritual father to me since baptism",[70] indicating a longstanding friendship between the families. This makes it likely that Hesychius, as a friend and ally of the bishop and a man of secular rank and influence in the region, was nominated by Mamertus to be his successor. The sources provide no account of what happened when Hesychius died but, given that Avitus had the blessing of his predecessor, the support of his family and alliances with influential families in the region, it is highly likely that his election was straightforward and uncontroversial. As we saw from the experience of Simplicius at Bourges, it may not even have been necessary for Avitus to declare himself a candidate.

Caesarius' experience is much more complicated. The major source for Caesarius' career is the *Vita Caesarii*, consisting of two books written in the decade following his death by the bishops Cyprian of Toulon, Firminus of Uzès and the otherwise unknown Viventius.[71] According to the *Vita*, Caesarius was born to a noble family in Chalon-sur-Saône in 469/70 and, as a young man, set out for the famous monastery of Lérins, near Cannes, forsaking family and homeland in favour of

---

of Valence in turn; see PLRE 2, 115 and Duchesne 1894, 1, 218.

69   Wood 1992, 10.

70   Avitus, *Homily*, 6: *Praedecessor namque meus et spiritalis mihi a baptismo pater Mamertus sacerdos, cui ante non paucos annos pater carnis meae accepto, sicut deo visum est, sacedotii tempore successit,...* ("My predecessor and the man who was a spiritual father to me from baptism, bishop Mamertus, whom the father of my flesh succeeded to the episcopate not a few years ago when, as seemed right to God, Mamertus was taken…").

71   Fusconi 1963; Viard 1964.

monastic life.[72] At the monastery, Caesarius was made cellarer (something like a quartermaster) but aroused the anger of the other monks by withholding their rations because he deemed them insufficiently ascetic. He was removed from his post, whereupon he starved himself to the point where it affected his health. The abbot, Porcarius, intervened and packed him off to Arles.[73] There he was welcomed by two major Arlesian nobles, Gregoria and her relative (probably husband) the *vir illustris* Firminus.[74] They found Caesarius' holiness so striking that they brought him to Aeonius, the bishop of Arles, whereupon the two men discovered, to their complete surprise, that they were related. Aeonius is thus described as *concivis pariter et propinquus*, a phrase which, as we shall see later, has some significance. Aeonius was so impressed by his kinsman's devotion that he made him deacon and then presbyter before naming him his successor and appointing him abbot of one of the Arlesian monasteries. Upon Aeonius' death, the people of Arles demanded that Caesarius be made bishop in spite of his reluctance.[75]

Caesarius' tale is thus much more involved than that of Avitus. One need hardly say that Caesarius' *Vita* was a political document, heavily slanted and, in places, probably deliberately misleading. Amongst its more suspicious aspects are Caesarius' convenient ignorance of his relationship to Aeonius and the claim that he only became aware of this after being introduced to his kinsman by two local aristocrats. Even the claim that Caesarius was made bishop by popular acclaim against his own will, though admittedly a literary trope in saintly *Vitae*, seems significant and suspicious.

Current scholarly orthodoxy holds that Caesarius' control of Arles was due to the support of

---

72   *Vita Caesarii*, 1, 3–5.

73   *Vita Caesarii*, 1, 6–7.

74   Firminus was a significant figure in Arles and a correspondant of Ennodius; see Arnold 2014, 244; Stroheker, 1948, 156 and PLRE 2, 471.

75   *Vita Caesarii*, 1, 8–14.

monastic allies from Lérins (that is, Mathisen's "Lérins faction" or Harries' "Lérins connections"),[76] but the *Vita* implies that Caesarius was disliked by his fellow monks and that he was more or less expelled from the monastery. Thus, while Leyser calls Caesarius "one of the monastery's most powerful alumni" and Rousseau claims that "the prestige of Lérins…reached a peak in the career…of Caesarius of Arles",[77] the reality seems different. From the *Vita* we see both the centrality of kinship in his rise to power and the desire of his biographers to obfuscate that fact. Caesarius became bishop not because of monastic alliances founded upon shared ascetic ideologies but because his relative Aeonius had secured control of the see and thereafter followed the common strategy of episcopal aristocrats by using the Arlesian church to provide careers for allies and kinsmen. By sending Caesarius to Arles in the first place, abbot Porcarius was actually returning him to his family for, in spite of the *Vita*'s protestations, Caesarius and Porcarius – and indeed the wider regional church establishment – must have known that he was a relative of the bishop of Arles. The obvious question poses itself: if Caesarius was known to be a kinsman of the most powerful bishop in the region, why did his biographers hide the fact? When we compare this apparent embarrassment to the outright pride in nepotism which we find in other contemporary bishops, especially Avitus, it seems odd.

Explaining the difference: ecclesiastical kinship in context

The reason for the contrasting reactions to kinship found in the *Vitae* of Avitus and Caesarius – embarrassment for Caesarius' biographers and pride for Avitus' – lies in the relative status of each man in his *civitas.* Avitus belonged to an aristocratic family with an ancient pedigree and deep roots in the region; by blood and marriage, the Aviti had close connections to many influential families including Sidonius'.[78] They took pride in their position as the epitome of the southern Gallic

---

76   Harries 1994, 40–41.

77   Leyser 1999, 188–189; Rousseau 2000, 768.

78   Cf. PLRE 2, 1317; note the recurrence of names within the families of Sidonius and Avitus.

senatorial aristocracy and saw power as their birthright.

Caesarius, though, was an émigré and the successor to another émigré. He was an outsider and, while his family had somehow managed to gain control of Arles, few Arlesians would have felt he had any real entitlement to the see.[79] As a foreigner, Caesarius was very fortunate to be able to retain the diocese, but he could not claim, as Avitus might or Simplicius had, that an ancestral connection to the *civitas* gave him a right to become bishop and therefore the effective leader of the community. In Arles, Caesarius remained a stranger without a birthright and therein lies the key difference between him and Avitus. Where Avitus could treat his acquisition of Vienne as a matter of rightful inheritance and could truthfully claim that the see was remaining in the hands of an established local family who were related to and representative of the regional elites, Caesarius and Aeonius could make no such claims about Arles. Caesarius appeared to be something of a carpetbagger – an outsider who had come to Arles purely to feather his own nest and who owed his position to the patronage of a relative who himself had no meaningful association with the city.

This lack of association is, in fact, underlined by Caesarius' description of Aeonius as *concivis pariter et propinquus.* While seemingly a neutral description and perhaps even a manifestation of Caesarius' foreign civic identity, it was something else altogether. In this period, shared civic identity between bishop and congregation was conceived of as a form of kinship between the Christian community and their bishop (who would, after death, be venerated as a saint); as Bailey says, this phenomenon emphasised the "intense parochialism" of the religio-cultural (and therefore political) milieu.[80] Or one might say that it emphasised the very local nature of elites and power in this period whereby the entire community is presented, rhetorically at least, as one large extended family. In any case, by stressing that he was a fellow citizen and kinsman of Aeonius – who, as bishop, was venerated as a local saint after his death and therefore absorbed into the city's

---

79   Note that one of Riculf's justifications for his coup against Gregory was to free Tours from the grip of a clique of foreigners from Clermont; Gregory, *Historia Francorum*, 5, 49.

80   Bailey 2010, 42.

religious and civic identity – Caesarius' biographers were, in fact, making him an Arlesian by adoption as the blood relative of an Arlesian saint.

However, while this may have carried weight with some congregants, it does not seem likely to have impressed most Arlesian nobles who, on the contrary, were probably offended to see Aeonius importing kinsmen from Chalon and giving them offices in the local church. Better for Caesarius, then, to diminish his relationship to Aeonius as far as possible and better for his biographers to pretend that Caesarius and Aeonius had not even been conscious of their relationship. Better, too, to emphasise Caesarius' relationship with Arlesian nobles such as Gregoria and Firminus and to argue that it was his holiness, not his blood, that had impressed them and, indeed, that Aeonius had only become aware of Caesarius' existence because his holiness had impressed some local nobles.

Thus, the function of kinship in Avitus' career was to reinforce the power of local elites within the *civitas*. It was to ensure that a local family with local allies achieved local power. In Caesarius' career, kinship's function was entirely the opposite: it was to supplant local Arlesian families and to place the most important see in Gaul in the hands of foreigners. The nobles must have feared that an immigrant bishop would not favour them with patronage, that they and their sons would be shut out of the ecclesiastical offices and therefore out of the post-Roman West's major non–Germanic source of political authority. This fear would hardly be baseless.

Just as Aeonius had brought Caesarius to Arles, so Caesarius, in turn, brought other relatives to the city. His sister, Caesaria, was appointed to govern an ascetic community for women,[81] though it actually burnt down during a siege before the building was complete.[82] During that same siege, another of Caesarius's clerical relatives from Chalon (*quidam e clericis concivis et consanguineus ipsius*) attempted to slip out of the city by night and into the camp of besieging Burgundians in

---

81   Beck 1950, 379.

82   *Vita Caesarii*, 1, 28; cf. Arnold 1894, 246–247.

hopes of betraying the city.[83] While the *Vita* could not be any clearer in its simultaneous disavowal of Caesarius' involvement and its pardon of the traitor (for the man acted only from *timor captivitatis* brought about by *levitas iuvenilis*), the people and garrison of Arles assumed that Caesarius had sent his kinsman out to betray the city and so arrested him; the bishop was locked in his palace and plans were made to drown him by throwing him from a boat into the middle of the river. The plan was thwarted only by the presence of the besieging army who prevented the defenders from casting off.[84]

In this anecdote we see both Caesarius' appointment of relatives to the Arlesian church and the distrust and anger which some of the community felt towards him. Interestingly, the *Vita* implies at 1.29 that anger at Caesarius was universal (though it has special mention of the Arlesian Jews upon whom Caesarius eventually dumped responsibility for his family's treachery),[85] but implies at 1.30 that the only people who distrusted Caesarius were the Arian Gothic garrison. There was clearly a need on the part of Caesarius and his biographers to present a united front, to give the impression, if nothing else, that the orthodox Christian community was united behind Caesarius and that only Jews and heretics disagreed. The need arose from the simple fact that Caesarius was not a unifying figure but a divisive one.

One aspect of his divisiveness is in the divisions he created within the traditional Arlesian nobility. Clearly alliances were forged between the family of Aeonius and some of the native Arlesian aristocrats. We can see this from the special attention given to Firminus and Gregoria in the account of Caesarius' arrival in the city. We know also that one of Caesarius' biographers was Firminus of Uzès, nephew of and successor to Probatius of Uzès; this Probatius had attended Caesarius's Council of Agde in 506 and had signed its canons.[86] These three figures, Firminus of

---

83   *Vita Caesarii*, 1, 29.

84   *Vita Caesarii*, 1, 30.

85   Cf. Lévi 1895.

86   Duchesne 1894, 1, 303.

Arles, Firminus of Uzès and Probatius, were members of the same family and close allies of Caesarius; this is seen from their involvement in Caesarius' ecclesiastical agenda, their part in presenting Caesarius to Arles after he left Lérins and their part in furthering the myth of Caesarius after his death. So, for all that Caesarius was an outsider, he had some allies among the local elite.

Yet he obviously had many enemies amongst them too and it is possible that, after Aeonius' death, they presented a candidate of their own to thwart the rise of Caesarius and his family. The episcopal *fasti* of Arles show a bishop, named Iohannes, between Aeonius and Caesarius.[87] Duchesne, editor of the *fasti*, strongly denied the possibility that Iohannes existed ("les dyptiques marquent un Jean entre Aeonius et Césaire; il est sûr que Césaire a succédé immédiatement à Aeonius") largely on the basis of his non-appearance in the *Vita Caesarii* but this is a naïve position.[88] Although the *Vita* implies a direct succession between Caesarius and Aeonius, it does not explicitly say that it was so.[89] Admittedly, we cannot state as a certain fact that Iohannes existed (rather than being later textual interpolation) but Klingshirn has explored the matter in detail and makes a persuasive case for his existence.[90] For our purposes, the presence of an episcopal candidate backed by and representing the local elites indicates the level of resentment that must have been percolating through Arles during the latter part of Aeonius' tenure. It demonstrates the desire of Arlesian elites to preserve for themselves the power and patronage of the episcopate and to defend their entitlements against a foreign family who were seemingly unabashed about their desire to appropriate the see of Arles in the long term.

---

87   Duchesne 1894, 1, 243.

88   Duchesne 1894, 1, 250, n. 8.

89   Klingshirn 1994, 85–86.

90   Klingshirn 1994, 85–87; note esp. Klingshirn's connection of the letter from Ruricius to Capillutus (*Epistulae*, 2, 31) with the tense *milieu* that would have followed a disputed episcopal election.

Caesarius and Chalon-sur-Saône: kinship and conflict at the *civitas* level

Ironically, Caesarius' family may very well have gone through a similar experience to that of the Arlesian nobles. That is to say, his family may once have had control of an episcopal see which they lost to outsiders. For this, we look to a letter of Sidonius written to Domnulus.[91] It is not overlong but nevertheless treats in depth the election of the bishop Iohannes at Chalon-sur-Saône in about 470 and, significantly, is one of only two episcopal elections which Sidonius discusses in detail.[92] It also seems significant that Sidonius diminishes his own involvement in the election's outcome. Although he attended the election in his episcopal rôle and participated in choosing the new bishop, he hands all responsibility to Euphronius of Autun and Patiens of Lyon and portrays himself as no more than an onlooker to the decision of senior clerics.

Sidonius opens his account by announcing that, following the death of Paulus of Chalon, Patiens of Lyon visited the town and ordained a new bishop. The *pontificale concilium*, which must have included Sidonius, found the people of the town riven by partisan strife as three candidates vied for the see. The first of these was a moral degenerate who prattled about his ancestral claims to the see, the second only had supporters because of the feasts he provided for his parasites and the third had announced that his adherents would be allowed to plunder church lands after a successful election.[93] The two named members of the "priestly council", Euphronius and Patiens, found the three candidates unacceptable and ordained someone of their own choosing instead, the *sanctus Iohannes*. This account is followed by a long discussion of Iohannes' pious qualities.

The anonymous first candidate, however disgraceful his character, articulated an entitlement to the see on the basis of "the ancient claim of birth". This remark unambiguously indicates a blood relationship between this candidate and previous bishops. Paulus of Chalon is described by

---

91   Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae*, 4, 25.

92   Apart from the Chalon election (*Epistulae*, 4, 25), the only other detailed account of an election is that at Bourges (*Epistulae*, 7, 9).

93   Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae*, 4, 25, 2.

Sidonius as a *iunior episcopus*, describing his age and not his status.[94] Thus, Paulus was a comparatively young man at the time of his death and it is therefore probable that he died unexpectedly and without having nominated a successor. In the absence of a nominated successor, the situation became more fluid than was normal. Dissent arose as various local families put forward candidates and, interestingly, none of the candidates seem to have been clergymen; all were secular nobles. Sidonius' account stresses the bribery that was at work, with one candidate promising to hand over church lands to his supporters and another trying to buy support with extravagant hospitality. These two candidates, seeing the opportunity posed by the death of Paulus and the momentary political weakness of his family, were trying to use material wealth to peel away local allies of Paulus' family (and thus of the first candidate). In this way, one can see that unity amongst local aristocrats was fragile, that it was purchased with episcopal largesse and that it could be trumped by ambition.

In Chalon, unity was replaced by internal conflict as local nobles saw a chance to seize leadership of the community and control of the church's wealth. Lesser families, who might not have the influence needed to put forward a candidate of their own, would still profit by selling their support to one of the candidates. This strife was very likely why Sidonius absolved himself of responsibility for the election's result. He did not wish to be seen as taking the side of one faction against another. It is also the reason why his colleagues, Patiens and Euphronius, opted to set aside the declared candidates and pick the priest Iohannes, perhaps reasoning that a bishop with no local support was a safer option than a bishop who was actively opposed by large swathes of the regional aristocratic establishment.

More importantly, the first candidate's failure to secure the see for his family explains why so many clerics from Chalon ended up in the Arlesian church, where they took control of the most important ecclesiastical office in late antique Gaul. The migration of *concives* from Chalon-sur-Saône to Arles very likely goes back to this election and the anonymous first candidate is, again,

---

94   Cf. Duchesne 1900, 2, 192.

very likely to have been a kinsman of Caesarius and Aeonius. Assuming that their family had controlled the see of Chalon for at least two generations,[95] the election of Iohannes would have constituted a serious blow to the family's fortunes and influence in the region, particularly if the passions aroused by the election led to ongoing conflict. This may have precipitated a move southwards to Arles by young and ambitious family members looking for an ecclesiastical career. It is even possible that some members of the family were already present in Arles, that there was a subsidiary branch who had sought careers there (perhaps because the Arlesian church, being larger, could offer more opportunities).

One of the more significant aspects of the election at Chalon is that it demonstrates again that kinship was not always a trump card. The anonymous first candidate felt entitled to an office left vacant by the death of a relative. While this was common practice in fifth and sixth century Gaul, the bitter conflict that arose between local families for control of the see forced the church to terminate both his candidacy and his family's ownership of the local episcopate. In a sense, the election at Chalon shows not merely the failure of kinship within an ecclesiastical setting but the outcome of internecine conflict between the local Roman elites.

Conclusion

Sidonius belonged to the last generation of Gallic nobles for whom the term "Roman" encompassed a political, as well as cultural, identity; yet, before the end of his life, he saw the last Western emperor deposed and his home city ceded to the Visigoths, leading him to lament "our servitude has been made the price of other people's safety".[96] For those who came after and had to carve out a place in a barbarian-ruled world, the Roman empire was a distant memory. At a cultural and linguistic level, Rome continued to unite the provincial elites of Gaul, but politically they were

---

95   Unfortunately, we have no record of the bishops before Paulus; see Duchesne 1900, 2, 190 ff.

96   Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae*, 7, 7, 2: *facta est servitas nostra pretium securitatis alienae*.

fragmented both by the borders of barbarian *regna* and by a lack of opportunities and a surfeit of competitors. Within the confines of the barbarian kingdoms, their identity underwent a dramatic change and became ever more parochial, ever more focused on the local to the exclusion of all else, until eventually *civitas* and family became the foundations of their identity and their ambitions.

This combination of kinship and localism created episcopal dynasties who were bound to local elites by marriage and patronage. When Avitus became bishop of Vienne, the city's powerful families welcomed him because he was one of them and they knew that patronage, offices and wealth would be forthcoming, as they had under his father. That was the price of their ongoing support for his family and Avitus would gladly pay it. Yet competition for power was intense enough to cause conflict within communities. Chalon and Bourges are illustrative of this. When a family was seen as being unable or unprepared to defend its hold on a powerful office (rightly in the case of Chalon, wrongly in the case of Bourges), the elite would fragment as old loyalties died and new ones were bought and sold. Even Caesarius' otherwise-inexplicable rise included a fracturing of the Arlesian nobility as the powerful Firmini entered into an alliance which allowed a foreign family to take the see in return for future considerations. Ambition fractured the local elites. Only family were immune to this, making kinship the bedrock for anyone seeking to acquire and control official power in post–Roman Gaul.

References

Amory, Patrick. 1994. "Names, ethnic identity and community in fifth and sixth-century Burgundy", *Viator* 25: 1–30.

Arnold, Jonathan J. 2014. *Theoderic and the Roman Imperial Restoration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bailey, Lisa K. 2010. *Christianity's Quiet Success: the Eusebius Gallicanus Sermon Collections and the Power of the Church in Late Antique Gaul*. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.

Barnwell, P. S. 1992. *Emperor, Prefects and Kings: the Roman West, 395–565*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Bartlett, Richard. 2001. "Aristocracy and Asceticism: the Letters of Ennodius and the Gallic and Italian Churches". In *Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul: Revisiting the Sources*, edited by Ralph W. Mathisen and Danuta Shanzer, 201-216. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing House.

Beck, Henry G. J. 1950. *The Pastoral Care of Souls in South-East France during the Sixth Century*. Romae: Apud Aedes Universitatis Gregorianae.

Brown, Peter. 1981. *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Callow, Chris and Harlow, Mary. 2012. "Left–Over Romans: the Life Course in the Late Antique West". In *Families in the Imperial and Late Antique West*, edited by Mary Harlow and Lena Larsson Lovén, 221–237. London, New York: Continuum

Drinkwater, J. F. 1989. "Gallic Attitudes to the Roman Empire in the Fourth Century: Continuity or Change?". In *Labor Omnibus Unus. Gerold Walser zum 70. Geburtstag*, edited by Heinz Herzig and Regula Frei–Stobla, 136–153. Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag.

Duchesne, Louis. 1894-1900. *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, 2 vol. Paris: Fontemoing et Cie.

Dunn, Geoffrey. 2011. "Canonical Legislation on the Ordination of Bishops: Innocent I's Letter to Victricius of Rouen". In *Episcopal Elections in Late Antiquity*, edited by John Leemans, Peter van Nuffelen and Carla Nicolaye, 145–166. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Engel, Arthur and Serrure, Raymond. 1964. *Traité Numismatique du Moyen Âge: Depuis la Chute de l'Empire Romain d'Occident jusqu' á la Fin de l' Époque Carolingienne*. Bologna: Arnaldo Forni.

Frend, W. H. C. 1969. "Paulinus of Nola and the Last Century of the Western Empire". *Journal of Roman Studies* 59: 1–11.

Fusconi, Gian Michele. 1963. "Cipriano", *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* vol. 3, cols. 399–421.

Roma: Istituto Giovanni XXIII nella Pontificia Università lateranense.

Gaudemet, Jean. 1958. *L'Église dans l'Empire Romain.* Paris: Sirey.

Geary, Patrick J. 1988. *Before France and Germany: the Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World*. Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press.

Grey, Cameron. 2011. *Constructing Communities in the Late Roman Countryside*. Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press.

Halsall, Guy. 2013. *Worlds of Arthur: Facts and Fictions of the Dark Ages.* Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press.

Harries, Jill. 1994. *Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome*. Oxford: Claredon Press.

Harries, Jill. 2000. "Legal Culture and Identity in the Fifth-Century West". In *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity*, edited by Stephen Mitchell and Geoffrey Greatrex, 45–58. London: Duckworth.

Heather, Peter J. 1994. "Literacy and Power in the Migration Period". In *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*, edited by Alan Bowman and Greg Woolf, 177–197. Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press.

Heather, Peter J. 2000. "The Western Empire, 425–476". In *The Cambridge Ancient History XIV*, edited by Averil Cameron, Michael Whitby and Bryan Ward-Perkins, 1–32. Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press.

Heather, Peter J. 2009. "Why Did the Barbarian Cross the Rhine?", *Journal of Late Antiquity* 2, 1: 3–29.

Heather, Peter J. 2013. "410 and the End of Civilisation". In *The Sack of Rome in 410 AD: The Event, Its Context and Its Impact*, edited by Johannes Lipps, Carlos Machado and Philipp von Rummel, 433–448. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag.

Heinzelmann, Martin. 1975. "L'Aristocratie et les Évêchés entre Loire et Rhin jusqu'à la Fin du VIIe Siècle", *Revue d'histoire de l'église de France* 62: 75–90.

Heinzelmann, Martin. 2001. *Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century*.

Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press.

Jahn, Albert. 1874. *Die Geschichte der Burgundionen und Burgundiens bis zum Ende der I. Dynastie*. Halle: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses.

Jones, A. H. M. 1964. *The Later Roman Empire*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Jones, Allen E. 2009. *Social Mobility in Late Antique Gaul: Strategies and Opportunities for the Non–Elite*. Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kelly, Christopher. 2006. *Ruling the Later Roman Empire*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Klingshirn, William E. 1994. *Caesarius of Arles: the Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul*. Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lévi, I. 1895. ”Saint Césaire et les Juifs d'Arles”, *Revue des études juives* 30: 295–298.

Lewis, Catrin M. 2000. "Gallic Identity and the Gallic *civitas* from Caesar to Gregory of Tours". In *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity*, edited by Stephen Mitchell and Geoffrey Greatrex, 69–82. London: Duckworth

Leyser, Conrad. 1999. '"This sainted isle": Panegyric, Nostalgia, and the Invention of Lerinian Monasticism". In *The Limits of Ancient Christianity*, edited by William E. Klingshirn and Mark Vessey, 188–214. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Liebeschuetz, J. H. W. G. 2001. *Decline and Fall of the Roman City*. Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press

Marcone, Arnaldo. 1998. "Late Roman Social Relations", in *The Cambridge Ancient History XIII*, edited by Averil Cameron, Michael Whitby and Bryan Ward-Perkins, 338–370. Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mathisen, Ralph W. 1989. *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul*. Washington: Catholic University of America Press.

Mathisen, Ralph W. 1993. *Roman Aristocrats in Barbarian Gaul: Strategies for Survival in an Age of Transition.* Austin TX: University of Texas Press.

Pohl, Walter. 2013. "410 and the Transformation of the Roman World". In *The Sack of Rome in 410 AD: The Event, Its Context and Its Impact* edited by Johannes Lipps, Carlos Machado and Philipp von Rummel, 449-456. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag.

Rapp, Claudia. 2005 *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: the Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Tradition.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Rousseau, P. 2000. "Monasticism". In *The Cambridge Ancient History XIV*, edited by Averil Cameron, Michael Whitby and Bryan Ward-Perkins, 745–780. Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press.

Salzman, Michele Renee. 2000. *The Making of a Christian Aristocracy: Social and Religious Change in the Western Roman Empire*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Shanzer, Danuta and Wood, I. N. 2002. *Avitus of Vienne: Letters and Selected Prose*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Stevens, Courtenay Edward. 1993. *Sidonius Apollinaris and His Age*. Oxford: Claredon Press.

Stroheker, Karl Friedrich. 1948 *Der Senatorische Adel im Spätantiken Gallien*. Tübingen: Alma Mater Verlag.

Teitler, H. C. 1992. "Un–Roman Activities in Late Antique Gaul: the Cases of Arvandus and Seronatus". In *Fifth-Century Gaul: a Crisis of Identity?*, edited by J. F. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton, 309-317. Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press.

Van Nuffelen, Peter. 2011. "Episcopal Elections in Late Antiquity: Structures and Perspectives". In *Episcopal Elections in Late Antiquity*, edited by John Leemans, Peter van Nuffelen and Carla Nicolaye, 1–22. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Viard, Paul. 1964. "Firmino". In *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, cols. 872–873. Roma: Istituto Giovanni XXIII nella Pontificia Università lateranense.

Wallace-Hadrill, J. M. 1967. *The Barbarian West*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Ward-Perkins, Bryan. 2005. *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization.* Oxford – New

York: Oxford University Press.

Whitby, Michael. 2000. "Armies and Society in the Later Roman World". In *The Cambridge Ancient History XIV*, edited by Averil Cameron, Michael Whitby and Bryan Ward-Perkins, 469–496. Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wood, Ian N. 1992. "Continuity or Calamity?: the constraints of literary models". In *Fifth-Century Gaul: a Crisis of Identity?*, edited by J. F. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton, 9–18. Cambridge – New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wood, Ian N. 2002. "*Gentes*, kings and kingdoms – the emergence of states: the Gibichungs". In *Regna and gentes : the relationship between late antique and early medieval peoples and kingdoms in the transformation of the Roman world*, edited by Hans-Werner Goetz, Jörg Jarnut and Walter Pohl, 243–269. Leiden – Boston: Brill.