THE ROLE OF ST MARTIN OF BRAGA
IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECCLESIASTICAL ATTITUDES
TOWARD ALTERNATIVE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES
IN 6th CENTURY GAUL AND NORTHERN IBERIA

by

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B.A., The University of British Columbia, 1995

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Religious Studies)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standards

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

December 1997

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to determine the role played by St Martin, bishop of Braga, in the development of ecclesiastical attitudes toward alternative religious practices and beliefs during the course of the 6th century. In recent years, several scholars, most notably Alberto Ferreiro and E. Kim Follis, have credited Martin with a greater degree of leniency toward irregular religious activities than the other bishops of his day, and both of these writers have sought to uncover the source of this tolerant attitude. In a more recent work, however, Ferreiro has stated that although he had once argued in favour of Martin’s ‘tolerance,’ his earlier views might have to be qualified. Both Ferreiro and Follis provide us with a comprehensive overview of both Martin’s life and the circumstances surrounding his work, and together they will serve as a point of entry for this study.

Ferreiro is a social historian, and Follis approaches the material from the perspective of the history of theology. By contrast, I shall apply a textual-historical method to the written evidence, examining it in terms of its traditional context, its cultural milieu and its intended audiences. In order to evaluate the importance of Martin, I shall consider at his work in the larger framework of the entire century, first giving his own writing a careful reading, and then comparing his work with that of two other better-known ecclesiastical voices: Caesarius, bishop of Arles, whose writings span several decades at the beginning of the 6th century, and Gregory, bishop of Tours, who wrote in the generation following Martin. In the course of this paper, I shall argue that Martin’s ‘leniency’ or
'tolerance' has been overstated, and that, at least in this matter, Martin's position does not differ significantly from that of Caesarius.

A number of 20th century writers, from Stephen McKenna in the 1930s to Joyce Salisbury in the 1980s, appear confident that compilations made of those religious activities which are inveighed against as being 'rustic' or 'pagan' by our 6th century bishops can be relied upon to mirror the religious beliefs and practices of the peasants and other indigenous peoples of Gaul and Northern Iberia. A close reading of the material at hand will reveal what is perhaps an insufficiently nuanced interpretation by these scholars of the way in which paganus and rusticus are used in their original context.

Rather than viewing the writings of the 6th century as a continuous polemic against the various 'survivals' of traditional folk magic and pre-Christian festive behaviour, we shall come, at the end of this paper, to regard the works of these bishops as steps along the pathway to accommodation and assimilation. It is my thesis that Martin modified, with considerable tact and discretion, the more militant, and monastically oriented, position taken earlier in the 6th century, notably by Caesarius of Arles, in a way that not only recognized and accommodated the needs of the laity more effectively, but also opened up the possibility of a broader, more expansive version of Christianity to emerge, as it did later in the century under Gregory of Tours. It is Martin's style, I shall maintain, that sets him apart, and I shall demonstrate that Martin's style is predicated by the cosmopolitan nature of his experiential and educational background.
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# ABBREVIATIONS

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<td>Sulpicius Severus. <em>Life of St Martin of Tours</em></td>
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<td>Martin of Braga <em>De correctione rusticorum</em></td>
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<td>1Braga</td>
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Introduction

This thesis will concern itself with the writings of three bishops who flourished in 6th century Gaul and Northern Iberia: Caesarius of Arles (c470-542), Martin of Braga (c520-580), and Gregory of Tours (c539-594). Both Caesarius and Gregory left a large corpus of work, which has in turn generated a considerable amount of scholarship. In contrast, we have only a small number of Martin’s writings, but in recent years there has been growing academic interest in both his writings and his pastoral activities.

Martin is credited by several modern scholars for displaying a more lenient attitude toward irregular religious activities than did the other bishops of his century. Alberto Ferreiro, of the Department of History at Seattle Pacific University, states that Martin’s writings were characterized “by the absence of any suggestions that involve harsh measures against those who perform pagan practices, [unlike] some of his contemporaries, such as Caesarius of Arles, Eligius [of Noyon, c590-660], and the Visigothic kings, [who] adopted stern measures.”

Ferreiro goes on to cite Martin’s respect for the moral philosophy of classical writers such as Seneca, and argues convincingly that Martin was more patient with the misbehaviour of his errant parishioners than were his peers because of

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the broadening effects of his classical education.² According to Kim Follis, in his MA thesis here at UBC: “St Martin of Braga: Sources for his Tolerance toward the Rustici in Sixth Century Galicia,” the tone of Martin’s writings “is pastoral rather than legislative.”³ Follis maintains that what set Martin apart from his fellow bishops in the West was the training in pastoral care, which he received among the Desert Fathers in Egypt, as well as his commitment to the theological doctrines of Origenism. Both Ferreiro’s article and Follis’ thesis were extremely useful in the preparation of this paper and served as a point of entry into the writings of Martin of Braga. Together they provide us with a comprehensive overview, both of Martin’s life and the circumstances surrounding his work, in the context of the 6th century.⁴

Both Ferreiro and Follis presuppose Martin’s toleration and seek to uncover its sources. By contrast, I shall apply a somewhat different method to the available material in an attempt to determine what Martin’s role in the development of 6th century Christian thinking might actually have been. It is my thesis that Martin modified, with care and tact, the more militant position taken earlier in the 6th century, notably by Caesarius, bishop of Arles, in a way that not only recognized and accommodated the needs of the laity more effectively, but

² See Ferreiro 1893:381: “Martin's interest in the classics ... does reveal that he held a tolerant attitude toward pagan authors. ... [Because of this] tolerant attitude toward pagan authors ... it could be that his tolerance found expression with regard to unbelievers.”

³ See Follis 1992:65. See also 1992:68: “Rather than threatening the fallen with punishment or excommunication, Martin leaves the issue at the discretion of the rustici to reflect upon his words and then to act accordingly.”

⁴ Ferreiro and Follis are not alone in their assumption that Martin played a distinctive role in the episcopal history of the 6th century. See J.N. Hillgarth, Christianity and Paganism, 350-750 (Philadelphia: U. of Penna. Press, 1986), 53: Martin is “exceptional in not recommending the use of force against the recalcitrant pagan or his shrine.” See also Jeffrey Richards, Consul of God: The Life and Times of Gregory the Great (London: Routledge, 1980), 19: “Opinion on how to deal with the recalcitrant peasants varies. St Caesarius of Arles wanted to beat it out of them ... St Martin of Braga believed in the use of persuasion and reasoned argument to win them over.”
also opened up the possibility of a broader, more expansive version of Christianity to emerge, as it did later in the century under Gregory, bishop of Tours. In the course of this paper, I shall argue that Martin’s ‘leniency’ or ‘tolerance’ have been overstated, and that in this matter Martin does not differ significantly from Caesarius. It is Martin’s style, I shall maintain, that sets him apart, and I shall demonstrate that Martin’s style is predicated by the cosmopolitan nature of his education. I shall therefore find myself in agreement with both Ferreiro and Follis on this point: Martin’s extensive education — classical, pastoral and patristic — shaped his implied criticism of Caesarius and laid the groundwork for Gregory’s assimilationist agenda.

We shall begin by examining in detail one of Martin’s few surviving works, *De correctione rusticorum*, commonly translated as ‘Reforming the Rustics,’ and the circumstances surrounding its writing. We shall then contrast Martin’s approach to the issues at hand with the rejection and condemnation of irregular expressions of piety which are found in the earlier works of Caesarius of Arles. Since Gregory of Tours, writing after Martin, expanded the purview of Christianity to include many of these popular activities, we shall ask if Martin’s writings may have served as some kind of a link between the contrasting positions taken by Caesarius and Gregory. In the course of this process, we shall examine the nature of alternative patterns of religious belief and behaviour in 6th century Gaul and Northern Iberia. We shall be paying particular attention to the prevalent opinions held by those in ecclesiastical authority concerning the nature

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5 The complete works of Martin in Latin are found in *Martini episcopi Bracarensis Opera Omnia*, C W Barlow, ed. (Papers and Monographs of the American Academy in Rome, 12 New Haven: Yale UP, 1950). We will be referring to two English sources in this chapter: our primary translation is by C W Barlow, *Iberian Fathers*, vol 1, *Martin of Braga (Fathers of the Church Series*, vol. 62, Washington DC, 1969), 71-85; we will also occasionally refer to the translation by Hillgarth (1986:57-64).
of these activities, particularly the way these views have evolved and changed over time.

This topic merits further consideration for a variety of reasons. Interest in the relationship between established ecclesiastical authorities and local populations is growing, and a more critical attitude has developed toward the interpretation of related surviving texts. In addition to the writings of Ferreiro and Follis, which provide a point of departure for this thesis, the works of a number of other authors will also be brought to bear on the issues involved. Due, however, to the somewhat fragmented state of modern scholarship on 6th century Iberia and Gaul we shall provide appropriate reviews of this secondary literature as it appears in the text.

Methodology

Using a textual-historical method, we shall carefully examine the written evidence — sermons, letters, canons, and hagiographic writings — in light of their intended audience, their traditional context, and their cultural milieu. For each of the three authors, we shall begin with an historical overview, and work to situate each of them in a diachronic context. Further, it is important for the development of this thesis for us to acknowledge that each of the genres listed above has a characteristic agenda which implies a distinctive relationship between the author and the audience, and the identity of the audience must be determined with real care. We shall keep in mind that the study of textual evidence involves more than a perusal of the printed page. As we shall examine it, ‘text’ is a dynamic concept that includes both the written word and the context in which it was produced,

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6 This is basically the same methodology which Follis applied to the material, but where he was looking at the history of theology, we will be looking at cultural history.
distributed and read. We shall assume that the text is signaling to us, but that the identification of a living environment is required in order for us to understand these signals. My task will be to unpack the text as well as its context in order to reveal both the author and his audience so that the text may be appreciated and understood. This paper shall examine the background of the author, his objectives and his motives, his resources and his patterns of judgment.

In order to determine what role Martin of Braga may have played in the development of 6th century episcopal attitudes toward irregular religious beliefs and practices, we shall begin this thesis with an examination of Martin’s De correctione rusticorum, its content, context, cultural milieu and, particularly, its intended audience. As we shall see, Martin of Braga may have been writing in the geographic isolation of the remote corner of northwestern Iberia but, because of his unique background, he was operating from directly within the cultural and theological mainstream of 6th century Christianity, both East and West. Among the many possible resources which Martin may have brought with him to his Iberian see were the sermons of Caesarius of Arles. We shall devote a section to Caesarius’ writings as the possible source for many of Martin’s complaints about alternative religious practices which were taking place about the fringes of ecclesiastical authority. We shall also use Caesarius’ writings as a benchmark to determine how Martin’s proposed solutions to these problems may have differed from those of Caesarius. In the final section we shall examine the writings of Gregory of Tours. Gregory addressed many of the same issues as Caesarius and Martin, but his proposed methods for dealing with the problem of alternative religiosity were considerably different and his writings can be seen as playing an important role in the subsequent development of the western Church. In
conclusion we hope to be able to cast new light on the part Martin may have played in the developmental history of ecclesiastical attitudes toward pre- and non-Christian activities during the century under consideration.

**Definition of terms**

Although we shall be dependent on conventions established by social historians of the Late Antique and Early Visigothic periods for clarification of any subtlety involved in the meaning of Latin terms, we shall remain aware that little is standardized for this period. Moreover, many of these terms have developed meanings, in modern popular usage, which only began to emerge in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. We need to exercise particular caution to avoid reading these familiar definitions back onto phenomena which occurred in a completely different time frame. In order to proceed with our examination of the attitudes of Martin, Caesarius and Gregory toward the behaviour of their parishioners, let us now develop working definitions for two of the words used in this regard by commentators, both ancient and modern. The terms we shall try to define in their 6th century context are *rusticus* and *paganus*.

*De correctione rusticorum* does not appear to have been the original title of Martin’s work, but was derived from a passage in the introductory chapter in which Martin offers his work for the chastisement of the rustics (*castigatione rusticorum*). In the next sentence, Martin speaks of offering the rustics ‘food seasoned with rustic speech’ (*cibum rusticis rustico sermone condire*). Apart from these examples, the word *rusticus* appears in the text on only two
occasions. Subsequent to the first chapter, Martin advises his suffragan bishop Polemius to condemn the beliefs and practices of those ‘ignorant men’ (DCR 7: *ignaros homines*), who after the Flood regressed to the worship of nature and who (DCR 8: *hominès ignorantes*) do not know God but offer sacrifice to streams, fountains and forests; the ‘infidels’ (DCR 8: *hominès infideles*) and ‘foolish men’ (DCR 9: *hominibus stultis*), who fail to keep the Lord’s Day but rather offer honour instead to days named after Jupiter, Mercury and Saturn; the ‘unfortunate men’ (DCR 12: *infelices homines*) who are deluded by auguries, divinations and omens; and the ‘wretched men’ (DCR 13: *miseros homines*) who are so deceived by the devil and his wicked angels that they worship them rather than their Creator. But only twice does Martin refer to ‘ignorant rustics.’ In the first instance (DCR 8: *ignorantes rustici*) these unfortunates worship demons as gods under the Roman names of Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Venus, Mars and Mercury; in the second (DCR 10: *ignorantibus et rusticis*) they celebrate the Roman new year on the kalends of January. It should be noted that in neither of these latter cases do the condemned practices appear ‘rustic’ in the sense of being peculiar to an indigenous or rural religiosity, but seem rather to be of distinctly Roman provenance.

*The Oxford Latin Dictionary* (1982) offers us seven definitions for *rusticus*. The first four, as expected, refer to country-dwellers, but the final three are concerned with ignorance and a lack of sophistication and wisdom. Follis observes that Martin, in both this work and in Martin’s translation of the *Sayings*

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8 Sources cited for these usages are mainly from the 1st century BCE and the 1st and 2nd century CE, including Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, Seneca, Juvenal and Apuleius.
of the Fathers, postulates ignorance of God as the primary source of error, and we have already noticed above that the word ignaros is used twice in the DCR.

In a similar manner, in the *De catechizandis rudibus* of St Augustine, a work which both Ferreiro and Follis have identified as being similar in both structure and content to Martin’s *De correctione rusticorum*, the term rudis is used to describe a cognitively unaware catechant: one who may be willing to be educated but for the time being occupies a state of ignorance. It may be tempting to contend, as do so many of our secondary sources, that the ‘rustics’ of *De correctione rusticorum* represent the rural underclass of Galician Iberia, but in the context of this text Martin’s rustici, like the rudes of Augustine, appear to be those who are mainly in need of education. It is my opinion that the *DCR*, like Augustine’s treatise, clearly refers to the sort of rusticus that is caused by ignorance or naiveté, rather than a social, racial or demographic condition.

Defining rusticua thus, however, requires us to consider more carefully the meaning of the term paganus. In the most superficial sense, these two words are synonymous and both may be translated as ‘country dweller’ or ‘peasant.’ Much of 19th and 20th century literature has assumed that because the Christian religion was slow to reach the countryside, the word for peasant had taken on, at a time when the cities were completely Christianized, the more modern meaning of ‘pagan.’ But from the mid-4th century onwards, as we shall see, Late Antiquity was marked by a resistance to Christianity that originated among the nobility and the world of the academies. It seems therefore most unlikely that even the most

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9 See Follis 1992:68: “Ignorance causes man to be easily distracted, and the devil and demons take advantage of this condition.”

10 In the *DCR*, Martin uses the word paganus only twice. Certain activities intended to bring protection and prosperity are ‘pagan practices’ (*DCR* 11: omnes paganorum), and those who honour the day of Jupiter are pagans (*DCR* 18: pagani).
optimistic Christian would have actually thought of paganism as a religion exclusively of the countryfolk.

Many classical authors\(^{11}\) use *paganus* in the sense of ‘civilian’ as opposed to ‘military.’ According to Christine Mohrmann,\(^{12}\) the *pagani* being referred to by these writers were the private individuals who, under the Empire, would have been inferior to the privileged members of the military and the functionaries of government. Fox\(^{13}\) tells us that the *pagani* were those who had not enlisted as soldiers of Christ against the powers of Satan. This popular use of the word, apparently, evolved among Christian writers in the early centuries to distinguish the *pagani* from members of the *militia Christi*, but according to Mohrmann this usage tends to disappear by the 4th century. By this time, *paganus* is said simply to mean someone who is not (yet) baptized and, in several usages which she cites, the word has no trace of any element of polemic or contempt, but appears as a thoroughly objective term. The word *paganus*, therefore, may be seen to have had a history of colloquial usage which, by the time it settled down in the early 5th century as the term by which Christians designated those who were not members of their own religion, had taken on the relatively non-pejorative meaning of *alieni a civitate dei*. In fact, many of the modern writers referred to in this thesis, particularly Markus, Flint and Klingshirn (see below), assume this usage as a matter of course.\(^{14}\) To me, this would seem a more likely meaning for

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\(^{11}\) Once again, the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* supplies us with examples of this usage from Pliny, Tacitus and Suetonius, while Professor Mohrmann cites Juvenal and Tertullian as well.


\(^{14}\) See Markus 1990:134: “The trichotomy which had prevailed before the crises [of the late 4th century] — of Christian (or sacred), secular (neutral, civic), pagan (profane) —
the word in our 6th century sources than the assumption made by authors such as McKenna and Salisbury (see also below), as well as by Follis, that *pagani* is being used exclusively in reference to members of a rural underclass.

It is more than a little interesting to note that the Greek word for an ordinary private person, one who does not belong to a defined group, is ['idiotes]. In my opinion, this example is invaluable in demonstrating the ease with which an ancient word like *paganus* that is neutral, or very nearly so, may take on a specifically pejorative meaning over the centuries that completely masks its original usage and may lead the incautious into error. In the case of the word *rusticus*, the opposite process may have occurred and a word which originally had a variety of meanings — including the relatively deprecatory ones of ‘naïve’ or ‘ignorant’ — is now assumed by many to mean only ‘rustic’ or ‘rural.’ If we decide, as I believe the evidence before us suggests is likely, that the *pagani* were simply the non-Christians of the day, and that Martin is using the *rustici* as a term of disapprobation for those who are uncultured, unsophisticated or simply under-educated, then I believe that the texts before us may be read in a more coherent and productive fashion.

**Roman and non-Roman paganism**

Used in the fashion assumed above, ‘paganism’ would encompass both the purported magical folk practices of Gaul and Galicia’s native population and the traditional pre-Constantinian religious activities of the Roman, Hispano-Roman and Gallo-Roman aristocracy, without necessarily implying that they need vanished, to be replaced by a simpler dichotomy: sacred and profane, or, simply, ‘Christian’ and ‘pagan.’
be connected to each other. Salisbury\(^{15}\) takes a tentative step in this direction when she criticizes McKenna\(^{16}\) for failing to place rustic magical practices in a cultural context, but rather for seeing them "as the irrelevant survivals of a previous era."

There is considerable physical evidence of pre-Roman religious practice in Spain but, according to Curchin,\(^{17}\) the religious beliefs and activities of the Galician underclasses are difficult to determine from the physical evidence for two reasons: because the preponderance of these materials come from sites in Andalusia and Catalonia, and because there was a tendency for monuments and other surviving artifacts to be produced by members of the upper classes. Both

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\(^{15}\) Joyce E. Salisbury, *Iberian Popular Religion, 600 BC to 700 AD: Celts, Romans and Visigoths* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1985) 4. It is hard for me not to be attracted to Salisbury's work. For one thing, she promises to use archaeological evidence and an anthropological methodology as correctives to the literary historical sources. Furthermore, a large part of her thesis centers around the idea that the Christianization of rural Iberia consisted of the church's accommodating indigenous religious views as much as the society's adopting Christian views, and she also makes the point that the church's official reaction to the existence of charismatic leaders among the rural populations resulted in the rise of monasteries and veneration of saints. Unfortunately, the Iberian society which Salisbury presents to us consists only of rulers and peasants, the clergy being allied with the rulers in pursuit of power and uniformity. Left to their own spiritual devices, as it were, the underclasses are represented as satisfying their religious needs with the remnants of Celtic pagan ways. The reductionism of this picture is especially surprising given the amount of existing relevant scholarship, little of which has informed the analysis in this book. Salisbury appears to be writing for special interests in the academic community and has impressed a model borrowed from that sector on the material in an attempt to reconstruct it. On the other hand, there is a great deal of valuable material in this book, so a reader should proceed with great care in order to make use of this attractive, if problematic, source.

\(^{16}\) Stephen McKenna, *Paganism and Pagan Survivals in Spain up to the Fall of the Visigothic Kingdom* (New York: Paulist Press, 1938). McKenna has been praised for his ingenuity in gathering the fragments of source materials and for the industriousness he demonstrates in his quest to document pagan survivals. One of the chief difficulties, however, in the investigation of pagan survivals arises from the scantiness and obscurity of the evidence. McKenna, of course, wrote some time before the 19th century notion of pagan survivals had itself fallen into serious disrepute. Unfortunately, many of the writers in this field often quote from McKenna without much in the way of either judicious selectivity or a clear understanding of the agenda which he brings to his research. This landmark work is an invaluable asset to the student of Gothic Iberia, especially if the reader is aware of the book's difficulties and is prepared to compensate for them.

McKenna (1938:10) and Hillgarth (1980:11) point out that none of the large numbers of inscriptions and icons found in northwestern Iberia in themselves furnish us with any details about who these deities might have been or what cult might have been paid them, and McKenna admits that this lack of information creates “some difficult problems” (1938:5). For one thing, “it is unclear whether these are all separate deities or whether the same god was worshipped in different places under different names or aspects” (Curchin 1991:157). Another problem is the preponderance of Roman names and images. Follis suggests that the religious practices of Iberia’s successive invaders were layered on top of native religion, and that much of the later conflation between Roman and indigenous beliefs may have been caused by centuries of syncretism (1992:27-28), and this certainly may have been the case. There may well have been “a perception that the gods of the conqueror were more potent or had stronger magic than those of the vanquished,” but what could appear to be the wholesale abandonment of native deities might not be entirely sincere or deep-seated. Roman theonyms may mask non-Roman deities: “the god Mars ... is more likely the perpetuation of a Celtic war god than a representative of Rome ... indigenous mother goddesses may lurk behind the worship of Juno, Diana and Venus” (Curchin 1991:156). Furthermore, what some writers refer to confidently as deities appear to be spirits of lesser

18 Follis credits the Phoenicians and Carthaginians for introducing the worship of Baal in southern Iberia, and the Greeks for establishing the cult of Artemis in the Northeast. Furthermore, he tells us that an altar has been discovered near Braga containing the names of more than 20 Graeco-Roman deities.

19 Curchin 1991:155. See also 1991:156, wherein Curchin refers to: “...theonyms, where the Roman name often masks a non-Roman deity ... Indigenous mother goddesses may lurk behind the worship of Juno, Diana and Venus ... the god Mars ... is more likely the perpetuation of a Celtic war god than a representative of Rome ... Roman gods bearing an indigenous surname, epithet or toponym ... are patently just native gods in Roman guise.” “... one may question whether the sculptor’s primary concern in copying these famous pieces was religious rather than artistic. Surely decor, rather than worship, invited the numerous representations of deities and mythological characters ...”
import. When McKenna states that an inscription was found “to the god Durius, who presided probably over the river of this same name” (1938:7), I have to wonder if this Durius was the name of a god in the same sense as Jupiter or Jehovah were the names of gods, if it was a name given to of the nominal spirit of the river.20

McKenna remarks with some astonishment that many of the superstitious practices censured by Martin were found to be identical among the Romans, the Goths and the indigenous Hispanic cultures (1938:87). He also marvels at the similarity of pagan practices in northwestern Iberia with those in southeastern Gaul, crediting the possibility of coincidence, rather than potential errors in the reporting procedures (1938:89-90). In a similar manner, Follis concludes that the common catalogue of rustic practices found in the works of both Martin of Braga and Caesarius of Arles “indicates that Martin probably had access to Caesarius’ sermons” (1992:62). One possible explanation is that all of these regions shared religious elements derived from a common Indo-European heritage.21 Another possibility, of course, is that both Martin and Caesarius were projecting traditional Roman literary and civic paganism, the details of which they both had thorough knowledge, onto the practices of their parishioners.22

20 Again, see Curchin 1991:159: “A large number of indigenous theonyms, many of them occurring only once, probably represent local genii rather than major gods. Many of these were worshipped as protective spirits, similar to the Roman Lares or Genius.”

21 See the works of Georges Dumézil, particularly Camillus: A Study of Indo-European Religion as Roman History; U. Strutynski, ed. and intro. (Berkeley: UC Press, 1980). It is generally acknowledged that Dumézil must be taken with a grain of salt because of his tendency to reduce mythological material from many diverse cultures to fit his own patterns. By the same token, few scholars working in this area have the capability that he does to work with Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, etc. Therefore, Dumézil’s theory of common Indo-European origins must be taken into account, at least in passing.

22 For example, it appears from the language of his text that Caesarius of Arles was dependent on second-hand sources for information about rural practices: See the use of audivimus (Serm. 13.5; 53.1), multorum relatione (Serm. 54.1; 184.5), and hoc pervenit ad me (Serm. 54.6).
Conclusions

The nature and location of the physical evidence makes it difficult for us to determine with any degree of confidence what the religious beliefs and practices of the original inhabitants of Gaul and northern Iberia might have been. Syncretism, especially as it effects the images and names of deities, also makes separating the Roman from the Celtic very problematic. Furthermore, the written evidence at hand does less to reveal the details of indigenous religion than has previously been assumed. As we have seen demonstrated above, neither 

\textit{paganus} or \textit{rusticus} necessarily imply that the people or practices being referred to are rural in nature. In the context of the texts we are examining, \textit{paganus} refers to non-Christian beliefs and practices, and \textit{rusticus} means uncultured, unsophisticated or just uneducated, and as such is similar to Augustine's \textit{rudes}. The fact that Martin uses the terms \textit{rustici} and \textit{pagani} to refer to those who celebrate Roman holidays and use the names of Roman gods for the days of the week makes it unlikely that he is referring exclusively to the practices of a non-Roman rural underclass.
Martin of Braga

In the previous section, I set forth the argument that Martin is distinguished by both his extensive and cosmopolitan education and his unique approach to the issues at hand. It was also demonstrated, through a nuanced view of the language involved, that the written works we shall be examining are not exclusively concerned with the beliefs and practices of a rural underclass. In this section, Martin will be presented as an accomplished man of letters, and his pastoral agenda will be discussed in some detail. Martin’s writing will be analyzed, particularly in terms of its historical context, its cultural milieu and its intended audience. Comparisons between Martin and Caesarius, which are very important to the development of my thesis, will wait until the end of the following section.

Martin of Pannonia, bishop of Braga (c520-580), appears to have been an unusually complex person, and one who brought a unique and interesting set of resources to his 6th century metropolitan see in the Iberian province of Galicia. Among these resources were his place of birth, his ecclesiastical training, his Origenist leanings, and his classical scholarship. We shall speak in greater detail below of Martin’s many unique talents, but the most distinctive of these abilities — one which is most often mentioned by both ancient and modern historians, and which relates most directly to our study of this document — is his considerable proficiency as a man of letters. Upon the death of Martin, Gregory of Tours wrote a eulogy in which he notes that Martin had visited the sacred places of the Orient, and calls him the most highly educated man of his day. Any suspicions of

1 See E.A. Thompson, “The Conversion of the Spanish Suevi to Catholicism,” *Visigothic Spain: New Approaches*, E. James, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), 83. This work and the author’s *Goths in Spain* (1969) are our main sources of information for the history of the
rhetorical overstatement are dispelled by Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers (c530-c610), and a major Latin poet in his own right, who reports that Martin carried on an extensive correspondence with him about Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and other classical philosophers, as well as such Christian writers as Ambrose, Augustine and Gregory the Great (Barlow 1950:295-96).

Because it was surrounded by rugged mountains in the extreme northwest corner of Iberia, the province of Galicia was physically isolated from other nearby western centres of religious and political activity, such as Toledo, Tours, and Arles. Galicia’s location and landscape put Martin of Braga in a position that was quite different from that faced by Augustine a century earlier, or by Caesarius of Arles and Martin’s other contemporary bishops, most of whom had considerably more urbanized populations to deal with (Follis 1992:25). However, in our consideration of Martin’s career we should be aware that, in spite of the remote circumstances in which he found himself, Martin was, as Ferreiro (1988:226) reminds us, no “provincial man of the backwoods,” but operated from directly within the mainstream of 6th century Christian thought.

Martin had a thorough knowledge of Greek, which set him apart from most of the other Christian writers in the West, including Augustine of Hippo. One of Martin’s many literary accomplishments was his translation from Greek into Latin period. Thompson is highly thought of by his peers, but not without some minor qualifications. Hillgarth praises Thompson for his concern with politics, administration and religion, but feels that he underestimates the sway of religious beliefs over 6th century minds. Goffart cites Thompson’s accurate survey of the times and his faithful reading of the sources, but feels that his ability as an interpreter of social phenomena leaves something to be desired. With these caveats understood, I have found Thompson to be an invaluable resource, although I was often frustrated by the lack of a bibliography.

2 By way of contrast, the subsequent chapters of this thesis will be dealing with two other 6th century writers, Caesarius of Arles and Gregory of Tours, both of whom lived in important centres of politics and culture. The Gothic rulers of Arles had not yet converted to orthodoxy at the time of Caesarius, but Gregory’s Frankish kings had been Catholic Christians for several generations.
of *Sayings of the Egyptian Fathers*, "a collaborative effort he carried out at his monastery in Dumium with his monk Paschasius" (Ferreiro 1987-88:303).

According to Follis, these *Sayings* provide a moral vision for senior churchmen which was "not that of harsh enforcers but of gentle pastors, both toward monks and lay-persons alike" (1992:50). It is important to the development of our thesis that we take notice from the beginning of the significant relationship that Martin's scholarship played in the development of his pastoral agenda.

In his youth, Martin had left his native Pannonia, in what is now eastern Hungary, and traveled to the Middle East, where he lived and studied for several years. Because of the nature and the quality of Martin's later writing, Kim Follis suggests that he most likely settled among the anchorite monks in the vicinity of Alexandria, where he would have had the opportunity to make use of extensive libraries as well as taking part in a monastic life which stressed education in the classics as well as direct pastoral involvement with the local population (Follis 1992:6). Unfortunately, Martin’s sojourn in the East corresponded with the Emperor Justinian’s attack on paganism which, beginning in 529, resulted in the closing of the very academies and other centres of learning which had preserved and encouraged classical studies (Ferreiro 1980:248-49). In the process of doing this, Justinian had also silenced much Christian philosophical and scholarly thought in the East, and had also specifically proscribed Origenist theology.

It is possibly because of this suppression of intellectual activity that Martin, facing imperial censure for both his classical learning and his enthusiasm for Origenism, decided in the early 550s to sail West for the Iberian Province of
Galicia. He may have been encouraged by Catholic pilgrims, who told him about a corner of the world that was still afflicted by heresies and paganism (Ferreiro 1980:245-46), or perhaps he was compelled by missionary zeal to follow literally the admonition of Acts 1:8 to carry his witness for Christianity to the uttermost parts of the earth. In any case, the talents and educational qualifications which Martin brought with him to Galicia proved ideal for the task at hand. On the 5th of April, 556, he was consecrated as Bishop of Galicia, and in 558 he dedicated his monastery at Dumium, across the river from the city of Braga (Thompson 1980:88).

Martin and the Gothic court

Much of Martin’s success as bishop was due to the complex set of qualifications which he brought to the office. But he was required to apply these abilities to a situation of considerable intricacy. For one thing, shortly after his arrival in Galicia, the Gothic court had converted to orthodox Christianity from its traditional Arian heresy. This is a subject which we shall now examine at greater

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3 The Byzantine Roman Empire, with its seat in Constantinople for over two hundred years, had been receding in the West for some time. In the mid-6th century, the Emperor Justinian was actually engaged in a military attempt to re-enter the Iberian Peninsula, but since this was only one of many fronts in which he and his famous general, Belisarius, were fighting in an attempt to win back the West, the Iberian campaign was without any lasting success. The fact that Martin’s westward journey corresponds almost exactly with Justinian’s ill-fated attempt to reconquer those provinces of the Roman Empire which had fallen into the hands of the Arian Germanic tribes should not be taken to imply that Martin was a part of imperial policy in Iberia. According to Ferreiro, “Any alleged connections between Martin in Galicia and the Byzantines in southern Spain simply did not exist.” (1988:228)

4 Ferreiro refers us to F.R. Hoare, The Western Fathers (London: Sheed and Ward, 1954) in which Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre (d448) is said to have made two journeys to Britain to combat the Pelagian heresy. He further notes that “With the later Germanic migrations, Arianism ... became a widespread heresy in the west.”

5 The Arian heresy was a trinitarian doctrinal dispute, which began with the teachings of Arius (c250-c336) in early 4th century Alexandria, and continued to plague orthodox Christianity until close to the end of the 6th century. To the modern reader, most of the ongoing controversies over Arianism seem to reflect the political rivalries of the day. Those interested in the theological issues involved are encouraged to make a close reading of R.F.C. Hanson, The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy,
length, along with the complex social and political circumstances which set
Galicia apart from the rest of Iberia and southern Gaul, and which required all of
Martin’s training in pastoral care.

In the mid-6th century, Galicia was further isolated from the rest of Iberia
because it was ruled by Suevian Goths, who had only recently converted to
orthodox Christianity. These Sueves were possibly far less ‘Romanized’ than
their Visigothic neighbors; for although the Sueves and the Visigoths had both
arrived in Iberia during the great influx of Germanic tribes that had taken place in
the early 5th century, the Sueves appear to have traveled West from their native
Pannonia (in what is present-day Hungary) without first having attempted to
settle in Gaul as the Visigoths had done, and thus “did not experience a
prolonged contact with late Roman culture prior to their final settlement in
Galicia” (Ferreiro 1987-88:299). The remainder of Iberia and southern Gaul was
under the control of Visigoths, with whom the Sueves had always had less than
amicable relations. The Arian heresy was virtually synonymous with the
Visigothic people, and the resurgence of Arianism under King Leovigild (r568-
86) combined with the conversion of the Sueves to Catholicism to polarize
further political and religious tensions on the peninsula (Ferreiro 1981:15).

318-381 (Edinburgh: T.T. Clark, 1988), and to examine the proceedings of the Council of
Nicaea (325) as well as the several councils which followed it; but classical 4th century
Arianism is probably irrelevant to the topic at hand. Gothic Arianism appears to have been
founded by Ulphilas (or Ulfila) (c311-383), an Arian bishop of Gothic ancestry, who
fled the empire after the final victory of orthodoxy under Theodosius at the Council of
Constantinople in 381. Ulphilas translated the Bible into Gothic, and his missionary work
among the Goths provided them with an alternative to Catholic orthodoxy that seems to
have flourished for 200 years as an element of cultural pride and differentiation more than
for any reasons of theological subtlety.

Although this may have been true of the Suevian people as a whole, Ferreiro brings our
attention to archaeological evidence, particularly numismatic, which confirms that the
leadership of the Sueves was “extensively romanized.”

Ferreiro (1981:20) suggests that this identification of the Visigoths with Arianism may
have been at least part of the reason that the Sueves were disposed to abandon the heresy.
Political considerations aside, it seems more than likely that the Sueves had converted to orthodoxy at least in part because of Martin of Braga’s missionary efforts. Martin, like the Galician Sueves, was originally from the Roman province of Pannonia, as was his famous namesake, St Martin of Tours (d397). Several scholars, most noticeably Ferreiro and Thompson, have asked if any kinship Martin might have felt for the Sueves was a motivating factor in his choice of Galicia (Ferreiro 1980:248). Did Martin speak the Suevic language? Was the conversion of the Suevic court negotiated in Suevic or in Latin? (Thompson 1980:92) In any case, it seems likely that Martin was able to “take advantage of an opportune situation to enter Galicia” (Ferreiro 1980:247). In the early 550s, the Suevian King Chararich (d560), whose son was suffering from an unnamed ailment (possibly leprosy), had sent a mission to the shrine of his fellow Pannonian, St Martin of Tours, in order to petition the saint for a cure. Details of what followed vary, and tend to emphasize the miraculous-appearing coincidences that abound in everyday life, but we can suppose that the future Martin of Braga may have been in Tours when the Suevian entourage arrived and simply followed it back to Galicia (Ferreiro 1981:13). When this first mission failed to effect a cure for his son, Chararich was told (perhaps by Martin) that as long as the Arian heresy prevailed in his kingdom, any appeal to (the orthodox) St Martin would be in vain. Chararich straightway converted to Catholicism and his son was restored to health.8

8 The reader should be aware that this much-repeated and generally credited story derives from Gregory’s De virtutibus S. Martini, 1.11, and is more valuable for its hagiographic intent than for its historicity. Isidore’s De viris illustribus, 35, credits Martin of Braga with strengthening the Church and building monasteries, but not with the actual conversion of the Sueves. In any case, neither Isidore nor any other source, save Gregory, mentions a King Chararich. Isidore also states (Hist. Sueb. 90f) that a King Theodomir converted the Suevic people with assistance from Martin (Thompson 1980:84). Furthermore, the First Council of Braga, of which we shall say more later, was convened in 561 on the order of a Suevic King Ariamir, whose name is not found in either Gregory or Isidore.
Converting an entire population, however, would still have been a difficult and lengthy task, no matter how beneficial, perhaps even necessary, the nominal conversion of a king might be. According to Ferreiro, “what the Sueves needed was a charismatic, pious, authoritative, and humble saint to bring them to orthodoxy” (1981:26), and they undoubtedly had that and more in Martin of Braga. Martin’s responsibility was to confirm the conversion of the king and his subjects and to make sure that they became and remained Catholic in belief and practice; and he successfully carried out this mission with the patronage of a line of Catholic kings, including King Theodomir and King Miro.

The Iberian Celts and the Hispano-Romans

Scholars seem to be nearly unanimous in crediting the original inhabitants of Galicia with a Celtic heritage. McKenna (1938:2) tells us that these people entered the Iberian peninsula during the two centuries preceding 500 BCE, and that their weapons and clothing identify them as Celts. Salisbury brings to our attention 19th century scholarship, which identifies distinct Celtic influences in the then-extant Galician dialect, and also cites the strong Celtic influence which can still be seen in place names. One of the signatories of the First and Second Councils of Braga was Mailoc, the Bishop of Britonia, and the Celtic origin of his name has definitely been established. After the Second Council, however, Ferreiro states that “we cannot identify a single bishop of Celtic origin” (1991:3-

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9 See Curchin 1991:154 where he speaks of the plurality of Hispanic indigenous cultures and cites three: the Basque, the Iberian and the Celtic, without further distinguishing among them.


11 Ferreiro quotes Melville Richards. “Mailoc”, Habis 3 (1972), 159. The ‘Mailosus’ who signed off in the First Council of Braga is believed to be the same person as the Second Council’s ‘Mailoc.’

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4), and this may be taken to indicate the short-lived nature of any direct Celtic participation among the leadership of the Galician Church.

Interestingly enough, in J.N. Hillgarth’s article “Popular Religion in Visigothic Spain,” the Celts are mentioned only in passing;\(^\text{12}\) the Hispano-Roman population of Iberia is what is mainly under discussion. According to Thompson, the Gothic rulers may have been outnumbered in the urban areas by their Hispano-Roman subjects by as much as ten to one (1969:3). Although these peoples’ political culture had originally been imperial and their religion had originally been the civic and literary paganism of pre-Constantinian Rome, by the mid-6th century the Galician Hispano-Romans were decidedly non-imperial, non-political, and non-military in outlook and behaviour, and they had been officially converted to Christianity for over a hundred years. However, there may be some evidence that would indicate the possible survival of the local 4th century Christian heresy of Priscillianism\(^\text{13}\) among this portion of the Galician population. Both the persistence of this, once popular, heresy into the 6th century as well as the historical complexities of the Hispano-Romans’ relationship to the rest of the Christian Empire will be examined at greater length below, but let us first turn our attention to Martin of Braga and to an analysis of his text.

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\(^{12}\) See Hillgarth 1980:6: In reference to the persistence of the ‘native element’ in Galicia in the 3rd century, “Persons with completely Roman names continued to erect inscriptions to Celtic gods.”

\(^{13}\) Priscillianism was an ascetic, charismatic and apocalyptic heresy that flourished briefly in northern Spain and southern Gaul between c380 and its denunciation by Pope Leo I in 447. In 385, its founder, Priscillian, bishop of Avila, was tried and executed in Trier by the Emperor Maximus for the practice of sorcery. Priscillianism was marked by a kind of Manichaean dualism. Marriage, the procreation of children and the eating of meat were prohibited, but free love was permitted. See ODCC 1126-27 for more details. See also Salisbury 1985:191, wherein she refers to the Priscillian heresy as a temporarily successful integration of “peasant beliefs with a theoretical and ethical cosmography that appealed to the Hispano-Roman elite.” This is an idea best be taken with a grain of salt, and which will be challenged later in this paper. For a more critical analysis of Priscillianism, see H. Chadwick’s *Priscillian of Avila: The Occult and the Charismatic in the Early Church* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976).
Martín's tolerant attitude

Martín is said to stand out from all other Gallo-Iberian bishops, both his predecessors and his contemporaries, in that he did not espouse the use of violent means of correction against those who strayed from orthodox rules of practice and behaviour. While other bishops, such as Caesarius of Arles (c470-542), advocated more or less severe physical punishments for those who practiced idolatry, Martín maintained that transgressions of this sort were the result of ignorance and should be corrected by education. Martín never appeals to his own, not inconsiderable, temporal authority. He never threatens his readers with punishment or excommunication; his readers are "left to reflect upon his words and then to act accordingly" (Follis 1992:68).

Ferreiro attributes Martín's tolerant and compassionate attitude toward the ignorance and rebelliousness of his flock to the study of the classics (1983:381), an activity which, as we shall later see, many of his fellow churchmen shunned entirely because much of the literature involved was of pagan provenance. Martín's toleration, however, was certainly not without its limits. In De correctione rusticorum, and several of his other works, he unhesitatingly condemns as pagan and anti-Christian many ritual and festive practices. On the other hand, his attitude toward pagan 'high culture' is quite different, as demonstrated by the writings to educated correspondents in his Letters, and

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15 In fact, the poor reputation which Caesarius has in this regard (see McKenna 1938:88) is based on statements of his such as “Chastise them most severely ... so that they who are not concerned about the salvation of their soul, may fear the wounds of the body” (Serm. 13.5); and this reputation, as we shall later see, is perhaps not entirely deserved.
16 See DCR 19: “Behold, with the testimony of God ... we have fulfilled what was due to your goodness ... It is for you now to think and work ... We pray the mercy of the Lord Himself, that He keep you from all harm ...”
especially in *Formula vitae honestae*, a treatise addressed to his patron, King Miro. The influence of Seneca is so clearly noticeable therein that for many centuries the work was mistakenly credited to Seneca himself (Ferreiro 1988:236).

It is the opinion of Follis that most of Martin’s fellow pastors and bishops, particularly in the West, had been trained in monastic systems which stressed hierarchy and discipline, and it is, therefore, not surprising that they tended to be more than somewhat heavy-handed in their relations with their flocks (1992:81). An aspect of eastern thought which Follis believes had great effect on Martin’s attitude toward pastoral issues were the principles of Origenism. Briefly stated, Origen (c185-c254) maintained that humankind naturally progresses toward God by virtue of an inherently rational nature (*De Principiis* 1.3.8), and that any backsliding which may occur is due (like the Fall itself) to ‘negligence’, ‘sloth’ (1.5), and ‘weariness’ (2.9), all of which are distinctly human weaknesses. Both salvation and the Fall are therefore seen as essentially cognitive processes. To Augustine (354-430), however, both the Fall itself and any subsequent tendencies to fall away from Christianity’s proffered state of grace are caused not by ignorance or forgetfulness, but are instead the result of a “corrupted humanity” (*De catechizandis rudibus* 18); so that the issue is more physical than cognitive. “For Augustine the problem is carnality while for Martin ignorance is the enemy” (Follis 1992:74), and thus it was ignorance that Martin seemed committed to attacking, rather than the physical bodies of his parishioners.

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17 The following argument and references are adapted from Follis (1992:73ff). Interested readers are referred to this work for a most accessible, and far more thorough, discussion of the distinctions between Origenist and Augustinian theology.
The texts and their audience

Let us now turn our attention to an examination of Martin’s *De correctione rusticorum* (‘Reforming the Rustics’) and, to a lesser degree, the *Capitula Martini.* These are the only two of his few surviving works that bear directly upon our subject. According to Ferreiro, Martin of Braga presided over the Second Council of Braga and provided its lengthy postscript, the *Capitula Martini.* Although a bishop named Lucretius officially presided over the First Council of Braga, Ferreiro states (1981:19) that there is little doubt that Martin was the primary force that made such a gathering possible. The first canon of 2Braga requires the bishops to warn people against the practice of idolatry and other serious crimes such as murder, adultery and perjury; and many of the canons in Martin’s *Capitula* condemn idolatrous practices as well. According to McKenna (1938:86) the structure of *De correctione rusticorum* closely follows the details of Martin’s *Capitula,* and this information will help shape our

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18 The *Capitula Martini* (CM) are the eighty-four canons appended to the text of the Second Council of Braga. These are translations, by Martin, from the Greek canons of the Eastern church, and also include several canons from the First Council of Toledo (400), as well as a few of unknown origin.

19 The other works of Martin of Braga which we possess are as follows: *Sententiae Patrum Aegyptiorum,* a small collection of stories and sayings; *Pro repellenda iactantia, Item de superbia,* and *Exhortatio humilitatis,* three moral treatises; *De ira,* and *Formula vitae honestae,* two treatises heavily influenced by the writings of Seneca; *De trina mersione,* a short treatise obliquely directed at Arian baptismal practices; *De Pascha,* on the dating of Easter; and three short poems. According to Barlow, Martin is also credited with the canons of the First and Second Councils of Braga (*IBraga, 2Braga*): “Because Martin is the only person living in the province at this time who is known ever to have written anything, it seems plausible to assign these words to him.” (“Iberian Fathers,” *Fathers of the Church,* Vol 62; 7-8).

20 See Ferreiro 1981:22. IBraga was convened in May, 561; and 2Braga in June, 572. The texts of these councils appear in collections in which they form only a minor part, the most authoritative being Rome, Biblioteca Angelica 1091. See Barlow 1950:87 for more details.

21 See McKenna 1938:86: The canons of Martin’s *Capitula* which deal with the sins of idolatry are in nearly total agreement with the practices condemned in the *DCR.* The only exception is *Capitula 69,* which prohibits people from bringing food to sepulchers. The 84 canons of the *Capitula* are mostly translations from the Greek by Martin of the canons of the Eastern Church, including canons from the Councils of Nicea, Ancyra, Gangra, Antioch and Laodicea (Barlow 1950:84). McKenna notes (1938:84) that many of the
understanding of the DCR. For example, from the content of the Capitula, we could assume that those being criticized in the DCR may have included some of Martin’s fellow churchmen as well: CM 59 deals with the problem of clergy who make magic amulets and apparently wish to be thought of as magicians.\(^\text{22}\)

Unfortunately, the texts of both the First and Second Councils of Braga, as well as that of the Capitula Martini, are not available in English translations. Most of our attention, as a result, will be focused on Martin’s *De correctione rusticorum*. We can only assign the date of this work by means of internal evidence: Bishop Polemius of Astorga had attended the Second Council of Braga in 572 and had, from the context of DCR 1, apparently written to Martin afterwards for instructions on how to oppose superstitious practices among his flock. According to the first Canon of this council, bishops were to instruct all catechumens on a number of important sins,\(^\text{23}\) and these are the topics which are covered in Martin’s reply.

In spite of the fact that most of our secondary sources repeatedly refer to the DCR as a sermon,\(^\text{24}\) it may possibly be a circular pastoral letter. The title *De*
correctione rusticorum originated in the 18th century Florez edition (Madrid, 1759) from which the first two chapters are missing (Barlow 1950:177-78). The original title of the Martin’s work, in both our first complete manuscript dating from the 9th century in the city library of Berne (McKenna 1938:85) and another from the 11th century in the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, was Epistula ad Polemium: ‘Letter to Polemius’ and, in the opinion of Barlow, this title “expresses the true literary form most exactly” (1950:159). Since the determination of audience is such an important part of our method, we need to examine our text carefully for this distinction. Is De correctione rusticorum a sermon or a circular pastoral letter?

There can be no doubt, of course, that the DCR is written in the form of a sermon, albeit a relatively long one, and it was certainly intended to be preached from the pulpits of Martin’s see. But a close examination of Martin’s language could lead us to believe that he is writing to his fellow clergymen about the misbehaviour of the laity. Martin’s opening remarks, which we mentioned briefly in the previous section, to the effect that the purpose of this work was to chastise the rustici, and that the recommended way to do this was to offer them ‘food seasoned with rustic speech’ could hardly be meant to be addressed to those whose chastisement was being discussed. When Martin speaks of those who are in need of correction it is at arm’s length — as ‘ignorant (foolish, silly, wretched, unfaithful) men.’ By way of contrast, when he addresses his audience directly, which Martin does on only four occasions after the opening chapter, he calls

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25 Even this name is apparently in error. See Barlow 1950:159: “Florez gave it the title De correctione rusticorum for its editio princeps, since these words were used to describe it in the old Braga breviary, but the actual words in the breviary seem to have been Pro castigatione rusticorum [DCR 1].”
them 'dear sons' twice (DCR 2, DCR 14: filii karissimi), 'dearest sons' (DCR 17: dilectissimi filii) and 'dearest brothers and sons' (DCR 18: fratres et filii karissimi). These differing styles of address could imply that Martin was writing directly to his fellow and suffragan churchmen as much as to those congregations who would ultimately hear the DCR as a sermon. Salisbury informs us of frequent episcopal meetings that were held in local provinces throughout Spain in addition to major national councils like those convened in Toledo (1985:54). If this is true, Martin would have met his fellow bishops regularly and the DCR could have been intended to be passed on to them for them to read and pass on in turn. The possibility of this distinction is important to my thesis and will be discussed in greater detail below.

**Reading De correctione rusticorum**

After the introduction, the next 11 chapters of De correctione rusticorum (3-13) are catechetical. Martin begins by relating the biblical stories of Creation, Adam and Eve, and Noah and the Flood, emphasizing the origin of demons as rebellious fallen angels, and the role of these malign beings in the original Fall and in the continuing deception of humanity. In Chapter 6, Martin extends Paul's condemnation of the veneration of (apparently Egyptian) 'creatures' such as birds, four-footed animals and reptiles (Rom 1:23-25) to include the sun, moon, and...
fire, "deep water, and springs of water," stating that reverence shown to these natural forces implies, mistakenly in his view, that they "had not been created by God for the use of man, but had sprung up as gods from themselves." Chapter 7 describes the shameful details in the lives of the Roman deities, expanding on the common patristic tradition of euhemerism. In Chapter 8 Martin claims that the demonic fallen angels of Christian tradition had taken on the names of the Roman deities and then persuaded "the ignorant rustics" to build temples, altars, and statues in their honour; these same demons now presided over "the sea or streams or fountains or forests," and even had the days of the week named after them.

Chapter 9 returns to Genesis, listing the daily divine accomplishments during the seven days of Creation as a way of demonstrating why the days of the week should honour the Christian God rather than demons in the guise of (reprobate) Roman deities. Furthermore, Martin recommends that the first day of the week, being the day on which Christ rose, should honour Him. In fact, the first day of the week became the Christian sabbath as early as the Didache; the Sabbath was transferred from Saturday to Sunday in honour of the Resurrection at about the same time that the Jewish fast days of Tuesday and Thursday were translated to Wednesday (the Betrayal) and Friday (the Crucifixion). Furthermore, until shortly before the Christian era, the entire emphasis of the traditional Roman liturgical calendar had been upon days of the month: the ides, the kalends, etc; the Romans having only begun to make use of planetary names for the days of the week in relatively recent times. In biblical times (see Rev 1:10), the days of the week were

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29 Euhemerus was a pagan writer of the 3rd century BCE who proposed the theory that the myths and stories of the gods had developed from traditional stories about actual historical persons. This idea was later taken up by Christian apologists such as Lactantius (c240-c320) as a satisfactory explanation of the origin of pagan deities.
known among the Christians as dies dominica, feria secunda, etc, with sabbatum for Saturday, but the Roman planetary names for days of the week had come into general Christian currency by late in the 3rd century. In a like manner, Chapter 10 criticizes the ‘ignorant rustics’ for believing that the kalends of January marked the beginning of the year. According to Martin, since God began Creation by dividing the light from the darkness, this division must have been exactly equal, and thus the vernal equinox, when day and night are of the same length, should be taken as the beginning of the year. Since God subsequently divided the light into unequal parts, creating the sun and the moon, it seems more likely that Martin’s argument was based on other concerns, which were more traditional than scriptural in provenance.

In Chapter 11, Martin “speaks with sorrow” of the superstitious practices used to protect against the ravages of mice and moths. Martin assumes that whatever spells or charms are used against these creatures are in fact ways of demonstrating reverence for them. Furthermore, Martin’s response has an unfortunate aristocratic sound to it. About as much bread or cloth could be protected in Martin’s ‘little box or basket’ as a person in authority would need for his own daily use; but those who actually produced the bread and cloth would need to protect relatively vast quantities, and what were they to do? Martin’s further explanation, that the mice and moths were sent by an angry God to plague those who practiced superstitious rites in order to rid themselves

30 See OCD 1464. Our English names for the days of the week are Teutonic equivalents of the Roman planetary names. For a fuller discussion of the issue of the Christian calendar in the early Church, see Markus (1990:98-106).

31 See DCR 11: “... si dici fas est, homo Christianus pro deo mures at tineas veneratur?”

32 See DCR 11: “... non vos defendunt sacrificia vana de locusta, de mure, et de multis aliis tribulationibus, quas vobis deus tratus immittit?”
of mice and moths seems to be an example of the typically circuitous demonology of the Early Church.33

Martin, however, is on more familiar theological ground in Chapter 12 when he criticizes the practice of augury and divination: “God did not order man to know the future. ... God alone possesses foreknowledge of events.”34 Divination undermines two Christian doctrines: human free will and divine providence. The art of the augur was based on the supposition that the future was determined, and that this could be seen as reducing individual will to a mere act of adjustment to the inevitable. Furthermore, seeking to discover God’s provision for humanity in advance implied that divine providence could not be trusted automatically to govern fate for a person’s own good.

In Chapter 13, Martin comes to the final and most compelling point of his didactic presentation, in which he argues that the primary purpose of the Incarnation was to free mankind from the worship of demons.35 Martin then reiterates in simple language the details of the baptismal promise to avoid sinful behaviour.36 The Latin text (Barlow 1950:193) refers the reader to Mt 15:19 for the list of sins Martin cites, but this passage contains no reference to idols, which Martin places at the head of a list including “homicide, theft, perjury, and

33 See DCR 11: Martin actually refers to these charms and spells against vermin as “sacrifices to demons” (et numquam cessatis ab istis sacrificiis daemonum).

34 See DCR 12: Martin quotes Solomon against “divinationes et auguria.” His source is actually Ecclesiasticus 34:5.

35 See DCR 13: “... when God saw that wretched men are so deceived by the devil ... that they forget their Creator and worship demons instead of God, He sent his Son, that is, His Wisdom and His Word, to recall them to the worship of the true God from the error of the devil.”

36 See DCR 13: “He bade His disciples ... to baptize them ... and to teach those who had been baptized to depart from their evil ways, that is, from idols, from homicide, from theft, from perjury, from fornication, and not to do to others what they were unwilling to have done to themselves.”
fornication.” Chapters 14 and 15 begin the final exhortatory portion of the DCR, in which Martin calls upon his readers to remember and honour their baptismal promises to “renounce the devil and his messengers”, and not to return “to idols and homicide and adultery and perjury and other wicked ways.”

We must acknowledge that this inclusion of idolatry in standard lists of serious sins had certainly become a conventional element of Christian belief by the 6th century. Although the canonical Gospels are silent on the subject of idols and idolatry, references to these activities proliferate in the Pauline Letters, particularly the 5th, 8th, and 10th chapters of 1Corinthians. Furthermore, idolatry is mentioned in the Didache as a ‘Way of Death’ along with the usual list, which in this case also includes black magic and charms. If one accepts Martin’s original argument in Chapters 3 and 4 that the practices of pagan idolatry originated through the instigation of the rebellious angels of Christian tradition, then the veneration of pagan deities is clearly a violation of baptismal pledges to renounce the devil and all his works and pomps.37 But what may be at issue in Martin’s writing is the expansion of this class of sin to include essentially secular activities of several sorts, and this is a subject to which we shall be returning in later chapters.

Chapter 16 contains an interesting listing of sundry activities which Martin accuses of being demonic in provenance. Readers are admonished against celebrating the Roman holiday of Vulcanalia (August 23) and keeping the

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37 On the other hand, using the accusation of idolatry as a method of criticizing the beliefs and practices of other religions was all too common a phenomenon. Psalm 95:5, for example, claims that all the gods of the gentiles are demons. And as was mentioned above, Paul makes this same point on several occasions, including his statement in 1Cor 10:20 that pagan sacrifices are actually being offered to demons.
kalends of each month,\textsuperscript{38} choosing Friday (Venus’ day) for weddings,\textsuperscript{39} trying to learn the future from the flight of birds and the frequency of sneezes,\textsuperscript{40} decorating the entrance to a house with laurel,\textsuperscript{41} and invoking Minerva while weaving\textsuperscript{42} (perhaps with a familiar song or shuttle chant), for “what else is this but worship of the devil?” (\textit{cultura diaboli}). Several activities of an obscure nature are also condemned. ‘Watching the foot,’\textsuperscript{43} according to McKenna (1938:101), possibly refers to the divinatory strategy of “seeing with which foot a person entered a room and drawing a good or evil omen from this action,” and Flint\textsuperscript{44} (1991:211) refers us to the practice, condemned by the 6th century Council of Auxerre, of placing wooden images of footprints at crossroads, perhaps to encourage

\begin{enumerate}
\item See \textit{DCR} 16: “\textit{Vulcanalia et Kalendas observare}”
\item See \textit{DCR} 16: “\textit{Veneris diem in nuptias observare}”
\item See \textit{DCR} 16: “\textit{avicellos et sternutos}”
\item See \textit{DCR} 16: “\textit{lauros ponere}”
\item See \textit{DCR} 16: “\textit{Mulieres in tela sua Minervam nominare}”
\item See \textit{DCR} 16: “\textit{pedem observare} “
\item See Valerie I.J. Flint, \textit{The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe} (Princeton: UP, 1991), 211. Flint is a social historian whose work has a strong basis in textual analysis. She rejects the explanation of magical activities in terms of ‘pagan survivals’ and sets out to study magic at the shifting boundaries between Christian religion and traditional practices. This is a methodology that is serviceably similar to my own. Several reviewers have praised Flint for opening a wonderfully displayed picture of early medieval Europe and some of its least approachable sources, and for her extensive familiarity, not only with the vast literature of early medieval Christianity, but with its manuscript locations and distribution, as well as with the literature of expertise in many fields. On the other hand, Markus reproaches her for using a synoptic approach which makes little allowance for chronological or geographical discrimination, and Paxton is less than comfortable with Flint’s implied claim that various actions of church authorities are conscious and deliberate, and also states that her arguments are often made by affirmation rather than by evidence. Both critics admit that these problems do not seriously undermine Flint’s work, but Peters scores a more telling point when he notes that Flint often construes the subject of magic more broadly than the Latin terms used by early ecclesiastical writers (\textit{magia, maleficium,} and others) would normally permit. Since a lack of terminological differentiation, particularly as it pertains to the realm of magic, is one of the flaws we have noted among our primary sources, this is not a superficial problem, and it will serve us well to be wary of any conclusions in Flint’s work that rely on her synoptic or inclusive tendencies.
\end{enumerate}
travelers.\textsuperscript{45} ‘Pouring fruit and wine over a log in the hearth’\textsuperscript{46} has the sound of a libation or lustration, in either case a way of ‘sacrificing’ first fruits or other articles of provender. ‘Setting out tables’\textsuperscript{47} at kalends reminds the reader of Martin’s admonition in Chapter 11 against ‘setting up practices’ in order to assure success and prosperity in the New Year, as well as Caesarius’ objection (Serm. 192) to ‘placing displays of food on the table.’ These are probably references to the important role that the family table (not to mention harvest festivals) played in the religious life of the pre-Christian household.

Several of the other activities condemned in the \textit{DCR} seem to display at least some similarity to Roman practices. The reference in Chapter 7 to ‘men anxious for gain’ piling up ‘heaps of stones’ at crossroads is possibly a reference to the invocation of Mercury/Hermes at boundary markers by travelers and those with interest in the location of borders and property lines. Even the mice and moths issue, which does seem at first glance to have the flavour of a local folk custom, is reminiscent of the Roman festival of \textit{Paganalia} or \textit{Sementiva}, which was celebrated towards the end of January and dedicated to Tellus (a Roman earth goddess) and Ceres in order to persuade those deities to preserve the crops from birds (\textit{aves}) and ants (\textit{formicae}) as well as other field pests (Ovid, \textit{Fasti} 1.657ff). \textit{Capitula Martini} 71 forbids inviting ‘magicians’ into homes to perform purification rites,\textsuperscript{48} and \textit{CM} 72 condemns those who practice augury or astrology

\textsuperscript{45} See also Flint 1991:211n34: Martin’s condemnation in \textit{DCR} 16 “could conceivably be a reference to a practice mentioned by Burchard, whereby women watch a person’s footprints, remove the trodden soil, and try to manipulate the fate of the person through it.”

\textsuperscript{46} See \textit{DCR} 16: “\textit{fundere in foco super truncum frugem et vinum}”

\textsuperscript{47} See \textit{DCR} 16: “\textit{mensas ornare} “

\textsuperscript{48} See \textit{CM} 71: “\textit{maleficia inveniant vel lustrationes paganorum faciant}.”
in order to determine which days are best for planting crops or starting construction projects.\textsuperscript{49} The prohibition in \textit{CM} 69 against bringing food to sepulchers and offering up sacrifices on behalf of the dead\textsuperscript{50} was, according to McKenna, a Roman practice that was adopted by the early Christians and then later condemned because of its pagan origins (1938:105).

**Rustic, Roman and romanized**

At least two of the practices which Martin condemns as idolatry in both his \textit{Capitula} and in \textit{De castigatione rusticorum} — the burning of candles and other devotional activities at springs, trees and crossroads, and the pouring of fruit or wine over a log in the hearth — have a distinctly rural flavour to them. Several other practices — keeping the kalends and the celebration of other Roman holidays — are obviously of Roman provenance. All the others — decorating with laurel, heaping stones at crossroads, banqueting in cemeteries, protecting crops from pests, ‘watching the foot’ and ‘setting out tables’ as well as resorting to magicians, augury and astrology — are of indistinct origin.

It therefore seems unlikely that Martin’s complaints are aimed exclusively at Galicia’s rural underclasses, as has often been supposed. Rather, Martin appears to be dealing with a general problem of irregular religious activity which he perceives among Galician peasants and Hispano-Romans both high and low. For example, Curchin tells us that rural areas might have had “small sanctuaries associated with sacred groves, springs or mountains” (1991: 169), but it is

\textsuperscript{49} See \textit{CM} 72: “\textit{observare vel colere elementa aut lunae aut stellarum cursum aut inanem signorum falliciam pro domo facienda vel ad segetes vel arbores plantandas vel contagia socianda.”

\textsuperscript{50} See \textit{CM} 69: “\textit{Non liceat Christianis prandia ad defunctorum sepulchra deferre et sacrificare de re mortuorum.”
unlikely that the Galician peasants had a great deal of involvement in the building of temples to the Roman gods, or being responsible for the days of the week being named after these deities, as a non-nuanced understanding of the term *ignorantes rustici* as it appears in *DCR* 8 and 10 (see above) would imply. From the large number of references to Roman deities and holidays I would imagine that there is a very high level of syncretism at work here, and this would be particularly true of those living near the cities and monasteries or those in the employ of the Hispano-Roman landowners; they could certainly be expected to have adopted Roman practices as they became more integrated into public Roman culture over centuries of Roman occupation. By condemning ceremonies at fountains and trees as well as the observance of the kalends, Martin appears to be employing a scatter-gun approach against all those whom he sees as departing from the Christian way — rustic, Roman or romanized — all in one sermon.

Martin’s tolerant and compassionate attitude — a subject to which we shall return in the following section — makes a great deal more sense to us if the target of Martin’s criticisms are people of his own culture and ethnicity as well as the marginalized peasants of the rural hinterlands. The issue (mentioned above) of Priscillianism, however, still remains. Salisbury refers to the Priscillian heresy as a temporarily successful integration of “peasant beliefs” with “a theoretical and ethical cosmography that appealed to the Hispano-Roman elite” (1985:191).

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51 As we have previously mentioned, the indigenous population of Galacia are considered to have been Celtic, and there seems to be no evidence that the ancient Celts had anything resembling a week, *per se*, much less names for the days of the week. It seems likely to me that weeks and years would be more recent and sophisticated distinctions, while rustic attentions would be drawn to seasonal and lunar cycles.

52 It has been suggested by Dumézil that some of these practices may well have had a similar origin. The fact that many of them were very wide-spread may suggest a common Indo-European religious phenomenon. The fact that the Romans could take over the Greek gods almost entirely, even though they were coming from two apparently different cultures, would indicate a certain commonality.
Follis speaks of the Galician Church as being "dispirited" and "overpowered" by "a vital indigenous paganism" and "a persistent Priscillianism" (1992:2). McKenna not only suggests that the continuing popularity of Priscillianism in Galicia prevented "ecclesiastical authorities there from giving the people a thorough training in the teachings of Christianity" (1938:74), but that this may have actually been a causal factor in the number of "pagan survivals" that could still be found at this time in Galician "country districts" (1938:87). On the surface, there would seem to be a contradiction involved in this conflation of Priscillianism and paganism. Priscillianism (and Arianism) may have been heresies, but they were Christian heresies, and 'paganism' delineates, by definition, non-Christian practices and beliefs.

Priscillian, however, was condemned and finally executed for the practice of magic and sorcery, and the mistaken belief that all magic and sorcery are exclusively non-Christian in provenance might lead the incautious scholar to assume some sort of connection between Priscillianism and paganism. In fact, what Priscillian confessed to under judicial examination was an interest in magical studies, holding nocturnal gatherings that included women, and praying in the nude (Chadwick 1976:139). It was these activities, especially the sexual impropriety implied by the conflation of the last two, which combined with Priscillian’s 'semi-Manicheism to incite the ire of the Christian authorities.53

Priscillianism was clearly a heretical view and, as such, would not come under the

53 See Chadwick 1976:143n4: Manicheism and sorcery had been associated since Diocletian’s anti-Manichean edict of 296. Manichees were accused of sexual misconduct by writers such as Ambrose (see Ep. 50.14: where Manichees are accused of combining sacrilege with turpitudo) and Augustine (see De moribus 2.19-20, 67-75: which "tells of incidents of sexual immorality among the Manichees, endeavouring (rather unconvincingly) to suggest that they were typical rather than exceptional") and assumed to be capable of any enormity.
rubric of *paganus*, so it is far from likely that Priscillianism would have been either the source of those pagan beliefs and practices inveighed against in the *DCR*, or the agency by which such ‘pagan survivals’ could have persisted. This issue of the difference between heresy and paganism is an important one, and we shall address it again in the final section.

**A tactful stratagem**

Many commentators of the 19th and 20th centuries have seemed confident that compilations made of those traditional local practices which are inveighed against in the writings of our 6th century bishops can be relied upon to reveal the religious beliefs and practices of the peasants and other indigenous peoples of Gaul and Northern Iberia. Closer reading of these documents, as we have seen, would seem to indicate that there are serious methodological problems with this commonplace assumption. There can be no doubt that many of the practices being criticized here were popular among both the rural and the urban social underclasses. It is my hypothesis, however, that both Caesarius and Martin are also chastising their own people, the hereditary Romans of Gaul and Iberia — many of whom are fellow members of the Christian clergy — for retaining the mostly secular remnants of a fading, but still tenacious, traditional Roman cultural system. In order to do this more effectively both bishops are employing the rhetorical device of condemning these popular contemporary practices as ‘rustic,’ ‘pagan,’ or ‘demonic.’

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54 See Klingshirn 1994:209: “It is only because Caesarius chose to attack the traditional religious practices and beliefs of the peasants of Arles in his sermons that we have any evidence at all about religion outside the urban center.”
A parallel to this practice may be drawn from the apparent subject matter of the First Council of Braga. The Suevian court and, officially, the rest of the province, had converted to Christianity only a few years before the convening of this council in 561, and yet, according to Ferreiro (1981:19) a striking feature of these canons was the absence of any reference to Arianism. Officially, 1Braga was entirely concerned with the survival of Priscillianism, although there are any number of veiled references to baptismal formulae and the like that relate more to the conflict between Roman orthodoxy and Gothic Arianism than to the heresies of Priscillian. This sort of tactful discretion was not unusual, particularly in the writings of the more successful churchmen. As we shall see in the next section, Caesarius of Arles was careful not to mention Arianism by name in his anti-Arian work, *Synopsis against the Heretics*. If many of the practices and beliefs being condemned by Martin in the *DCR* at least resemble ones which had always been current among the Galicians of Roman ancestry, then scholars like McKenna and Salisbury may be inadvertently following Martin’s lead by creating a straw dog of Priscillianism in order to account for the persistence of these “peasant beliefs” which “appealed to the Hispano-Roman elite” (Salisbury 1985:191) and prevented the “ecclesiastical authorities there from giving the people a thorough training in the teachings of Christianity” (McKenna 1938:74).

Tact, as a stratagem, has a great deal to recommend itself, especially when one is dealing, as Martin was, with the sensibilities of the Hiberno-Roman aristocracy and the Suevian ruling class; and this may have been as much an issue in the writing of the *Capitula* and the *DCR* as it was at 1Braga. Aristocrats often share many curious beliefs in common with peasants, but it might be more than politic for bishops to pretend that only the latter are at fault. The ruling Suevian kings
and the land-owing Roman elite of mid-6th century Galicia may have been every bit as ‘rustic’ as their indigenous subjects in regard to their belief in popular superstitions and pre-Christian practices, but the clever Martin would have been far too discreet to say so.

As we shall see, the same situation may have prevailed among the Gothic rulers, the Roman aristocrats, and the Celtic underclasses of 6th century Gaul. Before we move forward in time, however, let us recall that we promised in the introduction to devote a section to Caesarius, bishop of Arles in the generation preceding Martin, in order to use his writings as a benchmark for issues such as Martin’s purported tolerant attitude. More important to the development of this thesis, a close reading of the sermons of Caesarius will help us to place Martin’s proposed solutions to the problem of traditional pre-Christian practices in the context of 6th century Western ascetic Christian thought.

Conclusions

In spite of the remote location of his bishopric, Martin was no backwoods provincial but an accomplished man of letters, and his pastoral agenda was shaped, not only by his scholarship, but by his confidence in the educational process as a solution to the ills he addresses. Martin’s statesmanship proved equal to the task of ecclesiastical organization under the auspices of a Suevian Gothic court only recently converted to orthodoxy, and we may assume that his diplomatic skills served him as well in his other endeavors.

At least in the DCR, Martin never threatens force or excommunication. Ferreiro credits the broadening effect of Martin’s classical education, and Follis believes that Martin’s non-violent approach is due to the differences between eastern and western monastic training, and to Martin’s Origenist leanings. A
belief in man’s inherently rational nature is likely to produce an emphasis on education, whereas an Augustinian belief in man’s essentially corrupt nature might lead to reliance on more physical methods.

Martin equates idolatry with any number of other serious sins, such as murder, adultery and perjury, and then extends his definition of idolatry to include such practices as observing Roman (hence pagan) holidays. He also expands on the patristic tradition of euhemerism: pagan gods are less the famous people of a bygone age than the villains and reprobates of history, and their temples and images have been appropriated by the demonic fallen angels of Christian myth. Martin’s criticism of augury and divination, by contrast, is more even-handed and theologically familiar.

The original inhabitants of Galicia may have been Celts but any participation in the processes we are able to examine was small and short-lived. It is the Suevian Goths and the Hispano-Romans to which the works of Martin draw our attention. In fact, the actual practices which Martin inveighs against are difficult to associate with any distinct segment of the Galician population. But so many of them are distinctly Roman, or described in Roman terms, that it seems very unlikely that they are all or even mostly the exclusive beliefs and practices of a rural underclass. If the Celtic peasants and the Gothic rulers are guilty of the same purported offenses as the Hispano-Roman elite, this may be explained by either the mechanics of syncretism or the existence of a set of Indo-European religious practices and beliefs originally held in common by all of these people. It is also unlikely that Priscillianism, a Christian heresy popular with the Hispano-Roman elite in the 4th century, would have any causal effect on the apparently high level of pagan practices still found in the 6th century.
The complaints of the DCR seem likely to be aimed, at least in part, at Martin’s own Hispano-Romans, even other Christian churchmen. The fact that the DCR appears to be addressed to these clergymen, even though it preaches against the failings of those identified only as foolish, wretched, and silly men, would support this possibility. Any intention on Martin’s part to appear to be directing his complaints against the behaviour of a Galician underclass may be regarded as an example of his diplomatic skills, especially since similar examples of tact and discretion can be observed in his other writings.

We have discussed but not resolved the issue of Martin’s purported tolerant attitude, and we have yet to compare his attitude toward marginal religious practices with that of two other bishops of his century, notably Caesarius of Arles and Gregory of Tours.
Caesarius of Arles

In the previous section, we have seen how Martin's pastoral agenda was shaped by his scholarship. The DCR seem to be at least partially addressed to Martin's own Hispano-Romans, even other Christian churchmen. Any intention on Martin's part to appear to be directing his complaints against the behaviour of a Galician underclass may be regarded as an example of his diplomatic skills. In this section, Caesarius will be presented as a member of a new breed of ecclesiastical leaders who combined the aristocratic traditions of their social class with the asceticism of the monastery. Implied in the resultant monastic and elitist agenda of Caesarius is the belief that Christians should do only holy things, and this will be seen as creating a hierarchy of piety within the Christian community. In spite of an image of Caesarius promoted by several scholars and based on a few dramatic quotations, we shall see that his writings are more often accommodating than contentious, and occasionally even outshine those of Martin of Braga. A comparison of the differences in language used by Caesarius and Martin will show us that Martin's intellectual vistas are broader and his audience is handled with considerably more care.

Caesarius (c470-542) was bishop of Arles for the last forty years of his long and productive life. He represents not only the role of the native Gallo-Roman bishop at the beginning of the 6th century — during the turbulent period from the time that Gaul left the Roman political orbit until the final hegemony of the Franks — but more important to the development of our argument he also represents the definite triumph of monasticism in the Gallic church. As a monk,

1 See Hillgarth 1986:21: “A monastic bishop, in the tradition which went back to Martin of Tours, he was faithful to both vocations. He made his clergy live or at least eat together — a painful experience for some of them — in order to enforce greater clerical discipline. He founded one of the first convents for women in Gaul and also wrote Rules for monks and nuns which were widely adopted and adapted.”
bishop, and tireless reformer, Caesarius preached constantly in favour of orthodox forms of worship, almsgiving and spirituality while inveighing against “the evil of drunkenness and lust, ... against the sacrilegious and fortune-tellers, ... augurs and worshippers of trees and springs, and vices of different kinds.” His teachings were founded in the works of earlier Latin patristic writers, particularly Augustine, and like Augustine, Caesarius responded in his sermons to popular criticisms of his message, thus allowing the reader a unique opportunity to evaluate the resistance his efforts provoked in the Gallic community, and to achieve some insight into the persistence of traditional religious and magical practices.

Caesarius was an active writer. In addition to the canons of several councils which he led between 506 and 533, a number of his pastoral letters have survived, as well as two short apologetic treatises, a *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, and a set of rules for monastic life. But it is as a writer of homilies that Caesarius is best known, and we are fortunate to have a large number of his sermons available to us. As bishop of the Metropolitan city of Arles, Caesarius was responsible for a province of twenty-seven dependent bishoprics. In order to provide pastoral teachings to such a wide-ranging congregation, Caesarius established a library workshop at the cathedral of St Stephen where he directed

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2 *Life of Caesarius* 1.55, as translated by Klingshirn (1993:37); a source we shall shortly discuss.

3 The Caesarian corpus in Latin is collected in *Sancti Caesarii episcopi Arelatensis Opera omnia nunc primum in unum collecta*, ed. G. Morin, vol I: *Sermones* (Maredsous, 1937); vol II: *Opera Varia* (Maredsous, 1942). Latin texts of the canons of Caesarius’ church councils can be found in Morin II, 35-89; his pastoral letters in English translation appear in Klingshirn 1993; the theological treatises plausibly attributed to Caesarius by Morin include the *De gratia* (Morin II, 159-64), *De mysterio trinitatis* (Morin II, 164-80), *Breviarium adversus hereticos* (Morin II, 180-208), and *Expositio in Apocalypsim* (Morin II, 209-77). Caesarius’ rules for monastic life are *Regula virginum* (Morin II, 99-124) and *Regula monachorum* (Morin II, 149-55).
aspiring clerics in the task of extracting those passages from the writings of Origen in translation, Ambrose, Faustus of Riez, Fulgentius — and primarily Augustine — which were best suited for the instruction of the people. These were compiled into collections of sermons, which were apparently intended by Caesarius to circulate like the letters of Cicero, Pliny and St Paul. 4 Several hundred of these survive and are available in an English edition of three volumes. 5 According to the groupings set down by G. Morin, Caesarius’ sermons are arranged according to topic; the first volume containing the admonitions: those sermons dealing with the fundamentals of morality, the classifications of sinners, and the principal vices of the day. 6 The sermons in volume two are those dedicated to scriptural discourse, and the third volume contains seasonal sermons, sermons on the saints, and sermons to monks. As could be expected, many of the passages regularly referred to are found in the first volume. We shall, in this thesis, range somewhat further afield.

In addition to Caesarius’ sermons, we also have a biography written by five of his contemporaries immediately after his death. The Life of Caesarius 7 comes to us in two books, the first of which was written by Cyprianus, bishop of Toulon from c517 to c545, Firminus, bishop of Uzès from c534 to c552, and Viventius,
whose see is unknown but who served as bishop from c541 to before 549. The second book was written by two clerics of the diocese of Arles “who had attended Caesarius since their adolescence:” Messianus, a priest, and Stephanus, a deacon.\textsuperscript{8} This work was undertaken at the request of Caesaria the Younger, niece of Caesarius and abbess of the local nunnery. According to Klingshirn, its purposes were twofold: to enhance the prestige of the monastery Caesarius had founded at Arles, encouraging the cult which was already starting to grow up around his miracle-working relics; and to endorse after his death the controversial ecclesiastical reforms which he had spent his life promoting (1993:4-5).

Caesarius, Pomerius, and Lérins

When Caesarius of Chalon arrived in Arles from the monastic community at Lérins c495, he made contact with members of both the city’s ecclesiastical elite and its lay aristocracy. Two of the latter, Firminus and his wife Gregoria, who are mentioned in the \textit{Life of Caesarius},\textsuperscript{9} introduced Caesarius to other notables

\textsuperscript{8} See William E. Klingshirn, \textit{Caesarius of Arles: Life, Testament, Letters}. (Liverpool UP, 1993) 1. See also Klingshirn, \textit{Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul} (Cambridge UP, 1994). Together, these books represent an immensely valuable contribution to the growing body of recent scholarship on 6th century Gaul. By reading the literary and documentary sources with a sharp eye for polemical intent and rhetorical strategy, and making use of the resources of sociology and anthropology as well as the evidence of archaeology, Klingshirn is able to provide us with a richly nuanced study of Caesarius’ life. Not only does he provide a well-balanced and intriguing story of the life of a city and the life of a bishop, he also challenges other scholars who have made definitive or dogmatic statements about issues not supported by primary sources. There remain, however, several junctures at which we would wish for a more cautious approach on Klingshirn’s part. His portrait of Caesarius, not as the bastion of orthodoxy who christianized Southern Gaul, but as an outsider whose version of Christianity was a foreign import to a region in which Christianity had a history stretching back to the martyrs of Lyons in the 2nd century, is a historical corrective that seems long overdue. Nevertheless, as we shall see in greater detail below, careful reading of Caesarius’ sermons would indicate that the main obstacles to his reforms were not the ‘surviving’ beliefs and practices of the indigenous people so much as the resistance of the local aristocratic landowners and suffragan bishops, fellow members of Caesarius’ Gallo-Roman elite, who were defending their self-interests against Caesarius’ attempts at centralizing and bureaucratizing ecclesiastical authority and wealth.

\textsuperscript{9} \textit{VCaes}. 1.8. A bishop Firminus of Uzès was among the authors of this work, and was perhaps a relative of this Firminus.
of Arles' literary set, including Julianus Pomerius, a rhetorician recently arrived from Africa, who was to have a profound effect on the development of Caesarius’ thinking. We know little about what passed between these two other than the famous dream of the dragon,\(^{10}\) in which Caesarius experiences a book of Pomerius’ rhetorical instructions chewing its way up his arm in the form of a large serpent. Pomerius’ later writing, including *On the Contemplative Life*,\(^ {11}\) in which he promoted an ideal of ascetic behaviour, was to prove far more acceptable and influential to Caesarius than were his earlier and, to Caesarius, more worldly lessons in rhetoric. Writing against the current predilection of aristocratic clergy to appropriate the prestige of asceticism without giving up their privileged way of life, Pomerius set out a program of radical reform in ecclesiastical practices, based on the idea that bishops and their clergy should live less like aristocrats and more like monks. Caesarius had recently been sent to Arles by the abbot of the monastery at Lérins to recover his health, which had been damaged during the two years he spent there by his enthusiasm for ascetic discipline (Klingshirn 1993:xii), so we may assume that Caesarius would not have been opposed to the far-reaching changes in ecclesiastical behaviour required by the ascetic ideals of Pomerius.

The renowned monastery of Lérins had been established c400 by St Honoratus, and was one of the great centres of learning in the West.\(^ {12}\) From the

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\(^{10}\) See *VCaes.* 1.9: “During his brief nap, he saw the shoulder on which he was lying and the arm with which he had been resting on the book [of rhetorical instruction, by Pomerius] being gnawed by a serpent winding itself around him. Terrified by what he had seen, he was shaken out of his sleep and he began to blame himself more severely for wanting to join the light of the rule of salvation to the foolish wisdom of the world.”

\(^{11}\) This work was written shortly after Pomerius was ordained a priest (c502), probably by Aeonius, Caesarius’ close relative and then bishop of Arles. See Klingshirn 1994:73.

\(^{12}\) John Cassian (360-435) arrived at Lérins in 415 after spending several decades in Egypt, and in 420 he wrote *Institutions of the Monastic Life*, upon which Lerins’ spiritual
very beginning, Lérins was not only the foremost source of teachers in the West,\textsuperscript{13} but also the source of many of the 5th and 6th centuries' leading clergymen.\textsuperscript{14} Young men of noble families entered Lérins for a year or two of intense ascetic discipline, and then these scions of lay society, with their wealth, prestige and good standing in the aristocratic community, would emerge to fill clerical offices and vacant bishoprics all over Southern Gaul. Besides Caesarius, Honoratus himself became bishop of Arles and was succeeded by the notable Hilary, his companion at Lérins, who served as bishop 430-440. The Lerinian rules, combined with Pomerius' teachings that members of the clergy should give up their wealth and live together like monks, as Augustine's clergy had done in Hippo, had a profound effect on Caesarius' later bishopric.

Monks had become a part of the daily experience of town dwellers from the early 5th century onward. The monk-bishops of Lérins often founded monasteries and abbeys themselves, and their own monks in turn served the suburban sanctuaries of the local saints. If Arles was the centre of Roman rule in

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\textsuperscript{13} In \textit{Serm.} 238, Caesarius reminds a congregation of monks that "with God's help you yourselves learn through reading [the Scriptures] what you can then give to others ..."

\textsuperscript{14} According to Markus (1990:194), "Maximus had been taught at Lérins so that he might teach at Riez. The idea of the monastery as preparation for the ministry was a recurrent theme in the biographies of Lerinese monk-bishops."
Gaul, it may also be seen, according to Brown, as a colony of Lérins,\textsuperscript{15} since during this time, when secular administration was breaking down in the West, bishops were stepping into the gaps and taking over the leadership of their communities. Markus refers to this confluence of the aristocratic and ascetic traditions as "the invasion of the City by the Desert."\textsuperscript{16} Where once the local landowner, Roman or Goth, had been the source of wealth, employment, patronage, and excitement, the population now turned to the bishop, just as two centuries before, Christian miracle-workers such as Aemilian of Cantabria and Martin of Tours had eclipsed the local pagan augur or tribal shaman (Hillgarth 1980:50-51).\textsuperscript{17} Klingshirn proposes that it was at just such moments of political

\textsuperscript{15} See Peter Brown, \textit{The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, AD 200-1000} (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 66. Like all scholars of this period, we are greatly indebted to Peter Brown, whose ground-breaking works have made a major contribution to our understanding of the cultural history of Late Antiquity. Over the last thirty years, reviewers have consistently praised Brown for his penetrating and often novel insights, his elegant and imaginative writing, and his mastery of the related material. More than any other writer of our time, Brown’s grasp of the importance of the personal in history, and his interest (not unlike that of Augustine) in the recesses of human nature, has given his readers a unique idea what it was like to live in Late Antiquity. Unfortunately, what we often miss in Brown’s examination of social and psychological subtleties is any sense of what one reviewer calls “the great clash, on a philosophical and theological level” in the realm of ideas. It has also been noted that Brown’s writings suffer somewhat from being elitist in outlook, concentrating on the upper echelons of society, and failing to consider the lives of ordinary men and women. In any case, even though Brown’s interpretations are not unchallenged, his work goes a long way toward helping us understand events of the period. Brown’s recent works, however, often present a challenge to those engaged in serious research. Not only does he all too frequently ‘rise above the actual text’ and present his readers with an argument that collapses when the primary material is carefully examined, but what would be valuable references to primary sources or literary works are sometimes in error. Furthermore, Brown’s most recent book, in spite of the relevance of its subject material and the quality of its scholarship, has proved next to useless for the purposes of this thesis because it contains no footnotes at all.

\textsuperscript{16} See Robert A. Markus, \textit{The End of Ancient Christianity} (Cambridge UP, 1990) 199. This book is an invaluable resource. It is dedicated to Peter Brown, and it contains a curative for at least two of Brown’s failings. The book is centered on the lives of common people and not on either secular or ecclesiastical ‘high politics’, and it is a book in which events are seen more clearly for the ideas that suffuse them. Markus provides enough documentation to satisfy the specialist and a lucidity to entrance the general reader. He deserves a great deal of credit for a sane, balanced acuity, and for being independent and original without being excessively idiosyncratic or quirky.

\textsuperscript{17} See the following section for more on this subject.
and cultural change that “new religious loyalties, beliefs and behaviours could be introduced and confirmed” (1994:202).

We can observe one particular example of new religious loyalties constellating at the Church council sponsored by Caesarius at Orange in 529. Dealing with the most serious matters of doctrine, such as grace, predestination and free will, which had concerned Gallic churchmen since Augustine’s anti-Pelagian writings, the council rejected some of the more extreme Augustinian positions like individual predestination to evil and to salvation, while accepting the role of divine grace in the acquisition of faith and the performance of good works. On the one hand, the results of this council can be seen as a compromise between “the ‘semi-Pelagianism’ of Lérins and the Augustinianism of Pomerius, whose influence on Caesarius’ concept of grace was profound” (Klingshirn 1994:142), but equally interesting is the presence at this council of no less than eight members of the Gallo-Roman aristocracy, illustrious laymen who were invited to attend in support of Caesarius’ theological agenda. According to

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See Ralph W. Mathisen, *Roman Aristocrats in Barbarian Gaul: Strategies for Survival in an Age of Transition* (Austin: U. of Texas Press, 1993), 221n52: Three of these laymen, Syagrius, Pantagathus, and Namatius, may have gone on to become bishops in their own right, the first of Grenoble, the latter two of Vienne. Mathisen’s source for this information is the *Concilia Galliae 451-525, Corp.chr.lat. 148A* (Turnholt, 1963). Mathisen is to be commended for allowing members of the Romano-Gallic elite speak in their own voices, and he deserves credit for his main thesis that barbarian integration into Roman society in Gaul was a collaborative process rather than a conquest, an idea which reflects Brown’s model of a symbiotic relationship between imperial and episcopal authority. Unfortunately, this book has been given a mixed reception by Mathisen’s peers. Although Raymond Van Dam allows that the strength of Mathisen’s book is found in the thoroughness of the documentation, he contends that Mathisen’s accounts of the period are too schematic and too impersonal; and that he gives little indication of how options changed throughout the century, or of how aristocrats in different regions reacted to different barbarian groups. Others agree that not enough attention is paid to regional differences in Gaul, and some maintain that Mathisen’s discussion of the Germanic takeover is too naïve. However, since the geographic range of this paper is limited and issues involving the original Germanic invasion only infrequently enter into the argument, Mathisen’s work will be referred to sparingly and with caution.
Mathisen, it was by such practices that "Gallo-Roman aristocrats-cum-bishops" were able to preserve their class unity and authority (1993:138).

**Caesarius in the political arena**

Both Augustine and Pomerius maintained that it was a bishop’s whole character and way of life that influenced a congregation,\(^{19}\) and although many of the reforms which Caesarius tried to put into effect were prompted by the local political situation, it was his training as a monk that had the greatest effect not only on his way of life but also on his concept of the bishop’s role in the Church. In the matter of charity, Caesarius was credited with the redemption of uprooted serfs and the ransoming of the many freeborn and nobles who had been captured in the course of the constant warfare of the era, an episcopal tradition that went back to Patrick of Ireland and Martin of Tours (Mathisen 1993:101).\(^{20}\) Klingshirn, however, brings our attention to the volume of money and property which changed hands during these transactions, and suggests that a bishop’s role as a redeemer of captives gave him a particularly visible way of exhibiting his authority, of exercising his local patronage, and of broadening his base of clients — as well as taking a firmer control of the church’s purse strings (1994:191-92). Just as Caesarius’ aristocratic background prepared him for his role as an administrator of charitable activities, so his monastic training provided him with the ability to be tactful when necessary. In keeping with the spirit of an era when debates between Catholics and Arians in the Burgundian kingdom were marked by what Mathisen refers to as “a genteel, drawing-room atmosphere with little

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\(^{19}\) See Augustine, *Doctr. christ.* IV 28.59; and Pomerius *Vita contempl.* 1.17

\(^{20}\) See *VCaes.* 1.32: “The Goths then returned to Aries with an immense number of captives. The sacred churches were filled with a crowd of unbelievers, as was even the bishop’s residence.” It is interesting to consider the use of the term ‘unbelievers’ (*infidelium*) in this context, rather than *pagani.*
hint of animus on either side,” Caesarius was careful not to mention Arianism by name in his anti-Arian work, *Synopsis against the Heretics* (1993:33).

Unfortunately, neither Caesarius’ noble lineage nor his ascetic schooling seem to have provided him with an adequate preparation for the harsh world of 6th century statecraft and intrigue. For much of his early episcopal career, Caesarius was plagued by accusations of treachery by the various secular authorities with whom he was required to cooperate. He had only been bishop for 3 years when, in 505, he was summarily ordered to Bordeaux by the Visigothic king Aleric “as if he had been sent into exile” because of a report by a member of his own staff. When Arles fell to the Ostrogoths in 507, the city was besieged by Franks and Burgundians; Caesarius was implicated in a plot to betray the city and was briefly thrown into prison. Again, in 513, Caesarius was accused of further intrigue and was escorted under guard to Ravenna to explain himself to the Ostrogothic king Theodoric. He was apparently detained in Ravenna for some time and eventually allowed to return to Arles, where, throughout the remainder of his long career as bishop, he carefully managed to avoid all such activities. Later that year, Pope Symmachus declared Caesarius papal vicar of Gaul, a move, according to Klingshirn, intended to support

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21 See *VCaes.* 1.21. The biographers of Caesarius compare his accuser to Judas: “... a wicked man named Licinianus, one of [Caesarius’] notaries, took on against this apostolic man the role that the apostle Judas had not feared to take on against our Saviour.”

22 See *VCaes.* 1.29: “One of the clerics, a fellow-townsman and relative of [Caesarius] ... let himself down from the wall by a cord at night, and offered [to turn the city over] to the besieging enemies ...” In an attempt to downplay Caesarius’ role in the plot, his biographers try to fix blame on the ‘usual suspects’: “… a mob of people, including a crowd of Jews, shouted without restraint and charged that the bishop had sent his compatriot by night to betray the city to the enemy.” But according to Mathisen (1993:80), there can be little doubt that Caesarius was involved: the Ostrogothic defenders of Arles were Arians and the besiegers were the orthodox Franks.

23 See *VCaes.* 1.36: “He [the devil] again had the bishop taken from Arles on trumped-up charges (accusatione confecta) ...”
Caesarius’ claims to regional hegemony in return for his acknowledgment of the universal primacy of the papacy (1994:xv), but Caesarius apparently carried out the responsibilities of papal vicar with little success.24

The *civitas Arelatensis*

Caesarius would certainly have believed, along with Augustine, that the ideal Christian life was social in nature, but his experiences in the broader political arena appear to have been so disappointing that he might well have also agreed with some of Augustine’s more pessimistic views of social life in this world.25 Augustine’s remarks, of course, are more a criticism of worldly pursuits than a defense of monastic life *per se.* Nevertheless, considering the numerous setbacks Caesarius seems to have suffered in the realm of public life, it is not surprising that he would have moved beyond the teachings of Augustine and come to believe that the only nation to which a Christian could actually belong was his heavenly *patria,*26 that the closest possible approximation to this *civitas dei* on earth was the monastery, and that the rule of the monastery was the ideal model for the broader Christian community: what Klingshirn refers to as the *civitas Arelatensis* (1994:181). Following the advice of Pomerius,27 Caesarius assigned the everyday management of church property and land to his subordinates, and, although he

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24 See *Letters* 7a through 8b.

25 See Augustine *Civ. dei* 19.5: “... who would be capable of listing the number and the gravity of the ills which abound in human society amid the distresses of our mortal condition? ... we are aware of wrongs, suspicions, enmities and war ... yet even peace is a doubtful good, since we do not know the hearts of those with whom we wish to maintain peace ... For even if anyone is strong enough to bear these ills with equanimity, or watchful enough to guard with foresight and discretion against the contrivances of pretended friendship, nevertheless he cannot but feel grievous anguish, if he himself is a good man, at the wickedness of the traitors.”

26 See *Serm.* 7.2: “Our country is Paradise, and our parents are the patriarchs, prophets, apostles and martyrs; the angels are its citizens, and Christ is our King.”

27 Pomerius, *Vita contempl.* 1.8; 13.1.
certainly did not renounce all personal possessions, he did his best to practice voluntary poverty.\textsuperscript{28} Furthermore, Caesarius not only used this model to organize and regulate the lives of the clergy of Arles, he also attempted to impose a strict monastic regimen of religious devotion and social behavior on his lay congregation.

Caesarius strongly recommended the essentially monastic practices of regular fasting and vigil-keeping for ordinary people as well as for the clergy.\textsuperscript{29} He added to the number of services held in the cathedral and urged regular attendance, daily and throughout the day.\textsuperscript{30} Bible reading was encouraged, and Caesarius thought that 3 hours a day, especially on long winter evenings, was not too much time to devote to the Scriptures (\textit{Serm.} 7.1-3). To the objection that many of his congregation were illiterate, Caesarius suggested that those who could not read might hire “poor men” who were literate (possibly clergy) to read the Scriptures for them (\textit{Serm.} 6.1-4; 8.1). The likelihood that only the very rich and the very poor would have had the amount of leisure time at their disposal to perform all this devotional activity might not have occurred to Caesarius, but the inappropriateness of his recommendations must have been brought to his attention. In Sermon 76 he states that if a busy person like himself can find time to

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{28} See Klingshirn 1994:89: “... in comparison with other bishops of his time — even other reputedly ascetic bishops — Caesarius possessed very little indeed.” See also 89n6: “The very fact that Caesarius composed a will at all sets him apart from Augustine, who made no will because he had no property to bequeath (Possidius, \textit{VAug.} 31).”
\item \textsuperscript{29} \textit{Serm.} 20.3; 44.4; 72.1; 196.1; 198.5; 84.6; 225.6.
\item \textsuperscript{30} \textit{VCaes.} 1.15 mentions the establishment by Caesarius of “the offices of Terce, Sext, and None, in addition to hymns,” and in \textit{Serm.} 86.5 Caesarius “admonishes and exhorts” the faithful to “rise earlier for the vigils” and to “come faithfully to Terce, Sext, and None.” See also \textit{Serm.} 196.2: “I exhort you, dearest brethren, to rise rather early for the vigils, and above all to come to Terce, Sext, and Nones. Let no one withdraw himself from the holy office unless either infirmity or public service or at least great necessity keeps him occupied.”
\end{itemize}
fast, keep watch, attend church, pray and read the Bible, then so should those with fewer responsibilities.

For the most part, however, Caesarius responded to these criticisms by cataloguing and condemning other activities to which the people devoted their discretionary time, such as “frenzied addiction to the playing-table” (Serm. 198.3), attending banquets or “extravagant luncheons” (Serm. 6.1; 8.2). Caesarius’ use of immoderate language in describing these activities presents a problem to the reader searching for nuanced meanings. For example, three different levels of usage for diabolicas may be seen in these sermons. First are the “diabolic” altars of pagan deities (Serm. 53.1), and “diabolical” magic signs and phylacteries (Serm. 13.4) which, along with Martin of Braga’s “diabolical incantations and chants” (DCR 16), would seem to designate activities condemned because of their non-Christian origins. At a second level is the condemnation of “shameful and diabolical” love songs which “the Devil teaches” and which “send a man into the darkness of the Devil” (Serm. 6.3). Here unrefined humour is assumed by the aristocratic Caesarius to be of the basest possible provenance. The third level of usage is typified by the “diabolical” gifts exchanged on the kalends of January (Serm. 192.3), ‘diabolical’ because they are outside of Church control. This lack of condemnatory precision is important to our argument, and will be further addressed toward the end of this section.

In the realm of social behaviour, Caesarius expanded the Church’s condemnation of adultery and sexual frivolity to include the common practices of concubinage and other de facto marital arrangements. He also sought to enforce
a high level of sexual continence$^{31}$ on members of his congregation, "frequently using the same language with which he exhorted monks and nuns to maintain their state of chastity" (Klingshirn 1994:190). He made it clear$^{32}$ that permanent celibacy was the standard against which all other forms of sexual expression were to be evaluated. Convivial customs, such as fraternal drinking parties, public dancing, and protracted feasting, were also criticized (Serm. 46.1-4), and people were admonished to behave in a frugal and sober fashion even at feasts held in celebration of Christian festivals (Serm. 188.5).

Caesarius contra Augustine

It was the hope of Caesarius that through the patterns of regularly fasting and keeping vigil, by reading the Bible and attending church services daily and even several times a day, by avoiding all but the most ascetic of celebratory behaviour and by abstaining from most, if not all, sexual relationships, the Christians of Arles might be drawn "into a liturgical rhythm shared by the communities of monks and nuns" (Markus 1990:24). Caesarius might have hoped that he could create a new kind of Christian society by replacing the common everyday activities of the people with the routines of the monastery, but popular habits proved remarkably resistant to eradication. One reason for this apparent tenacity was the lack of any appealing Christian alternative to these activities, and another problem seems to have been the failure of Caesarius to understand the social and symbolic purposes of food and drink or the value that

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$^{31}$ Married couples were to avoid intercourse on holy days and during times of penitence (Serm. 44.3, 7; 68.2; 187.4; 188.3; 199.7; 225.5; 229.4.), during pregnancy and menstruation (Serm. 44.7), and for the first week of marriage (VCaes. 1.59).

$^{32}$ See Serm. 6.7: "There are three professions in the holy Catholic Church: there are virgins, widows, and the married. Virgins produce the hundred-fold, widows the sixty-fold, and the married thirty-fold."
ongoing sexuality may have to marital relationships. As we have seen, Caesarius’ establishment of monastic communities in Arles as well as his effort to impress an ascetic standard on the local clergy were inspired by the teachings of Augustine, as they had reached him through the influence of Pomerius. There are, however, several salient points on which Caesarius differs from Augustine.

One of these differences is found in Caesarius’ modification of the Augustinian views on predestination. In an effort to convince his parishioners that salvation was dependent upon their participation in the social and spiritual reforms he was promoting, Caesarius adapted Augustine’s sermons, modifying their wording in ways that contrasted with Augustine’s more nuanced views.33 Even more important to our thesis was the difference between the attitudes of these two toward classical literature and scholarship. Not only did Augustine make frequent use in his writings of an encyclopedic knowledge and command of Roman literature, he also seems to have had a good understanding, and even an appreciation, of the finer points of Roman culture and religion. By way of contrast, Caesarius, although obviously well-educated, displayed the ascetic’s characteristic distrust of secular learning (VCaes. 1.9). He never used elements of classical literature or philosophy to understand or expound on Christian beliefs,34 as both Augustine and Origen had done, and his attitudes toward Roman religion

33 See Caesarius’ version of Augustine’s Serm. 49: “... before the tribunal of the eternal judge we might come with a secure conscience, saying, ‘Give, Lord, because we gave; forgive, because we forgave; we have done what you ordered; now you fulfill what you promised’” (Serm. 219.2, and almost identically in Serm. 220.3); see also his version of Augustine’s Serm. 85: “… if we give to the poor whether in food or in clothing, we shall deserve to obtain not only the forgiveness of our sins, but also our eternal reward” (Serm. 153.4).

34 See Markus 1990:205 & 195n47: In fairness to Caesarius’ position, we should be aware that the times were far from propitious to secular thought and letters. The reading of secular literature had recently been prohibited under Gallic canon law (Statuta eccl. ant. 5) in a collection attributed to Gennadius (fl 470) the semi-Pelagian presbyter and ecclesiastical historian of Marseilles.
(and culture, as we shall see) was dismissive at best and frequently hostile in the extreme.

Unlike Augustine, Caesarius tended to conflate the norms of behaviour appropriate for monks, the clergy, and the laity. If it ever occurred to him that an ascetic value system was insufficiently differentiated to be applicable to the population in general, the idea never appears in either his writing or that of his biographers, and what stands out about his repeated admonitions was the expectation that they would be obeyed by the entire population. Of course, as the discipline of celibacy started becoming the norm for the entire clergy, one of these levels of differentiation began to disappear, and as a result, the aristocratic clergy, their lives freed from the complexities of reproduction, became, like the monks and nuns, considerably more capable of practicing the ethical and religious duties which Caesarius was promoting than were the rest of the Christian population. The aristocracy, as might be expected, had less trouble with some of these expectations than did the peasantry. In wealthy households, for example, Bible reading had by this time became less of a novelty as aristocratic literary culture expanded to include Christian scriptures. Furthermore, because the aristocracy in general and the aristocratic clergy in particular derived their

35 See VCae. 2.6: “there are two places; there is no middle place, only two: either one ascends into heaven or descends into hell.’ See also Serm. 47.5: “Let no one deceive himself, brethren, for there are two places, but not a third. If a man does not merit to reign with Christ, without any doubt he will perish with the Devil.”

36 See Raymond Van Dam, Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul (Berkeley: UC Press, 1985) 63. In addition to Van Dam’s translations and commentaries on several of Gregory’s minor works, this book is invaluable for the quality of its social and political reconstruction. Van Dam has been praised for his firm insistence on understanding his sources on their own terms, and setting out to find the mental or spiritual reality in the minds of the participants, not the patronizing opinion of the detached observer. Although Van Dam occasionally seems to rely on insight rather than information, he also appears to recognize the limits of social-science methodology while showing at the same time a considerable amount of understanding of the role which illness played in the 6th century’s equation of holiness with power — an idea which will play a central role in my argument below.
support from the laity and from that portion of the monastic community devoted
to servile work, they enjoyed a degree of freedom from productive labour, and
hence a greater quantity of leisure time to devote to religious activities (Van Dam
1985:298). So as a result of Caesarius’ continual emphasis on the highest
standards of social behaviour and religious participation as a provision for full
‘citizenship’ in his broader Christian community, a distinction gradually arose
between the pious aristocracy on the one hand, and everyone else in the diocese
on the other.

As a result of what Klingshirn terms “their alienation from the existing
subcultures of production” (1994:199), the leaders and rulers of 6th century
Southern Gaul became even more remote than ever from the customs and
necessities of peasant life. For example, the whole of the sabbath day was to be
set aside for prayer and worship; all secular activities were to be avoided, and
sexual relations were forbidden. In 538, the Council of Orléans (Canon 31)
even went so far as to insist that people were not to perform any agricultural
activities on the sabbath. Edicts of this sort seemed to identify Christianity as a

37 Expressions of gratitude are due to my thesis supervisor, Dr. Paul Burns, for pointing out
that despite the views of Klingshirn, Van Dam, and Markus expressed herein, medieval
monasteries were centres of practical learning in the arts and crafts of agriculture:
fertilizers, rotation, grafting, stock breeding, butchering, metal work, carpentry, medicine,
etc. Recruits for monasteries were often peasants and they were involved in the servile work
carried on in the monasteries, all of which was very much rooted in rustic culture. It
remains within the range of reason that a class of monks from that educated social elite
would enter a monastery and take on its leadership, but this fact does not reflect the reality
of everything that was going on in the monastery, even though some of these leaders seem
completely unaware of these activities. For further information on this subject, please see:
Walter W. Horn, The Plan of St Gall: A study of the architecture and economy of, and life
in, a paradigmatic Carolingian monastery Berkeley: UC Press, 1979). An inquiry into
Late Antique Christian attitudes toward servile labour within monastic communities would
be of interest as well, though outside the parameters of this paper.

38 See Serm. 116.6 and especially 44.7, which includes the warning that children conceived
as the result of sexual relations on this day would “be born as lepers, or epileptics, or
perhaps even demoniacs.”

39 See Van Dam 1985:285ff, for what Klingshirn calls “a stimulating Lévi-Straussian
discussion” of this subject (1994:155n54). According to Van Dam, activities such as sex
religion concerned only with the attainment of the next world and not with the
difficulties of this one. The lives of the peasants were filled with the sort of fears
and uncertainties that a religion might well be expected to address, yet Caesarius’
fellow bishop, Avitus of Vienne, admonished his congregation not to pray for
“the happinesses of worldly life,” which included good health, peace and
prosperity (Hom. 7). To the peasants of Southern Gaul, whose lives were more
directly dependent than those of the nobility on a whole body of knowledge
relating to farming practices, familial relationship strategies, and the protocol of
celebrations, these rules must have seemed designed either with no thought as to
the realities of their lives or with the intention to exclude them from membership
in Caesarius’ civitas Arelatensis.

Caesarius and the threat of violence

These harsh views of modern writers like Klingshirn and Van Dam might
well be balanced against the words of Caesarius himself, but at first glance
Caesarius often appears to be of little help in this regard. According to Follis,
Caesarius of Arles never hesitated to recommend the use of force against those
who persisted in the sin of idolatry (1992:79). Likewise, Ferreiro quotes from
Caesarius’ Sermon 13.5: “whip them so that they may at least fear physical
blows, if they do not think about the salvation of their souls” (1988:234). In the
previous section we noted in passing that Caesarius’ reputation for the
advocation of violence was not entirely deserved. In fact, although he does
occasionally use quite strong language, declaring that the faithful should rebuke
idolaters, admonish them harshly, chide them severely, “strike them if you can,”
“tie them with bonds of iron,” and even “pull their hair” (Serm. 53.2), as well as

and agriculture were believed to be incompatible with the natural condition represented by
the myth of Eden; the Edenic state being only achievable through ascetic practice.
the well-known admonitions of Sermon 13.5, Caesarius is more often accommodating than punitive, and occasionally even outdoes Martin of Braga in the degree of his equanimity.

While calling on his listeners to despise “the ancient customs of the pagans,” Caesarius recommends that they reprove those who observe these traditions “with charity and patience” (Serm. 193.3). He also advocates grieving “over the foolishness of miserable men” in the spirit of “true and perfect charity,” saying that “the man who faithfully thinks about the salvation of his soul ought to grieve or weep over them rather than open his soul to miserable laughter …” (Serm. 192.4). Caesarius also speaks out strongly against mocking or lying to those neighbors who might be pagans: “Sometime the man whom you are mocking because he worships idols will be converted and worship God, perhaps more piously than you who laughed at him a little before” (Serm. 180.1). It is hard not to be impressed with the amount of good will expressed in these maxims, and it might, perhaps, be equally charitable of us to forgive Caesarius his odd indulgence in hard words. When taken in balance, the whole of his works seems to reveal a level of patience and magnanimity quite at odds with the reputation derived from a few dramatic quotations.

In light of these observations, an examination of the whole of Sermon 13 may be worthwhile. Caesarius begins by admonishing his audience to do more than

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40 This sermon is a minor work of art, and an inspiration to those of any faith. Preaching on the subject of Ephesians 4:25, Caesarius states that no one should “think that truth is to be spoken with a Christian, and lying with a pagan. Speak the truth with your neighbor. Every man is your neighbor ... even before he is a Christian. Our neighbors lie hidden in those men who do not belong to the Church. ... Therefore [the godly] should not become proud or [the sinners] despair, for we cannot know what the future will be. Let us consider every man a neighbor ... for we do not know what is going to happen to a man who now is either a Jew or a heretic or a pagan. Perhaps ... he will be converted to God in such a way that he will deserve to hold the first place among the saints.”
simply allow themselves to be baptized and thereafter call themselves Christians; they must also “perform the work of Christians” (13.1). This includes keeping the peace within one’s self and “recalling to harmony those who are at variance;” giving alms to the poor and providing candles for the altar according to one’s means; learning the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer; teaching your children (and godchildren) to live “chastely, justly, and soberly;” shunning unjust profits and not accepting bribes “at the expense of the innocent;” and drinking no more than is proper at a feast (13.2). If even “the unfortunate Jews celebrate the sabbath with such great devotion that they do no earthly work on it,” Christians should certainly be prepared to do the same. When in church, the faithful should spend their time in prayer and neither quarrel nor gossip. The proud should become humble; the licentious should become chaste; the envious should become kind; the irascible, patient; the thief should return what has been stolen and give of his own goods as alms; those who have done injury to others should immediately seek pardon, and those who have been injured should be generous with their forgiveness (13.3a).

At almost exactly the halfway point of this sermon, however, Caesarius switches gears. Those who are overtaken by sickness or infirmity should refrain from seeking “charmers, fountains, trees, sorcerers, soothsayers, seers or oracles” with their “diabolical phylacteries” and thus bringing “numerous evils upon themselves.” Instead, the sick should hasten to the church and “humbly and devoutly” ask for blessed oil with which to anoint themselves, since those who do so will receive “both bodily health and remission of their sins” (13.3b). In the previous section, we commented on Martin’s interesting, if tentative, strategy of providing a Christian alternative to traditional magic practices in order to meet the
practical needs of the people. Considerably more will be said in the section following this one as this ‘tentative strategy’ starts to take the form of Church policy.

In Sermon 13.4, Caesarius repeats his admonition to teach the children “and all of your household” to “live chastely, justly, and soberly.” One should not “utter shameful, dissolute words,” but rather “continually admonish” friends and neighbors to “say what is good and honorable.” Neighbors should be treated as you yourself would wish to be, and no one should do what they would be unwilling to suffer in turn. Christian tongues should be praising God and not “singing dissolute, disgraceful songs,” engaging in “evil speech,” executing “dances or pantomimes before the very churches of the saints,” “leading the chorus on the holy festivals(!!),” or uttering “the impious words of the pagans.” Performing these activities will cause a person to lose the grace of baptism, because such behaviour “has carried over from pagan practice.” If any of the faithful know of people who “practice that most sordid and disgraceful act of masquerading as old hags and stags,” who “shout” on the occasion of a lunar eclipse, who “fulfill vows to fountains or trees,” who “consult sorcerers, seers or charmers,” who “hang devilish phylacteries, magic signs, herbs, or charms on themselves or their family,” and who “do no work or weaving on Thursday,” they are admonished to “rebuke most harshly those whom you know do this. If they refuse to amend their life, do not allow them to have conversation with you or to come to your banquet. Moreover, if it is your affair, even whip them so that they may at least fear physical blows, if they do not think about the salvation of their souls” (13.5).
The modern reader may well recoil from harsh language of this sort, especially when it follows so closely upon such good (and godly) advice on how to live in peace and harmony with one’s neighbors. Nevertheless, we must make every effort to place statements of this sort in the context of their times. Nowhere in Caesarius’ sermons, for example, does he advocate beating or whipping those who steal or commit adultery, but undoubtedly these crimes were already subject to penalties that were as harsh or even harsher than those he advocates for such practices as he considers to be idolatrous. As far as losing the grace of baptism goes, a closer reading of the first chapter of this sermon may help us achieve a better understanding of this way of thinking. According to Caesarius, continually making the sign of the Cross will be of little benefit to the person who thinks evil thoughts, commits theft and adultery, or fails to give alms. Those who set out to do mischief will make the sign of the Cross if they stumble or hurt their foot, but will not then turn aside from the sins they were intent upon. Such persons, according to Caesarius, “do not know that they are shutting in demons, rather than excluding them” (Serm. 13.1). Taken in its context, this advice seems quite acceptable, even psychologically profound. Having observed Caesarius’ use of this turn of phrase in the context of a comment on ordinary morality, the modern reader will perhaps have a more tolerant reaction to Caesarius’ statement that those who, for instance, consult soothsayers “eject Christ from their heart and bring in the devil” (Serm. 229.4).

The demonization of secular practices

We have already noted in the previous section how Martin of Braga condemned a variety of social customs by identifying them under the broadened rubric of idolatry, and how he then went on to include idolatry among
considerably more serious crimes, a practice which was well-founded in earlier patristic writing. Caesarius does much the same thing, listing “observing auguries under the influence of soothsayers, seers and magicians” along with perjury and false testimony, murder, and the pollution of virginity as “serious sins” which cannot be atoned for by moderate means but “require more grave, sharper and public cures” (Serm. 189.2). In Sermon 229.4 he condemns drunkards, adulterers, the envious and proud, thieves, perjurers, and those who “fulfill vows to trees or fountains” and “consult magicians, soothsayers or sorcerers.” Chastity, sobriety, and a love of justice are recommended to those who receive baptism, and they are cautioned against stealing, lying, drunkenness, swearing, false witness, the use of “deceitful weights and false measures,” and the observation of omens (Serm. 130.5). Caesarius goes even further in Sermon 52.5; inveighing against those parents who seek out the services of a “soothsayer, seer, oracle, or witch” when a child is ill: “the Devil has one aim: either to cruelly kill the children by abortion, or to heal them still more cruelly by the charms.”

Unfortunately, the objective evaluation of the Caesarius’ writings is complicated by the wide range of behaviour being condemned as pagan and the indiscriminate nature of the polemic being marshaled against these activities.41 For example, Caesarius frequently inveighs against augurs, haruspices, soothsayers, prophets and oracles,42 but not only does he fail to provide us with

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41 See Klingshirn 1994:210. “Caesarius further obliterated distinctions in religious intention ... from the sacrifices and dedications of traditional Gallo-Roman religion to such activities as bathing in rivers on the feast of John the Baptist (Serm. 33.4) and exchanging presents on New Year’s Day (Serm. 192.3; 193.3), activities which had either been adapted to Christian purposes, or drained of their religious content.”

42 See Serm. 1.12: caragii, divini; praecantatores; 12.3-4: sortilegi, caragii, praecantatores; 13.3-5: haruspices, sortilegi, praecantatores, divini, caragii; 19.4-5: caragii, divini, praecantatores; 50.1.5: haruspices, praecantatores, divini, sortilegi; 52.1.5: harioli, praecantatores, haruspices; 54.1.3; S: haruspices, praecantatores, caragii, divini, sortilegi; 184.4: praecantatores, divini.
the information we need to determine what methods each of these were using to foretell the future, he often uses these same words to describe folk healers. Although a scholar might be tempted to understand any of these terms as having discreet and specialized meanings, it seems more likely that they are being used as undifferentiated expressions of censure. A parallel may be found in what Van Dam calls the “formulaic abjuration of Manichaeism ... [as] a stereotype that did not correspond to any historical reality” found in the writings of 5th and 6th century Gallic writers.43

We have already observed how Martin of Braga deals with the issue of demonology by working strictly within the context of a refutation of traditional practices. Caesarius does so as well, but in much less subtle terms. Although Caesarius complains on several occasions that popular social activities, such as drinking and feasting, use up resources that could better be given to the poor, or time which could be better spent on monastic pursuits, it is the supposedly pagan origins of these celebratory occasions to which he mainly objects.44 Likewise, it seems that his condemnation of the prevailing methods for controlling or stimulating fertility are largely based on their sources in pagan, magical or folk practice.45

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43 Van Dam 1985:103. “The only Manichee that Gregory of Tours knew of in the late 6th century was Pontius Pilate.” See also Caesarius Serm. 59.2, 5; 83.7; 101.1, 4; 114.1, 2; 125.1, 3; 127.1.

44 See Serm. 47.5: Concerning excessive drinking at banquets, Caesarius claims that “it is not a matter for wonder or grief that pagans who do not know God do this, because ... they observe the ancient customs of their fathers.” See also Serm. 55.2.

45 See Serm. 51.4: “... those to whom God is unwilling to give children should not try to have them by means of herbs or magic signs or evil charms. ... evil medicines ... impious [!] drugs ...”
Of course this tendency to stigmatize conventional behaviour as inspired by pagan, hence demonic, influences goes back even further than Caesarius. When Ambrose began his bishopric in Milan, he was shocked to find his congregation engaged in dancing during the worship service, and complained that this sort of conduct was pagan (*De officiis* I.43.213). Fifty years later, Caesarius condemns “those wretches who dance and caper about before the churches of the saints themselves … for that custom of dancing is still with us from pagan ritual” (*Serm.* 13.4). Was every element of human behaviour, save only the most monastically somber, to be condemned as pagan simply because people had always behaved this way? Why would both these Fathers of the Church not first think of King David dancing before the Ark (*2Sam* 6:12ff), if not as the source of this custom, at least as a venerable tradition which would allow them to tolerate it? It seems very unlikely that those who celebrated saints’ days or martyrs’ feasts by dancing in or in front of the churches were actually rejecting their Christian faith in favour of paganism, as Caesarius charges. Rather, as Klingshirn suggests, they may have been adapting their own celebratory customs to Christian ceremonies (1994:198-99), or attempting to find some ‘fit’ between their Christian religious skills and the patterns of an earlier time, as Brown proposes (1996:101).

We can certainly sympathize with Caesarius’ obvious interest in dissuading the faithful from idling away their lives with tawdry pastimes. Nevertheless, many of the practices which he condemns must appear to modern eyes as religiously

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46 *Serm.* 13.4 goes on to say “... if [those who dance] appear at church as Christians, yet they leave the church as pagans — for that custom of dancing is still with us from pagan ritual.” See also *Serm.* 55.2: “There are some people who come to the birthday festivals of the martyrs ... that they may destroy themselves and ruin others by intoxication, dancing, singing shameful songs, leading the choral dance, and pantomiming in a devilish fashion. While they should be doing the work of Christ they are attempting to fulfill the service of the Devil.”
neutral both in content and intention. We have already noted that the conflation in Caesarius’ writings between ‘immoral’ and ‘pagan’ might be due to what Markus terms a “radically Christian morality which left no room for a secular sphere between ‘Christian’ and ‘pagan’” (1990:208). For example, Caesarius often speaks out against peasant songs, calling them ‘shameful’ (Serm. 6.3; 33.4: turpia); ‘bawdy’ (Serm. 6.3; 16.3: amatoria); ‘wasteful’ (Serm. 13.4; 33.4: luxuriosa) and even ‘diabolical’ (Serm. 6.3: diabolicas) but, according to Klingshirn, it seems more than likely from the context that he is objecting to them mostly because of their supposed pre-Christian origins (1994:216). Before Christian times, people everywhere had “joined music and motion to their occasions of worship,” so dancing and singing may have been disturbing to church leaders because “Christianity must not be seen to need anything of the sort from the pagan past,” and perhaps also because they sensed the dictum of modern anthropology\(^{47}\) that ritual gives authority to belief (MacMullen 1984:75). Therefore, Caesarius may have been objecting to more than the failure to live up to monastic standards of behaviour; but rather reacting in frustration to a culture-wide reluctance — on the part of Gothic kings, Gallo-Roman aristocrats, and peasant farmers alike — to give up “old ways of thought and action, patterns of behaviour embedded in a society that was older than Christianity” (Markus 1990:206).

A further dimension to Caesarius’ criticisms, however, comes to light upon examination of the two sermons (192; 193) in which he condemns the popular

celebration of the kalends of January. This was a secular festival which Klingshirn tells us “offended church officials more because of its ‘worldly’ emphasis on prosperity and celebration than because of any religious deviance it might have exhibited” (1994: 218). We have already made reference to the ways in which Caesarius and his contemporary bishops regularly rebuked the people for praying for happiness and prosperity in their day-to-day life and for engaging in other spiritual strategies for material success. Many local customs involving traditional aspects of all levels of society — from feasting and celebrations to family planning techniques and adoption strategies — were objected to as ‘diabolical’ or ‘pagan,’ less because of their magical or folk characteristics than because these activities had no equivalent within the monastic tradition, and thus no ecclesiastical rules for their orderly pursuit.

The ‘moderation’ of Martin of Braga

As stated in the Introduction, the purpose of this thesis is to determine the role played by Martin of Braga in the development of ecclesiastical attitudes toward alternative religious practices and beliefs. An assumption of recent scholarship that could profitably be examined more carefully is Martin’s purported ‘moderation’. Several recent writers have credited Martin with displaying a tolerant attitude, of never using the threat of violence or physical punishment, and of demonstrating a conciliatory manner when dealing with those whose behaviour he criticized. Follis, for example, uses his thesis to examine the source of this tolerance: Martin is said to have been trained in a system that emphasized a non-violent attitude and accommodating pastoral style (Follis 1991:87). Caesarius, by comparison, is reported to have been trained in a monastic system which stressed hierarchy and correction, and this is proposed as an
explanation for what is purported to be his comparatively heavy-handed episcopal style (1991:81).

Ferreiro states that Martin’s peaceful attitude was the result of his exposure to the literature of the Early Church and to classical writers such as Seneca (1983:384). He was also said to show leniency in his policy and not to mete out physical punishments in this life, because he believed greater punishments to await unbelievers in the afterlife (1983:388). To his credit, however, Ferreiro later states that although he had once argued in favour of Martin’s ‘pacifism,’ those earlier views might have to be qualified: for one thing, similar pacifistic and conciliatory attitudes are to be found in Caesarius’ works as well (1988:233). We have certainly seen this to be true in our examination of his Sermons 180, 192 and 193 above. If these three sermons (which, when taken as a whole, are about the same length as Martin’s De correctione rusticorum) were all we possessed of his writings, Caesarius would seem to us a considerably more tolerant and reasonable writer than Martin.

On the other hand, Ferreiro also states that the Capituli Martini lacks all suggestion of brute force: “Canon 71 suggested five years of penance for those who consult soothsayers … Canon 77 prescribed ten years of penance for women who were guilty of self-induced abortion or infanticide” (Ferreiro 1983:386). In fact, penance as it was practiced in the 6th century was a severe punishment. It consisted of floggings and imprisonment, as well as the

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48 See ODCC 1059-60: “After the sinner, voluntarily or under threat of excommunication, had asked the Bishop for penance, he was enrolled in the order of penitents, excluded from Communion, and committed to a severe course of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. At the end of a period whose length was determined by the gravity of the sin, the sinner was reconciled and rejoined the congregation of the faithful. … The outstanding characteristics of this system were: (1) the enrollment into the distinct order of penitents, (2) it could be undergone only once in a lifetime, and (3) the enforcement of life-long continence.
requirements of continence, pilgrimages, and fasting of greater or less severity. Penance meant a lifelong isolation from society, since even those who had served their time were thereafter forbidden to become a soldier or to marry. “The (not infrequent) penitents who returned to the lay life were seized on by the bishop and forced back into monasteries or subjected to indefinite excommunication” (Hillgarth 1980:28). The exact details of how penance was practiced in Martin’s Galicia are unknown, but the situation in the rest of western Europe persisted as described above until the advent, late in the 6th century, of St Columban of Ireland (c543-615). Although the penances he prescribed were often as harsh as those proposed in the CM, punishments were more carefully graded, and not only acknowledged different degrees of offense, but demonstrated the more community-oriented principle of compensation as well (Hillgarth 1986:122). The publication in the middle and late 7th century of ‘Penitential Books’ for the use of confessors spelled the end of penance as severe punishment. Penance thereafter became more private than public, could be undergone more than once in a life time, and gave rise among the clergy to the office of the confessor as a skilled director of conscience (Wallace-Hadrill 1983:65).

The severity of the penalties being meted out here, as well as the reported fury aroused among the ‘rustici’ by the violation of sacred trees or fountains, may be easier for us to understand if we remember that the tenacity and obstinacy with which these condemned practices were embraced were prompted by genuine fears. We can also appreciate how difficult it might have been for a

Because of these characteristics the system broke down ... Owing to the grave inconvenience and interruption to ordinary life occasioned by long and arduous Penances, the system of commutation grew up.”

49 See ODCC 1060: Of Celtic origin, the best known of these Penitential Books was that ascribed to Archbishop Theodore (668-90).
religion like Christianity, “one of whose fundamental teachings was duty to cast out fear,” to deal effectively with beliefs of this sort (Flint 1991:212). The Church’s first solution to this thorny problem was to ascribe to the activities of demons both the source of these fears, as well as any (apparent) benefits that might be derived from the appeasement of the (supposed) demonic powers involved. To modern sensibilities, this might appear a relatively convoluted rationalization, but by accepting the existence of demons as needing no demonstration nor argument, and by crediting them with substantial (and often substantially contradictory) powers, the Church was simply invoking one of the universally held beliefs of the time (Hanson 1980:925). Furthermore, by accrediting the source of these universally held fears to demons, the Church “could thus solve that ancient riddle, Whence Evil? For they could ascribe no wrong to divinity” (MacMullen 1981:13).

The premise of both Martin and Caesarius, that the practices being condemned were actually conducted in the service of demons, was solidly based on patristic teachings (Ferreiro 1983:378). Providing alternatives to these activities, however, especially considering the manner in which respect was enforced, might have been every bit as difficult for the early Church as allowing these objects to be retained as centers of a differently directed devotion. Both Martin and Caesarius denounce as the workings of the Devil all traditional

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50 See McKenna 1938:102: It has been noticed that Martin recommends for these purposes more powerful Christian incantations such as the Apostles’ Creed, the Sign of the Cross, and the Lord’s Prayer (DCR 16). See also CM 74: “nisi tantum cum symbole divino aut oratione dominica, ut tantum Deus creator omnium et dominus honoretur.” But Caesarius also makes suggestions of this sort. See Serm. 50.1: “Anyone who makes these phylacteries ... [has] become pagan ... and cannot escape punishment. However, brethren, ask health from Christ who is the true Light. Hurry to church, be anointed with holy oil, and receive the Eucharistic Christ. If you do this, you will receive health of soul as well as of body.” Still, this idea of Christian ‘counter-magic’ bears looking into, and the subject will come up again in the next section when we discuss the hagiographic and historiographic writings of Gregory of Tours.
techniques of controlling nature and reducing the fear of evil spirits, and both
deal with the issue of demonology by working strictly within the context of a
refutation of traditional practices. But Martin's strategy for dealing with this issue
in the *DCR* is noticeably different from that of Caesarius. According to Hillgarth,
the main message of hope in what he calls Martin's "capsule history of
salvation," appears to be that demons need not be frightening "because they
have fallen and man is called on to ascend above them" (1980:24). By way of
contrast, Caesarius' approach to this problem appears somewhat simplistic and
considerably less adroit.

The version of Christianity which Caesarius promoted in his sermons was
essentially a religion developed over the course of several centuries by scholars
and other religious specialists. It had not, like traditional paganism, risen from
within the community itself. Nevertheless, Caesarius and his contemporaries
clearly wished Christianity to be a true community religion, meeting the spiritual,
practical, and traditional needs of the local people: a task for which, according to
Klingshirn, "Christianity was in many respects deeply ill suited" (1994:171). If
the purpose of Caesarius' sermons was to modify at least the practical and
traditional needs of the people in order that they might find accommodation
within the limited perimeters of Christianity as Caesarius perceived it, it is no great
wonder that his language oscillates as much as it does between violent anger and
genuine pleading.

Martin of Braga may have been pursuing the same goals, but his language
appears to be much more controlled than that of Caesarius, and his intellectual
vistas seem broader than those of Caesarius as well. To Martin, both pagan ritual
and pagan philosophy are in error, but he does seem willing to indicate different
degree of error, “which Caesarius obviously did not,” and thus arrive at some kind of synthesis of pagan culture with Christian orthodoxy “without sacrificing orthodoxy at the altar of antiquity;” (Ferreiro 1988:236). Caesarius might have hoped to create a new kind of Christian society — Klingshirn’s civitas Arelatensis — in which the rule of the monastery was obeyed by the broader Christian community, and the common everyday activities of the people were replaced with devotional and ascetic routines. There is, by way of contrast, not a trace of a monastic agenda in Martin’s writing, at least in the 40-odd pages of the DCR.

This is not to say that Martin is, in any way, lax on the subject of Christian morality and behaviour or ‘soft’ on non-Christian beliefs and practices. Although he inveighs in no uncertain terms against devotions to pagan deities and nature shrines, to the celebration of pagan festivals and pagan names for the days of the week, Martin never mentions social activities such as gambling, attending banquets or public dancing. He condemns the performance of pagan rituals for protection or prosperity, and the practice of divination or augury, but never promotes ascetic practices such as vigil-keeping, bible-reading, church attendance, or sexual continence. Although Martin speaks out firmly against the belief that the kalends of January is the beginning of the new year, he does not condemn the exchange of ‘diabolical gifts.’ Martin clearly states that those who persist in idolatry, adultery, perjury or homicide will lose the grace of their baptism, but he does not include the ‘singing of songs’ or ‘dances and pantomimes’ in this list of serious spiritual offenses.

By the mid-6th century, we may suppose that the practical and traditional needs of the people had proved, at least to a sophisticate such as Martin, to be
stubbornly resistant to change, especially to serious abbreviation. If a monastic-based Christianity was to have any success as a community religion, perhaps it was Christianity itself that had to be changed, or at least expanded, to meet the needs of the people, and it is to the works of Gregory of Tours that we now turn in order to examine the process by which this change was enacted.

Conclusions

The breakdown of secular administration in the West was accompanied by the rise of a new breed of ecclesiastical leaders who combined the aristocratic traditions of their social class with the ascetic training received in the monastery. Like the land-owning members of the senatorial class of earlier centuries, these monk-bishops became the local source of wealth, employment, patronage and cultural direction, but by failing in some measure to differentiate between the norms of behaviour suitable for clergy and laity they created a hierarchy of piety within the Christian community. Caesarius clearly hoped to create a new kind of society in which the rule of the monastery was obeyed by the Christian laity. To those whose lives were more directly dependent than those of the nobility on a whole body of practical and social activities, the rules of Caesarius must have seemed designed either with no thought as to the realities of their lives or with the intention to exclude them from membership in Caesarius’ civitas Arelatensis.

In spite of an image of Caesarius promoted by several scholars and based on a few dramatic quotations, we have demonstrated that his writings are more often accommodating than contentious, and occasionally even outshine Martin of Braga in the degree of his equanimity. If we are to distinguish between the writings of these two bishops in our attempt to discover the role played by
Martin in the development of episcopal attitudes during the 6th century, we must look elsewhere than Martin's purported 'tolerance.'

We have noted that although Caesarius objected to many local customs on the grounds that they had no equivalent within the monastic tradition and thus no ecclesiastical rules for their orderly pursuit, he was also frustrated by the reluctance of the laity to give up patterns of behaviour that were embedded in a culture that was older than Christianity. Many of these practices met the practical and traditional needs of the people, and Caesarius' sermons seem intent on arguing the people out of these needs so that they might find accommodation within the limited perimeters of Christianity as Caesarius perceived it.

Nowhere does Caesarius seem to acknowledge that the tenacity with which the practices he condemns were embraced was prompted by genuine fears. Martin, on the other hand, seems to be more sensible about the peoples' concerns and says much to allay, rather than disparage, their fears. Where Caesarius' language oscillates between violent anger and genuine pleading, Martin's language appears to be much more controlled, and his intellectual vistas seem broader. Compared with Caesarius, Martin is considerably more careful with his audience. He is not so overtly condemnatory, he does not inflate the idea of idolatry to include amiable social activities, and his writing shows no trace of an overt monastic agenda. Unlike Caesarius and his 'dream of the dragon,' Martin apparently had little difficulty joining the 'wisdom of the world' to the 'light of salvation.' It may be the quality of his education and his positive attitudes to secular learning that sets Martin apart from Caesarius.
Gregory of Tours

In the previous section, we examined Caesarius’ monastic agenda and its failure to meet the practical and traditional needs of the laity. In comparison to Caesarius’ elitist version of Christianity, Martin seems to be responding to a broader audience, and his language expresses more confidence and appears more under control than that of Caesarius. In this section, we shall see how Gregory’s style of leadership, as well as the considerably greater authority he exercised under sympathetic Catholic monarchs, made it possible for him to move beyond the monastic model of Caesarius. Under the influence, I shall maintain, of Martin’s responses to these issues, Gregory will be seen as abandoning opposition and antagonism for assimilation and expansionism, and thus allowing Christianity to expand into areas which had previously been considered irremediably secular.

Gregory of Tours (c539-594) stands out as one of the most prolific and eloquent writers among those aristocratic bishops who dominated the Gallic Church in the 6th century. In this chapter we shall be dealing principally with his hagiographic works since they, being intended for the inspiration, the edification (and frequently the correction) of Gregory’s fellow churchmen, contain a wealth of information applicable to the topic at hand. In addition to these works, specifically those elements of Gregory’s Miracula\(^1\) which are published in translation as Glory of the Confessors, Glory of the Martyrs, and Lives of the Fathers,\(^2\) a significant number of our references will be to passages from

\(^1\) Gregorii Episcopi Turonensis, Miracula et Opera Minora, B. Krusch, ed. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum: Hanover, 1885).

\(^2\) Gregory of Tours: Glory of the Confessors, R. Van Dam, trans. & intro. (Liverpool: UP, 1988), and Gregory of Tours: Glory of the Martyrs, R. Van Dam, trans. & intro. (Liverpool: UP, 1988), hereafter referred to as GC and GM, respectively.; Gregory of
Gregory’s longest and best-known work: *History of the Franks.* The reasons for these choices will become clear as our argument progresses, but a few introductory remarks may be in order here. The vast majority of the material in *History of the Franks* appears at first glance to be essentially secular in nature. Gregory writes, for the most part, of ordinary events that are quite recent in time and proximate in space to his readers. Upon closer reading, however, it may be seen that he has combined his considerable gifts of narrative with a fair amount of sociable folk wisdom in order to bring theological principles to bear on current values and local issues. For example, many of the passages in this work appear to be directed against the misbehaviour of the royal grandchildren of Clovis in a (somewhat naïve) attempt to convince them to return to what is portrayed as the more peaceful and pious standards of their grandfather’s time (Peters 1975:viii).

It is also important to recognize that *History of the Franks* actually reads as a history of Christianity in Gaul more than as a history of its Gothic rulers. In *HF* 1,

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*Tours: Life of the Fathers,* E. James, trans. & intro. (Liverpool: UP, 1985), hereafter referred to as *VP.* Two other minor works of Gregory, *Life of St Julian* (*VI*) and *Life of St Martin* (*VM*), are not yet available in English translation and will be referred to sparingly, relying on translations supplied by our secondary sources.

3 The standard Latin edition, which we will, as usual, only occasionally refer to for an exact word or phrase, is *Gregorii Episcopi Turonensis: Libri Historiarum,* B. Krusch and W. Levison, eds. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Merovingiarum: 2nd edition, Berlin, 1937-51). Several English translations of this work are available, the most recent being by Lewis Thorpe (Penguin, 1974). I will mainly, however, be referring to the older translation by O.M. Dalton (Oxford: Clarendon, 1927), not only for its more extensive notes and especially valuable commentary on the fine points of translation, but also because of its language, which according to a review by M.L.W. Laistner, *History* 13 (1928), 44, “is not only an accurate rendering of difficult and often tortuous Latin, but reads as fine English prose with a slightly archaic flavour, eminently suitable to the subject.”

4 See *HF* 5, *Praef:* “Just think of all that Clovis achieved, Clovis, the founder of your victorious country, who slaughtered those rulers who opposed him, conquered hostile peoples and captured their territories, thus bequeathing to you absolute and unquestioned dominion over them! ... But you, what are you doing? What are you trying to do? You have everything you want! Your homes are full of luxuries, there are vast supplies of wine, grain and oil in your store-houses, and in your treasuries the gold and silver are piled high. Only one thing is lacking: you cannot keep peace, and therefore you do not know the grace of God.”
the first Roman emperor becomes Julius Caesar, the conqueror of Gaul. Augustus was apparently only his successor, notable for being emperor at the time of two important events: the birth of Jesus and the foundation of Lyons. Gregory explicitly refers to Clovis in *HF* 2 as "the new Constantine" thus, according to Van Dam, allowing the establishment of Frankish rule in Gaul to be conveniently fitted into a view of history revolving around conversion to Christianity rather than the machinations of Roman authority (1985:182-83). Whether Gregory was addressing his voluminous output of writings toward either the Gothic Franks, the Gallo-Romans, or both of these groups, is a matter of some discussion among modern commentators, but the material that will mainly concern us here is that which was written to address the concerns of the pastorate Gregory undertook among the Christian Gallo-Romans.\(^5\) Much of this, as we shall see, is included in *History of the Franks* as well as in his more conventionally hagiographic works.\(^6\)

Gregory's writings are distinguished by a remarkable level of liberality and goodwill. He appears to have been an able leader and a clever negotiator, and his statecraft never strays far from the task of feeding the poor, protecting the widows and orphans, healing the sick, calming social unrest, and bringing peace to the citizenry. His obvious affection for the people is surpassed only by his burning love for the saints and martyrs, and he continually expresses cheerful and

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\(^5\) See Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History.* (Princeton: UP, 1988) 138. In this book Goffart demonstrates the importance of examining his authors' intentions and the necessity of discovering how the world looked to them. He resists the temptation to dismiss Gregory as naïve, portraying him instead as a thoughtful historian and a conscious literary innovator. Goffart is also credited for following the advice of Michael Wallace-Hadrill: the inner workings of the age in question would be unraveled, not by archaeology, but by the intensive study of its literature.

\(^6\) Whatever their intended audience, Gregory's writings are invaluable to modern scholars of the period. According to Brown, it is in the "concrete and fastidious" details of Gregory's hagiographic works that social historians are able to find "fragments of local colour" and other truly important facts about Merovingian Gaul, including the very first mention of *omelette à la provençal* in *GM* 79 (1981:81).
apparently ingenuous amazement at the benefits available through appeal to the
memory and the relics of these holy figures of the often quite recent past.\(^7\) To
Gregory, doctrine is a closed issue, so although his saints are a numerous lot, they
are rarely distinguished by the acuity of their reasoning. On the whole, these are
men and women who ask no questions and have no theological quirks; their faith
and their asceticism mark them out from the rest of humanity and are rewarded by
God with the ability to perform miracles.

No miracle-working saint can claim a more central place in Gregory’s writings
than Martin, the venerable 4th century bishop of Tours (c316-397). Martin of
Tours had been one of the most renowned ecclesiastical leaders of his time, his
work having earned him the title of “patron saint of France.”\(^8\) He appears to
have been a charismatic Christian thaumaturge of the type which sometimes
flourished in rural areas, bringing a churchly presence to the role which had
previously been filled by the local pagan augur or tribal shaman. Such was his
regional popularity that, to the reported consternation of the local Church
authorities, he was elevated from relative ecclesiastical obscurity to the office of
bishop by enthusiastic acclamation of the laity.\(^9\) Although St Martin himself was
clearly neither an aristocrat nor an intellectual, his biographer, Sulpicius Severus
(c360-c420), was both; and his Life of St Martin\(^10\) reads as a challenge to the

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\(^7\) Some modern writers are less than generous with their evaluation of Gregory’s credulity. The word ‘naïvité’ is not infrequently used. Goffart, for example goes so far as to say that Gregory’s “own unabashed and boundless faith in miracles is deemed to show that the Gaul he lived in stood closer to the Haitian hinterland than to the fellowship of decorous Christians” (Goffart 1988:231).


\(^9\) Sulpicius Severus, VMart. 9. See following note.

following generations of aristocratic bishops to be active in local affairs and involved in the daily lives of the people.\textsuperscript{11} As we shall see below, this style of leadership would give bishops like Gregory the important ability to move beyond the monastic model of Cassian and Caesarius and allow Gallic Christianity to expand into areas of ancient society which had previously been considered irremediably secular.\textsuperscript{12}

It is, however, as a peerless miracle-worker and a patron of church authority that Martin of Tours appears most frequently in Gregory’s writings. Just as in his historical works, Gregory’s hagiography is marked by an neighborly sense of regionalism that concentrates almost exclusively on local events, local sites, and the holy works of local saints. The results of this focus are two-fold. First, Gregory is able to create and promote a significant number of devotional centres and pilgrimage destinations which are not only within reasonable traveling distance, especially in contrast to both Rome and Jerusalem, but which also constellate around his own seat of authority at the tomb of St Martin in Tours. Second, Gregory becomes able to represent himself as having the powerful and ever-present St Martin for his own sovereign; claiming an ecclesiastical line-of-succession which he uses to great effect in his dealings with local authorities.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{11} See Wallace-Hadrill 1983:5: “What was remarkable about [Martin of Tours] was the combination of recluse with man of action. At no time was he shut away like some Eastern contemporary to browse at will in the approaches to heresy. A vir apostolicus with his feet on the ground, he was up to his ears in work — healing, exorcising, arbitrating and so on.”

\textsuperscript{12} See Van Dam 1985:234: “... the traditions about St. Martin were manipulated during later centuries to ensure the dominant position of Christianity in a changing society. ... the weight of tradition was light enough to allow people to do whatever was necessary in their current situations, it was also heavy enough to provide the illusion of stability and consistency.”

\textsuperscript{13} See HF 8.6 (Gregory before King Guntram): “Let thy mightiness hearken, O king. Behold, I am sent to thee, a messenger from my lord (dominus). What answer shall I return to him who sent me, since thou wilt make me no reply?” At this he was astonished, and said: ‘And who is this thy lord, who hath sent thee?’ I answered with a smile: ‘The blessed
Gregory and the Franks

Gregory of Tours was one of several “logical and conscientious administrators” who flourished in the gap between “the ruthlessly maladministered world of the late Roman Empire and the irregularly and often brutally underadministered world of the early Germanic kingdoms,” and is said to have provided the Gaul of late antiquity with civic leadership that was “literal, specific and generally full of good sense” (Peters 1975:viii). Gregory was born in the Auvergne, a territory in the centre of Gaul whose capital was Clermont, in 538/39, a few years before Caesarius died; but this was a significantly different Gaul from the one Caesarius knew. Whereas Roman emperors had still ruled at Ravenna when Caesarius was a child, Gregory was the subject of the Frankish kings who only a few years before had succeeded the Romans as rulers of Gaul (James 1985:1).

Gregory was descended from a Gallo-Roman senatorial family who, although they had been relatively unknown during the Roman period, achieved distinction under barbarian rule as the holders of ecclesiastical office (Mathisen 1993:130-31). The bishops of Langres, Lyons, and Clermont were Gregory’s grandfather,

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Martin, he it is who hath sent me.” See also the commentary on this passage in Van Dam 1985:217: “As the bishop who sat on ‘the sacred throne of St. Martin’ [Fortunatus Carm. 8.15.3], he could now consider even acting independently of kings.”

Late in the previous century, Sidonius had complained about the rise to power of those who did not share with him the belief that it was improper for good Roman aristocrats to associate closely with the ruling Goths. In Epist. 5.7.6, he refers to those of his class who had the ear of King Chilperic as ‘venomous advisers’ (venenato interprete). Arvandus, then the Praetorian Prefect of Gaul, is said to be of ‘plebian family’ (plebeiae familiae) in Epist. 1.7.11, and Paeonius, Count of Auxerre and ancestor of the Mummolous of whom Gregory speaks highly in HF 4.42, is dismissed by Sidonius in Epist. 1.11.5 as ‘town born’ (municipaliter natus). See also Mathisen 10-11: “By the late 4th century, the term senator no longer was limited only to members per se of the senate of either Rome or Constantinople. ... All who had held [senatorial] rank, as well as their sons or even other descendants, had a claim on being identified as senators. As a result, the senatorial order comprised an increasingly large upper class, a true empire-wide aristocracy that was much more representative of all the provinces of the empire than the earlier imperial senate had been.”
great-uncle, and uncle, respectively (Goffart 112), and he claimed descent not only from all but five of those who had preceded him as bishop of Tours (HF 5.49), but also from the prominent Gallic saint, Vettius Epagatus, one of those early Christians martyred at Lyons in 177 (VP 6.1). In fact, Gallic nobility had, since the end of the 4th century, become so closely associated with the Church that aristocratic status was said to be all but a prerequisite for episcopal office (Mathisen 1993:91).

When Gregory succeeded Eufronius, his mother's cousin, as bishop of Tours in 572/73, both the people and the clergy, as well as the Frankish king Sigibert, were said to be enthusiastic about his appointment. But Sigibert was assassinated less than two years later, and there followed nearly ten years of conflict during which Gregory had to contend with the hostile King Chilperic (the probable assassin of his brother Sigibert), and his Queen Fredegund (James 1985:2). By 584, when Chilperic was assassinated in turn, Gregory had survived several attempts at deposition, had managed the unseating of Count Leduastes, his Frankish rival, and had consolidated his authority to the extent that he was able to exercise considerable administrative freedom under succeeding rulers (Peters 1975:120).

Gregory, along with the rest of the Christian clergy of Gaul, greatly favoured the Franks. Unlike his Gothic cousins, who had become Arians first and Orthodox later, the great Frankish chieftain Clovis had, in 496, converted directly to Catholicism: "They had passed over the decadent Gallo-Romans like a purging fire; had accepted the guidance of the Catholic hierarchy; and Gregory was

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15 See also Fortunatus Carm. 4.8: "From both his father and his mother he inherited membership among bishops, and his episcopal see was part of the family legacy."
grateful” (Wallace-Hadrill 1952:67). Once hostilities broke out in the early 6th century between the Catholic Clovis and the Arian Goths under Alaric II, Gregory reports much sympathy for the Franks among the Catholic bishops (HF 2.35). By Gregory’s own day, the Franks were certainly ready to support the Catholic establishment against the threat of Arian heresy, and this appears to be an even more salubrious situation than the one which Martin of Braga enjoyed in Iberia among the Catholic Sueves.

As a result of the supportive relationship between the Franks and the ecclesiastical authorities, the decentralization of Roman power in Northern Gaul appears to have been counterbalanced, at least to some extent, by the stabilizing influence “of the older, aristocratic Gallo-Roman families and by the sobering role of the church” (Peters 1975:118). In fact, the Romani might not have viewed the Frankish kings as being all that different from the Roman Emperors who had preceded them: both appear to have been warriors first and administrators second; neither seemed to care much for book learning; and few can be taken as being anything more than nominally religious. The Franks themselves may have appreciated the support of the Catholic clergy, but their relationship with the church was also marked by some of the same tensions previously seen between the imperial Court and the senatorial aristocracy of Rome. According to Gregory,

16 For a detailed account of the conversion of Clovis, see Hillgarth 1986:74-75.
17 Caesarius may have been inspired to treasonable activity on this account; and at any rate he was exiled, on suspicion of conspiring to deliver his city to the Burgundian allies of Clovis.
18 See also King 1972:5: “It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Goths, living in a predominantly orthodox world, clung so stubbornly to their Arianism in large part because the heresy represented an essential mark of their distinctiveness as a people from the native Romans.”
19 This is Gregory’s usage. According to him, the term Romani was used by the Gothic Arians to designate orthodox Catholic Christians (GM 24). See also King 1972:5n2, and Van Dam 1985:179.
King Chilperic complained that his treasury was empty and that all his wealth had been transferred to the Church: “Only bishops have any power” (HF 6.46).

Gregory as author

The patience of modern readers is often challenged by the anti-classical and anti-intellectual nature of Gregory’s writings. In his preface to Glory of the Martyrs, we read of Gregory’s opposition to secular learning that is based on Cicero, Virgil, and other pagan authors (whose works, it is obvious from the text, Gregory knows very well). Gregory’s anti-intellectualism is nowhere more clearly seen, according to Goffart, than in his concept of history as an aggregate of episodes detailing a seemingly endless number of miracles. Furthermore, systematic theology was clearly not one of Gregory’s strong points, and a close reading of his arguments against Arianism would seem to support this view. Gregory also continually apologizes, with what can almost be perceived as a touch of ironic pride, for the poor literary quality of his work, using the term rusticitas to describe his writing. In fact, Gregory grew up in a literate

20 “The priest Jerome ... relates that he was once led before the tribunal of the eternal Judge. ... he was strongly criticized because he had too often read the subtleties of Cicero and the lies of Virgil ... For it is not proper either to recall deceitful myths or to follow the wisdom of philosophers that is hostile to God, lest we slip into the penalty of eternal death when the Lord passes judgment. ... I do not wish myself to be overcome by or entangled in these snares. I do not commemorate the flight of Saturn, the wrath of Juno, the debaucheries of Jupiter, the insult of Neptune ... I say nothing about the mission of Cupid, the love for Ascanius and the wedding, tears, and fearsome destruction of Dido, the gloomy entrance court of Pluto, the debauched rape of Persephone, or the triple heads of Cerberus ...” See Van Dam’s comments (1988:18-19).

21 Goffart 1988:145: “[Gregory] had a clear sense of how to communicate Christian truth as an appeal to the experience rather than to the intellect of his listeners. He would set before them the wonders of today. God’s free, inexplicable, and unexpected intrusions into daily life ... an aggregate of such episodes was the form he gave to his militant anti-intellectualism.”

22 See HF 1, praef., HF 3, praef. In GM 12 and 24, Arianism is defeated not by logical arguments but by the power of relics, and in GM 80 an orthodox deacon is able to retrieve a ring from a pot of boiling water without harming himself while an Arian priest who attempts the same feat is not so fortunate: “As soon as he put his hand in the water, immediately his flesh was melted down to the very joints of his bones and fell off.”

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environment, and his works show him to have been widely read. According to McDermott,23 Gregory’s knowledge of law was extensive, his familiarity with the work of Christian poets and historians was wide and effective, and in spite of his condemnation of secular authors, Gregory clearly knew his way around Virgil.

Both Van Dam and Wallace-Hadrill have noted that Gregory is able, through the use of language which would have seemed unsophisticated and ungrammatical to a classicist, to tell a story that no classical writer could have told. Wallace-Hadrill credits Gregory with raising what he terms the *sermo rusticus* to a new level of literary distinction, and states that we have in Gregory (along with Augustine, who started to formulate “the stylistic contrast between classical rhetoric and Judaeo-Christian literature,” and Caesarius with his “vivid, direct sermons”) a trio of writers of a new Latin that was “trenchant, mordant, and right for the job” (1975:13). Gregory includes in his stories not only direct dialogues between participants and pointed exhortations to his readers, but active descriptions of the emotions of those present at the original events. These latter, particularly, can be seen as verbal cues for influencing the responses of his audiences.24 Making use of a popular and colloquial Latin that was just beginning to evolve into what would later become the French language, Gregory’s great talent for storytelling developed into a new literary genre in which both he and his audiences seem to have found “more insights in anecdotes than in systematic theology” (Van Dam 1988:14).25

23 See McDermott’s essay on Gregory (Peters 1975:115-28).

24 See the ending of *GM* 13: “a great fear arose in everyone, and no one again dared to tamper with the sacred relics.”

25 See *GM* 79 for a charming anecdote in which an Arian priest chokes to death on food he has blessed. Ignoring whatever doctrinal subtleties might have been involved in the argument between a pair of competing Arian and orthodox priests, both of whom go through great (and even comic) contortions to avoid eating food blessed by the other: “...
By modern standards, Gregory's writing may seem naïve and superstitious as well, and a modern audience may suspect him of intentionally pandering to the popular tastes of the masses. Flint reminds us, however, that the words 'popular' and 'superstitious,' when applied to examples of beliefs, practices, and (especially) texts, do not necessarily indicate that these are the exclusive attributes of uneducated or socially marginalized people (1991:37). As we have noted before, the clergy and nobility of 6th century Gaul were not only likely to be every bit as superstitious and ill-educated as the peasants, but were also capable of considering their own beliefs in the supernatural to be more sophisticated than those of the underclasses. In VM 3.16 for example, Gregory tells a revealing story about a child who was blinded by a dust storm. The boy's mother was a countrywoman, Gregory says, and poorly educated, otherwise she would have known enough to make the sign of the cross (signum crucis) which would have effectively protected her child from harm.26

The rise of Christian countermagic

With this caveat in mind, let us take a closer look at some of the beliefs and practices implied in Gregory's writings. Most noticeable in the context of this inquiry is his apparently permissive attitude toward pre-Christian practices. Where Martin of Braga and Caesarius of Arles had forcefully condemned the popular recourse to protective talismans and magical amulets, Gregory repeatedly recommends the use of such objects, specifically those which he deems to have most people could easily understand how Arianism was the religious equivalent of a bad case of indigestion" (Van Dam 1988:14). Both Wallace-Hadrill and Van Dam refer in this matter to an essay on Gregory in Chapter 4 of Auerbach's Mimesis (Princeton UP, 1953), 77-95. Van Dam further comments on Auerbach's "wonderfully sensitive and perceptive appreciation that it seems quite proper to have included Gregory in the same book with Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, and Cervantes" (Van Dam 1988:14n14).

26 See De Virtutibus Sancti Martini III, 16; edit. Krusch, MGH SRM, I, 186. Unfortunately, this text is not available in English. The translation quoted here is from Flint 1991:182.
acquired a special power by their association with Christian saints and martyrs. On two occasions Gregory’s family fields are saved by the display of magical charms: in VM 1.34, Gregory calms a hailstorm by placing a candle from the tomb of St Martin in the top of a tall tree; and Gregory’s mother turns back a wind-blown fire with the use of relics. The latter case is particularly interesting: first Gregory’s father and then his mother were said to have worn around their necks a gold reliquary in the shape of a wolf (lupinus aureus). Gregory candidly admits that neither he nor his parents actually knew the name of the saint or saints whose relics (reliquiae) were contained therein, but because of the power of this device (pignus) to turn aside “the violence of bandits, the dangers of floods, the threats of turbulent men, and attacks from swords,” Gregory states with confidence that it must have been a gift from God “through the faith of the saints” (GM 83) in spite of its notable similarity to the protection which traditional Roman paganism attributed to charms in the form of fierce beasts. To Gregory, at least in this case, efficacy was the primary test of sanctity and acceptability.

The development of a kind of Christianized countermagic may be seen as a not-unreasonable ecclesiastical response to what by Gregory’s time was likely the obvious inefficiency of purely repressive methods. By offering specific alternatives to non-Christian amuletic practices, with their long traditions of usage in matters of health and personal safety, church leaders could recommend

27 “It is a long story to tell how many miracles occurred from these wax candles ... Each year a hailstorm had been wont to lay waste a certain field in our possession ... I chose one tree which was taller than the rest amid the vineyards and placed some of the sacred wax upon it. After that day ... the storm has never struck there, but when it comes, it passes over that place as though afraid” (Peters 1975:175, McDermott, trans.).

28 For example, see Pliny Natural History 28.78 on the protective and curative powers of wolf amulets. See also Van Dam 1988:10.
recourse to holy relics instead, and thus focus attention on Christian — rather than pagan — sources of protection. Gregory’s stories of miraculous cures often involve magical curative practices that differ from the condemned beliefs and behaviour of the non-Christian opposition only in so far as the magic is worked by a good Christian and the herbal preparations and ligatures normally employed are accompanied by the sign of the cross.29

Likewise, the pagan practice of incubation in temples30 is duplicated in Gregory’s frequent stories of healing miracles that take place after spending the night in the tomb of a saint. In VP 6.7, Gregory tells us of a man who was cured of a fever when he ate herbs that were scattered on a saint’s tomb.31 Other pre-Christian attitudes toward the dead are evident in two of Gregory’s anecdotes. In his earlier Vita S Germani 1.5,32 he tells of how the ghosts of two improperly

29 For two stories that are hard to distinguish from the defeat of a wicked witch by a good one, see VP 19.2, in which St Monegunde treats a child who has been made ill by the potio of a maleficium. The saint binds a vine leaf to the child’s stomach and makes the sign of the cross, and he is cured. Likewise, in VM 4.36, Gregory’s niece, Eustemia, counters (and outdoes) the healing efforts of a hariolus. Removing the offending bindings, she makes a better one out of the candlewax and lamp oil from the tomb of St Martin. See also Flint 1991:306n145 for her interesting comments on the “remarkable parallels to later situations, in which illness which was sudden and unaccountable was liable to provoke accusations of witchcraft. ... We may see in the provision here of a form of Christian countermagic evidence of a gentler and less socially divisive answer than witchcraft accusations pursued to their full conclusion were later to be, and as they might have been here had the cure not been effective.”

30 Incubation was the practice of sleeping in the precincts of a temple in order that a healing deity might reveal a remedy for the sleeper’s sickness or trouble. This practice was common among both the Greeks and Romans (OCD 543).

31 See VP 6.7: “The singer Valentinianus ... found himself taken with quartan fever while he was still a deacon ... and was gravely ill for several days. ... he came to the tomb of St Gallus and prostrated himself before it ... he took some of the herbs which had been strewn around the tomb by the faithful in honour of the saint, and since they were green he put them in his mouth, chewed them with his teeth and swallowed the juice. ... he was so restored to health that he had no sort of relapse ...” According to Flint (1991:309n158), these herbs had apparently gained their curative power by lying on the tomb, which would have been expected according to the beliefs allied with pagan incubation practices — although Gregory carefully associates it with the raising of Lazarus. See also HF 7.12, in which cloths strewn with herbs are said to be proof against fire.

32 Unfortunately this text is not available in English. The story appears as it is related in Flint 1991:270-71.
buried criminals haunted a dilapidated house and frightened the nearby inhabitants until the saint gave their bones a Christian burial and prayed over them. In *GC* 18, the spirits of two holy virgins whose tomb lacked adequate shelter from the rain haunted the neighborhood until the terrified peasants built new roofs and an oratory. In both cases, the dead terrorized the living in a similar manner to that of the untimely and ill-buried pagan dead, “but to the best and most Christian of ends” (Flint 1991:271).

St Gallus was Gregory’s maternal uncle and bishop of Clermont from 525 until his death in 551. While serving as a deacon in his youth, he destroyed a pagan shrine in the vicinity of Cologne where the local inhabitants were said to feast to the point of vomiting, to worship idols as gods, and to make offerings in the form of afflicted limbs and organs (*VP* 6.2). Students of traditional Graeco-

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33 Stories of hauntings by the improperly buried are frequent in classical pagan literature, but this one seems remarkably similar to the one in Pliny, *Epist.* 7.27: “In Athens there was a large and spacious mansion with the bad reputation of being dangerous to its occupants. At dead of night the clanking of iron and ... the rattle of chains could be heard ... then there appeared the spectre of an old man, emaciated and filthy ... [The house is rented by the philosopher Athenodorus, who waits up late at night in order to see the ghost.] It stood and beckoned, as if summoning him. ... when it turned off into the courtyard of the house it suddenly vanished ... The following day he ... gave orders for the place to be dug up. There they found bones, twisted round with chains ... The bones were collected and given a public burial, and after the shades had been duly laid to rest the house saw them no more.”

34 See *GC* 18: “Rumour reported that two virgins who had been dedicated to God were buried in this place. ... the virgins revealed themselves to one of the local inhabitants in a dream. They explained that they had been buried there and that without a shelter they could not endure any longer the damage from storms. ... On another night the virgins appeared to him again and horribly threatened him with a menancing scowl that he would migrate from his world during the current year if he did not cover the place.”

35 See *VP* 6.2: “... when the king went to Cologne he brought the boy with him. There was a temple there filled with various adornments, where the barbarians of the area used to make offerings and gorge themselves with meat and wine until they vomited; they adored idols there as if they were gods, and placed there wooden models of parts of the human body ... As soon as St Gallus learned this he hastened to the place with one other cleric ... and set it alight, while none of the foolish pagans were present.” The translator of this passage, E. James, informs us in a note (1985:142n8) that this was a practice condemned by the late 6th century synod of Auxerre in terms which suggest that the pagans in Cologne, whom Gregory terms barbarians, may have adopted Roman customs. He further notes that similar practices have survived in Mediterranean areas to this day.
Roman paganism will recognize these activities as similar to those practiced at the temples of Asclepius; but whether Gregory and his illustrious uncle objected to the feasting as excessive or to the practices of idolatry which were implied by the images of non-Christian deities and human body parts, the fact remains that purgative rituals and votive offerings of this sort could be observed on a regular basis at the tomb of St Martin (Van Dam 1985:261). Gregory repeatedly and explicitly rates dust from a martyr's tomb as being more effective than traditional wizardry. It may be possible to see Jerome as paving the way for this attitude with his claims about the supernatural ability of the dust of martyrs' bones to drive away demons, but Gregory's applications go far beyond those of the earlier church fathers. For example, according to Augustine "relics were not strictly magical devices, since their efficacy depended on the intercession of the saint (ultimately on Christ), not on the relic itself" (Hillgarth 1986:20).

36 See OCD: 'Medicine,' I.d, 661: "There was ... among the Greeks and later among the Romans, a tendency to the formation of cults ascribing [healing] powers to deceased physicians. The most prominent of these cults was that of Asclepius" and I.f, 661: "Dedication of votive models of affected parts, especially in Asclepian shrines, was a common practice." The article on 'Asclepius' (129) mentions "dietetic regimens." That Asclepian practices were still current in Imperial Roman times is made clear by Origen's statement (Contra Celsum, 3.24-25) that the healings done at the shrines of Asclepius were not due to the activities of a god but to an evil demon called Asclepius. See further OCD, 'Medicine,' I.c, 661: "The Medicine of the New Testament is mainly that of possession by evil spirits. There is only a trace of demonism in the Old Testament and it is not prominent in classical writings until Christian times. Its presence often indicates Persian contacts. ... Its main source is probably Mesopotamian." See Contra Vigilantium 10: "How is it that poor worthless dust and ashes are associated with this wondrous power of signs and miracles? I see, I see, most unfortunate of mortals, why you are so sad and what causes your fear. That unclean spirit who forces you to write these things has often been tortured by this worthless dust ... go to the basilica of the martyrs, and some day you will be cleansed; you will find there many in like case with yourself, and will be set on fire, not by the martyrs' tapers which offend you, but by invisible flames; and you will then confess what you now deny, and will freely proclaim your name — that you who speak in the person of Vigilantius are really ... Mercury, for greedy of gain was he ..." (Principal Works of St Jerome. W.H. Freemantle, trans., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1892:421).

37 See also Flint 1991:309: Aelfric of Eynsham's (c955-c1020) declaration that "no one shall enchant a herb with magic, but, with God's word shall bless it and so eat it" (B. Thorpe, ed., The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church, containing 'The Homilies of Aelfric' 1.475, 477) was referring, according to Flint, to "Augustine's loophole in the De Doctrina Christiana, though not to the saint's warning in his commentary on John against
Fine distinctions between pagan and Christian magical practices are difficult enough to determine, but in the realm of augury the differences proved opaque even for Augustine. At the most crucial moment of his spiritual life, Augustine was able to believe that an important divine message might be communicated to him through the prattle of children and the random thumbing of a sacred text. In fact, "both modes of divination were alien to his faith. At the instant of taking the ultimate step in his conversion, he was still a pagan" (MacMullen 1984:74). In reading Gregory’s hagiography, we can only be impressed by the care with which this detail of Augustine’s conversion experience was built into future Christian expectations of divine guidance. In a similar fashion, traditional pagan feast days were often given a Christian focus by celebrating them as the anniversaries of the death of martyrs, but the reported results were sometimes less than fortunate. Brown, however, points out that the “studiously all-inclusive ceremonial life” taken on by the festivals of the martyrs allowed the society of Gregory’s day to reestablish the socially valuable traditions of pagan civic cult. These institutions, as they had done in pre-Constantinian Rome, made it possible for the disparate elements of Gallic society to find a common, celebratory

wrongfully attaching the name of Christ to such activities.” In what is an unfortunate lapse, the author neglects to provide a reference to either of Augustine’s texts.

39 For one example of this traditional pagan practice, see Plutarch, Moral.356E: “the Egyptians believe that children possess prophetic powers and they listen to their sayings at play for purposes of divination, especially ... when they are saying things at random.”

40 For example, see VP 9.2: When Saint Patroclus was wondering whether or not to go out into the desert, “for an auspice he wrote out little notes, and placed them on the altar. Then he watched and prayed for three nights, so that the Lord might deign to reveal clearly to him what He ordered him to do. But the great mercy of divine goodness had decreed that he would be a hermit, and made him take the note which hastened his departure for the desert.”

41 The dates of martyrs’ deaths are regularly referred to as ‘birthdays’ in recognition of the martyrs’ birth into the fuller life of Paradise.

42 For example, see Caesarius Serm. 55.2: “There are some people who come to the birthday festivals of the martyrs for this sole purpose, that they may destroy themselves and ruin others by intoxication, dancing, singing shameful songs, leading the choral dance [...], and pantomiming in a devilish fashion.”
ground: “It was by patronizing the basilicas of the saints and by appearing at
their festivals that [Franks] could gain acceptance in [the] community as ‘Roman

**Drawing the line**

By Gregory’s day, Gallic cities extended further into the countryside than
they had as Roman towns. Beyond the residential areas were a constellation of
shrines, some with attendant residences for the holy men and women who
maintained them; and beyond these were the extensive farming villas and hunting
lodges of the aristocracy. All of this, however, was still dominated by what Brown
calls “the castlelike Roman walls of what had become, very much, the bishop’s
inner city” (1996:104-05). The aristocratic bishops of Gaul had begun building
their status in the 5th century as the upholders of morale among the beleaguered
Romani; but by the end of the 6th century their costume, insignia, office and
function reflected the traditions of the Imperial civil service as well as the Church
(Peters 1975:117). These visible attributes were not the only features which Gallic
bishops had in common with their pre-Constantinian Roman counterparts. Both
Martin of Braga and Caesarius of Arles had objected to the display of reverence
to trees and fountains, to lighting candles and building cairns, to making vows
and pouring out libations.43 Gregory, on the other hand, seems to have found
little to disagree with in these activities, as long as their focus was directed toward
the Christian realm of the holy. For the most part his criticisms are aimed, not at
objectionable practices, but at unqualified or unauthorized practitioners.

43 For pouring libations and lighting candles, see DCR 16; for building cairns, see DCR 7; for
making vows to trees and fountains, see Caesarius Serm. 229.4.
For example, in HF 9.6, Gregory confronts a man named Desiderius who had just arrived from Bordeaux and who claimed to possess curative powers. In Gregory’s absence, “... the country people flocked to him in multitudes, bringing with them the blind and the infirm, whom he sought rather to deceive by the false teaching of hellish arts (nigromantia), than to heal by the power of holiness.” Having observed his activities, Gregory states: “it became obvious that he was an impostor and, once the bogusness of his behaviour was comprehended by my people, he was expelled from the city boundaries.” Another wandering holy man from Spain arrived, claiming to possess holy relics and carrying a large cross, “from which hung a number of phials containing, or so people said, holy oil.” Gregory refuses to receive him “as the hour was so late” and the next day the two exchange insults. Gregory reports that when this man arrived in Paris later on, the local bishop there, one Ragnemod, determined that he and his companion were malefici, and that their ‘relics’ were no more than moles’ teeth, mice bones and bear claws. Declaring these things to be the instruments of witchcraft, he had the sack thrown into the river.

44 In a note, the translator comments that although the word for ‘necromancy’ is used, “the sense is probably quite general” (Dalton 582n6). This is in keeping with my own observations concerning the lack of differentiation in the language of Caesarius of Arles.

45 See HF 9.6: “I was quite dumbfounded and flabbergasted at his impudence. I asked him what he meant by behaving in this way. He answered me very insolently, shouting at the top of his voice: ‘You should have given me a much warmer welcome. I shall tell King Chilperic what has happened. He will avenge this insult which has been done to me.’ Then he walked into my oratory, without asking my permission and recited first one verse, then another ... his accent was poor and the words he used vulgar.”

46 See Hint 1991:248n164: “The charge that they were merely animal bones was, ironically, one frequently levied against Catholic relics at the time of the Reformation.”

47 See HF 9.6: “Ragnemod realized that he was an imposter and had him locked up in a cell. His stock in trade was examined. He carried with him a big bag filled with the roots of various plants; in it, too, were moles’ teeth, the bones of mice, bears’ claws and bears’ fat. The Bishop had all this thrown into the river, for he recognized it as witchcraft ... he was seized by the archdeacon who had him chained up and then committed him to prison. ... Many there be who by the practice of such impostures never cease to lead simple folk astray.” See also Flint 1991:326-27.
These episodes demonstrate not only how much authority could be wielded by whoever drew the line between Christian and non-Christian magical practices, but also how similar they had actually become. Clergy and medical doctors alike prescribed potions and charms which were based on superstitious belief systems. Gregory takes great delight in demonstrating how his own favorite cures (exposure to relics, and tomb dust taken with water) far outshone the best efforts of his non-episcopal rivals; but his criticism of lay healers was not so much based on what they prescribed, nor on the low success rate of their prescriptions. Gregory’s objections to superstitious practices were mainly aimed at those who did not subordinate themselves and their remedies to belief in the curative power of Christian saints and their relics, and to the authority of those chosen by these saints to administer their legacy (Van Dam 1985:262). This criticism was founded, according to Flint, on the assumption that the laity could not be allowed to exercise as much influence in the realm of healing and safety as the clergy —

48 See VP 8.8: “The servant of Phrominius, bishop of Agde, had been touched with epilepsy ... He took various remedies offered by doctors, and for several months did not have any attacks. But then his sufferings began again, and were even worse than they had been before. Then his master, seeing the great miracles which were accomplished at the tomb of the blessed Nicetius, said to him ‘Go and fall down in front of the tomb of the saint, and pray for help.’ He followed the orders of the bishop, and returned cured, and never had any relapse in his illness.” See also HF 5.6: “Here I will simply add what happened to certain sceptics, who, after witnessing a God-sent miracle, would have recourse to earthly remedies, for St Martin’s power is shown just as much by the punishment meted out to fools as it is by the grace accorded to those who have been cured. Leunast, Archdeacon of Bourges, lost his sight through cataracts in both eyes. He sought the help of a number of doctors, but he did not recover his sight. Then he went to St Martin’s church, where he stayed for two or three months, fasting continually and praying ... When St Martin’s feast-day came round, Leunast’s eyes cleared and he began to see. He went off home and consulted a Jew, who bled his shoulders with cupping-glasses, the effect of which was supposed to be that his sight would improve. As soon as the blood had been drawn off, Leunast became as blind as he had before. He thereupon returned once more to the holy shrine ... but he never recovered his vision.” See also VM 2.1.

49 See also Van Dam 1985: 263: “[compared to Christian cures] pagan healers and pagan medicine also offered more than remedies or prescriptions ... pagan phylacteries were obligations of people’s souls, and like the cures at Christian shrines they too defined relationships between people in which healers were invested with authority. ... the imposition of these vital distinctions between proper and improper cures was again an indication of who would have authority in communities.”
not because they were insufficiently Christian, or excessively rustic, or too worldly, or too hard to control, although these factors certainly entered into the equation — but simply because the laity (and, as we shall see, the minor clergy) were thought to be too vulnerable to the ever-present machinations of diablerie (1991:184). Only the saints, and their earthly representatives, were considered to possess enough power to resist and deflect the overwhelming might of demons.

**Gregory’s demonology**

It is not surprising to notice the presence of demons as well as ghosts in Gregory’s writings. In fact, these magical beings were called upon to perform important services for the Christian world, not only as an explanation for any embarrassing success traditional magicians might enjoy, but also as a humane rationale for excusing (or at least preventing excessive punishment for) human misbehaviour. But the ‘demons’ of Classical Antiquity had not been uniformly evil: Augustine had even devoted considerable thought (*City of God* 9, 10) to the notion that the angels in *Mt* 4.11 and *Col* 1.16 might be the same as Plato’s *daimons*. Whether belief in angels had its roots in folk magic, pagan philosophy, Hebrew and Christian scripture, or patristic writings, the world of 6th century Gaul was so populated with angels that according to Marcus, a set of Gallic monastic rules warns monks at prayer to turn aside if they needed to spit, “lest they spit upon the angels gathered in front of them” (1990:22). We shall later

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50 See also Flint 1991:241: “The idea that earthly illness of the most serious sort came from the aery regions in which demons were so overwhelmingly strong, and humankind so unbearably weak, helped to give those who followed the way of the cross an exceptional authority ...”

51 *Reg. Mag.* 48.6-9. See also 47.6, 21-4. Angels are ubiquitous in this (probably Gallic) Rule: eg. 10.13, 39; 34.9 — they continually watch over the monks; 20.14 — they are
see that angels were to play a major role in determining which elements of pre-Christian magic Gregory would encourage to flourish under Christian control.\textsuperscript{52}

Evil spirits could do harm directly, or operate in a more subtle fashion by appearing to help (especially in matters of healing and augury) while subtly working to damage or encumber the soul of the recipient. Christian epiphanies of the holy, on the other hand, may have been amazing, or even daunting, but before this time they were never anything but unambiguously good events. Beginning with Gregory's works, however, and especially in his \textit{Glory of the Martyrs}, contact with the divine frequently took on the open-ended quality of an ordeal. Appeal to the relics of saints was expected to be a public event, as can be seen from the story in \textit{VM} 1.35 of what happens to a man who tries to make private use of a fragment stolen from St Martin's couch,\textsuperscript{53} and it was an activity which was likely to expose the merit of the appellant to a public display of divine disapproval.\textsuperscript{54} Equally public, in Gregory's writing, were the obvious maladies

\begin{itemize}
\item their communication-media; 95.19 — monks outside their monasteries apparently risked being mistaken for angels!
\item \textit{Daemones} (as angels) were not the only benevolent pagan creatures allowed to operate under the aegis of Christianity. See \textit{Vitae Sanctae Hiberniae} 1 for examples of the behaviour of animals: horses, oxen, and a sow with a litter of pigs, used to determine the location of sacred sites (Flint 1991:268n51).
\item See \textit{VM} 1.35: "... a certain one of our men without my knowledge took a venerable piece of wood from the railing of a couch which is in the monastery of the sainted master. This he kept in his own lodgings for protection. But his family began to be seriously ill ..."
\item See \textit{GM} 1: "... there is in Bethlehem a large well from which the glorious Mary is said to have drawn water. Often a famous miracle is demonstrated ... the star that appeared to the wise men is there revealed to the pure in heart. ... Recently however my deacon reported that he, with five other men, had looked, but the star had appeared only to two of them." See also \textit{GM} 54: "As a priest was travelling [with holy relics], a brash and, I think, properly unworthy woman advanced down the road, greeted the priest and ... asked that some of these relics be given to her. The priest ... was finally overcome by her insistence and cut off a small piece [of the cloth covering the reliquary] for her. He mounted his horse and began to resume the journey ... But even though he spurred both flanks of his horse, he could not be moved forward at all ... he was bound by the power of the martyr. ... he quickly retrieved what he had under the influence of negligence presumed to distribute. Once he returned to the reliquary the relic he had given away, he was allowed to proceed." See also \textit{GM} 5, 27, 31, 85.
\end{itemize}
contracted by those who ‘insulted’ the Sabbath and other festival days by engaging in forbidden activities like plowing a field,\textsuperscript{55} baking bread,\textsuperscript{56} making love,\textsuperscript{57} or even combing the hair.\textsuperscript{58} The afflictions Gregory describes were the sort that would make it obvious to all what could happen to those reckless enough to ignore episcopal orders, and leave the offenders as social outcasts until they were cured (Van Dam 1985:286).

We also meet those in Gregory’s works whose appeal to the power of the saints and their relics produces positive, and frequently miraculous, results. These were people who had passed successfully through the ordeal of exposure to the holy, whose personal merits had met with divine approval, and who thereby were shown to enjoy a level of intimacy with the supernatural different from the rest. According to Brown, it is noticeable that this blessing of the saints and their relics fell “most heavily on those vested protectors and agents of the relic, and that, in Gregory’s case, is almost invariably the bishop” (1982:187-89). Being cured by appeal to a saint provided a person with a permanent record of divine approval. Miraculous healing, as a result, became another level in the hierarchy of sanctity that began with baptism and, in a society where nearly everyone was at least nominally an orthodox Christian, could serve to differentiate between those who

\begin{footnotes}
\item[55] See \textit{VJ} 11: “\textit{Alius quoque ausu temerario die dominica iungens boves, agro sulcare coepit, adprehensamque securim, ut aliquid emendaret in vomere, protinus contractis digitis manubrium in dextera eius adhaesit.”
\item[56] See \textit{GM} 15: “…a woman who lived there made up dough on the Lord’s Day and formed a loaf of bread. … she covered the loaf with glowing cinders for baking. As she did this, immediately her right hand was scorched by divine fire and began to burn.”
\item[57] See \textit{VM} 2.24: “\textit{In Biturigo quoque fuit quaedam mulier, quae concipiens peperit filium ... mater argueretur, cur talis ex illa processerit, confitebatur cum lacrimis nocte illum dominica generatum.”
\item[58] See \textit{VP} 7.5: “A girl was arranging her hair with a comb one Sunday. The comb, because, I believe, of the injury which she was doing to the holy day, stuck to her hand, so that its teeth entered her fingers and the palm of her hand, causing her great pain.” See also \textit{GC} 5, 80, 97; \textit{VM} 2.13, 3.3, 3.7, 3.31, 4.45, 29, 45, 56; \textit{VP} 15.3.
\end{footnotes}
were merely members of the Church and those who were especially blessed. Those who had always enjoyed good health were, therefore, at something of a disadvantage, and we may imagine that Gregory's frequent stomach-aches, headaches, fevers and dysentery served him with many opportunities to assure himself, and others, of the favoured status he enjoyed among his patron saints (Van Dam 1985:273-4).

Another factor in this public expression of divine approval or censure were the *energumini*, the possessed. These were not individual wandering madmen, but were an established group who, along with the beggars and other mendicants, were permanent residents of the churches and shrines, where they were prayed over, given food, and set to scrubbing the floors (Brown 1982:237n60). The credit Gregory gives to the *energumini* as unerring seismographs of sanctity may seem strange to modern readers, since these unfortunates were, after all, supposedly being tormented by evil spirits or demons. But in the presence of the holy, it was believed that these demons themselves were tormented in turn and forced to 'confess' the powers of the saints who

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59 See *VM* 1.32-33, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1-2 for examples of Gregory's frequent illnesses.

60 See *VP* 8.8: "I placed more of these relics in the altars of other churches, and there those possessed confessed the saint (*energumeni sanctum confitentur*)." See also *VP* 7.5: "The demoniacs too, when they confess the name of the saint at his tomb, are often purified. (*Sed energumini eum confitentes ad eius sepulchrum saepe purgantur.*)" According to Dalton, this unusual Latin word is derived from the Greek for 'energy', and is the source of the French word *energumène* (519n11).

61 See *HF* 9.21: As proof of King Guntram's piety and holiness, Gregory states: "I myself have often heard evil spirits in the hour of their possession invoking the king's name, and confessing their crimes, compelled by his miraculous power." See also *HF* 10.29: "Just prior to the death of the abbot Aredius, a possessed woman broke her bonds and began to shout: 'Run, O citizens! leap for joy, O people! go forth to meet the martyrs and confessors who are now come together for the passing of the blessed Aredius. Lo, here is Julian come from Brioude, Privatus from Mende; here are Martin from Tours, and Martial from Aredius's own city. Here, too, are Saturninus from Toulouse, Denis from Paris, and many another now in heaven to whom ye pray as confessors and martyrs of God.'"
afflicted them. The utterances of the possessed may also have appeared reliable not only because they seemed so artless and involuntary, but also because they were more often self-critical than self-serving. According to Gregory, the possessed presented a formidable obstacle to any who would approach these shrines with harmful or insubordinate intentions. In HF 7.29 they defend the shrine of St Martin with sticks and stones; in HF 4.11 one is hired to praise a bishop and criticize his rival; and in VP 17.2, one of the energumini discreetly disappears after abusing the king and his entourage in support of the bishop.

**Making new martyrs**

We have already noticed how the writings of Caesarius had worked to create a hierarchy of piety which favoured those who were disposed (and able) to lead an ascetic life, and Gregory carries this idea one step further. Gregory frequently awards the status of martyr to those who, like his own beloved St

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62 See HF 7.35: “Others were seized by an evil spirit; thus possessed, they shouted in their frenzy the martyr’s name.” See also HF 8.34: “[One of the possessed] shouted that the saints of God were burning him through and through. For a very long time he remained a prey to this madness; and as he often shouted the name of the holy Martin, declaring that this saint tormented him more than all others, he was brought to Tours.”

63 See HF 4.36: “[A woman] suddenly possessed of a demon, was driven in madness through the whole city ... while she confessed the saint of God [Martin], whom in her sane days she had denied, to be the friend of God, and called on him to spare her.” It would be interesting to study the difference in attitude, today as in ancient times, toward those believed to be possessed by demonic forces as over against those who claim to be in receipt of angelic ‘voices.’ The perceived reliability of the former is often in sharp contrast, ironically enough, with the suspicions directed towards the latter.

64 See HF 7.29: “… sundry possessed men (energumini) … with stones and clubs came to avenge the outrage to the church … The fugitives were dragged from their hiding-places and cruelly slain …”

65 See HF 4.11: The villainous Bishop Cato once “hired a woman to cry aloud in the church, as if possessed (quast per energiam), declaring him a great saint and one dear to God, but [his rival] Bishop Cautinus guilty of every crime and unworthy ever to have received the priesthood.”

66 See VP 17.2: “… suddenly a young man in the congregation, seized by a demon, cries out and begins to confess in a loud voice, in the midst of the pains of his torment, both the virtues of the saint and the crimes of the king. He said that the bishop was chaste and the king was an adulterer. … after the ceremony he was sought for, but could not be found, and nobody was ever able to discover where he had come from or gone to.”
Martin, lived to ripe old ages and died peacefully in their own beds. Meeting physical death at the hands of the authorities, which was considered to be an irrevocable confession in defense of the faith and worthy of the immediate gift of salvation, was apparently no longer a necessary component of martyrdom. As we have already noted, the Frankish kings had accepted Roman Christianity and therefore presented little in the way of opportunity for actual martyrdom, so Gregory offered the chance for believers to become martyrs in the context of a moral struggle: “by resisting vices you will be considered a martyr” (GM 106). In the preface to VP 7, we read that St Gregory, the former bishop of Langres and our Gregory’s grandfather, achieved martyrdom by becoming his own persecutor, destroying his vices, and offering up “a spotless body as a tabernacle for the Holy Spirit.”67 A militant commitment to asceticism, however, essential as it may appear to have been, did not seem to be completely sufficient to this purpose; being well-born was apparently also helpful. In spite of the many burdens and distractions of episcopal office, Gregory’s aristocratic bishops usually completed their course of spiritual combat in triumph, but his minor clergy, including deacons and hermits, did not always so easily succeed.68 In several passages, particularly the story of St Leobardus (VP 20), who is identified as “being of free birth, though in truth not of senatorial family,” we learn the critical lesson that as valuable as the ascetic virtues of the hermetic life may be, they are less important than the need to obey one’s bishop (James 1985:7).

67 See Van Dam 1988:13 for more on this subject.

68 See James 1985:1: “they are perhaps usually of a lower social status (VP 9.1; 20.1), they lose heart (VP 1.1: 9.2), they fail to make a success of communal living (VP 9.1), and they succumb to vainglory (VP 10.2; 15.2) or to quarrelling (VP 20.3).”
We have already seen that Gregory reacted to the appearance of itinerant holy men in Tours with contempt, and in HF 8.15 a local imitator of Symeon Stylites is ordered in no uncertain terms to get down off his column.\(^{69}\) In fact, living holy men seem to be in short supply in Gregory’s Gaul. Brown suggests that the bishops themselves were engaged in such a fierce competition to remain equal that they were willing to deny the status of holy to any but “the most well-tried, that is, the most safely-dead figure” (1982:187). Even those who had led particularly holy lives and who were distinguished from others by the working of miracles were not considered by Gregory to be unequivocally favoured by God: “the virtue (virtus) which comes from the tomb is much more worthy of praise than those things which a living person can work in this world, because the latter can be blemished by the continual difficulties of worldly occupations, while the former are certainly free of all blemish” (VP 2.2).\(^{70}\)

Foremost among Gregory’s saintly (and safely) dead, of course, was the official patron of his see, St Martin of Tours. At first glance, there would seem to be little in the life of Martin, as we have it in Sulpicius Severus’ Life of Martin, to recommend him to Gregory. Martin appears to have been one of those charismatic figures who often exist on the fringes of orthodoxy, against whom Gregory inveighs so frequently in his own time. But Martin’s Gaul of the 4th century was quite a different place from Gregory’s in the 6th. The Church was

\(^{69}\) See HF 8.15: The narrator of this anecdote is one Vulfalaic, a native of the Lombard and deacon of a monastery near Yvois: “I set up a column, on which I stood suffering great torture, with no covering for my feet ... there came now to me bishops ... they said: ‘The way which thou followest is not the right way; nor shalt thou in thine obscurity, be compared to Simeon of Antioch, the Stylite. ... come down rather and dwell among the brethren whom thou hast gathered round thee.’ ... a bishop induced me to go out to an estate at some distance; he then sent workmen with crowbars, hammers, and axes, and they dashed to pieces the column on which I was wont to stand.”

\(^{70}\) Gregory offers this passage as an explanation of Jesus’ admonition in Mt 7:22-23.
just beginning to make serious progress in the conversion of the population at large; and just as Christian *puellae religiosae* began at this time to occupy the societal niche of traditional pagan Virgins, so could a Christian thaumaturge like Martin — who claimed to be able not only to see demonic forces at work virtually everywhere he looked, but to be able to command these forces, harness them to his will, and protect the populace from their depredations — take the place of the local augur or sorcerer and rise to a position of authority on the popular acclaim accorded to these figures (Hillgarth 1980:50-51). Wallace-Hadrill, on the other hand, points out that Martin (either in reality or in the image created by his biographer) was a figure “cast in a mold suited to a new generation,” a combination of a recluse and a man of action, a “*vir apostolicus* with his feet on the ground ... up to his ears in work ... healing, exorcising, arbitrating and so on,” a challenge to aristocrats like Gregory “to be a bishop, to be up and doing” (1983:5).

**New saints in old settings**

In Gregory’s hagiographic works, what he mainly seems to have been ‘up and doing’ was working tirelessly to locate ever more focus points for Christian veneration in the landscape of Northern Gaul; and in this we can see him somewhat further at odds with the tendencies of his hero. The very first miracle that Martin performs upon becoming bishop of Tours is to discredit a false cult. An altar had been erected by previous bishops on a spot where martyrs were believed to have been buried; but Martin summoned up the spirit of the deceased and forced him to reveal that he was not a saintly martyr but an executed criminal “who had been receiving veneration through the mistaken opinion of the populace” (Sulpicius, *Life of Martin* 11). This episode, interestingly enough, is
notable in its absence from Gregory’s account of Martin’s miraculous works. By way of contrast, the dominant theme of Gregory’s hagiographic writings is the sudden discovery of long lost saints; an enterprise in which divine intervention, without a single exception, takes the side of confirmation rather than repudiation:

“ancient tombs are certified to contain saints; the long-lost burial places of bishops are found; holy men and women lacking a cult finally obtain one” (Goffart 1988:135). This recurrent theme in Gregory’s writing stresses the possibility that any place, any thing, and any (safely dead) person might be worthy of veneration, and useful as a focus of healing magic, if only one were to make the effort to locate this holiness, and had the (episcopal) authority to certify it as genuine (Van Dam 1985:188).

In GM 56, the tomb of a holy martyr is discovered beneath brambles and thorns;\(^7\) one is found, in GC 79 overgrown by a vineyard;\(^7\) and in GC 51, beneath the floors of a church.\(^7\) Having already noted, in the case of the lupine reliquary inherited from his parents, that Gregory’s standards for determining holiness seem to have been based more on utilitarian efficiency than on history or even tradition, the reader must wonder about the provenance of these ‘finds.’

\(^7\) See GM 56: “Amarandus, a martyr of Albi, was buried after completing the course of a faithful struggle; but he lives in glory. ... for a long time his tomb was covered by brambles and concealed beneath thorn bushes. But at the command of the Lord it was revealed to Christians, and the crypt in which he was buried was uncovered and shone forth.”

\(^7\) See GC 79: “... the people still did not understand how to venerate bishops of God and how to show the respect that was owed them. Hence it happened that a vineyard was planted on top and buried all memory of the first bishop of the city. ... In a vision [the bishop] Ursinus appeared to ... both Bishop Germanus and abbot Augustus, and he brought them to the spot of his tomb and begged that they take him from that place.”

\(^7\) See GC 51: “Three priests were buried in ... the village of Aire-sur-l’Adour. ... they distinguished the area of this one place with the frequency of their miracles. ... Recently the pavement that was formed from lime and crushed bricks, as hard as the hardest stone, split and exposed the top of one tomb. ... Already now the first tomb is free from the weight of the ground and offers itself exposed to the sight of men; the other two tombs are still following the first, but each year they emerge further from the ground.”
This is not to say that Gregory was intentionally trying to revive interest in traditional religious elements. If he were, of course, he would not have been alone among his fellow clergy, but unlike either Caesarius of Arles or Martin of Braga, Gregory is not trying to stamp out non-Christian practices by reforming, castigating, or pleading with the practitioners, and neither is he proposing harsh penance, flogging or enslavement as did various church councils and codes. Rather he is expanding the boundaries of Christianity in order to include these pre-Christian beliefs and practices.

He displays neither the anxious urgency of Caesarius nor the hesitant obsequiousness of Martin. He neither rants nor equivocates. Instead of fighting against these popular practices, Gregory makes use of them to advance not only the cause of Christianity, but also to enhance the status of the bishop and to promote the agenda of the aristocratic clergy. If any anxiety shows through in his writings, it is over such ‘unauthorized’ or ‘vernacular’ versions of Christianity as might be represented by those itinerant holy men or underdisciplined mystics who would spring up in the cities and countryside whenever bishops like Gregory relaxed their vigilance.

Conclusions

In contrast to our previous writers, Gregory enthusiastically encouraged

74 Martin of Braga, in CM 59, attacked those members of the clergy who made and distributed amulets and otherwise behaved as if they were magicians. See also Richards 18 for an even more dramatic account (from Patrologia Latina 87): “In some cases even the local priest found it prudent to join in rather than oppose the traditions of his flock, and the Galician hermit St Valerius in the second half of the 7th century recorded coming across a secret pagan ceremony at dead of night in the depths of the forest, with chanting, gyrations, horned beasts, with the local priest presiding.”

75 See the Council of Elvira (306), Canon 6, for sorcery and idolatry; 4Tol. (633) 29, for consultation of diviners and magicians; 12Tol. (681) 11, for worship of fountains, stones and trees; 2Braga (572) 71, for consulting soothsayers; 2Braga 77, for abortion.
the use of talismans, amulets, herbal preparations, and ligatures, as long as the magic was worked by a good Christian and accompanied by the sign of the cross. To Gregory, efficacy was the test of sanctity and acceptability.

Caesarius had worked under the unsympathetic and occasionally hostile aegis of a series of Arian rulers, and Martin of Braga was obliged to deal with the sensitive issues of a Suevian court only recently converted to Catholicism. In contrast to both of these, Gregory achieved a great deal of administrative freedom under the Franks, who had converted directly to orthodoxy several generations previously, and who generally accepted the guidance of the Catholic hierarchy. Gregory’s style of leadership gave him the important ability to move beyond the monastic model of Cassian and Caesarius and allow Gallic Christianity to expand into areas of ancient society which had previously been considered irremediably secular. Gregory did not attempt to stamp out non-Christian practices by reforming, castigating, or pleading with the practitioners, and neither did he propose harsh penance, flogging or enslavement as did various church councils and codes. Rather he expanded the boundaries of Christianity in order to include these hitherto marginal beliefs and practices. Gregory used his considerable authority to assure that those who would practice Christian magic were required to subordinate themselves and their remedies, not only to belief in the curative power of the saints and their relics, but also to the authority of the bishop.

By granting the status of martyr to those who had lived ascetic lives and died full of grace, Gregory may be thought of as retooling the concept of martyr in its literal meaning, as ‘witness.’ By discovering the tombs of previously unknown saints in locations associated with popular devotion, Gregory succeeded in expanding the boundaries of the sacred while retaining and enriching the
bishop's authority. Caesarius' hierarchy of piety, which favoured as a Christian elite those who were disposed (and able) to lead ascetic lives, was carried one step further. Gregory expanded the elite to include the majority: any place, any thing, and any (safely dead) person might be worthy of veneration, and useful as a focus of healing magic, if only one were to make the effort to locate this holiness, and had the (episcopal) authority to certify it as genuine.
Conclusions and Recommendations

Many commentators of the present and previous centuries have seemed confident that compilations made of those traditional local practices which are inveighed against in the writings of episcopal figures like Martin of Tours, Caesarius of Arles, Martin of Braga and Gregory of Tours can be relied upon to reveal the religious beliefs and practices of the peasants and other indigenous peoples of Gaul and Northern Iberia. Closer reading of these documents, however, would seem to indicate that there are serious methodological problems with this commonplace assumption. There can be no doubt that many of the practices being criticized were popular among both the rural and the urban social underclasses. But it is my hypothesis that all of these writers are also chastising their own people, the hereditary Gallo- and Hiberno-Romans — many of whom are fellow members of the Christian clergy — for retaining the remnants of a fading, but still tenacious, traditional cultural system.

Another serious problem facing scholars is the wide range of behaviour being condemned as pagan and the indiscriminate nature of the polemic being marshaled against these activities. As we have seen, Caesarius frequently inveighs against augurs, haruspices, soothsayers, prophets and oracles, without providing us with the information we need to determine what methods each of these were using to heal the sick or foretell the future. It seems likely that they, as well as terms like 'pagan' and 'demonic,' are merely being appropriated as generic expressions of disapprobation.

We have seen how an ancient word that was originally neutral, or very nearly so, may take on a specifically pejorative meaning over the centuries that
completely masks its original usage and may lead the incautious into error. If we
decide, as I believe the evidence before us suggests we must, that the _pagani_
were simply the non-Christians of the day and that the term _rustici_ is being used
in the sense of 'uncultured,' 'uneducated' or 'unsophisticated,' then all of these
texts can be read in a more coherent and, I believe, more productive fashion.

Another assumption of recent scholarship that could profitably be examined
more carefully is the 'moderation' of Martin of Braga. Similar pacifistic and
conciliatory attitudes are to be found in Caesarius' works as well. If the only
writings of Caesarius which we possessed were his Sermons 180, 192, and 193
(three works which, when taken as a whole, are about the same length as
Martin's _De correctione rusticorum_), Caesarius would seem to us at least as
tolerant and reasonable a writer as Martin. This is especially true in light of the
severity of the late Antique practice of penance, which Martin was known to
prescribe.

We set out in this thesis to examine the changes that took place over the
course of the 6th century in episcopal attitudes toward those alternative religious
practices. The evidence before us strongly suggests that rather than viewing the
writings of this period as a continuous polemic against traditional folk magic and
pre-Christian festive behaviour, we would do better to regard the work of these
writers as steps along the pathway to accommodation. This process was begun
by Caesarius as a monastic initiative, but even though Caesarius condemned all
non-monastic activities as pagan in origin and thus demonic in character, even he
was obliged to recommend a kind of Christian counter-magic for the cure of ills
normally dealt with by secular means. From this viewpoint, we could read into
Caesarius' apparent distress a need for a better solution to the problem than he
can provide.
In Gregory’s writings, however, we see an extraordinary degree of acceptance of hitherto non-Christian practices. Gregory does not engage in an attack of opposition, but rather one of assimilation, and by doing so, he moves 6th century Christianity from an antagonistic position to one of expansionism. Under Gregory, Christian practice becomes very similar to pagan practice by the simple insertion of a specifically Christian word or sign. The Desert and the City are both, in effect, brought under the broad purview of Gregory’s pastoral vision.

Martin moderates the position of Caesarius in several important ways. For one thing, he does not include popular social activities in his catalogue of serious sins. But more important, Martin avoids the promotion of an ascetic or monastic agenda, neither condemning practices that had no equivalent within the monastic tradition, nor encouraging those activities designed to draw their practitioners into the liturgical rhythms of the cloister.

Gregory eulogized Martin with the epithet: ‘the most highly educated man of his day.’ and it is possible to see Martin’s scholarship as the hinge on which the changes in 6th century episcopal attitudes may have turned. In spite of his protestations to the contrary and his use of language which would have seemed unsophisticated and ungrammatical to a classicist, Gregory was, as we have demonstrated, a literate and well-educated man. Caesarius, on the other hand, in spite of his aristocratic origins and his elitist agendas, rejected secular scholarship at an early age as an excessively worldly pursuit. I would therefore find myself in agreement with both Ferreiro and Follis, at least on this one point. It was Martin’s education, classical, pastoral and patristic, that shaped his implied criticism of Caesarius’ work and laid the groundwork for Gregory’s democratization of 6th century Christianity.
Other issues

As might be expected, several of the conclusions reached in this paper contain implications which might benefit from further research. Implied in the writings of Caesarius, as we have read them, is the idea that Christians should do only holy things, and this may be seen as leading to the development of hierarchies of religiosity within the nominally Christian community. Martin of Braga, on the other hand, is apparently proposing that Christians should develop their own ways of doing everything, and this requires the accommodation of traditional lay impulses and civic practices. Gregory has been seen to provide a solution to this problem by redefining many of the key traditions in question — and carefully placing them under the firm control of the episcopal aristocracy — so as to allow them a new existence as elements of a uniform Christian practice. Unfortunately, this paper cannot be long enough to deal with the interesting conflicts within the broader community, upon which this solution must be considered to have had a substantial impact. How many non-Christian beliefs and practices were carried across that line which was drawn too closely to the monastery door by Caesarius, which Martin first loosened and Gregory then crossed? What implications did this have on the development of Christian thought and the content of Christian belief?

Klingshirn brings our attention to another issue which requires further attention. We have often, throughout this paper, implied that many of the traditional practices of the time were festive or social activities of an entirely secular (or no more than superficially religious) nature. On one hand, the Church’s reaction to much of this activity as being non-Christian in provenance is entirely understandable, since a clergy, whose spiritual credentials were rooted in asceticism, must have regarded extravagant feasting, for example, as more than simply a wasteful or economically unsound practice. The virulence of the attacks
by the churchmen of several centuries on this kind of civic activity can be at least partially ascribed to a conflict over fundamental religious issues. But in a note, Klingshirn reminds us that part of the strategy of early Christianity contra traditional paganism was an assumption that the practices being condemned were already devoid of religious content. The implications of this statement as a criticism of the methodology of this paper are far from superficial, especially considering the question we asked at the end of the previous paragraph.

**Afterword**

Both Ferreiro and Follis may have been correct in assuming the key role of Martin of Braga in this process and the importance of his education, which appears to have been 'classical' in its embrace of both patristic writing and the pagan literature which preceded it. Several other modern writers have noticed how quickly Martin leaves the world of the Bible (DCR 3-6) and plunges along with his narrative into the forests of post-Roman Spain (DCR 7-8), and what elements of Roman paganism he carries along with him as he does. According to Flint, as Martin “launches himself upon that condemnation of pagan practices which is his purpose, he launches the demons into the Christian world with him” (1991:152). Having charged those classical pagan deities — the Lamias of the streams, the nymphs of the fountains, the Dianas of the forests, and Neptune of the sea (DCR 8) — with responsibility for the magical practices which he abhors, Flint sees Martin as causing these ancient personifications of natural forces to be

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1 See Klingshirn 1994:219n93: “I would disagree with the description of these religious activities as ‘magical’ in V.I.J. Flint’s very interesting [book]. There are serious methodological problems with any use of ‘magic’ as a fundamental category for the study of Christianization. By implying that even in late antiquity rituals of healing, divination, control over nature and the like were merely neutral techniques of manipulation, which lacked religious ‘reverence’ and were thus easily detached from traditional religion, this approach bypasses the most important problem posed by Christianization: how and with what effects Christianity treated the whole range of pagan religious practice as magical from the start is itself covertly christianizing: it demeans traditional religion by denying it status as a ‘true’ religion and it anticipates the Christian incorporation of ‘pagan/magical’ practices by assuming that those practices were already devoid of religious content.”
rescued from the fall of Roman paganism and inserted into the fabric of those traditional practices which Gregory will later embrace.

As in the oral traditions of a preliterate society, where myths about the past are continually reshaped in accordance with the needs and purposes of the present (Van Dam 1985:236), so Gregory may be seen as joining a long tradition of religious writers through the use of his considerable skills to create a new, all-Christian mythology of miraculous happenings. In this new mythology, according to Goffart, all the operations of the natural world are "directly identified with the Creator and His friends, the saints, living through their earthly relics" (1988:150), and all the stories are linked by the common theme of an omnipotent God unconstrained by any natural necessity (1988:133). One of the most noticeable cultural effects was the rehabilitation of important elements of the natural world from obscurity or condemnation. In the countryside, the sacred was enabled, through Gregory’s powers as a writer of myth, to creep back into the landscape; the great trees of the pre-Christian past now grew over the graves of martyrs, and sacred springs filled magically with water to mark the date of Easter — while still retaining their power over fertility (Flint 1991:268).2 Sweet fragrances and beautiful music waft through the basilicas and shrines,3 and Gregory is able to go on for twenty lines of rhapsodic prose about the miraculous bouquet of a wine served at a martyr’s vigil (Brown 1981:39).4

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2 See GM 23: "The pool was packed with a high mass of water, just as wheat is usually piled over the mouths of bushel baskets. ... Once the water had been sanctified ... all the people drank as a sign of devotion. ... they each carried back home a container full of water, intending to protect their fields and vineyards by sprinkling the beneficial water."

3 See HF 2.31: "... the holy place of baptism was filled with divine fragrance. God filled the hearts of all present with such grace that they imagined themselves to have been transported to some perfumed paradise." See also HF2.16; GC 94.

4 See VJ 36: "Nam ingressus promptuarium [sic]clericus, repperit cupellam, quam pene medium reliquerat, per superiorem aditum redundare, in tantum ut copia defluentis vini rivum per terram ad ostium usque duceret."
Brown also reminds us that the amount of wine flowing at this event should not be seen as an indication that Gregory and his congregation had become lax, as Caesarius might surely have judged it. Gregory's hagiography is notably rich in stories about the supernatural abilities of bishops\(^5\) who were thereby able to see themselves not only as the human representatives and orchestrators of the worship due the saints and martyrs but also as heirs to the miracle-working apostles. Once Gregory and his episcopal fellows had entered with confidence and security into this role of the living and visible patroni, themselves under the celestial patronage of the omnipotent and invisible God, the traditional feasting of pre-Christian days could begin again.

\(^5\) See Flint 1991:388: “Although Gregory was ready to acknowledge that thaumaturgical powers might be widely distributed on the basis of Christian merit, his bishops are very well represented among those who deserve to exercise them.”
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