SOCIAL NETWORKS IN THE RISE OF EPISCOPAL POWER
IN LATE ANTIQUITY:
THE CASE OF MARTIN OF TOURS

by

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Abstract.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the case of Martin of Tours to understand the process of the rise of episcopal power during the fourth century in Gaul. A traditional understanding of this process considers that episcopal power had a significant change in nature when aristocrats took over the office of bishop in the beginning of the fifth century. Nevertheless, recent studies have pointed out that during the fourth century some bishops were able to develop and consolidate a large amount of power within the city by means of traditional Roman social relationships. These were alliances with local notables and the development of networks of patronage. Sulpicius Severus, the biographer of Martin of Tours, constructed a figure of Martin shaped by particular religious, political and social motives. As a result, it becomes difficult to establish the actual nature and form of Martin’s social relationships. Yet he also offered some hints that allow the reader to grasp them. Specially, the mention of gifts and favours are the clues that point towards the existence of a vast network of social rapports. This network reached all sectors of late-antique Gallic society, from emperors to minor officers or from aristocratic landowners to poorest sectors. Consequently, a close examination of Martin’s vertical and horizontal social relationships allows the modern reader to reconsider traditional models of the rise of episcopal power in Gaul.
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Introduction. Problems around the gift.

Circa 396 C.E., Paulinus of Nola wrote from his ascetic retirement in southern Italy a letter to his fellow conversus Sulpicius Severus wherein he compared their respective conversions and stressed the intimate, spiritual bond that linked them to the extent that both became ill at the same time – in Paulinus' words, this was a gratissimum signum concordiae.\(^1\)

At the end of the letter, he directed the attention to more prosaic concerns:

> I send you some Campanian bread as a blessing from our store, relying on your merits before the Lord so much that I believe that the bread must reach you with its full grace ...

> In case you think that wheaten bread is a gift which carries my practice of humility too far, I send you a platter made of boxwood to attest my riches. You must take it as a gift (apophoreta) of my spiritual longing for you\(^2\)

He did not forget to ask his friend something in return: "If you have any dark oil, send it to me in the vessels which I have entrusted to my sons the couriers",\(^3\) as though the exchange of presents epitomized the relationship between the two ascetics. Furthermore, Paulinus did not lose the opportunity to mention his position and his riches through the gifts he was sending.\(^4\) Reciprocity of the favor was naturally intended, since Paulinus did not think necessary to explain why Sulpicius should send the requested oil to him.

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\(^2\) Panem Campanum de cellula nostra tibi pro eulogia misimus, tantum meritis in domino tuis freti, ut plena ad te preferendum sui gratia crederemus ... ac ne panis silagineus tibi modum nostrae humilitatis excedere videretur, misimus testimoniale divitiarum nostrarum scutellam buxeram; ut apophoreta voti spiritualis accipies Ep. 5, 21 (CSEL 29; all the translation of Paulinus' letters in this work are taken from P. Walsh, Letters of St. Paulinus of Nola, New York, 1966).


\(^4\) As he had previously done in the letter (See Paul., Nol., Ep. 5, 5).
Paulinus and Sulpicius shared many interests besides bread, oil, and monasticism. In the same way as Paulinus had chosen St. Felix as his patronus, his correspondent Sulpicius devoted himself to Martin (at the time of Paulinus’ letter probably still bishop of Tours) in a form that would characterize a great part of late antique spirituality. Martin had made a long career as a holy man and bishop at Tours, and Sulpicius’ devotion towards him assumed the form of two literary works (among other devotional practices) that shed light over the first decades of episcopal power in Tours and in northern Gaul in general.

It is the aim of this work to study the rise of episcopal power in the fourth century, taking Martin of Tours’ case as a means to understand a wider phenomenon with a particular emphasis on the social relationships involved in this process. The research will be focused on gift-exchange, one aspect that characterized personal and social relationships in the ancient world and was also present in the world of Martin’s biographer Sulpicius, as illustrated in the passage from the letter of Paulinus – which one may assume was a microscopic event that denoted a wider social practice.

First of all, what is intended by the term “gift”? To define it may lead to a complicated field because this concept has been the subject of scholarly debates since the

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5 BROWN 1981, 50-68.
6 The following chapters will explain how fundamental gift-exchange was for the creation and reproduction of social relationships. The correspondence between Ausonius and Paulinus shows that the latter was used to this social practice, as many of late antique aristocrats. For instance, Ausonius’ epistle 25 begins with the following statement “What kind of treatment of me, that my complaint is dealt with without even being delivered, my son Paulinus! Fearing that the oil you sent had not given satisfaction, you repeat the gift and, by the addition of some Barcelona sauce called muria, increase its measure” (Quanto me adfecit beneficio non delata equidem, sed suscepta mea querimonia, Pauline fili! Veritus displicuisse oleum, quod miseris, munus iterasti, addito etiam Barcinonensis meriae condimento cumulatius praestitiisti). Translations of Ausonius’ Epistles are from Loeb’s edition (WHITE, 1967). Note the vocabulary used by Ausonius (specially beneficium and munus), which will be introduced in chapter III. Also, epistle 26 shows other aspects of gift-giving: “Many and various are the causes I have for gratitude to you, which both circumstance, arising from time to time, happily introduces, and the ready generosity of your nature voluntarily invites, my son Paulinus. For in that you deny me nothing when I demand” (Multas et frequentes mihi gratiae tuae causas et occasio subinde nata concinnat et naturae tuae facilitas conciliat, Pauline fili. Nam quia nihil poscente me abnus).
publication of Marcel Mauss’ *Essai sur le don* in 1925. The gift was often opposed (in both academic and common-sense understanding) to mercantile exchange in the sense that the latter would be purely based on calculation and wish of profit, whereas the former would express disinterestedness and generosity. Yet this distinction might not be so simple when one considers a feature that Mauss assigned to gifts—reciprocity. As he argued, reciprocity is one of the three obligations attached to gifts. But, if reciprocity is compulsory, then altruism does not necessarily distinguish the gift from other forms of exchange. Thus, either one eliminates reciprocity as the other face of the coin of the gift or one needs to search for something different than generosity to define ‘gift’.

Other authors have explored different elements to obtain a definition of gift beyond the mere distinction based on generosity or liberality. An interesting reconsideration was put forward by Pierre Bourdieu, whereby the central characteristic that distinguishes gifts from other forms of exchange is “the work of time.” He reacted against the conception of this phenomenon as a mechanism of closed gifts and counter-gifts, since this model does not take into account a central feature such as the delay in the answer. In his mind, this permits the working of strategies of social actors who may choose between different answers: refusal or delay in returning the gift, giving back something with similar value or more valuable than the “opening gift”, an incapacity of returning the gift, etc. This deferral in the answer allows strategy to operate in the social realm as well as creating the possibility of misrecognition of

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7 For Mauss’ “legacy”, see OSTEEN 2002, 2-4. Osteen considered that Mauss’ legacy was so profound that “it would be difficult to find a text in the human sciences that has had more impact than Mauss’ brief monograph” (Ibidem, 2). In the present work, it will be used the English edition of 1950, which was supervised by the author himself.

8 In the potlatch system, Mauss recognized three obligations: obligation to give (in order to keep a certain status), obligation to accept, and obligation to reciprocate (a failure to reciprocate would imply a lost of rank). MAUSS 1990, 39-43.

9 For a brief yet comprehensive review of main theories about gift, see OSTEEN 2002.

10 First formulated in BOURDIEU 1972, 221-227.

11 Bourdieu did not apply these concepts only to gifts, but also other social practices, such as challenges or insults.
the objective existence of an answer (an expected, though not always received, counter-gift) that would be obliterated if the gift is returned immediately. As Bourdieu puts it, “the interval inserted between the gift and the counter-gift is an instrument of denial which allows a subjective truth and a quite opposite objective truth to coexist, in both individual experience and the common judgment.”

Therefore, he considers that reciprocity is not the only element that defines the practice of gift, and that it also includes subjective elements.

Furthermore, it has to be clear that one cannot talk about reciprocity as though it were a single mechanism behind any exchange of presents. It will depend to a great extent on the particular social position of the people or groupings involved in the activity – an element present in Bourdieu’s analysis about which more things will be said in due course. Moreover, one can find different “sub-types” of reciprocal exchanges. Marshall Sahlins has proposed a threefold characterization of reciprocity according to the intentions of the participants in the transactions; namely, a “generalized reciprocity” in one of the extremes of the continuum of reciprocity (based mostly on solidarity), typical among close kinship and without definition of time for returning favors, a “balanced reciprocity” based on the equality of the exchange, and, in the other extreme, “negative reciprocity” wherein both parts pursue a benefit in the transaction.

Although one might count among these exchanges more things

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13 “... même si la réciprocité est la vérité objective des actes discrets et vécus comme tels que l’expérience commune met sous le nom d’échanges de dons, elle n’est pas la vérité complète d’une pratique qui ne pourrait exister si elle se percevait conformément ou modèle” BOURDIEU 1972, 222.
14 “Generalized reciprocity refers to transactions that are putatively altruistic, transactions on the line of assistance given and, if possible and necessary, assistance returned.” (SAHLINS 1972, 193-194). As Sahlins points out, this kind of reciprocity does not mean that in a disinterested gift there is no obligation of counter-gift, but it operates in a different way, not being “stipulated by time, quantity, or quality” (SAHLINS 1972, 194). Cf. POLANYI 1967, 253 (“The closer the members of the encompassing community feel drawn to one another, the more general will be the tendency among them to develop reciprocative attitudes in regard to specific relationships limited in space, time or otherwise”).
15 “Balanced reciprocity refers to direct exchange. In precise balance, the reciprocation is the customary equivalent of the thing received and is without delay.” (SAHLINS 1972, 194).
16 “Negative reciprocity is the attempt to get something for nothing with impunity, the several forms of appropriation, transactions opened and conducted toward net utilitarian advantage.” (SAHLINS 1972, 195).
than gifts in a strict sense (in effect, only the first category, the “generalized exchange” represents what it is commonly understand as “gift”), Sahlins' categorization proved the possible richness and variety of relationships of reciprocity that must be taken into account. If one understands gift-exchange (or gift-giving) as something different from a market-like exchange (as proposed above), then it has to be clear that it is essential to recognize that the use of “exchange” precisely implies a reduction of a social practice to an economic category.\(^{17}\)

Besides an instrumental definition of gift, it is necessary for the purpose of this work to explain the possible and different interpretations of the actual relationship between gift-exchange and social power. And here one must go once again back to Mauss. Although his book opened a vast field for scholarly research, he actually intended to answer only one question about the gift, namely, “what rule of legality and self-interest, in societies of a backward or archaic type, compels the gift that has been received to be obligatorily reciprocated?”\(^{18}\) He directed the research to one aspect, posed in the question that immediately followed the previous one: “What power resides in the object given that causes its recipient to pay it back?”\(^{19}\) His answer to these inquiries was that the object given (and not only material objects) keeps, in the so-called archaic societies, part of the person who gives them. In other terms, goods were not totally alienated from the individual as they are in modern capitalistic systems; rather, they are a way to represent a social obligation with the others.\(^{20}\)

\(^{17}\) CALLARI 2002, 250. According to Callari, this is the product of a conception of economy as a world of homogeneous goods that allows to reduce every activity to a measurable calculation. Therefore, interest is allowed to be presented as a hermeneutical key to understand social relationships. Conversely, following Derrida's perspective, he proposes a multiplicity of perspective according to political and ethical mandates. Cf. OSTEEN 2002, 5.

\(^{18}\) MAUSS 1990, 3.

\(^{19}\) MAUSS 1990, 3.

\(^{20}\) MAUSS 1990, 45-46.
Mauss called systems such as American Northwestern *potlatch* a “total system” wherein economic categories melded with the juridical, the religious, and the social in the phenomenon of the gift. In this sense, he found three obligations that regulated the exchange of goods: the obligation of a chief to give in order to keep his social rank, the obligation to accept the gift, and the obligation to reciprocate it under the threat of losing one’s social position. Consequently, he established a link between the “spirit of the gift” and the social position of both the donor and the receiver, whereby the circulation of things becomes the “circulation of rights and persons.”\textsuperscript{21} In spite of the many critiques that other facets of his work received from anthropologists and social scientists,\textsuperscript{22} Mauss opened a path to investigate the gift and gift-giving in relation to status, social webs, and, ultimately, power in its diverse forms. As a consequence, he questioned some of the most basic ideas of his contemporaries. As Mark Osteen pointed out, what lay behind Mauss’ conception of gift was a contrast between a western (liberal) representation of exchanges between autonomous individuals and another model based on an exchange system carried on by individuals acting as representatives of social positions or groups.\textsuperscript{23}

Subsequent studies have indicated other possibilities and new lines of analysis. An important step in this process was taken by Karl Polanyi, who elaborated three categories to understand what he called the “forms of integration” of an economy: reciprocity, redistribution, and exchange.\textsuperscript{24} One may suspect that only the first of these forms is involved in gift-exchange. Polanyi, however, clearly separated reciprocity as individual behavior from reciprocity as a form of integration of an economy, which only occurs when “symmetrically

\textsuperscript{21} MAUSS 1990, 46.
\textsuperscript{22} Among the most relevant and accurate critiques made since the publication of the *Essai sur le don*, one can mention the review of Mauss’ evolutionist approach that considered gift-exchange as typical of “primitive” societies – although Mauss himself recognized that in his time gift-giving still played an important role (MAUSS 1990, 65-71, including some of his proposals). For other critics and developments in gift theory after Mauss, see OSTEEN (2000:1-11).
organized structures, such as a symmetrical system of kinship, are given." He also added that in "non-market" economies, reciprocity comes along with redistribution, a fact that would be important to keep in mind since, as Chris Wickham demonstrated from a Marxist standpoint, the late Roman social formation was more than ever integrated through redistribution. Polanyi also made clear that reciprocity did not imply duality, but rather a more complex structure of links between more than two individuals or groups.

These developments also affected the ideas about the relationship between gifts and social networks. For Marshall Sahlins, in non-state economies the gift-exchange is the basis for stressing particular social relationships and creating new ones, because "if friends make gifts, gifts make friends." This is a decisive complement to Mauss' theory whereby a gift only expresses an existing bond. Sahlins added, and this will be particularly relevant for this work, the dimension of creation of new social relationships. However, he considered that this only occurred in stateless social formations, which would not include the late Roman empire. On the contrary, Polanyi's categorization permitted to integrate state social regulations with individual or group practices.

Based on these categorizations, though taking a step further, Bourdieu saw in both relationships of reciprocity and distribution only one side of the coin. He considered that there is also another operation involved, namely the circulation of symbolic capital.

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24 POLANYI 1967, 250-256.
25 POLANYI 1967, 251. With this idea he wanted to stress that individual behavior is not reflected in social integration if it is not accompanied by an institutional conditioning – which was consistent with his intention to "de-naturalize" free-market relationships.
26 WICKHAM 1984. This study has been fundamental to grasp the importance of redistribution in late antiquity as well as its mechanisms. The dominant mode of production (the ancient one, characterized by state taxation) implied a redistribution of wealth from the state to society, the landowning class being the one which certainly most benefited from it (see specially WICKHAM 1984, 13-15).
28 SAHLINS 1972, 186.
29 "In focusing solely on the particular case of the exchanges designed to consecrate symmetrical relations, or solely on the economic effect of asymmetrical exchanges, one is liable to forget the effect produced by
circulation (and consequent appropriation) increases as far as one moves away from a "perfect reciprocity" (intended as an exact exchange of economic capital between the parts) and toward redistribution under the form of homage, obligations, etc. This allows one to make relations of subordination based on economic grounds to appear like "moral obligations" or, in other words, to create a formality that enables one to "separate a gift from straight exchange, moral obligation from economic obligation." Thus, apparently "irrational" practices that involve the loss or destruction of economic capital make sense in a context of power relations that imply the recognition of an authority by means of the accumulation of symbolic capital. In Bourdieu’s words, this means that “the accumulation of symbolic capital cannot be achieved but to the detriment of the accumulation of economic capital.”

Historians have only gradually included these developments of anthropology into their domain. One might recall the pioneer work of Moses Finley, *The World of Odysseus*, which was the first complete analysis of exchanges mostly regulated under the appearance of gift in the ancient world. Many of the conclusions reached by modern anthropology were extended to the study of an “archaic” society with historical methodology, which proved the importance of ethnographical studies for the comprehension of past societies. The gift, according to Finley, assumed many functions in pre-classical Greece, trade being the most important among them (an idea that he took from Malinowski’s studies of the Trobriand

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the circular circulation in which symbolic added-value is generated, namely the legitimation of the arbitrary, when the circulation covers an asymmetrical power relationship.” (BOURDIEU 1990, 123). For the concept of symbolic capital, see BOURDIEU 1972, 227-243, a descriptive, rather than theoretical, definition. For some critiques of this concept, particularly its economicism, see OSTEEN 2002, 24-25, although these criticisms seem to point more to the language chosen by Bourdieu than to the process as described by him.

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30 BOURDIEU 1990, 126.
31 BOURDIEU 1977, 237. Translation ours.
Yet the word "gift" represented in the archaic Greece a variety of transactions, beyond the modern concept of "commerce", among which Finley situated "services rendered, desired, or anticipated; what we would call fees, rewards, prizes, and sometimes bribes." In addition to these commercial, economic activities, Finley drew attention to social aspects and power relations in the practice of gift-giving. This practice was able to create social alliances, particularly through kinship (or gifts in the form of women), but it also served to compete for status and prestige under the form of agonistic (i.e., competitive) gift. The status of a person was transmitted, hence reinforced, with a gift, in addition to the intrinsic, "economic" value of the thing – an idea somehow resembling Mauss' theory.

The working of the gift in societies such as archaic Greece assumed many of the aforementioned characteristics. It was a compulsory practice that made gifts sometimes less than a voluntary action; it lacked regularity and the working of time allowed different answers to a certain gift; counter-gifts assumed various forms (material or symbolic); and the range of possibilities in an exchange of gifts was determined by the social position of both parties.

In the case of the late Roman empire, one has to expect some continuities, but also some ruptures with this depiction of the roles of gift. On the one hand, a different economy created different representations. Thus activities such as trade were not always represented under the coverage of gift. But it did occur in some instances, such as in the exchanges of landowning aristocrats in late Roman Gaul. On the other hand, social relationships were

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32 FINLEY 1954, 61-62, specially n. 19. Although trade was covered with the ideology of the gift, Finley considered that it ultimately conserved an economic bias, rather than social or political one: "Odyssean trade differed from the various forms of gift-exchange in that the exchange of goods was the end itself. In trade things changed hands because each needed what the other had, and not, or only incidentally, to compensate for a service, seal an alliance, or support a friendship" (FINLEY 1954, 65).
33 FINLEY 1954, 64.
34 FINLEY 1954, 129-133.
35 FINLEY 1954, 100-103.
still created and asserted through gift-giving, and not only those of social alliance between equals, but also through patronage.\textsuperscript{37}

All these studies allow us to reconsider not only the functioning of late Roman economy, as it has been previously done, but also other phenomena that involved gift-exchanges or gift-giving in the creation and affirmation of social and political power – for instance, the episcopate. As mentioned before, the aim of this work is to analyze one specific case, that of Martin of Tours, and analyze the functions and significance of gifts and favors (both in material and symbolic forms) played in the assertion of his authority as bishop in late Roman Gaul.

Chapter one reviews scholarship of the last thirty years on the rise of episcopal power in late Roman Gaul in order to put forward the questions that were answered and the ones that remained unresolved. This review, far from being exhaustive, covers only the main perspectives on the issue in an attempt to include as many historiographical perspectives as possible.

Chapter two consists of a brief introduction to the author of the principal sources to be analyzed, Sulpicius Severus. Instead of enumerating all the aspects of his life, which has been done with competency before, the focus will be put on the factors that shaped his understanding of social reality, which consequently would be reflected in the sources. Likewise, the chapter deals with some aspects of the figure of Martin of Tours but not those concerning his life (although some facts are mentioned when required). Rather, it presents some modern interpretations about the central character of Sulpicius’ writings that suggest to what extent contemporary historians assumed his portrayal of Martin as valid.

\textsuperscript{37} EPP, 76-82 for horizontal relationships and KRAUSE 1987b, 20-65 for rapport of patronage. See also PATLAGEAN 1977, 181-196, for the patronage of the poor in the Byzantine world.
Chapter three is concentrated on the first part of the case-study. It consists in the analysis of Martin's social relationships with Gallic notables, local imperial functionaries and other bishops. The reason to group these social links together is that they may represent relationships of "horizontalité", i.e., between people of similar status. Certainly, status is difficult to quantify and these relationships encompass rapports with more or less subtle differences, and some of these relationships may be included within a sub-type, that of the protégés with powerful supporters.  

Finally, chapter four deals with another group of social relationships of Martin of Tours, those of "verticality," or between persons and groups of different status. To be sure, this implies, for the late Roman society, relationships of patronage. This term included different social bonds, ranging from the rural patronage or urban clientes to the imperial patronage of high officers and aristocrats. The separation between vertical and horizontal relations is only for the purpose of the presentation in this work, because they shared many features, as the one aforementioned between patrons and protégés.

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38 See GARNSEY and SALLER 1987, 152-154.
I. The rise of episcopal power in late antique Gaul

In a letter written one or two years after the aforementioned epistle to Sulpicius, Paulinus praised bishop Victricius of Rouen for his achievements during his episcopate. He was probably comparing the situation in Gaul in the third century or the middle of the fourth century with that of circa 400 when he stated that,

... where once barbarian strangers or native brigands dwelt in deserted, equally hazardous areas of forest and shore, now cities, towns, islands, and woods with churches and monasteries crowded with people and harmonious in peace, are thronged by revered, angelic choruses of saintly men. Admittedly this is being achieved throughout the peoples of Gaul and all over the world by Christ.

The barbarian invasions and the bagaudae no longer devastated northern Gaul, and a new order had been established by God’s grace. For Paulinus, this was particularly clear at Rouen, a city that had been “only slightly known even in neighboring districts”; however since Victricius’ episcopate, it was “being mentioned with respect even in distant provinces.” This new order, in Paulinus’ eyes, was not due to the re-establishment of the imperial state in the fourth century, but to Christianity which, under the visible head of Victricius, had brought a new era to his city. Paulinus, indeed, put the matter in biblical

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40 Ubi quondam deserta siluarum ac littorum pariter intuta aduenae barbari aut latrones incolae frequentabant, nunc venerabiles et angelici sanctorum chori urbes oppida insulas siluas ecclesiis et monasteriis plebe numerosis, pace consonis celebrant. Quod quamquam in totius Galliae populis ut ubique gentium Christus operetur (Paul. Nol., Ep. 18, 4).
41 Uicinis ante regionibus tenui nomine peruidgatum in loginquis etiam provinciis nominari venerabiliter audimus (Paul. Nol., Ep. 18, 5).
To the modern reader, this description may seem an exaggeration or overblown flattery if he or she considers the actual power that bishops may have had at that time. However, it recognizes a process that was silently taking place in the cities of late antique Gaul: the rise of bishops as central figures in the urban (and sometimes rural) political life.

The historiographical problem of the episcopal power in Gaul has been discussed in the last decades in terms of a distinct concept of German historiography, Bischofsheerschaft. The classical study and the keystone for the discussion of this concept was the book by Martin Heinzelmann wherein he analyzed the evidence from the fourth to the seventh century and concluded that during those centuries Roman nobility mixed with Gallic episcopate to create the all-powerful episcopal figure of the late sixth century. Thus, the Gallic aristocracy took over the control of the office, transferring the power and the tastes that its members previously had. Heinzelmann also established a direct nexus between the fall of the empire in the west and the stampede of aristocratic families into the episcopal office (in a way, he turned upside down the ideas of Arnaldo Momigliano, who thought that the Roman aristocracy contributed to the fall of the empire when upper classes orientated their minds and resources towards the service of the church). According to Heinzelmann, two processes

43 HEINZELMANN 1976, 210-211. This characterization has been very influential in historiography on late Roman episcopate to the extent that it was taken for granted for other parts of the Mediterranean world, even if it was not precisely accurate when applied to instances outside Gaul. See BROWN 2000, 335-338.
44 In the present work, the terms “Gallic aristocracy” or “upper classes” will be preferred to “senatorial order”. The choice is based on the fact that senator was a term meant to represent a rank, and not other social categories such as status or class (see GARNSEY and SALLER 1987, 107-123). However, a process of “homogenization” of aristocratic rank took place during the fourth century. As a result, by the beginnings of the following century, most of the aristocracy belonged to an expanded senatorial order (JONES 1964, 527-528).
45 MOMIGLIANO 1964, 9. However, Momigliano’s thesis is not so straightforward. He took other factors into account that, as it will be shown, were shared by other scholars. In his words, “the Church was mobile
occurred simultaneously to facilitate and shape this development. On the one hand, the ascetic ideology molded (and was molded by) the ethical values of an aristocracy well prepared to agree with some of its ideas after centuries of influence of Stoicism and elitist principles. On the other hand, the episcopal office increasingly appealed to a class habituated to govern the city, in a time when fewer opportunities were offered to its members for performing such offices – particularly, with new rulers throughout Gaul.46

Heinzelmann’s study was the starting point for further research in the field, since it demonstrated, from prosopographical studies, the continuity of Roman upper classes in the episcopal office after the fall of the empire. Maybe for that reason, Heinzelmann’s work became an accepted interpretation in further works of synthesis.47 However, many questions remained unexplained, such as, for instance, the content itself of the Bischofsheerschaft throughout the centuries in which the process of its emergence took place; or, to put in another way, what was implied by episcopal power in the fourth and in the sixth century. The development that led to the office of the Merovingian bishop was one that took at least three hundred years to complete, with regional variations. Even though the evidence supports the argument that upper-class families took over many of the episcopal sees in Gaul, this fact alone does not necessarily explain how the power of the bishop was developed – by what means and to the detriment of which groups. Furthermore, in this kind of analysis the emphasis is put on people (the individual bishops) rather than on the institutionalized figure,
i.e., the member (and, of course, the head) of a collective, institutionalized social agent — the Christian church.

Moreover, it seems quite important to understand the chronology of the development of the episcopal power with its continuities and discontinuities, because any interpretation of its rise ought to keep in mind the growing influence and resources manipulated by bishops of the fourth century, when a senator-bishop was a *rara avis* — although that person would be characteristic of the fifth and sixth century. It is also unexplained in Heinzelmann's work why the aristocracy chose one particular office (the episcopate) as the focus of its interests after the fall of the imperial structure. Yet more important than this problem, is the fact that the rise of episcopal power, which occurred during the fourth century and even before, remains unsolved by an interpretation based on the "transference" of wealth, prestige, status, etc. from the aristocracy to the episcopate.

Other problems arose after Heinzelmann's study and the subsequent debates about his concept. In a recent series of studies about the problem of the *Bischofherrschaft*, Bernhard Jussen held that modern scholarship (particularly German) has been disorientated in its attempts to explain the rise of the all-powerful figure of the sixth century because of the terms and perspective from which the question has been posed; that is, whether power (*Herrschaft*)

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48 The social origin of the late Roman episcopate, and particularly that of the fourth century, was from the order of *curiales*. See JONES 1964, 920-929. In a more recent article, F. Gillard (GILLARD 1984) counted only two or three senatorial bishops in the fourth century, after a cross examination that eliminated from the list some other instances — among which, significantly, there are some Gallic bishops, once considered of senatorial origin. Cf. ROUSELLE 1977, with a wider list of senatorial bishops for Gaul. However, Gillard believed that many of the bishops recorded by Roussel received the qualification of "senators" from later, i.e. early medieval, sources when the term did not necessarily signify belonging to the senatorial order (GILLARD 1984, 159-166).

49 In a systematic description of the development of Gallic episcopate, Brigitte Beaujard (BEAUJARD 1996) made a depiction of the evolution that although stressed the differences between the fourth and the fifth century (probably overdiminishing the situation of the fourth century), she clearly pointed out that the advance of the bishop over the city in Gaul was a product of a slow process that took place over three centuries. However, she still put the emphasis in the changes occurring after 400 C.E.
was delegated by the emperor or appropriated by the bishops.\textsuperscript{50} In Jussen's mind, there are two fundamental weaknesses that require revision to this perspective. First of all, Jussen asserted that such interpretation understands the process from the point of view of legality as presented in the imperial constitutions.\textsuperscript{51} In other words, the process is reduced to a legal conflict over a power defined also in legal terms. Second, such an interpretation also raises a more practical question. How could the imperial legislation shape the process of power definition when the imperial authority was in full retreat?\textsuperscript{52}

Jussen also demonstrated that the source of power of the \textit{Bischofsherrschaft} was somewhat different from that proposed by Heinzelmann. Rather than considering the problem from the perspective of the "transference" of certain power belonging to Gallic aristocrats, he put forward an interpretation based on the manipulation of symbolic activities (liturgy) as a source of legitimacy and, hence, of power.\textsuperscript{53} The end of the imperial government in Gaul, which almost coincided with the end of the imperial court in the region, accompanied a regionalization of the political field (\textit{Gallia}) for the senatorial aristocracy, with a consequent shift of the centre of gravity in the representation and legitimation of social order, which became located in the church. Jussen saw the key for this process in the control of the liturgy and the non-institutionalized sources of authority such as charismatic ascetics.\textsuperscript{54} Consequently, the \textit{dignitas} of the episcopate experienced a profound modification from the time of Martin of Tours. The values attached to the episcopal office became the same as those

\textsuperscript{50} First formulated in JUSSEN 1995, 677-679, and later in a more comprehensive article in JUSSEN 1998, 80-81.
\textsuperscript{51} JUSSEN 1998, 80.
\textsuperscript{52} JUSSEN 1995, 679.
\textsuperscript{53} JUSSEN 1998.
\textsuperscript{54} JUSSEN 1998, 81-85. Yet it is not clear in his work why charisma is associated with a certain type of ascetics, since one may suppose that for many late antique men in Gaul an aristocratic bishop had as much charisma as a wanderer monk. See Markus 1990, 25-26, for a reconsideration of traditional understandings of charismatic figures, such as holy men. He holds that their charisma derived less from their role as intermediaries between the Christian community and the other world than from their role as "representatives" of the community itself. See infra, note 179.
that officeholders of the Roman empire believed necessary for the exercise of high magistracies; a *nobilitas* only possessed by the members of a certain *ordo* – hence a hereditary feature rather than an individually acquired *virtus*.\(^{55}\) Therefore, Jussen proposed that the late Roman aristocracy in Gaul needed the control of the episcopal office not because of the office itself but because it allowed them access to the only source of symbolic legitimacy available, together with an impressive source of power. Nevertheless, he still accepted the chronology of the process that had been the basis of Heinzelmann’s work, with its powerless bishop in the fourth century and its all-powerful episcopate in the sixth.\(^{56}\) The problem with this kind of stark periodization, in addition to those aforementioned, is its analysis of the dimension of the episcopal power in the fourth century in terms of a typical medieval *Herrschaft*; also, it does not take into account that the configuration of political and social power differed qualitatively in the Merovingian age from the late Roman era. In other words, the fact that a bishop of the fourth century did not rule the city in a medieval sense (or in a sixth-century sense) does not imply that his power or *Herrschaft* has necessarily to be considered according to the standards of the sixth century, when aristocratic pedigree was an important prerequisite (though not the only one) for the episcopal office. The fourth century remains a *vacuum*, the prehistory of or prelude to episcopal power. This is the consequence of a medievalistic approach towards the issue and it has an anachronistic flavour. Yet the reader may get a different outlook when the topic is analyzed from an ancient, or late antique, perspective.

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\(^{55}\) JUSSEN 1998, 93-94.

\(^{56}\) JUSSEN 1998, 79. He divided the process in three stages: up to c. 400, when bishops were not rulers of the city and aristocrats were not usually interested in the episcopal office; from c. 400 to c. 500, when aristocrats occupied episcopal sees and bishops gradually became the rulers of the city; and from c. 500 to c. 600, when the aristocrats established their authority as a central element in the Merovingian regional rule. For his acceptance to Heinzelmann’s periodization see p. 79, n. 9.
Writing almost at the same time as Heinzelmann, John Matthews gave some hints about how the process of increasing episcopal power took place, even when the imperial government showed vitality in the western provinces. He perceived a shift in the profile of the bishops in Gaul between the generation of Hilary of Poitiers (c. 300 - 367) and that of Martin of Tours (d. 397). Whereas the former belonged to a generation of bishops that behaved as "imperial politicians", the latter gained his fame from his local activity. Among the occupations of bishops like Martin, Matthews counted the evangelization of lower classes and bishops' contacts with upper classes, necessary to reach the rural population. Although this description might seem excessively sharp and lacking in nuance, Matthews directed the attention to the problem of the relationship between bishops and aristocrats in Gaul before the fifth century. According to him, a complex alliance (to which he added the imperial court and officers) linked powerful and recently Christianized families with the visible heads of the Christian church, yet both groups were still clearly differentiated. His presentation looked at this alliance from the side of the Roman aristocrats (which was precisely the aim of Matthews' book) but it lacked a clear reference to what benefit the members of higher classes obtained from this association. It seems from this interpretation that upper classes in the west decided to support certain bishops because of a common piety. If the processes in northern

57 MATTHEWS 1975, specially chapter VI ("Provincial Upper Classes: Evangelism and Heresy").
58 MATTHEWS 1975, 153-159. Surprisingly, since the publication of Matthews' book, the second aspect (his contacts with upper classes) received less attention than the role of Martin as evangelist. The model of conversion of subordinated classes through the upper classes has been applied also for the fifth century. See WES 1992, who offered a similar model for conversions in fifth-century Gaul.
59 Indeed, some passages in Sulpicius' works show Gallic bishops as imperial politicians worried about theological and ecclesiological controversies (such as the Priscillianist affair and the Felician controversy) as much as members of the previous generation (as will be shown in chapter III). See also MATHISEN 1989, 11-18, for the Felician controversy and imperial politics. The fact that some theological controversies acquired a strict local context certainly represents a change from the previous generation, when Arians and Nicenes were affiliated with factions with imperial-wide dimensions.
60 Matthews studied the case of Ausonius' family and Martin. Although it is only one case, it is certainly a well documented one. Similar processes occurred in other parts of the Roman West, for instance northern Italy. See PIETRI 1982, who studies the case of Roman Venetia.
61 MATTHEWS 1975, 146-159. The idea of a "Latin spirituality" typical of the period from Valentinian I to Theodosius can be found also in FONTAINE 1967, 140-143.
Italy can be compared with those occurring in Gaul, one may join Rita Lizzi in stating that the church gave a social function to the higher classes in the almsgiving. Also, bishops assigned to themselves the role of guarantors of the social order within the city and at the same time they obtained support from the lower classes. 

Certainly, one of the aspects of the period to be taken into account is the “upper-class piety” that led aristocrats to show deference for bishops and evangelists in the age of Theodosius. Nonetheless, this explanation presents a social reality determined only by aristocracies and imperial officers and one that ignores the vast majority of the population of the Roman empire, who are regarded merely as the passive actors in the play. One must remember that bishops commanded an institution that “stood at the joining point between elites, the sub-elites, and the humbler masses.” And these humbler masses played a role that requires explanation.

This role might suggest that the alliance of the upper classes and the church’s offices was something more than the expression of a particular piety or a policy of conversion.

In an important book of synthesis that attempted to explain long-term processes, Raymond Van Dam drew attention to the situation of the bishops in light of a wide network of social relationships. From his point of view, the basic social structure of late Roman Gaul consisted in “small local tyrannies” based on ownership of the land and extended relationships of patronage. This background remained almost untouched during the third and fourth century in Gaul to such an extent that it proved to be resistant to this external (imperial) “intrusion.” Van Dam also claimed that bishops exerted their authority with the

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62 LIZZI 1998, 100-104.
63 The so-called “alliance of public authority with private tastes” (MATTHEWS 1975, 140).
64 BROWN 2000, 345.
65 VAN DAM 1985.
66 VAN DAM 1985, specially ch. I. According to him, the imperial power was an “intrusion” that did not affect basic social structures in Gaul. Nevertheless, he admitted that the imperial system created a new source for prestige and authority (and one might add wealth) but the landowning aristocracy managed to control this “intrusion” for their benefit. (VAN DAM 1985, 12-16). This is a central issue that distinguishes Van Dam’s approach from Matthews’, who held that the provincial (Gallic) upper classes owed much of its
same idioms as secular leaders from the fourth century; yet their authority was initially concentrated in two spheres: linking the sacred world with ordinary life (for instance, in their "fights" against daemons) and teaching of Scriptures. In addition, bishop’s power had a more concrete manifestation, namely the regulation of social behavior in small communities by means of more or less concrete forms of persuasion. Therefore, in his interpretation of the rise of episcopal power, Van Dam paid attention to an aspect that had not been considered by Matthews: the role of bishops in the control of the local community. Moreover, he added an element absent in Heinzelmann’s analysis, namely the fact that the office of bishop offered concrete attractions (beyond prestige and similar social values) to Roman aristocrats when they took over the episcopal function from the fifth century. It offered a political power developed and accumulated during the fourth century, when the Christian communities consolidated and expanded — something that enables one to understand many of Martin of Tours’ activities. Van Dam held that this power and the assimilation by the episcopate of secular forms of authority and prestige permitted aristocrats to exercise “lateral mobility” in the fifth century, and, therefore, to act as imperial magistrates once the empire disappeared.

The typology offered by Van Dam represented a qualitative development from an interpretation based merely on the “aristocratization” of the episcopal office to explain the rise of the Bischofs herrschaft in Gaul. He placed the emphasis on internal developments within Christian communities prior to the take-over of the office by local notables. Yet he did

power to the imperial system, which was a “pervasive social influence” (MATTHEWS 1975, 159). Cf. JUSEEN 1998, 81-82. This is an idea dear to historiography of the field whereby local aristocracy took over power abandoned by the imperial structure — and among the “usurpers” was the episcopate. See MATTHEWS 1975, 329-351, where it is claimed that different political patterns appeared according to the region, though the resolution of the crisis in local terms became the common trait everywhere in Gaul. VAN DAM 1985, 59-87.

In this sense, B. Jussen correctly remarks that prestige is ultimately a question of representation, and not a source of power. Prestige has different sources and different interpretations (consequently, different degrees of legitimacy) that differ according to social groups and persons. Therefore, he claims for a survey based on the different social actors to understand episcopal power (JUSSEN 1995, 682-684).

VAN DAM 1985, 141-156. Also, PEREZ SANCHEZ 1995, 211.
not include, at least not explicitly, the importance of social networks with local notables during the fourth century, as Matthews did. Another point not explained in his approach is the objective basis for this control over the community. In other words, what resources could bishops mobilize in order to assert their authority by means of hegemony over the regulations of social life? He gave some hints about one aspect, particularly when he stressed the importance of the control of symbolic goods (teaching, exorcisms, etc.), but research on other episcopal sees of the Roman empire suggested that different, more concrete means were deployed to create and assert bishops’ power.

Some traditional Marxist approaches considered that the origins of the power of the Gallic episcopate lay with the class to which some of its members belonged (in a similar way to conventional interpretations of the process). Since many of them were *potentes*, they turned the episcopal office into a component of the dominant class whose power came from the property of the land and the relationships of domination there established. This interpretation, however, presents many problems and leaves many questions unanswered. First of all, not all the bishops belonged to the highest classes of Gallic society, although the most famous of them may have. It is interesting to observe that this view is not very different from that mentioned above which considered the rise of episcopal power as a product of a take-over of the church’s offices by the Roman aristocracy. In any event, it creates (as many other interpretations do) a sharp hiatus between the fourth and the fifth centuries, and here again the processes that occurred during the previous decades to the year 500 are

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70 In fact, Martin’s “success” is explained by his reaction against traditional forms of authority that dominated the social setting in Gaul. For Van Dam, what Martin did was to consolidate a new model of episcopacy that “assumed secular idioms of power”, that is, a figure of bishop parallel to that of the civilian magistrate or the emperor (VAN DAM 1985, 126). However, one can suggest that this was the way in which Martin (and Sulpicius) wanted to present the question rather than the actual way of power construction (see *infra*, ch. III).

71 See, for example, PEREZ SANCHEZ 1995, 211-213.
underestimated. In spite of these problems, interpretations like this one point toward an issue that has to be reconsidered, particularly after recent research; that is, the role of wealth in the rise of bishops’ power.

It has been frequently noted that the church’s wealth developed in the wake of Constantine’s decrees that granted generous benefits to Christian institutions. This increasing wealth had different sources such as imperial donations, tax exemption, private contributions, ecclesiastical properties and, of course, the personal wealth of individual bishops. Wealth does not necessarily imply power; it must be seen as legitimate in order to establish such relationship of power between two persons or groups. Rita Lizzi showed how institutionalized wealth was a necessary precondition for a bishop to be recognized as potens, but this recognition also required the attainment of modeled paradigms of behavior. Likewise, based on the studies on poverty carried out by Evelyne Patlagean, Peter Brown put forward a pattern to analyze the rise of episcopal power in the Mediterranean world, which may give a hint about the role that wealth played in this process long before the richest aristocrats in Gaul captured some of the episcopal sees. He considered the question from the point of view of urban leadership, as Van Dam did, but his perspective included the use of wealth as a means of assertion (and basis) of episcopal authority. This was reached through a symbolic and material appeal to different social sectors that were excluded from the traditional urban body – the poor. On the one hand, the publicized role of the monks and the traditional Christian discourse worked together to achieve the symbolic side of this process.

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72 It is noteworthy how many scholars (and not only Marxists) have stressed the difference between the fourth and the fifth century in Gallic episcopate. As a result, the figure of Martin is usually starkly opposed to that of Sidonius or other aristocratic bishops of the fifth century (See, for instance, PEREZ SANCHEZ 1995, 211; BEAUJARD 1996, 129; CRACCO RUGGINI 1999, 181). It will be later shown whether this interpretation can be held without reserve or one should look at other aspects of episcopate to make a judgment on the (dis)continuity between the two centuries.

73 JONES 1964, 894-899. HUNT 257-262.

74 BOURDIEU 1990, 117-119.

75 LIZZI 1998.
On the other hand, the patronage of the poor, which tried to replace private charity, materialized a power relationship as well as reinforced its symbolic aspects. This practice, whose epitome was the image of the bishop as lover of the poor, “provided an acceptable raison d’être for the growing wealth of the church”, through a mechanism that did not differ from the ethnological studies of Bourdieu. Consequently, it is possible to complement Matthews’ idea of a bishop creating his power through the alliance with upper classes to reach their clientelae with Brown’s perspective that stressed the existence of a conscious policy of creating a new clientela to compete for urban preeminence. This systematic policy was reflected in the ideological plane by the creation of episcopal models by Christian intellectuals that reinforced the thaumaturgical, supernatural aspect of the power of bishops, as Lellia Cracco Ruggini recently proposed. This is an essential feature in the study of figures such as Martin, although Cracco Ruggini did not consider the bishop of Tours an important participant in the process.

Ultimately, Matthews’ and Brown’s approaches should not have to be opposed as local studies demonstrate the existence of a mixture of both strategies – and this should be
particularly relevant to the case of Gaul. Brown’s emphasis upon one aspect may be due to the importance he places on eastern sources, because not many other western examples are systematically explored in his *Power and Persuasion* (except for Ambrose or Augustine). On the contrary, Matthew’s book is exclusively dedicated to western cases.

If the alliance with local aristocrats and imperial officers seems evident during the fourth century, what did bishops “offer” to them? Brown’s answer pointed to the relationship between the rise of episcopal power and social conflict, suggesting that one of the roles that most benefited the episcopacy in their gaining ascendancy was that of “controller of the crowds”, in a context of increasing social unrest in the Theodosian age. He considered that the main beneficiary of this role was the imperial power. However, it would be interesting to know to what extent this capacity for social control and (new) mobilization was particularly perceived by the upper classes, particularly in the west, and contributed to the process of the increasing preeminence of late Roman episcopate in Gaul.

This chapter has briefly sketched some developments and trends of contemporary historiography regarding the problem of the rise of episcopal power. None of them ought to be completely disregarded as they represented important stages for the discussion of the question. Some preliminary conclusions, however, may be drawn. The central question revolves around the role of the Gallic aristocracy in the process of “primitive accumulation” of episcopal power. The model proposed by Heinzelmann should be complemented by one that shows different relationships that upper classes maintained with the episcopate in the

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81 For example, Lellia Cracco Ruggini, *(CRACCO RUGGINI 1997)* presents an interesting example of a mixture of both strategies, although one may wonder whether her case of study (the election of Damasus in Rome in 366) is representative of other cities. The further sections of this work will point towards an positive answer. Brown himself recognized some nuances that include the role of social alliances with notables: “In a partially Christianized region such as northern Italy, the effectiveness of Christian teaching
decades previous to the era of Sidonius or Germanus of Auxerre. Also, the existence of an aristocracy implies that the vast majority of the population, which was the other actor of the play, did not share the status and power that a privileged minority had. To complicate the scene, these two groups were not clearly distinctive entities, but rather their existences as such was a simplification imposed by legislation (between honestiores and humiliores). They were crossed by distinctions and affiliations based on different wealth, status, religion, gender, etc. Last but not least, the definition of episcopal power was not only established in relationship to other groups, but it was also the product of conflicts and different positions within the life of the churches.

What is proposed in the following chapters is a reconsideration of the well-known case of study, namely Martin of Tours. The goal is to understand the process of his assertion of authority and social power. The analysis will be chiefly based on the impressive research done on the subject of the rise of episcopal power as well as on Sulpicius Severus' works, although from a slightly different standpoint. The social practice of gift giving (in a wider sense, that is, including favors and "symbolic gifts") as well as the social relationships involved in it allow one to consider some aspects of the rise of episcopal power in late Roman Gaul, perhaps less impressive than imperial constitutions or aristocratic backgrounds, but nonetheless significant. Before analyzing the sources, some basic information must be given about the protagonist of Sulpicius' stories and, more importantly, about the writer himself.
II. Sulpicius Severus, his socio-religious setting and his hero.

The sources to be analyzed in this thesis are the Life of Martin (Vita Martini) and the Dialogues (Dialogi), both written during the decade of 395-405, a period of high literary production by their author, Sulpicius Severus. The debates about literary genres are not settled among scholars, but one can agree with the denomination of “biographical” that encompasses different forms beyond the traditional biography. These kinds of pieces of literature developed steadily in late antiquity, especially those biographical writings that narrated the stories of saints, the hagiographies.

Sulpicius’ literary compositions present many riddles, impossible to be fully explained because some of them still remain problematic, but one of their difficulties must be confronted since it is fundamental for this study; that is the validity of Sulpicius as a trustworthy historical source. Because his works were not warmly received (even when Martin was still alive) a long debate that reaches back to the fourth century dominated the studies on Sulpicius’ literary productions. The veracity of his writings suffered from the criticism of many of his contemporaries, as he himself recognized, although the censors were

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83 The dates of the works remain controversial. For the Life, the most likely is 396/7 and for the Dialogues c. 405 (STANCLIFFE 1983, 71-81). All the passages quoted in the present work comes from Jacques Fontaine’s edition of the Life of Martin (FONTAINE 1967) and Augello’s edition of the Dialogues (AUGELLO 1969). All translations are ours.

84 The concept of “biographical” is taken from SWAIN, S. 1997. For the literary background of Sulpicius’ writings, see FONTAINE 1967, 59-75, who has for argued the existence of different literary traditions (classical and Judeo-Christian) in the Life. There are many possibilities of classification of the Life. First of all, this work can be labeled either as “history” or “biography” since the boundaries between these two genres were not clearly delimited in late antiquity. In addition, the Life can be grouped together with Christian lives of monks or lives of bishops (for all these debates, see STANCLIFFE 1983, 86-102). For the Dialogues, Stancliffe has suggested that different traditions nourished the work: Biblical narrations, biographical literature (both classical and Christian). According to her, the Dialogue-form allowed Sulpicius to develop his polemics better than the traditional Life-style (Ibidem, 103-107).

85 The literary aspects are beyond the scope of the present work. However, a general introduction to the importance of the Lives in Christian literature can be found in CAMERON 1991, specially ch. V.

86 Basically, there are two sets of problems: the accuracy of Sulpicius’ chronology and the sources the hagiographer used in his portrayal of Martin. For a comprehensive list of the literary difficulties of both the Life and the Dialogues, see STANCLIFFE 1983, 111-202.
never identified. Indeed, it is possible that the voices raised against the authenticity of some of Martin’s deeds mentioned in the Life were numerous enough to impel Sulpicius to write the Dialogues. Then, one might ask how reliable are these sources for an objective understanding of Martin’s world.

For the purposes of this work one needs to take into account that the detractors of Sulpicius’ works only confronted one aspect of them, namely Martin’s powers of miraculous healer or, in other words, they claimed that the bishop lacked the thaumaturgical powers and supernatural gifts that Sulpicius asserted he had. The extant evidence does not suggest that the episodes narrated in the Life and the Dialogues were criticized because Martin had not actually met a certain person mentioned in Sulpicius’ text, which is essential for this thesis. To be sure, the emphasis of Sulpicius in mentioning witnesses may reinforce that at least Martin had a social relationship with the specified person, although the circumstances may have been different. Considering the standards of the ancient world, one may assume that the evidence allows one to assert with a certain degree of probability that the social contacts of Martin did occur. However, as it will be shown, Sulpicius’ own ideas and interests

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87 For the works previous to 1967, see FONTAINE 1967, 171-185.
88 Some passages refers to one person (Ep. 1, 2: ...indicatur mihi dixisse quondam...) whereas other identified Martin’s detractors (or Sulpicius?) in plural (Dial, 3, 5, 3: ...infidelitas plurimorum...), or both (Dial, 1, 26, 4-7: ...infelices, degeneres, somnulentis...).
89 This has probably been the only agreement among recent studies on Martin. All of them take for granted many of the episodes involving people named in Sulpicius’ works since their accuracy has been proved by their cross-examination with other sources. See FONTAINE 1967, 181-183, for the comments about Julian’s studies on Martin (from a historical point of view) and their importance for Martinian studies.
90 The problem of the possibility of Martin’s miracles will not be treated here. Clare Stancliffe has an optimistic approach that tries to justify in modern terms the possibility that the miracles did occur – particularly those involving thaumaturgical powers (STANCLIFFE 1983, 249-255). In any case, Sulpicius’ sources are blamed for any distortion, since “we might assume that Sulpicius simply wrote down what he was told about Martin’s life and in good faith; and the responsibility for the miracle stories he tells lies not with him, but with his informants” (STANCLIFFE 1983, 160). More convincingly, Jacques Fontaine suggested a methodology to approach the sources based on a triple metamorphosis between the actual episodes and Sulpicius’ writing: the “subjectivité de Martin”, the second hand references (particularly the “tradition of Marmoutier”) and Sulpicius’ own ideas. FONTAINE 1967, 185-188.
91 The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire confirms some of the characters and titles (see infra, ch. III). There is also the possibility of cross-examination in some cases, such as Paulinus’ mention of the encounter between Martin and bishop Victricius in Vienne (Ep. 18, 9).
permeated his presentation of Martin’s social intercourses. Three different aspects, which are intimately linked although can be analytically separated, ought to be distinguished: firstly, the social landscape of the late Roman world, that constructed those categories that allowed the hagiographer to understand and describe social practices; secondly, Sulpicius’ social and cultural background, which positioned his discourse; lastly, the political and social cleavages that shaped late Roman Gaul and Sulpicius’ own career.

In the first place, one needs to give account of an analysis of the influence of Roman social practices upon Sulpicius’ understanding of them. Although social categories were present when he dealt with issues such as orders, dignity, status, etc., there is a more unconscious process working here (which deserves to be acknowledged, although it will not be systematically treated). Social categories of the Roman world shaped also the religious interactions. It has to be remembered that Sulpicius did not only write about a bishop but also about a monk and a holy man. The way in which these figures were represented in fourth-century literature owed much to the dominating social relationships in the Roman empire, namely patronage and political friendship (amicitia). Not only was Martin a patronus for his biographer but also Sulpicius’ ascetic companions were named amici, and shameful behavior of bishops before the emperor is described as a clientelistic liaison. More

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92 The dominant social categories in the later Roman empire will be explained in the subsequent chapters.
93 “Men of the late-Roman aristocracy such as Paulinus found that they could obliterate their pagan past because they could add something new: the warmth of late-Roman senatorial amicitia and the intensity of late-Roman loyalty to patroni and to beloved teachers suffused their newly forged style of relationship with the other world” BROWN 1981, 60.
94 For example, a relationship between a fox and a monk in Egypt is described by Postumianus in the Dialogues as a patronage bond (... cum familiarem patronum abesse sentiret ..., Dial 1,14,2). Amicus is used by Sulpicius to denote a relationship of protégé’s patronage, when he calls Martin amicus Dei (Dial, 2,4,6), a relationship that is not certainly that of amicitia between equals but expresses a preference or special protection for someone of lower position. It also reflects, from a literary standpoint, a tradition of Biblical models of amici Dei, typical of Christian literature, not very common in classical literature (KONSTAN 1997, 167-170). For amicitia between equals, see Dial 1,2,4-5, where Sulpicius describes his relationship with one bishop (though not named) that used to have deference for him in the past. He was his amicus and their relationship was one of amicitia (quia et amicum colui et tunc etiam amavi ... paene nos sapiens et religiosi viri amicitia destitutos). Yet it is not known the actual bond between Sulpicius and the bishop and so it can perfectly be a relationship of unequal friendship. Also, Dial, 3,16,3 offers an example
important for the present work is the mention of gift-exchange (or its absence) as a landmark of social rapport. Many of these elements will be mentioned in due course, but this layer must be emphasized since it helps the reader of late antique works to understand the frame that conditioned discursive possibilities.

Secondly, it is Sulpicius’ social background which was preserved mostly in the correspondence with his friend Paulinus. In the letter mentioned at the beginning of this work, Paulinus affirms that Sulpicius is “no poorer in store of wealth, ... still prominent in the fame of the forum”.\(^95\) His fortune increased when he married a woman from a senatorial family.\(^96\) In addition to these facts provided by Paulinus, Gennadius affirms that he was an Aquitanian born from a noble family.\(^97\) It is also known that he was born after 355 and his background was not senatorial. He was acquainted with people of Ausonius’ circle like the rhetorician’s amicus, Paulinus.\(^98\) This circle was part of the most prominent faction of Gallic notables that gained ascendancy over the imperial court probably from Julian’s reign, reaching the peak of prominence under Gratian (and they managed to keep their position after his fall and Maximus’ “usurpation” in 383).\(^99\) After his wife’s death (though it is difficult to establish after how much time), Sulpicius renounced to his secular career and gradually

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\(^95\) Substantia facultatum non egentior et in ipso adhuc mundi theatro id est fori celebritate diversans. (Paul. Nol., Ep 5, 5).
\(^96\) Neque te divitiae de matrimonio familiae consularis adgestae (Pal. Nol., Ep 5, 5).
\(^97\) De viris illustribus, 19.
\(^98\) For the relationship between Ausonius and Paulinus, see MATTHEWS 1975, 151-153.
\(^99\) The relation of forces at court experienced an important change during Gratian’s regime. Traditionally, it was understood as the ascendancy of senatorial aristocracy that had not had enough dominance during Valentinian’s government. However, John Matthews has pointed out that what changed from the times of Valentinian to the era of Gratian was, in fact, that under the government of the latter established provincial (Gallic) upper classes reinforced their position with the status conferred by imperial titles, whereas Valentinian’s court had seen the rise of people with obscure backgrounds (mostly Pannonians like Martin) who used their appointments for social advance (MATTHEWS 1975, 76-81 and SIVAN 1993, 131-141).
adopted a monastic way of life, under the influence of Paulinus and Martin; he was still alive in the 420’s.\textsuperscript{100}

During the second half of the fourth century, local aristocracies in Gaul obtained access to one of the most important sources of prestige, i.e., imperial offices – either real or nominal. The world of Martin had opened gates for an increasing number of individuals who asserted their local power with imperial prerogatives. Although higher classes did not always meld with imperial functionaries, they were linked through networks of patronage and political friendship.\textsuperscript{101} Modern scholarship agrees that this process gave Gallic aristocrats access to a different source of power, but they were ready to take over this role because of a previous assertion of local power through their wealth and social position.\textsuperscript{102} In addition, some individuals obtained preeminence due to their education, such as many of the students of the school of rhetoric in Bordeaux with Ausonius being the most famous example. This was the place where Sulpicius presumably did his studies, although this remains hypothetical.\textsuperscript{103} But he certainly had strong connections with members of the family of Ausonius. His literary works are permeated with hallmarks of traditional eloquence and classical culture.\textsuperscript{104} This education, together with a convenient network of powerful supporters, allowed Sulpicius to advance in social terms (his marriage with a heiress of a senatorial family proves it).\textsuperscript{105} Both his social and educational background would define

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item STANCLIFFE 1983, 15-19.
\item According to Mathews, this was possible because imperial bureaucrats recognized that local upper classes controlled regional affairs by means of their traditional authority (MATTHEWS 1975, 256-257). Cf. BROWN 1992, 7-34, for a more detailed description of the functioning of this mechanism around the Mediterranean world and the process of constant negotiation between representatives of the central power and local elites.
\item SIVAN 1993, 6-27.
\item STANCLIFFE 1983, 16.
\item STANCLIFFE 1983, 58-61.
\item Social advance seems to have been a common pattern among the most prominent Gallic rhetoricians of the second half of the fourth century. For other careers, see SIVAN 1993, 85-91. Similarly, grammarians of Bordeaux were benefited from their profession to improve their social status, although this group came from lower social origins which limited their advance (KASTER 1988, 100-106).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
many of the features of Sulpicius' career within the monastic movement, and they will be reflected in the sources.  

The third layer that needs to be considered is Sulpicius' political-religious affiliation. He wrote in the middle of heated controversies among Christians and, according to Gennadius, later in his life he joined the Pelagian faction – probably in the so-called “semi-Pelagian” controversy of the early fifth century. However, the years during which he wrote both the Live and the Dialogues were dominated by other divisions within the Gallic church. Invectives and strong criticism against Gallic episcopate give a particular tone to these books. One explanation of the events stresses that Sulpicius argued in his writings against the Gallic episcopate of the 380’s, when the church of Gaul was sharply divided as a result of Priscillianist and Felician controversies. Therefore, according to this interpretation, Sulpicius criticized Martin’s rivals or, in other words, he assumed Martin’s agenda. Another point of view tends to put the emphasis on Sulpicius’ own agenda, arguing that he was defending himself from the attacks of many Christian leaders who reacted against the

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106 This point will be shown in chapter III, wherein some cases of Gallic notables are presented.  
107 Gennadius, De vir. ill., 19  
108 The examples are numerous and the critiques vary from the wealth of the clergy to the improper behavior with consecrated virgins, from bishops' flattery towards the emperor to their gluttony. See GRIFFE 1964, 299-303.  
109 Priscillianism refers to a group of Christians, the majority original from Spain, who followed Priscillian of Avila, a layman who belonged to a wealthy family. This collective gained the support of many upper-class families both in Spain and Gaul. Although he was accused of practicing magic, immoral behavior and Manichaeism and Gnosticism among other things, the real basis for his accusation has probably been his forms of piety and communal practices outside the control of the institutionalized church. After a series of councils and appeals to different emperors, he was finally put on trial and executed by Maximus in 386. His principal accuser was Ithacius of Ossonoba, who supported the intervention of secular authority in ecclesiastic affairs. Among the partisans of this standpoint was Felix of Trier, who was elected by the bishops in communion with Ithacius (himself present at the consecration of Felix). Other bishops, even though they did not support Priscillianism, were firmly opposed to imperial intervention. This last issue gave rise to a second division within Gallic episcopate that lasted until 398, when, after the abdication of Felix, both parties reached an agreement at the council of Turin (For the general process, GRIFFE 1964, 316-329, STANCLIFFE 1983, 278-289, MATHISEN 1989, 11-18; for the social background of Priscillianism, MATTHEWS 1975, 159-168).  
110 GRIFFE 1964, 299-304.
spreading of ascetic practices.¹¹¹ These critiques affected both Martin and Sulpicius, since the latter had also adopted a monastic way of life in a way that reflected many of the aristocratic ascetic practices of his days.¹¹² Usually, the authors that hold this point of view also agree that it is difficult to define a clear separation between both perspectives, since the suspicion against ascetics existed during Martin’s episcopate, though with different shades.¹¹³ Stancliffe has persuasively argued that Sulpicius’ commentaries about contemporary bishops must not be considered as the continuation of Ithacian and Felician controversies of the 380’s. Rather, they reflect the continuous hostility against asceticism that emerged after the Priscillianist affair or perhaps even before.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, Sulpicius wrote within a context of strong debates about the cult of the relics and a particular piety associated with them. This debate included many of the Christian intellectuals of the end of the fourth century, inside and outside Gaul.¹¹⁵

Therefore, these three layers (historical and social context, Sulpicius’ background and his political-religious affiliations) need to be taken into account in order to understand the figure of Martin and his actual social setting, because they colored the biographical record. Before entering into the analysis of the sources, some information must be given about their protagonist.

¹¹¹ STANCLIFFE 1983, 72-73. Fontaine considers that the Life was directed against an anti-ascetic faction, antagonistic to Martin, but not to Sulpicius (FONATAINE 1967, 80-84).
¹¹² Sulpicius established a monastic retirement in Primuliacum (somewhere in Aquitania or Narbonensis, though the exact location is unknown). The life at this place was something different from Martin’s monastic setting. Specially, Primuliacum had a strong aristocratic tone. Sulpicius lived among his former servants (who became his “disciples”); among them, there were many copyist who assisted him in his literary works. In addition, the monastery was a point of encounter for aristocrats of southern Gaul, interested in new forms of piety (for the life at Primuliacum, see FONTAINE 1964, 40-46).
¹¹³ Martin himself was about to be accused of Priscillianism when he supported a moderated position on regard of this movement. Ithacius, the accuser, particularly questioned ascetic practices within the clergy. See STANCLIFFE 1983, 280-281 for accusations against Martin and their context.
Many if not all the facts available about Martin’s life come from Sulpicius’ works. If one can rely on the biographical information of the *Life* the future bishop of Tours was born in the city of Sabaria (Panonia), “being his parents not the lowest according to the worldly rank, yet pagans.” He served in the army, as his father had done, but during the reign of Constantius II he abandoned the military life and joined Hilary of Poitiers before his exile to the east ostensibly for his defence of the Nicene dogma. Soon afterwards, he left Gaul and went back to his natal Pannonia to convert his parents. He continued his travels through Illyricum and finally settled down in northern Italy, though there he had some problems with the Arian bishop of Milan, Auxentius. At last, he joined Hilary again when the bishop returned from his exile. Hilary himself supported Martin’s monastic enterprise at Ligugé, probably influenced by the monastic experiences that he might have seen in the east.

Sometime between 370 and 372, Martin became bishop of Tours, a city with a brief Christian tradition, since the evidence indicates that he was its second bishop. There, Martin is said to have continued with his monastic experiences, in a foundation near Tours, Marmoutier. He held office until his death in 397.

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115 STANCLIFFE 1983, 297-312; a recent reconsideration in HUNTER 1999b.
116 *Parentibus secundum saeculi dignitatem non infimis, gentilibus tamen (VM, 2,1)*.
117 It is still controversial whether Martin could have joined Hilary before his exile because the interval between his release from the army and Hilary’s exile was too short. However, as Stancliffe argues, the encounter may have taken place (STANCLIFFE 1983, 134-148).
118 VM, 5-6.
119 For the date of his election, see STANCLIFFE 1983, 116. For the origins of the community of Tours, see PIETRI 1983, 30-36, who established the date of 337/338 for the origins of the episcopal see in Tours (which does not imply that there were not Christians before that date nor that the community significantly increased the number of its members after the establishment of a bishop).
120 The information about the community of Marmoutier comes from Sulpicius’ writings. Apparently, the life at the monastery was ruled by the principle of authority emanating from Martin, since there is no evidence off a written rule. The basic activities seem to have been prayers and reading the Scriptures. If one believes Sulpicius, many of the monks came from upper-class backgrounds (which was distinctive of ascetic life in the west at that time) and some of them became bishops (*VM, 10*). For early western monasticism, see PRICOCO 1978, 59-73.
Interpretations of the figure of Martin varied significantly between different historians. The emphasis sometimes is put on Martin the evangelist of Gaul, the father of western monasticism, the first holy man with world-wide dimensions of Gaul, etc.\textsuperscript{121} Also, he has been portrayed as a fanatic monk, an exalted ascetic or a fraudulent wonder-maker.\textsuperscript{122} Of course, all these depictions are exaggerations and this is perhaps the result of the role that Martin, the saint, (very different, indeed, from Martin of Tours) had in the ecclesiastical history of France. It is not the purpose of this work to deal with this problem. However, it is necessary to mention some other modern representations of Martin, certainly more temperate than those aforementioned. Specifically, there has been a tendency among historians to study the figure of Martin in an attempt to resolve the constructions of two models (the monk of holy man and the bishop) and the actual importance of each one.

Jacques Fontaine sketched an “evolutionist” depiction of Martin, which consists in a series of stages of “spiritualité martinienne”: the ardent spirituality of a former soldier was slowly polished by his contacts with Hilary of Poitiers, a man of renown for his intellectual and exegetical skills; later, the forms of sedentary and communal monasticism contributed in the same way to socialize his uneducated temper of a former soldier and orientate his pious efforts through institutionalized channels.\textsuperscript{123} However, in the monastic context, the character of Martin’s asceticism remained “très charismatique et assez médiocrement hiérarchisé.”\textsuperscript{124}

The line proposed by Fontaine gained many adherents, partially because it reconciled a Catholic understanding of Martin with an approach to the sources more critical than the

\textsuperscript{121} For an almost flattering conception of Martin’s role, see GRIFFE 1964, 281-295.
\textsuperscript{122} These kind of critiques do not only come from some contemporary writers, but also they were common during Martin’s life. For Babut’s critique of Sulpicius’ portrayal of Martin, see FONTAINE 1967, 175-177.
\textsuperscript{123} FONTAINE 1972, 143-160.
\textsuperscript{124} FONTAINE 1972, 153.
panegyrists (either ancient or modern) of "le grand Saint de la France."\textsuperscript{125} For instance, Lucien Pietri also supports the Fontainian idea of a Martin balanced between the episcopal duties and his ascetic inclinations. In his mind, the bishop of Tours projected a model of episcopacy, whose renunciation of secular ambitions distinguished it from the models followed by contemporary bishops.\textsuperscript{126} Likewise, Lellia Cracco Ruggini affirmed that the thaumaturgical episodes of the \textit{Life} were only intended to stress the spiritual dimension of a figure, "qui ne joua jamais un rôle politique de quelque importance."\textsuperscript{127} Phillip Rousseau has also claimed that in the figure of Martin there existed a balance between "the demands of spirituality and an ecclesiastical career",\textsuperscript{128} which was also Sulpicius' conception of religious life. According to him, Martin had a sense of authority that depended more on personal conduct than structured hierarchy, whereupon he never abandoned ascetic ideals since he considered them as part of his spiritual authority.\textsuperscript{129} Nonetheless, Rousseau recognizes that Martin's activities of wonder-worker were performed in "ecclesiastical circumstances", namely episcopal occasions, which might have been related to the necessity of giving a respectable aura to ascetic practices.\textsuperscript{130}

These few examples sketch a portrayal of Martin's career in terms of behavior regulated by ascetic (or non-secular) parameters that would have made of him an unique example within Gallic episcopate. However, it is difficult to say whether this is an accurate representation of Martin or the triumph of Sulpicius's construction. For it has to be

\textsuperscript{125} The term comes from HATT 1966, 338, together with the following claim: "Les Français retrouvent sans doute, dans son culte, cet amour admiratif et exclusif du héros, qui les oblige à personifier les grandes forces de l'histoire, et qui fait de leur histoire même, une vivante épopée dominée par d'éminentes personnalités."

\textsuperscript{126} PIETRI 1983, 43-68.

\textsuperscript{127} CRACCO RUGGINI 1999, 181. The secondary source quoted by her to support this statement is Pietri's book (n.40).

\textsuperscript{128} ROUSSEAU 1978, 150.

\textsuperscript{129} A similar standpoint in HEUCLIN 1998, 19 ("Il n'était pas un simple clerc mais un homme consacré, c'est à dire Dieu agissant en lui et par lui. C'était de son \textit{humilitas} persévérante que découlait son \textit{auctoritas} et non pas d'une \textit{potestas} d'origine temporelle").
remembered that the hagiographer, on the one hand, divided the life of Martin in four stages (soldier, layman, monk and bishop) in a progressive and accumulative manner. But on the other hand, he emphasizes that the source of Martin virtus during his lifetime was a certain personal compliance with ascetic standards; therefore, during his military life, Martin “was not thought to be a soldier, but a monk” and once he became bishop he “performed the episcopal dignity, full of auctoritas and prestige, although he never deserted his monastic aim and virtus.” To sustain that the equation between monasticism and episcopacy was resolved in terms of an ascetic basso continuo that granted episcopal auctoritas is certainly a mirroring of the character that Sulpicius presented, yet the following sections will show whether or not this is an accurate depiction.

In a more socially based analysis, Van Dam has suggested that the uniqueness in Martin was his use of secular idioms of authority that challenged the traditional way in which authority was asserted in Roman Gaul. According to him, the bishop of Tours would have symbolized a different auctoritas from that of “accommodating” bishops, who appealed to traditional clientelistic practices and took for themselves the role of imperial “advisers”. Martin, on the contrary, assumed a type of ruler that Van Dam has called “local emperor”, that is, of bishops who presented their authority with secular idioms of imperial

130 ROUSSEAU 1978, 143-160. A similar idea can be also found in HEINZELMANN 1976, 194-195.
131 These stages are presented in the Dialogues before Gallus begins to tell the stories about Martin. He says that he will not talk about the facts that occurred when Martin was soldier, nor those when he was a layman or a monk. Rather, he will talk about the things that he saw personally, i.e., those that took place when Martin was bishop (Unde prima illius inter militandum gesta praetereo, neque ea adtingam, quae laicus egit ac monachus: nec uero audita ab alitis quam quae uidi ipse dicturus sum, Dial, 1,27,7).
132 Ut iam illo tempore non miles, sed monachus putaretur (VM, 2,7).
133 Plenus auctoritatis et gratiae, inplebat episcopi dignitatem, ut non tamen propositum monachi uirtutemque desereret (VM, 10,2).
134 VAN DAM, 1985, 121-122. It must be reminded Van Dam's idea of wider socio-political changes happening in fourth-century Gaul, according to which imperial government was seen as an “intrusion” upon the basic political forms, as much as Martin was an “intruder” in that society: “Martin can be seen as yet another Pannonian who made his career in the fourth century as a military man in Gaul ... [T]he use of military and imperial ideology to characterize Martin’s version of Christianity found a strong response" (VAN DAM 1985, 125).
government. Yet the image of this disruptive character would have been distorted by Sulpicius, who emphasized aspects such as wonder-making and institutional roles of bishop and monk. Paradoxically, the innovations launched by Martin would have made Christianity more acceptable to secular, aristocratic tastes, since they introduced worldly standards of power exercised within the church. Certainly, there are passages that sustain Van Dam’s position, particularly the famous description of the (Ithacian) bishops moving around the emperor as a clientele, whereas the “apostolic auctoritas” remained only with Martin. However, one might suspect that Sulpicius had particular interests in portraying bishops in such a way. Although Van Dam presents a more suggestive interpretation for identifying the coordinates that assembled episcopal and ascetic power, the differences that he puts forward between Martin and other members of the episcopate deserve to be complemented with those features that associated Martin with other bishops.

Therefore, the proposal for the following sections is to look at the sources, aiming to understand the dynamic of social relationships in the life of Martin, rather than describe how they worked in the Life of Martin. The obvious limitation is that the modern reader relies on the latter to understand the former. However, the previous chapters have demonstrated that one may count on an impressive scholarly production of the last decades that allows one to partially overcome this difficulty.

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136 VAN DAM 1985, 134-140.
137 VM, 20,1. See infra, ch. IV, for an analysis of the episode.
III. Martin’s relationships of horizontality.

In a curious passage in the *Dialogues*, Sulpicius tells the story of an Egyptian monk who lived near Memphis in complete solitude. In one occasion, a lioness visited his cell in the middle of the desert. She prostrated in front of the holy man, since she intended to be followed by the monk, who immediately understood the signal. He followed her and when they arrived in her cave, he saw her cubs which could not open their eyes, being condemned to a perpetual blindness. The monk invoked Christ’s name and the lioness’ offspring were immediately cured. After five days, she returned to the cell of “the author of such a great favour (*beneficium*) and brought to him the skin of a rare animal as a gift (*munus*)”.

This episode may seem a picturesque story whose primary concern is the description of eastern holy men’s *Lives* for a western audience. But it also offers the account of a relationship shaped by the language of social and political rapports, a gift constituting (as in the letter of Paulinus to Sulpicius) the central element in the bond.

The present chapter will deal with a group of Martin’s social relationships, those characterized by their horizontal nature. Certainly, it is difficult to establish a common criterion to assemble all the cases that will be presented here. The common methodology of many modern historians consists in putting together under the title of relationships of horizontality those bonds between individuals or groups of equal social status. Even though status may appear a loose category (and indeed it was the element that, due to the lack of rigidity, gave dynamism to the rigid system or orders and classes in ancient Rome), it is

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138 *Dial*, 1,15.
139 *Leanam post dies quinque ad auctorem tanti beneficii reuertisse eidemque inusitatae ferae pellem pro munere detulisse* (*Dial*, 1,15,7).
140 For a general description of these relationships, see GARNSEY and SALLER 1987, 154-156.
thought to be the central element in the definition of social coordinates in the Roman world. 141

In late antiquity, a new social agent, the episcopate, emerged as one group that competed for status and sought to determine its social position vis-à-vis other social actors. Most of the bishops came from a “sub-elite” group, namely the curiales, or local notables. Social origins was only one element that determined status. In addition, regulations from the state certainly enhanced the status of the bishops. 142 However, status was not simply an inherited position or something legislated by the state. These elements may have defined the limits and boundaries for the coordinates of one person’s situation in society, but status was the product of many factors that involved the individual in the face of a chain of subjective and objective elements that determined prestige, honor, reputation, etc. 143

This is particularly relevant for the following analysis. Indeed, what will be presented here is a series of acquaintances that Martin made during his episcopate among people of similar rank, the so-called honestories - generally speaking, landowners, high imperial functionaries (for the case of Gaul, these two categories were intimately related in the second half of the fourth century) and other bishops. This does not imply that all of them had a similar status, although they shared the attachment to a common rank or order. The pursuit of a higher status implied that all these persons competed for prestige, for instance, by means of

141 “A Roman’s status was based on the social estimation of his honour, the perception of those around him as to his prestige. Since statuses reflect values and outlook rather than legal regulations, distinctions are less precise than in the case of orders.” (GARNSEY and SALLER 1987, 118).

142 During the fourth century a series of imperial constitutions and legislations granted bishops (and sometimes the clergy in general) privileges and prerogatives typical of the highest social orders. For example, they were exempted from compulsory public services (C. Th., 16,2,2) and taxes (C. Th., 16,2,8), and they could be judged only by other bishops and not before ordinary courts (C. Th., 16,2,12). Yet both social origins and status attached to office were always intermingled, since “once ordained, the social status of bishops within their cities is determined largely by their ecclesiastical office, while prior to ordination, it was their inherited social status that recommended them for this office” (RAPP 2000, 391).

143 GARNSEY and SALLER 1987, 118-123.
social alliances, factional struggle (either political or religious), agonistic (i.e., competitive) exchange of gifts or accumulation of symbolic goods that enhanced their social standing.

The relationships between equals was often expressed in Latin by the term *amicitia* (although this word was also used to cover relationships of verticality, mostly patronage). The practice of *amicitia* was regulated by a tacit though well-known etiquette that included both symbolic and material practices; *amicitia* was "ideally based on mutual affection with no thought for profit" but "a necessary part of friendship was a mutually beneficial exchange of goods and services", and included the obligation to provide the other with certain services (that may be summed up with the terms *officium* – *beneficium* – *meritum*) both public and private. There is no need to recall the introductory notes about the gift and its functioning as social regulator in order to claim that many of the processes aforementioned are present in this Roman social relationship. One may expect that this "friendship" assumed different external forms (although intrinsically shared the same functioning) according to the social and symbolic position of both participants. For instance, the link of *amicitia* between people of unequal status will be presented in the following chapter. See infra, note 242. For the difficulty for distinguish both types of amici, see HELLEGOUARC'H 1972, 54-56.

44 According to Hellegouarc'h, "l'amicitia ainsi entendue ne repose-t-elle pas simplement sur le caractère plus ou moins aléatoire nouées au hasard des circonstances ; il s'agit d'une véritable organisation, qui impose à ses membres des obligations variées et sur laquelle les textes nous fournissent des renseignements assez précis" (HELLEGOUARC'H 1972, 53-54). The correspondence of Symmachus illustrates this phenomenon in late antiquity, as it is presented by John Mathews. According to him, "His [Symmachus'] correspondence still preserves, intact and unchanging, the ideals and smooth functioning of a mode of social intercourse and friendship ... In its performance, amicitia called for the careful observation of established rules of courtesy, the preservation of all due social rankings, and an attitude of earnest devotion." (MATHEWS 1975, 5).

145 SALLER 1982, 12. for the purposes of the present work, it has to be remembered that exchange of gifts do not only include "material gifts", but also other goods that would not be perceived as such in modern societies. In Mauss' words, "everything – food, women, children, property, talismans, land, labour services, priestly functions, and ranks – is there for passing on, and for balancing accounts. Everything passes to and fro as if there were a constant exchange of a spiritual matter, including things and men, between clans and individuals, distributed between social ranks, the sexes, and the generations." (MAUSS 1990, 14).

146 The first term designates, in classical Latin, the concrete manifestation of the *amicitia* (for instance, monetary aid, letters of recommendation, defense under a tribunal, etc.) which expresses a reciprocal exchange of an existing relationship. *Beneficium* and *meritum* imply the action of giving that initiates a
two landowners would have been different than those between bishops, or between a bishop and an imperial functionary. But this was not always the case. In the fourth century, men such as the senatorial bishop Ambrose and senatorial pagan Symmachus could behave in their social intercourses according to certain traditional patterns regardless their political or religious standings. The etiquette of reciprocity in their relationships slightly differed from that between the conversi Sulpicius and Paulinus, although only in its symbolic representations. Here, the importance of both Biblical examples and monastic values concurred to produce an image of a friendship based on different grounds, even though one does not find a significant variation in the actual practices. One needs to turn to the description that Sulpicius made of Martin’s social intercourses to see how they might have functioned in the case of this bishop.

The *Life* does not offer many episodes of Martin’s encounters with local notables or landowners, but some patterns that will be found in the *Dialogues* are already present. The first mention of a notable comes before the episode of Martin’s consecration as bishop, when the narrative recounts that Martin resurrected a slave. Although the central actors are Martin, the slave and the “expecting crowd” (*turba inspectans*), Sulpicius does not forget to mention at the beginning of the episode who owned the slave, even though the proprietor does not play any role in the tale. He was a certain Lupicinus, a man honored according to the *saeculum*. Suggestively, this is the only episode in which Martin had no direct contact

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social rapport (from the side of the giver and the receiver). See HELLEGOUARC’H 1972, 152-170. The terms are also applied to relationships of patronage (see *infra*, ch. IV).

148 MATTHEWS 1975, 205. Ultimately, one might say that, like social relationships of noblemen in sixteenth-century France, “gifts helped to initiate … relationships, establishing through their asymmetry the distance between simple seigneur and duchess and between minor officer and governor, while affirming at the same time … that they were all honorable noblemen and noblewomen” (ZEMON DAVIS 2000, 39-40).

149 KONSTAN 1997, 157-158.

150 *VM*, 8.

151 *Dum agrum Lupicini cuiusdam, honorati secundum saeculum uiri* … (*VM*, 8,1).
with the important figure and it is actually the only episode that occurred before his consecration, hence before he gained a high status.

Later in the *Life*, after Martin became bishop, he is said to have cured a slave of Taetradius, a former proconsul.\(^{152}\) At that time Taetradius was still a pagan and he promised to convert to Christianity if Martin cured his servant, which immediately happened. Not only he abandoned his former pagan beliefs, but he also “honored Martin, the author of his salvation, with extraordinary fondness.”\(^{153}\) Another former functionary that had contact with Martin was a certain Arborius, *uir praefectorius*. The *Life* holds that his daughter was cured by Martin in absentia and that the former prefect then went to visit the bishop to offer her as a virgin.\(^{154}\) This character was Magnus Arborius, nephew of Ausonius, *comes sacrarum largitionum* in 379, *praefectus urbi* of Rome in 380.\(^{155}\) He probably was the son of Aemilius Magnus Arborius, teacher of the famous rhetorician of Bordeaux.\(^{156}\) In the *Dialogues*, Arborius is mentioned again as a witness of a miraculous episode of Martin.\(^{157}\) Finally, Sulpicius mentions that Martin also cured Paulinus from an illness of the eyes. As mentioned before, he was an *amicus* of Ausonius and a former governor of Campania.\(^{158}\)

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\(^{152}\) Eodem tempore, Taetradii culsusdam proconsularis uiri servus, daemonio correpus, dolendo exitu cruciabatur (*VM*, 17,1).

\(^{153}\) Martinus negare se profani et gentilis domun adire posse. Nam Taetradius, eo tempore, adhuc gentilitatis errore implicitus tenebatur. Spondet ergo se, si de puero daemon fuisset exactus, christianum fore ... Taetradius ... nec multo post baptizatus est semperque Martinum salutis suae auctorem miro coluit affectu (*VM*, 17, 2-4). Note that the verb *colo* (translated here as “to honor”) also means “to protect”.

\(^{154}\) Arborius autem, uir praefectorius, sancti admodum et fidelis ingenii, cum filia eius grauisimis quartanae feribus ueretur, epistulam Martini, quae casu ad eum delata fuerat, pectori puellae in ipso accentu ardoris inseruit, statimque fugata febris est ... Profectusque ad Martinum, puella ei, prae sens virtutum eius testimonium, quae per absentem licet curata esset, obtulit, neque ab alio eam quam a Martino habitu urginantis inposito passus est consecrari (*VM*, 19, 1-3).

\(^{155}\) MATHEWS 1975, 70-71

\(^{156}\) PLRE, 97-98.

\(^{157}\) Dial, 3, 8.6.

\(^{158}\) *VM*, 18, 3. Paulinus describes his relationship with Ausonius in the following terms:

> Dulcis amicitia aeterno mihi foedere tecum
> et paribus semper redamandi legibus aequet (Aus., Ep. 30)

Sweet friendship makes us peers through the eternal bond betwixt me and thee and through the equal laws of endless mutual love. (Trans. WHITE 1967, 123).
The Dialogues offer more instances wherein Martin had social intercourse with his social equals. Possibly, the reason for this is Sulpicius' necessity for authoritative characters who may reinforce his words against the criticisms that the Life received. The miracles are performed less over anonymous turba or unnamed individuals and more over people (most of them from the upper classes) with references to rank or office and even place of residence; and they were probably well-known by Sulpicius' Gallic readers.\textsuperscript{159}

Vincentius, praetorian prefect of Gaul in 397, is the first notable mentioned in this book. He is said to have asked Martin to share lunch with him at Marmoutier's monastery when he visited Tours in the same way that Ambrose received "consuls and prefects" at his table.\textsuperscript{160} Martin did not accept his request in order to avoid pride (uanitas) for having received a man with such a rank and, in Sulpicius' words, "a prefect, a distinguished man; no one in Gaul is more illustrious in every kind of virtue."\textsuperscript{161}

Later in the narrative, Evanthius, the uncle of Gallus (who was a principal character of the Dialogues and a monk at Primuliacum) appears as to have been cured by Martin. In addition, one of his servants received the thaumaturgical benefits of the holy man when he was cured from the mortal poison of a snake.\textsuperscript{162} This Evanthius was a "Christian, although a person occupied by the businesses of this world."\textsuperscript{163} The same Evanthius carried the slave to For Ausonius circle and his political faction, see SIVAN 1993, 131-141 and MATTHEWS 1975, 69-76. Paulinus' secular career included the mentioned governorship of Campania and his marriage with a member of a wealthy family of Spain. This event allowed him to become one of the wealthiest senatorial man of the west (see MATHEWS 1975, 73-74).

\textsuperscript{159} There is probably one important exception in Dial, 2,4, a whole section dedicated to miracles, the public of which is essentially a gentilium turba (Dial, 2,4,4) and that have as a result the conversion of the crowd (Dial, 2,4,8), giving to the episode the atmosphere of some of the Life's passages.

\textsuperscript{160} Dum Turonos [Vincentius] praeteriret, a Martino saepius poposcisse, ut ei conuiuium in suo monasterio daret – in quo quidem exemplum beati Ambrosi episcopi praeferebat, qui eo tempore consules et praefectos subinde pascrere ferebatur (Dial, 1,25,6).

\textsuperscript{161} Memini Vincentium, praefectum, uirum egregium et quo nullus sit intra Gallias omni uirtutum genere praestantior (Dial, 1,25,6). MATTHEWS 1975, 155.

\textsuperscript{162} Dial, 2,2,3-7.

\textsuperscript{163} Uir licet saeculi negotiis occupatus admodum Christianus (Dial, 2,2,3). None of the Evanthius mentioned in the PLRE matches with this character.
Martin and implored the bishop to cure him. Finally, all the attendants, including Gallus and Evanthius, proclaimed that “there was no one under heaven that could imitate Martin.”

Sulpicius presents other relationships with more details that enable one to complete some lacunae in the portrayal of other social intercourses. It is certain that Martin, the bishop of a provincial capital, had to deal during his episcopate with many imperial officers, but there is only one presented in the Dialogues while he was holding office, Avitianus. For the other cases, it is not sure that they were exercising their office when they met Martin or whether their titles were just honorific. Avitianus was probably the same Claudius Avitianus who was uicarius Africae in 362-363 and he was a comes with judicial functions when Martin met him. According to Sulpicius, Avitianus’ wife asked Martin to bless a flask of oil for the cure of different illnesses. But their relationship was not limited to oil blessing; Martin also pleaded for some prisoners who were about to be tortured at Tours. Martin interceded on their behalf (by means of a miracle and divine intervention in the narrative) and Avitianus, acknowledging Martin’s powers, granted everything requested by the bishop. The persuasiveness of Martin seems to have made Avitianus a peaceful man in Tours while in other cities he had a reputation for an extreme cruelty. Moreover, the Dialogues points out that Martin expelled a daemon that controlled Avitianus, a fact that had lasting effects in the behavior of the comes, since from that day he became a better person.

Sulpicius notes that Dagridus, a former tribune, witnessed the miracles and transmitted them.
to the presbyter Refrigerius.\textsuperscript{170} The same Refrigerius was told by a certain Romulus, “a man of honor and faithful”, about another episode involving a local notable. Romulus was the son of the former prefect Auspicius, who is said to have requested Martin’s help on his behalf and his \textit{pagus} for securing the crops threatened by the climate with the miraculous powers of the bishop.\textsuperscript{171}

Finally, the \textit{Dialogues} present a relationship with a former \textit{uicarius}, Lycontius, that reveals many details of a social rapport between equals that other instances fail to mention. Lycontius was a “faithful man” whose household suffered from a “calamity without precedent: sick bodies fell down all over the house.”\textsuperscript{172} Through letters, he implored the bishop for help (\textit{implorauit auxilium}), and Martin spent seven days praying and fasting. Eventually, the misfortunes at Lycontius’ house have ceased, an event that was perceived by him as a divine favor (\textit{diuina beneficia}) and impelled him to thank the holy man and offer one hundred silver pounds. Martin did not want either to accept or reject them, and therefore he used the money for the release of captives.\textsuperscript{173}

There are some other instances in the sources where the status of the person involved in the relationship is unclear. For example, the incident wherein a \textit{paterfamilias} asked Martin to expel a daemon that resided at his house, which was achieved by means of the powers of exorcism by the bishop.\textsuperscript{174} The name and social rank of this \textit{paterfamilias} is never mentioned; neither is the name of a certain consecrated virgin that did not want to receive any man in her

\textsuperscript{170} Haec cum multis Auitiano comperta sint, tum nuper Refrigerius presbyter, quem coram uidetis, a Dagrido, fidelu uiro ex tribunis. (Dial, 3,5,1). The PLRE does not offer further information about this character.

\textsuperscript{171} Dial, 3,7,1-5. Et tamen tu, Refrigeri presbyter, credo, meministi, nuper nobis super hoc cum Romulo Auspicii illius filio, honorato et religioso uiro, fuisse sermonem (Dial, 3,7,5).

\textsuperscript{172} Lycontius ex uicarius uir fidelis, cum familiam illius lues extrema uexaret et inauditae calamitatis exemplo per totam domum corpora aagra procumberent. (Dial, 3,14,3)

\textsuperscript{173} Mox ad eum Lycontius diuina expertus beneficia pernuoaluat, nuntians simul et agens gratias, domum suam omni periculo liberatam. Centum etiam argentl libras obtulit, quas uir beauts nec respuit nec recept, sed priusquam pondus illud monasterii limen adtingeret, redimentis id captiuis continuo deputaui (Dial, 3,14,5).
retirement, even Martin, when he gave her a visit out of courtesy.\textsuperscript{175} Although this distinguished (\textit{inlustris}) virgin refused to accept Martin's visit, she offered him a present (\textit{xenium}) and Sulpicius says that Martin accepted a gift, which he had never done before.\textsuperscript{176} Although there are no indications of the social standing of this virgin, Martin's monastery at Marmoutier gathered many young nobles, if Sulpicius' portrayal of that place accurately describes it and aristocratic background was a common element among Gallic ascetics in the second half of the fourth century.\textsuperscript{177}

Before going on, it would be convenient to recapitulate and sum up some common patterns from these examples, placing them within a wider context. In the first place, the relationships of Martin with local notables or imperial officers had as a central component Martin's fame of wonder-maker. Whether fictional or not, many people believed at that time that Martin was able to act as intermediary between this world and the supernatural realm.\textsuperscript{178} Undoubtedly, many late antique men highly esteemed these services rendered by individuals who gained access to the other world by means of their \textit{uirtus}. Nevertheless, one might wonder whether both the \textit{reuerentia} shown to the \textit{auctoritas Martini} (which certainly included the recognition of his attributed powers) and the readiness of the holy man to grant the requests signified the sanction of an existing social bond.\textsuperscript{179} In other words, these episodes imply the existence of social relationships between equals with more "secular"

\textsuperscript{174} VM, 17,5-7.
\textsuperscript{175} \textit{Illam uirginem ... quae ita se penitus ab omnium uirorum remouisset, ut ne ipsum quidem ad se Martinum, cum eam ille offici causa uisitare uellet, admiserit} (Dial, 2,12,1).
\textsuperscript{176} \textit{Xenium beato uio eadem ilia uirdo transmisit: fecitque Martinus, quod ante non fecerat – nullius enim ille unquam xenium, nullius munus accepit} (Dial, 2,12,6).
\textsuperscript{177} VM, 10,8. Sulpicius mentions them as \textit{nobiles} without further specification. For aristocratic asceticism in fourth century, see PRICOCO 1978, 61-73.
\textsuperscript{178} BROWN 1981, 65-66.
\textsuperscript{179} Robert Markus has pointed out that far from being an isolated phenomenon, the holy man cannot be understood without taking into account a community that believed in his powers. "To understand the special place and the function of holy men in the Christian community, we have to see them as representative persons acting for the community rather than as individuals with privileged access to a
components than the narrative of the hagiographer wished to show, which would be understandable given the religious purposes of Sulpicius. Although the wonder-making was the hallmark of the holy men (and women), a characterization of Martin as the "western Anthony" appears incomplete without taking into account his position of bishop, a person with local social prominence. However, in order to assert what was proposed, one needs to identify some issues that do not seem to be present in the evidence.

This hypothesis requires that members of the upper classes seek more than healing powers or miracles from Martin. As it was said, an important component of Roman amicitia consisted in favors rendered to amici or on their behalf. And some bishops in late antiquity could offer an important favor to upper classes: their access to imperial court.\footnote{Next chapter will deal with this issue. Yet it is important to remember here that not all the bishops were able to access the imperial circles, but only those who enjoyed the support of social networks.} Although fragmentary, the information provided by Sulpicius tells about two visits to the imperial courts both of Valentinian I and Maximus. In the first case, Sulpicius does not mention the reasons why Martin needed to visit the court. He certainly wanted to ask the emperor something, because Sulpicius mentions that there were things that the emperor did not wish to provide.\footnote{Fuit ei necessitas adire comitatum, Valentinianus tum maior rerum potiebatur. Hic cum Martinum ea petere cognisset, quae praestare nolabant... (Dial, 2,5,5).} Finally, due to a miraculous intervention, Valentinian accepted all the requests (preces) made by Martin.\footnote{Nec expectatis Martini precibus prius omnia praestitit quam rogaretur (Dial, 2,5,10). See next chapter for the signification of the encounter.}

More interesting is the information about Martin’s visit to Maximus’ court, soon afterwards he had deposed and killed Gratian in 383. Sulpicius points out that he visited the court of this emperor more than once.\footnote{Hie Martinum saepius euocatum receptumque intra palatium venerabiliter honorabat (Dial, 2,6,3).} At least on one occasion, the favors he asked from the emperor had high importance, since the mission included the release of prisoners, the end
of some people’s exile and the restitution of goods, presumably confiscated by the emperor. This description matches the figure of a bishop who talks with the emperor about "the present and the future things, the glory of the faithful and the eternity of the saints." In another section of the Dialogues Sulpicius puts names to some of the "present things" which Martin talked about with Maximus: "he had these important requests, for the comes Narses and the praeses Leucadius, who had supported the cause of Gratian."

Also, the visits to the court presented the opportunity for contacting higher imperial officers with whom a bishop could set up a political friendship. Martin may have had such an occasion when he participated in a banquet offered by Maximus where he met "great and important men, the prefect and consul Evodius ... two comes endowed with the highest power, the emperor’s brother and his uncle."

Martin was able to provide another officium to his secular counterparts. The idea that he had privileged access to the invisible world rendered possible that he could employ this access for any number of objectives. Eventually, they gained a symbolic value in a time when some people fervently sought them out. The most patent case presented by Sulpicius was the blessed oil requested by the wife of Avitianus, who in due course received the requests of Martin with a particular openness, if one considers what Sulpicius says about his behavior outside Tours as reliable testimony. The blessing of the oil to be used for the cure of illnesses was done "according to the custom" which indicates an extended practice.

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184 Ut clausos carcere liberaret, exiliis datos restitueret, bona adempta rehiberet (Dial, 2,7,2). This passage is probably related to the episodes in Dial, 3,11-12, where the greed of Maximus is presented as one of the reasons why he persecuted Gatian’s partisans. See infra, ch. IV.
185 Dial, 2,6,3.
186 Has principales petitiones habebat: pro Narsete comite et Leucadio praeside, quorum ambo Gratiani partium fuerant (Dial, 3,11,8).
187 Summi atque inlustres uiri, praefectus idemque consul Euodius ... comites duo summa potestate praediti, frater regis et patruus (VM, 20,4).
188 Auitiani comitis uxor em misisse Martino oleum, quod ad diversas morborum causas necessarium, sicut est consuetudo, benedicet (Dial, 3,3,2). The punctuation used by Augello proposes a signification of the sentence according to which the "according to the custom" refers to the use of oil as a therapy. However,
episode wherein the wife of Maximus served Martin at the table (put forward by Sulpicius as an outstanding example of virtue, although it appears to be a justification to criticisms for Martin’s being touched by a woman)\textsuperscript{189} concludes with the empress picking up the crumbs of the bread consumed by the bishop during the dinner. She preferred “those leftovers to imperial dishes” \textit{(illas reliquias imperialibus epulis antepones)}.\textsuperscript{190}

The double meaning of \textit{reliquia} (both “relic” and “rests”) may puzzle the modern reader, because he or she might expect to find here an incipient reference to the traffic of relics that would characterize the following centuries.\textsuperscript{191} However, this connotation has a flavor typical of Sulpicius’ agenda which was shaped by an intense debate about the cult of relics against its opponents, and it does not give the impression of being a practice systematically supported by Martin. Indeed, he took care of determining which saints and which shrines (or saint’s graves) ought to be venerated and which ones did not.\textsuperscript{192} This points towards the function of symbolic goods such as blessed oil or prayers in the light of a different context than that of a holy man. The gifts blessed by Martin and other related items must be considered as occasions for episcopal performance since “many of these marvellous events appear to have been carefully restricted to what one might call ‘ecclesiastical places or occasions’.”\textsuperscript{193} Then, the thaumaturgical activities of Martin gain another sense when placed amongst gifts and favors that were part of the episcopal \textit{officia}. However, not all bishops had

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\textsuperscript{189} See \textit{Dial}, 2,7,4 and 7.
\textsuperscript{190} \textit{Dial}, 2,6,6.
\textsuperscript{191} For fifth-century cult of relics in the west, see MARKUS 1990, 142-150.
\textsuperscript{192} For instance, the episode in which Martin unmasked the grave of false martyrs. It was a tomb that was venerated as a sacred place, yet Martin did not want to validate it without authoritative support \textit{(non temere adhibens incertis fidelis)}. So he asked the oldest priests and clerics where this tradition came from, but they could not answer with certitude \textit{(nihil certi constans sibi maiorum memoria tradidisset)}. Therefore, he prayed before the grave and he saw a shadow who said that he was buried there, and he used to be a thief. Then, Martin explained in public \textit{(exposuit)} what he has saw, order to remove the shrine and “delivered the people from the mistake of their superstition.” \textit{(VM, 11)}. 
the fame of Martin and could offer these “sacred” gifts, which indicates a distinctive element in the relationships of Martin with his episcopal peers. If some of Martin’s gifts had an agonistic dimension, there certainly were the services associated with his figure of a holy man. As Sulpicius indicates, Martin’s asceticism and miracles raised many criticisms from his colleagues, who “hated in him [i.e., in Martin] what they did not see in them, and what they could not imitate.”194 Some aspects of this antagonism will be explained in due course.

Furthermore, one may add a third layer of resources that bishops could manipulate in order to establish a relationship with aristocrats and imperial officers and which proved to produce powerful effects in society. On the one hand, Martin, as holy man, provided (voluntarily or not, this does not matter here) ideological support for the relationships of patronage which determined the social standing of his upper-class’ devotees.195 On the other hand, Martin, as bishop, controlled the discourse of social behavior in the local community, potentially reaching more social strata than any other Roman institution did.196 And the discourse of Martin was certainly far from being a challenge for the social order of his time in an extreme fashion – something consistent with his social acquaintances.197 Yet the importance of this last layer depended on the existence of a Christian audience that recognized Martin as an authoritative source; and this, in a still

194 Qui in illo oderant quod in se non uidebant et quod imitari non ualebant (VM, 27,3).
195 “In order to survive, holy men were dependent on patronage ... In return, they justified their [patron’s] position by standing, in the eyes of the world, as he quintessence of good patronage.” (BROWN 1995, 63).
196 VAN DAM 1985, 64-69.
197 Certainly, some of Martin’s attitudes represent a challenge to well established forms of governance of late Roman world (for instance, his external appearance, even criticized by contemporary bishops or his monastic semi-retirement). However, the basic social order was not at all questioned by the episcopate in general or by Martin in particular – which ultimately constitutes the basic premise of this work. For the challenges that bishops cast over traditional forms of government, see BROWN 1992, 76-77. For the role of bishops as guarantors of social order, see DE SAINTE CROIX, 1981, 433-441, who stresses the role of Christian ideology in the validation of property rights of upper classes; CAMERON 1991, 130, who affirms that “a realignment of Christian discourse toward the new political situation [after Constantine's “revolution”] was essential, in particular if the degree of support shown by individual emperors toward the
pagan area as northern Gaul, coincided with a vast enterprise of conversion. So it is possible to understand in this context that support from local notables accompanied the process of formal Christianization of the countryside undertaken by Martin. 198

Even though the evidence suggests with a considerable degree of certitude the existence of a flow of gifts and favours from Martin to aristocrats and imperial officers, one needs to demonstrate a counter-flow in order to prove reciprocity. However, the lack of evidence in the sources constitutes an impediment to identify counter-gift; here again, one has to admit Sulpicius' construction before continuing with the analysis.

As mentioned before, the sources emphasize the aspects of Martin closer to the figure of late-Roman holy men, rather than his episcopal side. Therefore, the narrative tries to present a character who stands as a "giver" or an intermediary between men and the supernatural realm. In a recent reconsideration of his classic article of 1971 on the holy man, Peter Brown has recognized one shortcoming of his study in the light of a new interpretation of the sources. Lives such as Martin’s “achieved their effect through censoring one side of the gift exchange that had taken place around the figure of the holy man – the steady, often disquieting flow of gifts and favours from the outside world that gave the holy man’s activities an appropriate degree of splendour and public recognition.” 199 This feature occurred in many other instances of pre-capitalistic societies wherein gifts played a structuring role in society and prestige usually accompanies the action of giving more than that of receiving. 200

Likewise, Sulpicius shows an ideological restraint to recognize that his patron and master did receive gifts and favours. In his relationships with emperors (a topic that will be part of the following chapter), and specially with Valentinian I, one comes across the

chuch was to be turned to ideological advantage”, and BROWN 1992, 89-117, for the role of bishops as guarantors of social order.

198 MATTHEWS 1975, 156-159.
199 BROWN 1995, 63.
existence of certain values operating in the gift exchange. The emperor granted all of
Martin’s requests (preces) and in addition to that, he offered gifts (munera) that the bishop
rejected, since he was “watchful of his poverty”.*201 The solution that Sulpicius reaches to
explain why Martin received something (in this case, favours) consists in a separation
between what Martin obtained as bishop and what he might have got as individual. The same
restraint to show reciprocity occurs in the episode wherein Lycontius offers money after the
apparently miraculous ending of the plague in his house. The incident is a perfect example of
how Sulpicius renders a plain relation of reciprocity into something different. According to
the narrative,202 Lycontius asked Martin’s assistance (implorauit auxilium), whereupon
Martin fasted and prayed during a week with the expected outcome of the plague’s ending.
Sulpicius, writing as a holy men’s story-teller, stresses that a divine favor (diuina beneficia)
took place and therefore Lycontius thanked (agens gratias), although the narrative does not
make clear whom, whether Martin or God. The former is more likely to be the candidate for
Lycontius’ thankfulness, since he was offered one hundred silver pounds. Sulpicius finds it
very problematic to explain a situation in which his hero received money. He solves it by
saying that Martin “neither accepted nor rejected” (nec respuit nec recepit) but rather the
bishop directed it to an act of charity: the release of captives.

A literal interpretation might accept the absence of any relationship of reciprocity at
work in this passage. Yet such an interpretation would imply the success of Sulpicius in
hiding the real rapport from the eyes of the reader. First of all, the vocabulary of amicitia
(and also of patronage) permeates the whole passage. Although Sulpicius denies reciprocity,
the diction he chooses to describe the episode is rooted in the traditional, Roman social and

200 MAUSS 1990, 37-38.
201 Postremo abeunti multa munera obtulit, quae uir beatus, ut semper, pauperitatis suae custos cuncta
reiecit (Dial, 2,5,10).
202 Dial, 3,14,3-6.
political vocabulary. Furthermore, reciprocity exists but is hidden by means of an operation of “de-institutionalization” of the figure of Martin, in a way similar to the episode of Valentinian’s gifts. In other words, he did not receive the gift as Martin, the holy man, the wonder-maker, but he did it as a bishop whose office included the administration of the works of charity (a topic developed in the next section). The achievement of this separation requires that the counter-part of the gift be presented as diuinum munus, a favour of God, rather than Martin’s (his role being limited to an intercession). All this allows Sulpicius to neglect the fact that Martin did actually receive a gift, but the modern reader must be aware of the inseparability of the person of the bishop and his social and institutional position.

It would be valid to question how representative the episode of Lycontius was, or if all the instances of relationships with equals implied a similar pattern of money transference. Regarding the flow of wealth to the church, one does not count on further evidence in the Life and the Dialogues to suggest that this was a normal procedure in Martin’s social relationships. However, two reasons indicate the possible existence of a wider flux of resources towards the church of Tours. First, Sulpicius, as expected, fails to mention donations of wealth for particular reasons. Secondly, wealth in diverse forms had to have

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203 The auxilium (as Sulpicius presents the request made to Martin), “dans le domaine social et politique, il désigne l’assistance mutuelle qui s’impose à ceux qui sont unis par la fides.” (HELLEGOUARCC’H 1972, 172). The beneficium, as it is presented the favour made by Martin, “est le principal moyen par lequel se créé l’amicitia” (Ibidem, 164). Note that in this case, Sulpicius chooses not to employ the term officium, since this term presupposes the existence of a social relationship whereas beneficium had a connotation that implied the beginning of a rapport between two people.

204 See BROWN 1981, 60-63, for the role of saints as intermediaries.

205 The most important among them may have been the conscious elaboration of an image of Martin as opposed to worldly bishops, who are sometimes depicted as avid of secular marks of prestige. (see, for example, Dial, 2,1,3-4. See also GRIFFE 1964, 299-304). The introduction of the passage wherein Lycontius makes his offering gives the impression of a section intended to describe (or settle) norms of communal life in the monastery, since a discussion about whether the money could be employed for the monk’s necessities or not follows the passage in question (Dial, 3,14,6). The answer given by Martin rules that monks must be sustained by the church rather than by donations, which evidently implies that the church of Tours was financially able to support a monastic foundation. This perfectly fits into an asceticism of loose regulations before the thorough rules of the sixth century. At Sulpicius’ times, the monastic literature used exempla to regulate communal life rather than semi-judicial statements of later Gallic rules.
come to the church of Tours, since a vast expansion of the church to rural areas (that required significant amounts of resources) took place during Martin's episcopate. Finally, the care of the poor, a increasingly important activity of local churches, also implied the channeling of wealth through the church that was drained out of rich families.

Another way through which riches of important families went into the hands of bishops was the consecration of virgins. This might have happened when Arborius, a former holder of one of the most important senatorial magistracies in the Roman world, the prefecture of the city of Rome, consecrated his daughter as mentioned before. In addition to the link created between his family and Martin through this act, the consecration of virgins presents a less ascetic and more episcopal side. The veiling of virgins implied a reinforcement of bishop's authority, in a time when the episcopate began to control "disruptive" forms of asceticism. Likewise, the Life asserts that the affluence of the offspring of noble families did not only include women, but also men, specifically named as "nobles" who joined Martin in Marmoutier. However, one might expect that they did it less compulsorily than young women, as in the case of the young nobilissimus Clarus, who "once he abandoned everything, he went to stay near Martin."

Wealth and young members of important families may have been the other side of the coin in Martin's relationships of reciprocity with equals. However, even though he did

such as those produced in Lerinian times. See PRICOCO 1998, xvii. Cf. VM, 10,4-9, where Sulpicius describes the life at the monastery of Marmoutier with some rudimentary rules of communal life.

For the evangelization of rural areas, see MATTHEWS 1975, 154-157 and PIETRI 1983, 53-59. GRIFFE 1964, 357-366, for a comparison between Tours and other episcopal sees.

See next chapter, for the forms of church patronage and charitable institutions.

This can be interpreted as an exchange of gifts under the form of women. See supra, n. 146.

The veiling of virgins epitomized the subordination of these women (often from wealthy families) to episcopal authority. See HUNTER 1999a, who claims that this process was in direct relation to values of clerical celibacy, since the authority of the clergy over virgins required an avoidance of a challenge based on different standards of sexual renunciation (married clergy against consecrated virgins).

Multi inter eos nobiles habebatur (VM, 10,8).

Clarus quidam adulescens nobilissimus, mox presbyter ... relictis omnibus, se ad Martinum contulisset (VM, 23,1).
not receive other counter-gifts besides the aforementioned (which is certainly unlikely), he obtained recognition of his position in the form of symbolic capital. The formula that the hagiographer uses to stress this aspect focuses on the acceptance of Martin’s *auctoritas*. Some episodes conclude with symbolic attitudes of recognition of the bishop’s powers – something that specially interested Sulpicius. After Martin’s interventions, Taetradius “honored Martin ... with extraordinary fondness”; Arborius “could not suffer that she [his daughter] was consecrated by anyone except by Martin by means of the imposition of the dress of virginity”; Euanthius and the other witnesses of the miracle proclaimed that “there was no one under heaven that could be compared with Martin”; the unnamed *paterfamilias* of Chartres expressed his gratitude towards Martin yelling “with joy and at the same time with tears, embracing Martin’s knees”; the son of Auspicius, who was afraid that his estates would suffer from the climate like in his father’s days, “mourned that Martin was not alive in these times” (which also talks about a lasting relationship, after both Auspicius and Martin’s death, between Auspicius’ son and Martin’s disciple); finally, in his encounters with the bishop of Tours, Auitianus recognized in Martin a “saint”. The acknowledgment of Martin’s authority (and it is not easy to separate that of the ascetic from that of the bishop in a context of “miraculous actions” occurring in episcopal contexts) was not a minor issue, since he was challenged by many of his colleagues and members of his own church – a question that introduces the last relationship between equals.

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212 VM, 17,2-4.
213 Neque ab alio eam quam a Martino habitu virginitatis inposito passus est consecrari (VM, 19,2)
214 Fatebamur non esse sub caelo, qui Martinum possit imitari (Dial, 2,2,7).
215 Prclamat pater cum gaudio et lacrimis Martini genua complexus (Dial, 3,2,7). Note that the episode presents more dramatic elements than the other ones, with a symbolic procedure (kneeling) that would possibly indicate a different social than in the other instances status of the protagonist.
216 Lugebat, Martinum non in haec tempora reseruatam (Dial, 3,7,5).
217 Quid me ... sancte, sic accipis? (Dial, 2,8,2).
218 It is possibly an exaggeration intended to contrast Martin’s constant occupations with the leisure that eastern monks enjoyed, but the Dialogues claim that Martin had to live “among quarreling clerics, among raging bishops” (*inter clericos dissidentes, inter episcopos saevientes*; Dial, 1,24,3). The problem of
Since the moment of his acclamation as bishop, Martin had to deal with the resistance of other colleagues, who considered him “unworthy for the episcopate, a man contemptible to the sight, with dirty clothes, with ugly hair.”

The sources offer many references to bishops who opposed Martin for two principal reasons: asceticism and ecclesiastical controversies. Concerning the first point, Sulpicius does not offer any name nor an episode in which one may evaluate the relationships between the two “groups” (i.e., the ascetic and the “secularized” bishops) and sometimes it is difficult to separate Martin’s actual opponents from Sulpicius.

Regarding the problem of different factions the narratives give more details and one can identify rapport of political alliance and enmity. The Dialogues offer a vivid description of the environment at the court of Maximus in the aftermath of Priscillian’s execution. One episode narrated took place in 385, when the new bishop of Trier had to be consecrated.

After the Priscillianist affair, the Gallic church presented sharp divisions between two different factions. The origin of the dispute was the intervention of secular powers in the condemnation and execution of Priscillian, but it had wider connotations, since it questioned the role of secular powers in church’s affairs. It must be noted that the asceticism did not necessarily play a fundamental part in this conflict, although some scholars suggest that it

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219 Indignum esse episcopatu hominem uultu despicabilem, ueste sordidum, crine deformem (VM, 9,3)

220 Stancliffe presents a persuasive argument in favour of considering the division between ascetic and non-ascetic bishops as typical of Sulpicius’ context (STANCLIFFE 1983, 292-293). Indeed, the evidence suggests that the same bishops who criticized Martin for his ascetic behavior were still active when Sulpicius wrote the Life (See, for instance, VM, 27,3 and Dial, 1,2,2). However, Stancliffe and other scholars point out that there was a lasting current of anti-ascetic ideas among the Gallic episcopate from the times of Martin, which exploded at the end of the fourth century. Hunter, following Stancliffe, considers that Vigilantius and his non-ascetic opinions represented the main stream of episcopal standards (HUNTER 1999b, 428-429).

221 Stancliffe suggests that the two episodes were different visits of Martin at Trier (STANCLIFFE 1983, 113-114).

was so. Martin, an ascetic himself, stood with the bishops that condemned Priscillian at the
council of Bordeaux in 384/385. Among the attendants was also Ambrose of Milan. He
shared Martin’s views, who backed the position that held that the whole affair should remain
within the church and judged by bishops. Then, asceticism was politically used against the
bishop of Tours, when he was accused by Ithacius, the same character that accused
Priscillian. However, the real issue at stake was not asceticism, although these practices did
not have extraordinary support among the clergy. The central point was the definition of
episcopal authority, before alternative leaderships within the church (such as Priscillian’s)
and before the secular ruler.

According to the Dialogues, the bishop of Tours entered into the city when a council
was taking place and the Ithacian bishops (i.e., those who had supported the intervention of
secular powers in the Priscillianist affair) were gathered and threatened by an
excommunication from a bishop named Theognitus. At the same time, Maximus wished
the put an end to controversies within the Gallic church, probably because he wanted to finish
with this “internal” problem for political reasons. Martin proved a good negotiator: he
obtained grace from the emperor for some Priscillianists (and perhaps for the supporters of
Gratian); he joined communion with the Ithacian faction (after all, something that he had
previously done at the condemnation of Priscillian in the council of Bordeaux) and he

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223 For example, Ralph Mathisen held that, after 390, “Martin and his monkish associates recognized that at
any church council they would be in the minority, and therefore disdained to attend.” (MATHISEN 1989, 15).
Likewise, Jean Heuclin considers Martin as the head of a “parti ascétique” against the Ithacians
(HEUCLIN 1998, 16).
224 For an account of the events and different problems presented in the sources, see MATHEWS 1975,
164-167 and STANCLIFFE 1983, 279-283. For the role of Martin, see GRIFFE 1964, 1:320-323, with
Sulpicius’ testimony.
225 VAN DAM 1985, 88-114.
226 Dial, 3,12,1.
227 At that time he was planning his campaign into Italy to overthrow Valentinian II and following a policy
that guaranteed his recognition by Theodosius. See MATHEWS 1975, 177-185.
attended the consecration of Felix.²²⁸ Even though Sulpicius claims that Martin spent the last years of his life in “splendid isolation” without attending any council, he kept an interest in ecclesiastical politics, as in the case of the council of Nîmes.²²⁹ Besides, his visit to Vienne remembered by Paulinus possibly took place at the occasion of a travel to a council, although it is impossible to determine to which one.²³⁰

Nevertheless, even if Martin has stood against the pars Ithacii, he also counted on amici among the episcopate. The isolation presented by Sulpicius contrasts with the evidence of some bishops who shared religious and ecclesiastical standpoints with Martin.²³¹ In Chartres, where the aforementioned paterfamilias asked Martin to heal his daughter, the bishop of Tours was accompanied by the bishops Valentinus of Chartres and Victricius of Rouen. Martin declared that these bishops were better candidates for undertaking the cure, since their holiness surpassed Martin’s. Despite Martin’s claims, his amici joined the paterfamilias in his requests (preces).²³² This was not the only meeting between Martin and Victricius, since Paulinus met both at Vienne.²³³ Therefore, even though Sulpicius wants to depict a Martin isolated from a ecclesiastical politics, the reality was quite different. Indeed, the hagiographer refers to ecclesiastical conflicts in terms of political groups. The Dialogues affirm that the group of bishops that supported Felix’s election was the Ithacian pars, a term with strong connotations of political groupings which certainly implies that there were other

²²⁸ Dial, 3,13.
²²⁹ According to Sulpicius, although Martin did not attend any council after Trier’s (Dial, 3,13,6), he was curious about the decisions taken in that occasion. (Dial, 2,13,8).
³³⁰ Paulinus, Ep, 18,9. Griffe claims that the restriction imposed upon himself of attending a council only included meetings outside the province (GRIFFE 1964, 342). Yet this remains hypothetical, because no document supports this idea.
²³¹ For the portrayal of Martin as an isolated figure within episcopate, see, for instance, Dial, 1,26,3; VM, 20,1. For other bishops with possible common points with Martin’s ideas, see GRIFFE 1964, 304-316, although the relationship with Martin is not clearly demonstrated for all the cases.
²³² Ille [i.e., Martin] cedens episcopis, qui tum forte latus illius ambiebant, Valentino afdque Victricio, inparem se esse tantae moli, sed illis quasi sanctioribus nihil impossibile fatebatur. At illi pias preces una cum patre supplici uoce iungentes orare Martinum ut sperata praestaret (Dial, 3,2,4-5).
²³³ Paulinus, Ep, 18,9. See HUNTER 1999a, 417-419 for a wider outlook on Victricius’ activities.
partes and not an isolated individual. After all, “in major controversies, where opinion was divided within the church, decisions tended to be made by the intrigues of the rival parties at court, unless the emperor happened to have strong convictions or prejudices of his own.”

Martin had an active participation in some of the central events that defined ecclesiastical politics. Although he probably belonged to a minority within the episcopate, he managed to place himself in a position favourable to negotiate and undertake some of the episcopal activities that enabled him to develop a consistent base of support. For example, he had access to the court and imperial functionaries, an element that allowed him to act as patron of individuals and groups. There is no concrete evidence that this was achieved by means of his contacts among members of the upper classes, although one can suspect that the acquaintances with holders (former or current) of imperial offices and individuals linked to Ausonius’ family might have opened the doors to the imperial consistorium. In addition, his reluctance to completely detach from ecclesiastical politics allowed him to sustain his vulnerable position within the church through negotiations with other factions.

All these actions went along with exchanges of gifts and favours. The counter-gifts are not always present in the narrative and one may assume that they never existed in some cases, although this was surely balanced with the acquisition of “symbolic capital” under the form of recognition, prestige, honour, etc. The relationship between gifts and social networks varies from case to case. Sometimes they reflect an existing bond, sometimes they seem to show a new social rapport. The former are typical of Martin’s petitions to the emperors (therefore, the exercise of one of the duties of amicitia) whereas the latter gives the

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234 Itaque ab illo tempore satis cauit cum illa Ithacianae partis communione misceri (Dial, 3,13,5). The term pars has strong political connotations, even in Sulpicius’ works. For instance, the supporters of Gratian are described as Gratiani partium (Dial, 3,11,8). Cf. HELLEGOUARCH 1972, 110-115, for the connotations of the terms in the Latin lexicon of political affiliations.
impression of being part of most of the contacts with aristocrats in his thaumaturgical actions; yet this remains hypothetical since no other sources allow one a cross-examination.

One thing obvious from the abovementioned cases is that Martin was not an unsocial, isolated character. In his social relationships Martin balanced a watchful respect for essential practices of social conventions and the exercise of an authority that claimed an increasing, though modest, sharing of public affairs. He follows traditional patterns of social intercourse as well as employing new possibilities that his fame of holy man and, with increasing importance, his office of bishop opened for him.

235 JONES 1964, 361.
IV. Martin’s relationships of verticality

In *Dialogues* 1, 14, Sulpicius tells the story about a female wolf that everyday visited an ascetic who lived in the desert of Egypt. She used to stand at the door of the holy man, at dinner-time, and he gave her the rest of his dinner. “she usually licked his hand and went away, almost like she had fulfilled a duty (officium) and performed the salutation.”

On one occasion, the ascetic had left the cell to accompany another monk who had gone to pay him a visit. The wolf came into the cell of her “household patron” and ate the bread. After the event, she was so ashamed that she did not show up for a week. The monk did not know who had committed the theft, nor what had happened with the wolf. He was sad because he missed his usual companion. Finally, the prayers of the monk made the wolf go back to the cell, with her face full of shame. At that moment, the monk understood the reason, forgave her, and the beast resumed her habitual duty (officium).

This episode may have had an “exotic” flavor for Sulpicius’ audience, mostly westerners for whom Egypt was a land of mysteries. Some aspects of the tale, however, recalled more familiar elements for a late Roman reader. The daily visit to a powerful figure, the services rendered by the visitor and the gifts exchanged between significant characters, all these elements describes a pervasive social relationship of the Roman world: patronage.

Patronage has always been considered a distinctive and fundamental feature of Roman society. Even Marxist historians, generally concerned with issues of class relationships, have recognized the centrality of such a system. For instance, De Sainte Croix has argued that “the exercise of patronage by the great men (by no means limited to their clientes) was a major factor in political and social life – and

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236 *Illum manum eius lambere solitam, adque ita quasi inpleto officio et praestita consalutatione discedere* (*Dial*, 1,14,1).
237 *Uacam cellulam, cum familiae patronum abesse sentiret, ingressa, curiosius explorans ubinam esset habitator* (*Dial*, 1,14,2).
238 *Ita indulgentiam consecuta officii consuetudinem deposito maerore reparavit* (*Dial*, 1,14,6).
239 Even Marxist historians, generally concerned with issues of class relationships, have recognized the centrality of such a system. For instance, De Sainte Croix has argued that “the exercise of patronage by the great men (by no means limited to their clientes) was a major factor in political and social life – and
in "an enduring bond between two persons of unequal social and economic status, which implies and is maintained by periodic exchanges of goods and services, and also has social and affective dimensions." The norms that regulated patronage had some aspects similar to those of amicitia. For instance, the flow of gifts and favours was expressed by the terms officium – beneficium – meritum, as for relationships between equals. In addition, as it was said, relationships of patronage were usually represented as rapports of amicitia, the client being presented as an amicus. These relationships ranged from urban to rural patronage, from upper-class clients to the lowest strata of society, from political patronage to merely economic interest, from individual patronage to patronage of the city.

The counter-part of patronage was the clientele. Since patronage was an essential mechanism for political advancement, the social and political power of one person was measurable by the quantity and importance of his clientele. Political success of higher classes generally depended on the existence of a powerful network of patronage that granted profitable access to the centers of decision making: local councils, provincial functionaries and eventually, imperial court. Jens-Uwe Krause has indicated the groups that may be considered as patrons (or heads of networks of patronage) in late antiquity: courtiers (people with easy access to the emperor, including his family’s members), senators, honorati (provincial senatorial class), curiales (local notables) and rhetoricians. The clients are the rest

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242 During the early empire, the term amicus was used to distinguish between clients of higher status from those of a lower position. Yet this relationship also implied a reciprocal exchange of favors or gifts. (SALLER 1982, 11-15). For a continuation of amicitia as a form of patronage during late antiquity, see EPP, 130-175, with a detailed analysis of early medieval sources.
243 The emperor was, from the times of the early empire, the center of networks of patronage (SALLER 1982, 32-33). However, “emperors did not and could not monopolize patronage … far from contemplating the suppression of the patronal networks of the aristocratic houses of Rome, emperors positively

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of the population, who usually lacked the means for creating their own clientele. Krause included bishops together with philosophers (under the label of rhetoricians), which seems understandable since in late antiquity bishops assumed much of the role that philosophers used to have in the ancient world, specially in their “freedom of speech” before the emperors. This also implied that individual bishops could reach the position of imperial clients, or amici principis. In addition, the episcopate also assumed another role of patronage: they developed from the fourth century onwards a network of charitable institutions that reached the utmost lower groups within the city.

Since patronage is such an important relationship in the Roman world, it is not surprising to find testimonies of it in Sulpicius’ works. For analytical purposes, the evidence can be divided in two parts, namely, relationships of Martin as client and his social rapports as patron.

Regarding the first ones, the biographical information in the Life offers two instances in which Martin is presented as “client” before he obtained the episcopal office. When he was still a soldier, Julian summoned his scholae (the body to which Martin belonged) to distribute the donativum. According to Sulpicius, at that time Martin desired to abandon the army but he recognized that the acceptance of the gift will not allow him to leave the army: “Until now, he said to the Caesar, I served you as a soldier. Allow me now to be a soldier of God. May he who fights accept the donatium. I am a soldier of Christ; it is not permitted for me

couraged them by providing some of the resources that helped aristocratic patrons like Pliny to reward their clients” (GARNSEY and SALLER 150).
245 KRAUSE 1987, 19-20b.
246 KRAUSE 1987, 14b. For bishops replacing philosophers, see BROWN 1992, 35-70 and 103-117.
247 PATLAGEAN 1977, 188-196.
248 The donativum was an extraordinary payment to the soldiers in particular occasions, such as the accession of an emperor. In this case, it was probably due to Julian’s successful campaign of 356 (see FONTAINE 1968, 515-519, for the historical context and some problems with the authenticity of the event). Sometimes the term also refers to a regular payment. Yet the most common word for soldier’s regular salary is stipendium. For soldiers’ payments, see JONES 1964, 623-626.
to fight.” This passage evidences two facts. First of all, there is the perception (Martin’s, Sulpicius’ or both) of a gift as something that entails an obligation (in this case, to serve in the army). Secondly, Sulpicius underlines that from the very youth of Martin, the only patron he recognized was God. Again, as in the case of the horizontal relationships, the hagiographer insists in “de-socializing” his hero, putting him away from standard social rapport and insisting on a total reduction of his liaisons to the one with God.

This also happens when Sulpicius describes Martin’s relationship with Hilary. Martin is said to have joined him at Poitiers, after having abandoned the army. In this case, the officium that the bishop gave to Martin was an office within the church. According to the narrative, Hilary wanted Martin to become his deacon but he was afraid that his recruit would reject the offer for he considered himself undeserving of such an office. Therefore, the bishop decided to offer a lower position (humilior), one of exorcist, which Martin eventually accepted (or in Sulpicius’ words, “he did not reject”) since he feared to incur the accusation of arrogance. This passage is of important significance, because it demonstrates how Martin initiated his career under the patronage of a powerful figure. In the concrete practice, one can find typical elements of Roman clientelistic system. Hilary introduced Martin into the ecclesiastical career and protected his monastic foundation at Liguge; on the other hand, Martin supported his protector, joining his ecclesiastical faction – the Nicene one.

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249 *Hactenus, inquit ad Caesarem, militaui tibi; patere ut nunc militem Deo. Donatiuum tuum pugnaturus accipiat; Christi ego miles sum: pugnare mihi non licet.* (VM, 4,3).

250 VM, 5,1. See supra, note 117.

251 *Temptauit autem idem Hilarius inposito diaconatus officio sibi cum saepissime retitisset, indignum se esse uociferans, intellexit uir altioris ingenii uno eum modo posse constringi, si id ei officii imponeret in quo quidam locus iniuriae uideturur. Itaque exorcistam eum esse praeceptam. Quam ille ordinationem, ne despexisse tamquam humiliorem uidetur, non repudieatu.* (VM, 5,2).

252 VM, 7,1. For the characteristics of this monastery and Hilary’s influence, see FONTAINE 1968, 608-616.

253 In Illyricum, Martin is said to have been “hit in public with a stick and obliged to abandon the city” because he had been almost the only one who opposed to the treachery of the [Arian] bishops” (Dehinc cum haeresis Arriana per totum orbem et maxime intra Illyricum pullulasset, cum adversus perfidiam sacerdotum solus paene acerrime repugnaret multisque suppliciis esset affectus – nam et publice urgis
Certainly, other reasons existed to seal the relationship, among which a possible interest of Hilary in monasticism after his exile in the east, or the reputation of the bishop of Poitiers among Gallic episcopate. However, these arguments do not deny the existence of bond patron-protégé sanctioned by an exchange of favours, initiated by the offer of an ecclesiastical position no matter the accurateness of the information of the Life.

Additionally, the relationship with Hilary gave other opportunities to Martin. During the many years he remained close to the bishop of Poitiers, he could use the protection of his well-known patron to acquire a reputation and probably some contacts with important families of Aquitania, although this remains hypothetical. Certainly, the proximity of Hilary made Martin’s asceticism more polished to the eyes of an upper-class’ audience.

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caesus est et ad extremum de ciuitate exire compulsus, VM, 6,4). That Martin was “almost” the only one to oppose the Arian faction indicates that he had some Nicene contacts there, though it is unlikely that these contacts came from Hilary’s acquaintance. Near Milan, he was also persecuted by the Arian bishop Auxentius, “leader and head of the Arians” (auctor et princeps Arrianorum). Cf. SALLER 1982, 26-32 for a description of protégé’s relationships during the early empire and the obligation to adhere to the patron’s political group.

254 Which is valid only for the period after Hilary’s return. In the first encounter, there is no mention to a possible monastic foundation, whereas Hilary supported the enterprise after his exile (see FONTAINE 1968, 613, who includes this monastery among Hilary’s pastoral activities).

255 Indeed, it is possible that the “contractual” act might have been slightly different. Firstly, it is impossible to know if Hilary really offered the position of deacon to a former soldier without important literary training. Yet it is not totally impossible since there were cases of minor clergy as well as higher officers of the church drawn from humbler classes (JONES 1964, 920-923). What is more certain is that Hilary offered a lower position, the exorcist one. Secondly, the event is presented in a way that made impossible for Martin to reject the offer, therefore, to accept a “gift” and, more important, to become under the protection of a powerful figure. This agrees with Sulpicius’ interests in hiding any gift from other people to Martin. The hagiographer does not mention any request from Martin, nor he describes how both characters became acquainted with each other. Without this information, it is impossible to determine the real nature of the “clientelistic contract”.

256 The only mention to a contact before his consecration is the resurrection of the slave of Lupicinus (VM, 8) but without a reference to a relationship between Martin and the landowner. For Hilary’s social background, see GRIFFE 1964, 218-219. Possibly, Hilary had an education of rhetorician and belonged to a upper-class family, though the exact rank (whether senatorial or simply honorati) is difficult to determine. In any case, he could have put Martin in contact with Christianized families of notables. For Hilary’s literary and educational backgrounds, see BURNS 1998.

257 Fontaine considers that the capital influence of Hilary on Martin lies on his integration of ascetic practices within the ecclesiastical institution as well as the limitation of exalted, hence uncontrolled, forms of asceticism (FONTAINE 1967, 155-160).
also gave Martin the platform for a renown beyond the limits of the diocese of Poitiers and Aquitania in general, which proved to be influential for his election as bishop.²⁵⁸

Once Martin became a bishop, the relationships of patronage drastically changed. Now, with his new position, he was able to establish relationships of amicitia with bishops and aristocrats or imperial officers;²⁵⁹ however, the relation with emperors still consisted in a rapport of patronage, though with different characteristics.

Imperial patronage played a fundamental role from the times of the early Principate in most of the political careers. High magistracies and military appointments depended to great extent on nominations approved by the emperor. Of course, this does not mean that any appointment was personally decided by the emperor himself, because the decision making on this issue (as well as on many others) depended on influences and factional struggle, the peak of which was at the imperial court – especially during the later empire.²⁶⁰ Many groups and individuals fought to obtain imperial favour in decisions that affected in diverse ways their lives, although not everyone gained access to the emperor, a privilege that was limited to a few. Yet this does not necessarily imply that the doors were closed for those unfortunates whose status, political situation or resources in general prevented them from the highest sphere of power. They could still count on the help of important figures at the court, the amici (i.e., protégés) of the emperor and people with a status high enough to act as “first-hand” clients of the emperors. In the late Roman court, some of these characters were, besides the imperial “inner circle”, members of the family of the emperor (specially though not

²⁵⁸ PIETRI 1983, 36.
²⁵⁹ One must remember the reservations posed in the previous chapter about the different shades in each relationship with “equals” that could range from real rapports of amicitia of people with similar status to relationships between powerful patrons and protégés.
²⁶⁰ Imperial appointments depended to a great extent on recommendations from important figures. The system that existed since the times of the Principate, was called suffragium. DE SAINTE CROIX 1981, 365-366. JONES, 1964, 391-396.
exclusively women), teachers (i.e., rhetoricians), eunuchs, senators and bishops, among others.\textsuperscript{261}

The writings of Sulpicius indicate that Martin met two emperors: Valentinian I (364-375), in a visit soon after his episcopal consecration, and Maximus (383-388), at the time of the election of Felix as bishop of Trier, although he may have visited the imperial \textit{comitatum} in more opportunities.\textsuperscript{262} The reasons for the visit to Valentinian’s court are not mentioned in the sources, but he certainly needed to request some things from the emperor:

Almost at that time when he was elected bishop, he needed to visit the court. Then the ruler was Valentinian I. Since he knew the things that Martin would ask him, which he did not want to provide, he ordered to keep him off the gates of the palace. His Arian wife had approached to his cruel and arrogant mind to completely alienate him from the holy man, so he [Valentinian] did not perform the due respect for him\textsuperscript{263}

After the bishop’s fast and prayers, he is said to have received a heavenly help and Valentinian granted everything he asked. Also, he offered to him many presents that Martin eventually rejected.\textsuperscript{264}

\textsuperscript{261} KRAUSE 1987b, 10-20.
\textsuperscript{262} Sulpicius says that Martin was often summoned and received by the emperor, although this may well have happened during the same visit to Trier (\textit{Hic Martinum saepius euocatum receptumque intra palatium venerabiliter honorabat}, Dial, 2,6,3). Fontaine holds that he visited the court twice, once before and once after the condemnation of Priscillian (FONTAINE 1969, 913). The evidence suggests that this is very likely, since it portrays a very different atmosphere at court during the first visit (wherein Fontaine thinks the banquet and the meal prepared by the empress took place) and the second one, when the main concern was the Priscillianist affair. Yet it has to be kept in mind that Sulpicius does not offer a conclusive testimony in this regard.

\textsuperscript{263} \textit{Eo fere tempore, quo primum episcopus datus est, fuit ei necessitas adire comitatum. Valentinianus tum maior rerum potiebatur. Hic cum Martinum ea petere cognouisset, quae preaeastre nolebat, iussit eum palatii foribus arceri: etenim ad animum illius inimitem ac superbum uxor accesserat Arriana, quae totum illum a sancto uiro, ne ei debitam reuerentiam praestaret, auererat} (\textit{Dial}, 2,5,5).

\textsuperscript{264} \textit{Dial}, 2,5,7,10. See the previous chapter for the vocabulary of gifts. David Hunt has pointed out that “it is hard to imagine many local church leaders having the will to follow the austere example of bishop Martin of Tours, who reportedly refused gifts offered by Valentinian” (HUNT 1998, 258). Although this may have
Regarding the visit (or visits) to the court of Maximus, one might add some other
details about the relationship between the bishop and the emperor to those aforementioned.
The encounter as depicted in the Life presents some facets not included in the Dialogues.
Sulpicius portrays Martin as the only example among the episcopate who had “not abandoned
the episcopal steadiness for the adulation of the emperor.” On the contrary, the other
bishops made a “scandalous adulation nearby the emperor” and “the episcopal dignitas
disappeared under the base fickleness of the emperor’s clientele; the apostolic auctoritas
remained only in Martin.” The difference between Martin and his colleagues is stressed
when Sulpicius points out that “even if he had to plead with the ruler for some other people,
he ordered more than he begged.” What follows is the scene of the banquet, wherein
Martin shared table with members of the imperial family and courtiers (the amici of the
emperor, qui a rege erant proximi). At that occasion, the famous episode of Maximus’
“humiliation” took place, when the bishop offered his cup to a priest before handing it to the
emperor, an act that was approved by all those present, even though they were surprised by
the action. Finally, Martin is said to have predicted that if Maximus went to Italy to fight
against Valentinian II, he would be defeated. That actually happened in 388.

In the Dialogues, Sulpicius added further information about the episodes happening at
court, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Yet this work presents an atmosphere of

been true, he does not consider that the favours granted by Valentinian represent a gift, which they certainly
were, although from a different kind.
265 Adulationi regiae sacerdotalis non cessisse constantiam (VM, 20,1).
266 Degenere inconstantia regiae clientelae sacerdotalis dignitas subdidisset, in solo Martino apostolica
auctoritas permanebat (VM, 20,1). Bishops show the same attitude in the Dialogues, where they,
“prostrated, beg with tears and lamentations that the imperial power be employed against one man with all
its strength” (Prostrati cum fletu et lamentatione potestatem regiam inplorant ut utatur aduersus unum
hominem ui sua, Dial, 3,12,2).
267 Nam et si pro aliquibus regi supplicandum fuit, imperavit potius quam rogavit (VM, 20,2).
268 VM, 20,4-7. Specially 7, quod factum imperator omnesque qui tunc aderant ita admirati sunt, ut hoc
ipsum eis, in quo contempti fuerant, placeret.
269 VM, 20,8-9.
familiarity between the bishop and the emperor that did not appear in the Life.\textsuperscript{270} The wife of Maximus seems to have been a devotee of Martin and Sulpicius claims that she once prepared a dinner for him and served as though she “did not think in the riches of the kingdom, nor in the dignity of the empire, nor the crown or the royalty.”\textsuperscript{271}

The atmosphere described by Sulpicius suggests that the relationship between Martin and the emperors was far from being a patron-client bond. If one has to give an account of the situation as portrayed in the sources, the outcome would be the depiction of a powerful holy man that, by means of his \textit{virtus}, subverts the social hierarchy and subordinates secular powers to divine authority. Another way of understanding the liaison between bishops and emperors points towards the existence of common points with relationships between prophets and kings as described in the Hebrew Scriptures. This is illustrated in elements such as the “freedom of speech” (like the philosophers in the ancient world) that Martin is said to have had at court, or the prophecy that he cast about the future of Maximus. There is a clear literary background that supports this hypothesis, since the appeal to prophetic figures was a common feature among early Christian writings and specially the stories of martyrs.\textsuperscript{272}

However, this presentation is still problematic. Certainly, biblical models played an important role in both Martin’s and Sulpicius’ definition of patterns of public behavior. The example of Ambrose and Theodosius is perhaps one of the most famous relationship between a bishop and an emperor shaped by biblical figures of prophets and kings.\textsuperscript{273} One might ask whether this is not also the way in which Martin and the emperors (specially Maximus)

\begin{footnotes}
\item[270] Cf. \textit{VM}, 20.
\item[271] \textit{Non illa opes regni, non imperii dignitatem, non diadema, non purpuram cogitabat} (\textit{VM}, 2, 6, 4).
\item[272] FONTAINE 1969, 913-923. For the Christian literary background of Sulpicius, see STANCLIFFE 1983, 61-70.
\item[273] For a possible influence of the episodes between Ambrose and Theodosius in Sulpicius’ works, see FONTAINE 1969, 925-926. Neil McLynn has pointed out the construction of a prophet-king relationship by Ambrose in his dealing with Theodosius, although the portrayal expressed more a situation of weakness of the bishop than the actual nature of the rapport (MCLYNN 1994, 298-341).
\end{footnotes}
wanted their relationship to be represented. In concrete terms, however, the basis of their rapport lays in social practices that had more in common with those of patronage than with those of spiritual advisers.

When Martin visited the court on the occasion of the council of Trier, Sulpicius remarks that he had "petitions" (petitiones) for the emperor, that for Narses and Leucadius, the supporters of Gratian. He also claims that this situation obliged Martin to cede some things to the emperor's will. For instance, he was served by a woman (the empress), something that had never occurred before, but he was justified because "he was constrained by the necessities of the occasion: to release the prisoners in jail, to allow the return of people sent into exile, to restitute confiscated goods." Likewise, he had to join communion with the Itacians after Maximus posed the menace of sending tribunes against the Priscillianists in Spain if Martin did not attended Felix's consecration. The bishop of Tours decided to attend the ceremony, "considering better to yield that time than to abandon those whom the sword threatened over their neck."

These elements allow one to draw a more complex relationship between emperors and bishops than that of the ruler and his inspired adviser. Exchanges of favours and gifts existed in both directions. On the one hand, the imperial authority counted on bishops for the control

274 For the case of Ambrose and Theodosius, Peter Brown has suggested that the public "humiliation" of the emperor represented one case among others of an imperial policy that consisted in the recognition of the role of bishops as guarantors of the of the city order (in this case, Milan). BROWN 1992, 103-117. Cf. MCLYNN 1994, 291-298. It is important to remember that Maximus had a particular weak situation during his reign, since a rival court was established in Milan and Theodosius never fully accepted the "usurpation" of part of the western empire by Maximus. Although the latter tried to convince the former that he was the champion of Catholicism in the west as much as Theodosius was in the east. Therefore, Maximus needed to gain internal support to strengthen his position in relation to possible menaces and challenges to his power. And among the groups of pressure that he co-opted was the Gallic episcopate, which explains in part his possible acceptance of public deference towards bishops. See MATTHEWS 1975, 160-161 and 173-182.
275 Dial, 3,11,8. See supra, note 186.
276 Temporis necessitate constringi, ut clausos carcere liberaret, exiliis datos restitueret, bona adempta rehiberet (Dial, 2,7,3).
277 Aestimans ad horam cedere quam his non consulere, quorum ceruicibus gladius imminebat (Dial, 3,13,2).
of the cities and for legitimacy of imperial rule, especially in delicate situations such as Maximus'. On the other hand, bishops could obtain support that reinforced their situation as members of privileged groups as well as they were offered access to the center of political patronage. This partly determined the way of the presentation of this exchange – by means of the portrayal of the bishop as “adviser” (either philosopher or prophet) of an emperor ready to be persuaded. However, this does not imply that the terms of the relationship were as those between equals. The difference in status and power was clearly understood by Martin and the other bishops who knew which were the limits of their influence and to what extent they depended on imperial decisions for many aspects of ecclesiastical life. The limits of Martin’s maneuvers can be perceived in those occasions when he had to “cede” something to the emperor.

To sum up, in all the rapports of patronage wherein Martin was the client or the side with lower status, Sulpicius noticeably alters the social reality by means of the manipulation of symbolic gestures, such as the attitude towards the emperor or the way in which gifts and favours are presented. This is not surprising, since in late Latin literature the vocabulary of clientelistic relationships is hidden in order to avoid the dishonour of the client. Furthermore, Sulpicius achieves his aim as hagiographer by destroying Martin’s social rapports, and reinterpreting them from a point of view based on a hierarchy of religious

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278 The weak position of Maximus and his necessity of recognition may explain the episode wherein the emperor sought Martin’s attendance to his banquet. The bishop is said to have firstly rejected arguing that he could not share the table with someone who had killed one emperor, in reference to Gratian, and overthrown another one, in reference to Valentinian II (VM, 20, 2). Finally, Maximus had to explain that he had received the imperial office from his soldiers and he could do nothing to reject this offer. Martin, then, “conquered either by the arguments or by the requests”, accepted Maximus’ invitation, which also implies that he accepted Maximus’ arguments, hence, granted legitimacy to the emperor. Maximus is said to have been admired by the result he obtained (Tandem uictus uel ratione uel precibus ad conuiuium uenit, mirum in modum gaudente rege quod id impetrasset, VM, 20, 3).

279 This feature has been pointed out by Krause for the case of Symmachus’ correspondence. “Häufig werden also auch mit den Bezeichnungen domestici mei, familiares mei oder amici bei Symmachus Klienten gemeint sein, ohne daß sich freilich immer sicher sagen läßt, ob ein amicus oder familiaris ein
bonds of patronage with statuses redefined by the access to the supernatural reality – with
God at the top of this pyramid and Martin as a privileged courtier.\textsuperscript{280} However, the evidence
shown here permits one to assert that Martin did not escape actual bonds of patronage, and he
utilized them when necessary in his career.

The relationships of patronage presented so far reveal Martin as “client” or in a
subordinate position. However, Martin held an office that enabled him to develop his own
“clientele”, and, therefore, to become a patron. In this work, two dimensions of episcopal
patronage will be introduced.

The first one is a form of patronage that consisted in the representation on behalf of
the city or some of the most important groups within it. Usually, this implied a representation
before the imperial power, or its representatives and was carried on by prominent figures
such as powerful landowners or former high imperial officers.\textsuperscript{281} In late antiquity, it was also
common to find bishops who acted as intermediaries between the city (or a specific group
within it) and imperial authorities, if not the emperor himself. It is important to emphasize
that bishops were not \textit{de iure} magistrates with specific functions of intermediaries between
the cities and the imperial court. In specific cases, bishops’ office may have granted certain
privileges, but the success of bishops in obtaining an imperial favour did not exclusively
depend on the \textit{auctoritas} of his office. In addition to it, bishops needed to count on other
resources, no different from traditional urban patrons. They obtained access to high spheres

\textsuperscript{280} The pervasive language of patronage in holy men’s relationships has been pointed out by Brown
(BROWN 1995, 73-74).

\textsuperscript{281} JONES 1964, 362-363.
of influence by means of the mobilization of political and social networks,\textsuperscript{282} and by the willingness of some emperors to create an enduring bond with ecclesiastical officers to guarantee the peace within the cities.\textsuperscript{283}

There is only one episode in Sulpicius' writings wherein Martin represents the city (or a group of citizens) before an imperial authority. On that occasion, the \textit{comes} Avitianus, the same imperial functionary whose wife had asked Martin for blessed oil,\textsuperscript{284} is said to have entered into the city of Tours and arranged, in the "terrified city", the execution of some prisoners for the following day.\textsuperscript{285} Martin went to the residence of the officer in the middle of the night and waited outdoors since everyone was sleeping. Sulpicius reports that Avitianus was visited in dreams by an angel, who asked him why a servant of God was being treated in such a way. He rushed to the gates, and there he saw the bishop. "The wretched being shocked by so great demonstration of powers, said: 'Why have you done this to me, O Lord? It is not necessary that you talk: I know what you want, I see what you ask.'\textsuperscript{286} Then, when Martin left the residence of Avitianus, he summoned his officials and liberated the prisoners. Soon afterwards, the \textit{comes} also left the city, which was "happy and freed."\textsuperscript{287}

Once again, Sulpicius presents the relationship taking all the socio-political components out of it. Martin never requested a favour and Avitianus did not even need to receive a request. He just realized what God (and not Martin!) wanted by means of a miraculous demonstration. The concession of a favour as well as its request is completely obscured. However, it is clear that Avitianus granted a favour asked by Martin. It is

\textsuperscript{282} \textsc{Le Pelley}, C. 1998, 20. Also, \textsc{Cracco Ruggini}, 1998, 7. The author studies the case of Synesius of Cyrene. According to her, this bishop could comply with the role of urban patron "grazie al prestigio sociale e culturale e agli appoggi in altro loco gia da tempo acquisti."

\textsuperscript{283} \textsc{Brown} 1992, 103-109.

\textsuperscript{284} \textit{Dial}, 3,3,2.

\textsuperscript{285} \textit{Disponit postero die adtonita ciuitate ad opus triste procedere (Dial, 3,4,2).}

\textsuperscript{286} \textit{Perculus miser tantae manifestatione uirtutis, quid, inquit, muh hoc, domine, fecisti? Nihil te loqui necesse est: scio quid desideres, uideo quid requiras (Dial, 3,4,6).}
impossible to know whether the episode of the blessed oil given to Avitianus’ wife was prior or not to the event of the prisoners, although in the Dialogues the former comes before the latter. In any case, it suggests that the comes was ready to be persuaded by Martin; they had an existing relationship (as the recognition of the “sanctity” of Martin indicates) which allowed the bishop to be successful in his dealing with secular authorities. It also proves how important the establishment of a relationship with a powerful equal was for Martin, if he wished to be a successful “protector” of his city. Unfortunately, this is the only episode wherein Martin deals with an imperial representative on behalf of the city. It is impossible to determine whether this was a unique case or a common practice of the bishop. Nevertheless, it proves that at least for some cases, Martin was able to act as a powerful figure (i.e., patron) who represented the city.

The second aspect of episcopal patronage is related to the extension of social networks within the city. Traditional patronage of the city consisted in public *euergesia*, that is, acts of “generosity” which included public ceremonies, games, financial support for certain activities, banquets, etc. For the reason that “patrons did not enter into relationships with their social inferiors indiscriminately”, ancient civic patronage was directed to particular groups, based on occupational, religious, ethnical or geographical criteria, among others. Ultimately, the recipient of notable’s munificence could be the people

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287 *Post discessum autem sancti aduocat officiales suos, iubet omnes custodias relaxari et mox impse proficiscitur. Ita fugato Auitiano laetata est ciuitas et liberata* (Dial, 3,4,7).

288 But this was not the only mention of Martin “liberating” a *ciuitas*. In the Life, Sulpicius narrates that in one occasion, Trier was alarmed by the rumors of a barbarian incursion. Martin requested that a possessed person be brought before him (*Interea cum de motu atque impetu barbarorum subita ciuitatem fama turbasset, daemoniacum ad se exhiberi iubet, VM, 18,1*). He ordered him to tell whether this story was true or not, and the possessed person answered that it was a plot to frighten Martin and make him to abandon the city of Trier. When this was admitted, “the city was freed from its fear and the present preoccupation” (*metu et turbatione praesenti ciuitas liberata est, VM, 19,2*). Note that Martin played the role of a judge, probably influenced by Sulpicius’ own training. Fontaine has pointed out the technical, legal vocabulary of the passage (FONTAINE 1968, 854-855), but it is also perhaps the consequence of a role assumed by Martin even in Tours, although no further evidence can confirm this.

289 For the diverse activities of urban patronage in late antiquity, see KRAUSE 1987a, 14-16.
of the city, which certainly does not include all its dwellers, but the citizen body in ancient terms. In late antiquity, bishops claimed an increasing share of power within the city, competing against the traditional forms of urban leadership. One of the ways in which they did this was through the development of new networks of patronage. Particularly, they claimed to protect those that fell outside the protection of civic notables: the poor. To do so, the church developed an important network of redistribution of gifts. On the one hand, bishops addressed upper classes in their sermons and provided the wealthiest strata with a new role within the community as well as they directed private forms of charity into institutionalized practices. On the other hand, this wealth, together with the increasing revenues from the church’s properties, flowed to charitable institutions that guaranteed protection to those that did not fall under traditional patronage. These people could be mobilized in public events as the “symbolic retinue” of the bishop. Likewise, as it was said, this became a means for controlling the population of the cities in times of unrest.

Unfortunately, Sulpicius was not very interested in stories that involved people of lower status as much as he stressed the notables encountered by Martin. However, there are some incidents that indicate that the church of Tours did not escape the pattern of late Roman

290 GARNSEY and SALLER 1987, 156.
292 See PATLAGEAN 1977, 188-196. “Outsiders [of the city]… eroded the sharp distinction between members of the lower classes who, if not ‘poor’ in the strict sense of being destitute, were vulnerable because, as strangers, they were not full members of the démo\textit{s}. Such persons were anxious to find a group to which to belong. They might look to other leaders and be grateful for other forms of gift” (BROWN 1992, 93). Cf. LEPELLEY 1988, who strongly stresses the differences between secular and episcopal patronage. He puts the “assimilation” of episcopal patronage to traditional civic patronage at the beginning of the fifth century.
293 LIZZI 1998, 102-103.
294 JONES 1964, 895-898.
295 BROWN 1992, 97. One of the most important appearances of religious clienteles was during the elections of bishops. In the case of Martin, the support of the \textit{populus} was decisive in his election, since he did not count on the support of the bishops that attended his consecration. “Some [people] and some bishops who had been called to consecrate the priest [that is, Martin] were impiously opposed [to Martin’s nomination].” (\textit{VM}, 9,3). In the fourth century, the “Christian plebs” was still decisive for episcopal appointments, but they needed to be mobilized by influential figures. For episcopal election, see PIETRI, DUVAL and PIETRI 1992.
episcopal patronage. There are two scenes that point out the existence of charitable activities. One of them is the aforementioned episode wherein Lycontius gave money to Martin to demonstrate his gratitude, and the money was used for releasing captives.\textsuperscript{296} The other episode happened when a poor (\textit{pauper}) asked Martin to give him some clothes to wear. Immediately, Martin ordered his archdeacon to dress the poor person.\textsuperscript{297}

In addition to these few references to charitable activities, the sources present more information about the ideological dimensions of this process. Along with the new episcopal patronage of the poor, Christian sources presented the new role of the bishops as “lover of the poor”, which allowed them to legitimize the growing riches that they controlled as “wealth of the poor”.\textsuperscript{298}

In Sulpicius’ writings, the relationship between Martin and the poor appears in more than one occasion. The most famous of these episodes took place when Martin, still a soldier, shared his cloak at the gates of Amiens with a poor. “When he [the poor] begged the passers-by for having mercy of him, and all of them rejected the miser, the man full of God [i.e., Martin] understood that that [poor] had been reserved for him, since the others did not show compassion.”\textsuperscript{299} Therefore, he cut his cloak in two pieces and gave one of them to the beggar.\textsuperscript{300} This does not prove that Martin developed a network of patronage of the poor, but certainly it illustrates the image that a bishop of the late fourth century wished to present. They were the protectors of the unprotected; they “reserved” for themselves those for whom the other patrons “did not show compassion”, or in other words, that did not belong to any group under the protection of a local “benefactor”. From the very time when he was in the

\textsuperscript{296} \textit{Dial}, 3,14,3-6.
\textsuperscript{297} \textit{Interim ei seminudus hibernis mensibus pauper occurrit, orans sibi uestimentum dari, tunc accessit archidiacono iussit algentem sine dilatatione vestiri} (\textit{Dial}, 2,1,1-2)
\textsuperscript{298} BROWN 1992, 91. For the concept of “lover of the poor”, \textit{ibidem}, 89-103.
\textsuperscript{299} \textit{Qui cum praetereuntes ut sui miserentur oraret omnesque miserum praeterirent, intellext uir Deo plenus sibi illum, alius misericordiam non praestantibus, reservari} (\textit{VM}, 3,1).
army, Martin is said to fulfill with the requirements of lover of the poor: “to defend the sufferers, to bring help to the miser, to nourish the indigents, to dress the naked.” Possibly, many of the gifts that went into the hands of the poor were returned under the form of symbolic capital, which in this case implies the recognition of Martin’s *auctoritas* and, eventually, support for his political and religious standpoints. Unfortunately, Sulpicius is here even less interested than in the cases of aristocrats with showing counter-gifts of any sort.

The evidence on this point is suggestive yet scarce to assert with complete certitude that during Martin’s episcopate the bishop of Tours had a consolidated network of patronage over the poor. The reasons why one does not find the same pattern than in other parts of the Mediterranean world (or at least not to the same extent than other episcopal sees developed them) can be various. Firstly, Sulpicius’ lack of interest in mentioning episodes involving “the poor”, which would be a consequence of aristocratic prejudices of his class. Secondly, that all these aspects of charity were only topics of ascetic literature to show Martin’s *pauperitas* and not a systematic description of patronage relationships, particularly of a man who is claimed to have lived separated from the *saeculum*. Also, it might be the case that during Martin’s episcopate, traditional networks of patronage were still functioning at Tours and its neighboring area. If so, the social alliances with local notables would have been the most successful means to reach lower sectors of society, especially for their conversion to Christianity. Whatever the reason, the evidence also suggests that, at least in few cases, Martin reached the poorest sectors of Tours by means of charitable activities. This allows one

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300 *VM*, 3,2.
301 *Adsistere scUicet laborantibus, opem ferre miseris, alere egentes, uestire nudos* (*VM*, 2,8).
302 The association of Martin with the poor is clear in the episode wherein he asks the archdeacon to dress the poor man. According to the story, since the archdeacon was delayed in his commission, the poor man entered into a room where Martin was alone, and complained about his suffering. Therefore, Martin gave him his tunic. When the archdeacon went to tell Martin he had to begin with a religious ceremony, Martin answered that the archdeacon had to dress the poor, that is, to dress Martin (*Dial*, 2,1).
303 MATTHEWS 1975, 156.
to consider the incipient development of social networks which would be fully accomplished one century later.\textsuperscript{304}

The evidence about Martin’s relationships of verticality is certainly not abundant. Sulpicius avoided any portrayal of Martin as “client”, particularly in a rapport involving secular authorities, for the aforementioned reasons. The relationships wherein Martin appears as “patron” are more frequent than the previous ones, yet not copious. Some motivations for this have been suggested. Nevertheless, one has to take into account that neither the \textit{Life} not the \textit{Dialogues} were works intended to reflect social relationships. They aimed to create a western model of sainthood that could compete against eastern holy men.\textsuperscript{305} This is why, after all, one might propose that the evidence is, in relative terms, enough to denote that social relationships of Martin were not so different from other bishops despite Sulpicius’ claims. Mention of gifts and favors, as in the case of relationship of horizontality, opened the door for the modern reader to the existence of networks of patronage, though without a detailed idea of their real dimensions.

\textsuperscript{304} BEAUJARD 1996, 139.

\textsuperscript{305} Postumianus, one of the central characters of the \textit{Dialogues}, make the following claim in a key section between dialogue one (which talks about the eastern monks) and dialogue two (which deals with Martin’s deeds). “I will always make an exemption of Martin. I do not dare to compare any monk, less any bishop with him. It is proclaimed by Egypt and Syria; it is learnt by Ethiopia; it is heart by India; it is known by Parthia and Persia; it is not ignored by Armenia; it is very well known by Bosporus and by everyone who dwell the Fortunate Islands and the Glacial Ocean. For that reason, our region is even more pitiable, because it did not merit to know this great man when they had him nearby.” (\textit{Martinum semper excipiam: non illi ego audeo monachorum, certe non episcoporum quempiam comparare. Hoc Aegyptus fatetur, hoc Syria, hoc Aethiops conperit, hoc indus audiat, hoc Parthus et Persa nouerunt, nec ignorat Armenia, Bosporus excusa cognouit, et postremo si quis aut Fortunatas insulas aut glacialem frequentat oceanum. Quo miserior est regio nostrorum, quae tantumuirum, cum in proximo habuerit, nosse non meruit, Dial, 1,26,2-3). Cf. Dial, 3,2,2 (Postumianus expectat nuntiaturus Orienti, ne se in comparatione Martini praeferat Occidenti).
Conclusions.

Throughout this work, it has been shown to what extent that the study of Martin’s life is also the study of Sulpicius’ life and ideas. The modern historian (either literary or social historian) knows Martin almost exclusively through the version constructed by Sulpicius. This characteristic makes the scholar working on Martinian issues walking on a minefield set up by the skillful hagiographer. The first conclusion to be put forward is that one must not be deceived by Sulpicius’ presentation of Martin’s social relationships. The sources portray a character that depends on the writer’s construction. And this construction aimed to present a model of sainthood legitimated by the challenge of Roman social categories, in the same way as Martin’s miracles challenged ordinary human powers.

The fact that sources are literary constructions does not necessarily imply that one has to give up on the attempts to attain critical historical interpretation. Indeed, Sulpicius’ works open a gate to a realm of social rapports that suggests that Martin was not exactly the figure that his hagiographer wanted to portray. In order to justify some of his hero’s actions and to rely on witnesses who could give an aura of veracity to his writings, Sulpicius mentioned gifts and favours as part of Martin’s social intercourses. The hagiographer does not offer many details about the practices involved, nor a complete account of every relationship. However, one may suppose that the examples given express wider social networks operating in Martin’s life. In spite of the many critiques that Sulpicius’ works have received, Martin’s social relationships have never been questioned by either ancient critics or by modern historians. Indeed, in some cases they could be positively corroborated by cross-examination. Therefore, even though Sulpicius does not describe Martin’s relationships in terms of ancient social rapports, he offered hints (gifts and favours) which proved that the bishop of Tours
was neither the isolated man that Martin wanted to be nor the unique holy man his biographer portrayed.

As a result, this work has presented a Martin permeated by traditional Roman social relationships. Gifts and favours were conveniently used in order to assert existing rapports or to create new ones. Some of them were typical of holy men, such as prayers, fasts and blessed objects. Yet most of the gifts that Martin granted to his counterparts corresponded to things that he obtained from his episcopal office, such as access to official, local and imperial circles or charitable actions of the church. Likewise, the counter-gifts received by Martin were related to his episcopal functions: political support within the church, money for charitable and ecclesiastic foundations and “human resources” for the growing ascetic groups of virgins who were under the strict control of the bishop and monks who underwent an ascetic training for future church officers, under the direction of Martin himself.

This point leads to the last conclusion, which is the depiction of the episcopal power drawn from this analysis. As it has been pointed out, in the century previous to the takeover of bishop’s office by the Roman aristocracy, a bishop of a small city in Gaul, with lower-class origins, was able to consolidate extended social networks. This does not mean, of course, that Martin had the same power within the city as Merovingian bishops were to acquire. However, the case of Martin offers an example of how difficult it is to explain the rise of episcopal power in terms of aristocratization. On the contrary, the instance proves that half a century before wealthy, senatorial families seized some episcopal sees (but not all of them), one visible head of the church undertook the “primitive accumulation” of power for this institution. Social power was the confluence of accumulation of symbolic capital (i.e., recognition, prestige, status), political capital (i.e., extended clienteles, alliances with notables, factional alignments, etc.) and economic capital. As it as been demonstrated, these three layers are intimately related without one being more important than the other.
Therefore, the rise of episcopal power in Gaul must be understood from a different perspective than transmission of power from senatorial families. The sources analyzed here suggest that the key for the process must be sought in a period when imperial authority still existed in Gaul and aristocrats were not interested in episcopal offices.

Nonetheless, it is difficult to make a generalization out of the single case of Martin. The lack of evidence is a major impediment for a complete understanding of the process. This study must be complemented with evidence of early fifth century that corroborates or refutes the importance of the aforementioned practices in the strategies of wealthy families that took over bishops’ offices. Nevertheless, the case of Martin stands as microscopic instance that calls for a reconsideration of traditional interpretations of the rise of episcopal power.
Abbreviations.


VM  Vita Martini (ed. FONTAINE 1967).
Bibliography.


