

**TEACHING TIME : THE CONCEPT OF TIME IN
THE SERMONS OF LATIN CHRISTIANITY, A.D.
354-505**

Shawn J. Pollett

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
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**TEACHING TIME: CONCEPTS OF TIME IN THE SERMONS
OF LATIN CHRISTIANITY, A.D. 354-505**

By

SHAWN J. POLLETT

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

University of St. Andrews

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ABSTRACT

Learning about time was part of the indoctrination of Christians in the late antique West. Time played an important role in Scripture and also in the pagan milieu from which most catechumens came. Thus, bishops were required to explain to their flocks traditional Christian concepts of time, while at the same time refute unacceptable ideas concerning time (i.e., astrology, pagan festivities), which were normally an ingrained part of the late Roman mind-set. The sermon was the predominant means of communicating these ideas.

Chapters one and two begin by establishing the boundaries of time (Creation and eschatology). Bishops attempted to link all time to Christ by demonstrating that time-units had their origin in Creation and their consummation in the *dies iudicii*. This belief in Christ's mastery over time proved advantageous in anti-pagan and anti-heretical polemic.

Chapters three through five examine the time-units themselves (e.g., the year, month, seasons, week, day and night). Symbolic exegesis and technical explanations of the workings of time-units were used to fortify the belief that all time comes from God, which, in turn furthered the demythologization of sun, moon, and stars.

Chapter six examines episcopal prescriptions as to how lay Christian should spend their day-to-day life. As a general rule, bishops promoted the devotion of all

time to God, requiring, at least as an ideal, that their flocks live like ascetics. This included frequent fasting and almsgiving and daily public and private worship. Chapters seven and eight follow episcopal attempts to enlarge their calendars with festivals, thus increasing the special periods of time during which the laity would be fixated on God.

DECLARATIONS

I, SHAWN J. POLLETT, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 100,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

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I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance No. 12 in October 1990 and as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in October 1991; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 1991 and 1994.

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Hamilton, Ontario

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations used throughout this thesis are those found in *L'Année Philologique* and *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

- AASS *Acta Sanctorum* (64 vols., Antwerp, 1643-).
- CCSL *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* (Turnholt, 1957-).
- CIL *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin, 1862-).
- CJ *Codex Justinianus*, ed. P. Krueger (Berlin, 1868-).
- CM *Chronica Minora, MGH AA 9*, ed. T. Mommsen (Berlin, 1892).
- CSEL *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (Vienna, 1866-).
- CTh *Codex Theodosianus*, ed. T. Mommsen (Berlin, 1954).
- DACL *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, ed. F. Cabrol and H. Leclercq (Paris, 1903-50).
- DCB *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.
- Ep(p). *Epistola(e)*.
- F.V.Post *Fasti Vindobonenses Posteriores*.
- F.V.Pr *Fasti Vindobonenses Priores*.
- JRS *Journal of Roman Studies*.
- JThS *Journal of Theological Studies*.
- Loeb *Loeb Classical Library*.
- Mansi *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio* (Paris, 1901-27).

- MFC* *Messages of the Fathers of the Church.*
- MGH AA* *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Auctores Antiquissimi* (Berlin, 1877-).
- OCD* *The Oxford Classical Dictionary.*
- PG* *Patrologia Graeca*, ed. J. P. Migne (162 vols., Paris, 1857-66).
- PL* *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J. P. Migne (221 vols., Paris, 1844-64).
- PLRE* *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* I (1971), II (1980).
- PLS* *Patrologia Latina Supplementum.*
- PS* *Patristic Studies.*
- SC* *Sources Chrétiennes* (Paris, 1940-).
- Serm.* *Sermo(nes).*
- Teubner* *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana* (1849-).
- Tr.* *Tractatus.*

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INTRODUCTION

Augustine of Hippo reports a question asked by those seeking to understand the differences between time and eternity: "*Quid faciebat deus, antequam faceret caelum et terram?*" One standard response, "*scrutantibus gehennas parabat,*" did not amuse Augustine, who felt such an important question deserved better than flippancy and deflection.¹ The uninformed could easily settle for an answer that was unacceptable to orthodox Christianity. To agree with the Arians, for example, that God was creating the Son before he created the heaven and the earth, was heresy. To answer with the Stoics that before the beginning of this cycle of time was another cycle of time, and so on, was paganism. Neither route led to salvation.

That Augustine took the concept of time very seriously is evident from his detailed discussions of time in his *Confessiones* and *De Civitate Dei*. Book 11 of the *Confessiones* places Augustine firmly in the tradition of philosophical inquiry into the significance of time. His own concept of time was built upon the consideration (and rejection) of non-Christian theories. The keynote of Stoic, Aristotelian, and even Platonic definitions of time was the equation of time with motion.² Augustine was helped beyond this assumption by an unlikely source--

¹Augustine, *Conf.* 11.12 [CCSL 27:201]: "What was God doing before he made heaven and earth?" To which some would answer, "He was preparing hells for those who ask such questions."

²The Stoic definition of time changed. Zeno defined time as the dimension of all motion. See Simplicius, *On Aristotle's Categories* 350, 15-16 [SVF 2.510]. Chrysippus, Zeno's disciple, amended this to include time's function as a measurer of fast and slow, specifically in the motion of the world. J.M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1969), p. 273, calls the changes "elaborations on original insights." Cf. V. Goldschmidt, *Le Systeme Stoicien et l'Idée de Temps* (Paris, 1953), p. 7, who argued there was no great change. See Aristotle,

Scripture. The stationary sun of Joshua's battle proved for Augustine that time had nothing to do with the motion of planets.³

He was also assisted by Plotinus' reconsideration of Plato's view of time.⁴ Although the Neo-Platonists were not able to completely detach time from motion, Plotinus placed that motion outside the physical world, into eternity, creating an eternal present of which time is only an imperfect imitation.⁵ It was upon such abstractions that Augustine based his conclusion that time is a *distentio* of mind, in which past, present, and future exist only in memory, attention, and anticipation.⁶

Yet philosophical investigations were not to become the hallmark of the Church's teaching concerning time.⁷ Time as a philosophical construct could not assist a Christian in understanding or procuring Christianity's ultimate spiritual goal-salvation. The rarity with which it appears in episcopal sermons demonstrates that bishops perceived such abstractions to be of little value to their flocks. Instead, it

Physics 4.11.219b [Loeb 228:386-7] for time as the number of motion. Even Plato, *Timaeus* 37d [Loeb 7:76-77], depicted time in terms of motion (i.e., time as a moving image of Eternity), although later Neo-Platonism would reject this position to a certain degree.

³ Augustine, *Conf.* 11.23.30 [CCSL 27:209], uses this argument based on Jos. 10:13. It allows him to conclude, at 11.24.31 [CCSL 27:201]: "Non <est> ergo tempus corporis motus" ["Time, therefore, is not the movement of a body"].

⁴ J.F. Callahan, *Four Views of Time in Ancient Philosophy* (New York, 1948), pp. 88-148. A good investigation, although his failure to deal with the Stoic view of time leaves a gap in his work.

⁵ Plotinus, *Enneads* 3.7.11.15-20; 3.7.12.33-61 [Loeb 442:338-9; 344-349]. Plotinus, like Augustine later, internalized time by making it the product of the soul. See G. H. Clarke, "The Theory of Time in Plotinus," *The Philosophical Review* 53 (1944): 351.

⁶ Augustine, *Conf.* 11.26.33-28.38 [CCSL 27:211-14]. The present existed for Augustine, but in such infinitesimally small pieces that it was impossible to comprehend.

⁷ Examples of such abstractions can be found in Western sermons, however. Ambrose, *De Incarn.* 3.20 [PL 16:858], defined time, along with Aristotle, in terms of number and motion in order to demonstrate, against the Arians, that time was not part of the nature of the Father or the Son. There are numerous examples in the sermons of Augustine. The fleeting nature of time was one of his favourite images. E.g., *Hom. in Ioh.* 38.10; 99.5 [PL 35:1679-81; 1888-9]; *Hom. in Ioh. Ep.* 2.5 [PL 35:1992-3]; *Ennar. in Ps.* 76.8 [CCSL 39:1058].

was the theological approach to time exemplified by Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* which predominated.⁸ The Christian's place in time; the relationship between the temporal and eternal realms; the comprehension of time in an orthodox manner--these were matters which *did* seem to have some bearing on the individual's salvation. And it is such aspects of time which abound in the late antique sermon.

This thesis will investigate the use of time and time-units by the Latin Church in the fourth and fifth centuries. Time, both as a theological abstraction and as a mundane reality, played an important role in late antique Christianity, especially in its use as a tool for indoctrinating Christians. It is the message concerning time, passed from bishop to flock in the medium of the sermon, which shall be the focus of this study.

The following chapters have been arranged thematically so that the ideas expressed concerning the individual elements of time may be more easily appreciated. Chapters one and two will investigate Christian teachings about the origins of time and its completion. Chapters three, four, and five will examine the symbolic and literal use of time-units--ages, the year, seasons, months, weeks, days, and hours. At this point we should be in a position to appreciate some of the central

⁸ i.e., stressing the relationship between time and eternity, man and God. Augustine traces the progress of time by following the two cities from Creation to present to eschatological fulfillment. Many of the themes discussed in the *De Civitate Dei* will recur throughout this thesis: the difference between time and eternity (11.5 [Loeb 413:440-447]); pagan and heretical misconceptions concerning time and eternity (11.5-6; 12.11-14; 20.9ff [Loeb 413:440-9; 414:48-65; 416:304ff]); divisions of time (e.g., the six ages--Books 15-18 [Loeb 414-5]), etc. J. Callahan, "Basil of Caesarea: A New Source for St. Augustine's View of Time," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 63:437, sees the understanding of time presented in the *Confessiones* as psychological, versus the more objective view of historical time found in *De Civitate Dei*. In fact, both views are very subjective, and philosophical versus theological is the simplest division that can be made.

tenets of the late antique Christian's understanding of time: its origin with and subjugation to God; humanity's place in time, or, more accurately, the Christian's place between, and relationship with, time and eternity;⁹ time's polemical value in refuting paganism and heresy; and its exegetical value in understanding Scripture. The remainder of the thesis will address episcopal attempts to turn their flocks from temporal matters to the eternal. Beginning with the orthodox position that time was dependent on God, bishops throughout the West concluded that time was, in effect, a proving ground for salvation. This was extended into a universal, if somewhat idealistic, teaching: devote the time you have been given to God. Thus chapters six, seven, and eight examine what the episcopacy expected of their flocks in the context of the Christianization of daily life and the development of the festival year.

Due to considerations of space, certain themes which fit naturally into the context of this thesis could not be explored fully. The image that a Christian's life began with baptism, taught with particular flare by Zeno of Verona, is one such

⁹ Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 10.14 [Loeb 413:312-14], places the relationship between time and eternity in an educational context: "*Sicut autem unius hominis, ita humani generis, quod ad Dei populum pertinent, recta eruditio per quosdam temporum tamquam aetatem profecit accessibus, ut a temporalibus ad aeterna capienda*" ["The true education of the human race, at least as far as God's people were concerned, was like that of an individual. It advanced by steps in time, as the individual's does when a new stage of life is reached. Thus it mounted from the level of temporal things to a level where it could grasp the eternal"] (trans. D.S. Wiesen). Augustine does not separate time and eternity completely, however. The City of God in its current temporal existence is not *only* temporal, but contains eternal elements as well. It is symbolic of the traditional depiction of the Christian's place *between* time and eternity, an idea repeatedly expressed in the sermons. Cf. R.D. Sider, *The Gospel and Its Proclamation*, vol. 10, *MFC* (Wilmington, 1984), p. 146: "[the City of God] thus transcends the distinction between time and eternity." Cf. L. White, "Christian Myth and Christian History," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 3.2 (1942): 146, who put the matter most eloquently: "The Christian claims to be unlike other men: he dwells amphibiously in two worlds. Born into the realm of time, he is likewise sacramentally *renatus in aeternum*." It was not until Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.* Ia, *Quaest.* 10.5 [*Summa Theologiae* (New York, 1963) 2:150], however, that this position was actually defined. Aquinas coined the word "*aevum*" to indicate the "*medium inter aeternitatem et tempus*" ["the medium between eternity and time"] in which the Christian existed.

theme.¹⁰ Another is the dichotomy between cyclical and linear time. Although we will see that Christian time was conceived in late antiquity not so much as linear but as cyclico-linear, a thorough investigation of these two theories would require a separate thesis.¹¹

Considerations of space have also played an important role in determining the chronological boundaries and, to some extent, the primary sources which will be used. I have found it necessary to include the available calendrical and chronographic sources from the period, as a society's calendars and chronicles say much about its comprehension of time. Thus, the time-frame under discussion is 354 to 505: from the publication of the *Codex-Calendar of 354* to the final entry made in the *Calendar of Carthage* (that of the bishop Eugenius in 505).

It is to the period shortly after the publication of the *Codex-Calendar of 354* that our first extant homilies may be dated (those of Zeno of Verona in Italy). After the fifth century the sermon underwent a decline, succumbing to the lowering of educational standards that accompanied the establishment of barbarian kingdoms

¹⁰ I.e., the belief that upon baptism, one once again entered infancy and that one's life really began at that point. Although this image is a metaphorical expression of the idea of the Christian's existence between time and eternity, it will be mentioned only in that context rather than being discussed separately. It was one of Zeno's favourite images. See *Tr.* 1.3.22-23; 1.24.1; 1.38.1; 1.55 [CCSL 22:29; 71; 105; 130]. On Zeno's use of this theme, see T.M. Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate, Italy, North Africa, and Egypt*, vol. 6, *MFC* (Collegeville, 1992), pp. 54ff. Cf. Augustine, *Serm.* 119.4 [PL 38:674]; Ambrose, *De Bon. Mort.* 11.48 [PL 14:589-90]; Leo of Rome, *Serm.* 24.3 [PL 54:206]; Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* 4.3 [PL 61:165-6]; Maximus of Turin, *Serm.* 35.3-4 [CCSL 23:137-9].

¹¹ The extant literature that deals with this aspect of time is massive. Augustine devoted part of his *De Civitate Dei* (e.g., Book 12 [Loeb 414]) to a refutation of the concept of cyclical time. Augustine broaches the same topic in his sermons for the benefit of his flock. In fact, references to cyclical and/or linear time were made by most bishops. We find them, for example, in the sermons of Peter of Ravenna, Ambrose of Milan, Zeno of Verona, Gaudentius of Brescia, and Leo of Rome, as well as in more literary works such as Orosius' *Adv. Pag.*, the *Carmina* and *Epistolae* of Paulinus of Nola, and the *V. Mart.* of Sulpicius Severus.

throughout the West.¹² Caesarius of Arles responded with the homiliary. He collected the homiletic masterpieces of his famous predecessors to be used by those who lacked the confidence and education to extemporize on their own. He worked on a number of such compilations, made use of their sermons in his own preaching, and ensured others would do so by writing the homiliary into Canon Law.¹³

Between 354 and Caesarius of Arles (503-543) is a 150-year period which stands as the zenith of Western homiletic literature, and it is to this period that our attention will be directed.¹⁴ Although the sermons will by no means be used to the exclusion of all other sources, they do provide the majority of our data. It is therefore necessary to say a few words about the late antique sermon before proceeding, as it were, to the beginning of time.

Any work which attempts to trace the communication of an idea between bishop and congregation must acknowledge the role of the sermon as the principle

¹²For the breakdown of the traditional three-fold structure of Roman education (ludus, grammaticus, rhetor), see R.P.C. Hanson, "The Reaction of the Church to the Collapse of the Western Roman Empire in the Fifth Century," *Vigiliae Christianae* 26 (1972): 281. The Church, no longer able to rely on traditional Roman education, was forced to educate its own clergy. The result was the establishment of episcopal and monastic schools.

¹³Caesarius' role in this is discussed by T. J. Carroll, *Preaching the Word*. Vol. 11 in *MFC* (Wilmington, 1984), pp. 208-210. Caesarius, *Serm.* 1.15 [CCSL 103:11], demonstrates his opening of the office of preaching to deacons: "*si dignus est diaconus quisque ut legat quod locutus est Christus, non debet iudicari indignus ut recitet quod praedicavit sanctus Elarius, sanctus Ambrosius, sanctus Augustinus, vel reliqui patres*" ["If any deacon is worthy to read what Christ said, he should not be judged unworthy to read what St. Hilary, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, or the rest of the Fathers preached"]. The Council of Valson (5 Nov. 529), over which Caesarius presided, made this canon law. *Conc. Vas.* 2 [CCSL 148:78-9].

¹⁴Italy and North Africa are well represented. For Italy: Ambrose of Milan, Leo of Rome, Maximus of Turin, Gaudentius of Brescia, and Peter of Ravenna, amongst others. For Africa: Augustine, whose expansive homiletic output is only fractionally represented by the over one thousand surviving sermons; also the sermons of Quodvultdeus of Carthage and the calendar of the same city. For Gaul, there is the "Eusebius Gallicanus" corpus of homilies, very probably compiled by Caesarius of Arles, which is useful as its sermons were delivered in the fifth century. To this may be added the homilies of Valerian of Cimiez, the *Laterculus* of Polemius Silvius, and a handful of individual sermons by such bishops as Victricius of Rouen and Hilary of Arles. Much important supplementary data can be gleaned from the chronicles produced in Gaul at the time, those of Prosper of Aquitaine, and the anonymous compilers of the Gallic Chronicles of 452 and 511. Finally, Spain, represented only by the work of Gregory Baeticus and Pacian of Barcelona. Hydatius' Chronicle is a very useful supplement to this paucity of sources, as is the work of the Spaniard Prudentius. Britain, for which very little literary evidence remains for this period, will not be discussed.

means for the dissemination of Christianity. It was far more influential than the literary output of men like Augustine and Ambrose, from which the relatively small numbers of cultured readers could gain access to Christian doctrine in forms more palatable to their refined tastes. The sermon reached all members of a congregation, whether urbane aristocrat or unlettered rustic. Often it complemented and encompassed its literary counterparts by providing oral expression for the concerns which had prompted a treatise or tractate: that which needed to be defended or attacked on behalf of the entire *ecclesia* also needed to be taught at the local level in the humble homily.¹⁵

The sermon was a teaching tool. Preachers had much in common with the more opulent speakers of the non-Christian world. Like them, they used words to convince (to convert, explain proper Christian doctrine, or to argue against heresy and paganism),¹⁶ to advocate morality, and to expound literary texts (scriptural exegesis).¹⁷ Some did so with a rhetorical flourish that could match even their best

¹⁵ Possidius of Calama's comment on Augustine, *V. Aug.* 3 [PL 32:36] serves as an example: "*Et de his quae sibi Deus cogitanti atque oranti intellecta revelabat; et praesentes et absentes sermonibus ac libris docebat*" ["And what God revealed to his understanding as he thought and prayed on these things, he taught by sermons to those present and by books to those absent"]. Cf. F. Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, trans. B. Battershaw. (London, 1961), p. 434.

¹⁶ Gaudentius, *Praef.* 8 [PL 20:831], briefly stated his understanding of the purpose of the sermons as follows: "*satis est enim mihi, si instruere commissam plebem viva saltem voce sufficiam*" ["For it is enough for me if I suffice to instruct, at least by my preaching, the people committed to me"]. On the use of sermons to convert, see Sulpicius Severus, *V. Mart.* 15 [PL 2:169]. Martin's missionary enthusiasm often led to extemporaneous preaching to rustic pagans. Paulinus of Milan, *V. Amb.* 17 [PL 14:35], reports the conversion of an Arian who saw an angel speaking to Ambrose as Ambrose preached. A number of examples of the use of sermons to teach doctrine and refute heresy and paganism appear throughout this thesis. One useful example is provided by Augustine, *Serm.* 150.3-9 [PL 38:809-13], where he gives the congregation at Carthage a lecture on Epicurean and Stoic doctrines before proceeding to refute them.

¹⁷ Inculcating flocks with proper moral precepts was an important part of a bishop's teaching. Ambrose of Milan made it a point to instruct new bishops in the proper methods of preaching. In *Ep.* 2.5 [PL 16:918] to Constantius, the new bishop of Forum Cornelii, he advises him to make his sermons clear and lucid, "*ut morali disputatione suaviter infundes populorum auribus, et gratia verborum tuorum plebem demulceas*" ["so that you may pour the charm of your moral arguments in the ears of the people, and soothe the people with the grace of your words"]. He then proceeds (*Ep.* 2.7-18 [PL 16:918-22]) to provide Constantius with a list of moral precepts to teach to his flock: they are to avoid bad deeds; they are not to covet; they should be just and truthful to neighbours; they are to avoid avarice and be

pagan counterparts,¹⁸ others preferred to tailor their sermons to the level of education of their congregation. Chromatius of Aquileia (388-c.408) makes no classical references, no use of rhetoric in his sermons.¹⁹ Faustus of Riez was praised for his ability to preach, "*inter spiritalis regulos vel forenses medioximum.*" Ambrose of Milan (374-397) and Peter of Ravenna (c.433-450) advocate using ordinary speech in preaching, while reminding the erudite listener that the purpose of the Christian sermon is not flowery words, but to teach salvation.²⁰

This tendency to tailor sermons to the audience reflects an episcopal awareness of the needs of the listener which is evident on a number of other levels. It was widely recognized that a sermon should not be too lengthy.²¹ The message lost its potency when the speaker persisted too long. Members of the congregation

humble. A similar list was sent to Vigilius of Trent. See *Ep.* 19.2-6 [PL 16:1024-26]. Cf. Maximus of Turin, *Serm.* 79.1 [CCSL 23:327]: "*Prædicatio enim sacerdotis in plebe saluandis est correctio contestatio iudicandis*" ["For the bishop's preaching to the people is a correction to those who will be saved and a testimony to those who will be judged"]. And, of course, explaining Scripture was one of the bishop's fundamental duties. See, for example, Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 146.4 [CCSL 24B:904]: "...*non litteræ, non syllabæ, non verbum, non nomina, non personæ in euangelio diuinis uacua sunt figuris*" "...neither the letters, nor the syllables, nor a word, nor the names, nor the persons in the Gospel are free from divine allegorical meanings". Similar attitudes to allegory are found, for example, in Augustine, *Serm.* 89.4 [PL 38:556-7]; Ambrose, *Ep.* 2.3 [PL 16:915]; Valerian of Cimiez, *Hom.* 12.1 [PL 52:728].

¹⁸ Augustine is a good example. He was a trained rhetor, having once held the chair of rhetoric in Milan. For a good study of Augustine's rhetorical abilities, see Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, pp. 405ff.

¹⁹ See J. Lemarie's comments on Chromatius and rhetoric, SC 154:62. Lemarie argues that Chromatius' speaking style was a concession to the educational level of his congregation, but see below, ch. 3, pp. 94-5.

²⁰ Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* 9.3.5 [Loeb 420:513-515]: "a middle course between the rules of religious and forensic usage" (trans. W.B. Anderson). Cf. Ambrose, *De Isaac*, 7.57 [PL 14:550]; Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 43.1 [CCSL 24:242]. Gaudentius of Brescia, *Praef.* 9 [PL 20:831], wrote that a catechumen was not to seek "*inanis eloquentiæ pompam*" ["the pomp of inane eloquence"] from his bishop's sermons, but rather "*de Scripturis sanctis explanationum congruentium*" ["consistent explanations from holy Scripture"].

²¹ Valerian, *Hom.* 1.8 [PL 52:296], defers his subject to another day, "*ne otiosis auribus fastidium pareret longa narratio*" ["lest the sermon become long and contemptible to idle listeners"].

began to grumble or even fall asleep!²² Spontaneity was also important. Pre-written sermons were useful, but the ability to extemporize was a highly desirable quality.²³ The preacher had to be able to change tack and address a particular problem or even an individual *ex tempore*. We find Augustine on one occasion responding to his flock during the middle of a sermon by turning to speak to an ex-astrologer. Ambrose prescribed this one-on-one approach to new bishops; it was their duty to address with a sermon any transgressions by individuals or groups while the rest of the congregation looked on.²⁴

The episcopacy understood its role as teacher to the point of equating sermon and classroom. The bishop taught from his *cathedra*, just like the traditional Roman teacher, his "students" standing or sitting about him.²⁵ The Christian curriculum was simple. "*Debemus enim non frustra intrare scholam,*" Augustine

²² Ambrose, *Hex.* 5.12.36 [PL 14:236-7]. Some bishops advocated brevity in sermons and stuck to it religiously. E.g., Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 36.1 [CCSL 24.306], speaks of being restricted by "*consueta sermonis nostri breuitate*" ["the customary brevity of our sermons"], even when the subject matter seems to be of interest to his flock. Cf. Peter, *Serm.* 1.7; 2.5-6 [CCSL 24:20; 24-5]. The majority of Peter's sermons would have taken twenty minutes at the most to deliver. Cf. Gaudentius, *Tr.* 5.6 [PL 20:873]: "*brevitas congruit et praedicantis labori, et memoriae auditoris*" ["brevity agrees both with the work of the preacher and the memory of the listener"]. Augustine, *Serm.* 264.1 [PL 38:1212]; *Hom. in Ioh.* 4.16 [PL 35:1413], was also aware of the need to keep sermons short, although Augustine the orator tended more towards long sermons, the source of not a few complaints by his congregation! *De Cat. Rud.* 13.19 [PL 40:325] depicts catechumens yawning ("*oscitans*") with fatigue.

²³ Faustus of Riez carefully prepared sermons for important events, such as a festival or church dedication, although he could just as easily make it up as he went along. Sidonius, *Ep.* 9.3.5 [Loeb 420:512-615].

²⁴ For Augustine and the ex-astrologer, *Ennar. in Ps.* 61.23 [CCSL 39:792-3]. Although the remarks are addressed to an individual, the message concerning the evils of astrology was intended for the whole congregation. Ambrose, *Ep.* 2.5 [PL 16:918], also advises new bishops to correct individuals in sermons. Cf. Possidius of Calama, *V. Aug.* 15 [PL 32:46], where Augustine explains the sudden change in the subject of his sermon as a result of God's wanting "*aliquem errantem in populo... doceri et curari*" ["someone amongst the people who had erred...to be taught and cured"]. Cf. Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 114.1 [CCSL 24A:694].

²⁵ On the coincidence of the use of the term *cathedra* for episcopal chair and teacher's chair, see Haarhoff, *Schools of Gaul. A Study of Pagan and Christian Education in the Last Century of the Western Empire.* (Johannesburg, 1958), p. 103. The posture of the listener varied according to local custom. Augustine, *De Cat. Rud.* 13.19 [PL 40:325], suggests catechumens be allowed to sit if they show signs of fatigue as was allowed "*in quibusdam Ecclesiis transmarinis*" ["in certain churches across the sea"]. Sidonius, *Carm.* 16.125f [MGH AA, 8:242], has the congregation of Faustus of Riez standing about him as he preached. Possidius, *V. Aug.* 1 [PL 32:35], mentions Augustine standing and listening to Ambrose's sermons while he was in Milan.

warned his flock. In the Christian *schola* one text above all needed to be expounded, Scripture: "*ne cum aliquid de Scripturis sonuerit, quod in alio saeculari usu intelligi solet, aberret auditor, et...non intelligat quod audivit.*"²⁶

Techniques used to impart knowledge about Scripture--to teach any of the doctrines of the Christian religion--were often those used traditionally in Roman education. Repetition was particularly useful. It is tempting to denigrate the late antique sermon for this when the necessities of teaching a predominantly illiterate population are not fully appreciated. Yet the repetitiveness which marks many sermons was neither accidental nor careless. Repetition was a key to learning. And once learned, repetition continued in order to impress that which was most important.²⁷

Bishops also made use of another traditional teaching technique, examples and analogies. They drew on images which were part of the common, human experience (time, of course, being one such image), to emphasize important points of doctrine:

²⁶ Augustine, *Serm.* 74.1 [PL 38:472]: "For we must not enter school without reason...lest when anything is spoken from Scripture, which is usually understood in another secular way, the listener errs, and...does not understand what he has heard." Cf. John the Deacon, *Ep. ad Senar.* 3 [PL 59:401-402].

²⁷ E.g. Augustine, *Serm.* 125.1; 164.3 [PL 38:688-9; 896]. Repetition as a mnemonic device was a popular technique at the elementary levels in Roman education. Augustine, *Serm.* 58.2-12 [PL 38:393-399] provides a good example of the Christian application of repetition. As a mnemonic aid he divides the Lord's Prayer into seven petitions, then proceeds to expound each petition in order, repeating most several times. 1. "*Pater noster, qui es in caelis,*" = 3 times (58.2); 2. "*Sanctificetur nomen tuum, Veniat regnum tuum,*" = 2 times (58.3); 3. "*Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in caelo, ita et in terra,*" = 5 times (58.4); 4. "*Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie,*" = 4 times (58.5); 5. "*Dimite nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris,*" = 6 times (58.6-8); 6. "*Ne nos inferas intimationem,*" = 2 times (58.9-10); 7. "*Sed libera nos a malo,*" = 1 time (58.11). In addition, he breaks down each petition and discusses its parts. He ends his exposition with a third mnemonic device, breaking the petitions into two groups, eternity and time (58.12): "*Tres ergo petitiones superiores...aeternae sunt. Quatuor autem sequentes ad istam vitam pertinent*" ["The first three petitions are for eternity. The four following, however, pertain to this life"]. Cf. *Serm.* 59.8 [PL 38:401-2].

*Perfecti doctoris est, ad erudiendos discipulos, similitudina earum rerum proponere quae in conversatione humani generis frequentantur, ut auditor idoneus, ad operandi studium comparationis magisterio informetur.*²⁸

Finally, the use of lists, familiar to every Roman schoolchild, found its way into the late antique sermon, as did the method of allegorical exegesis, so popular in the higher schools of the Roman empire.²⁹

From the congregational standpoint the sermon was also a source of entertainment. The sermon's popularity is particularly noticeable in Africa where congregations tended to speak out in assent or disagreement. Augustine's sermons are witness to the sound of children laughing at a slip of his tongue, to the voices of his congregants crying out in delight when they realize beforehand a point he is going to make. He obviously approved of and expected his flock's participation.³⁰

In late-fourth or early-fifth century Italy, Maximus of Turin threatened on more than

²⁸ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 18.4 [PL 20:973]: "It is the manner of an exceptional teacher, for the instruction of his disciples, to provide examples of those things which in the conversation of humankind are common, so that the good listener may be led by the teaching of comparison to an eagerness for working." Cf. Augustine, *Serm.* 139.2 [PL 38:770].

²⁹ Ambrose, *Hex.* 5 [PL 14:219-256], uses lists of fishes and birds, which are then given Christian meanings. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*. Trans. G. Lamb. (London, 1956), pp. 263-4. The *Hermeneumata* exemplify these lists as they were used in traditional education. Normally they contain words in Latin and Greek—a kind of elementary, bilingual textbook. The words were divided into lists—fishes, birds, vegetables. Units of time were usually included (e.g., lists of months, festivals, etc). The *Eclogae* of Ausonius of Bordeaux also demonstrate this. Several of his poems exhibit an obvious pedagogical intent, suggesting that they were stylized renditions of subjects which occupied Roman schoolchildren. We see poems on the months, the weeks, and the seasons, amongst others which show a similar concern with time and time-units. R.P.H. Green, *The Works of Ausonius* (Oxford, 1991), Sect. 14, pp. 96-110; and his commentary on the *Eclogae*, pp. 420-444. E.M. Courtney provides a list of similar poems in *Museum Helveticum*, 45 (1988): 33-57. Ausonius' poems on time are reminiscent of modern attempts to provide children with mnemonic devices to make the length of months comprehensible: the "Thirty days hath September" genre (Green, p. 424). According to Haarhoff, *Schools of Gaul*, pp. 90-92, such mnemonic devices were traditional in Roman education, and Ausonius wrote the *Eclogae* specifically for schoolchildren. In the Roman school, lists helped children learn to read. In the sermon, they were designed to contextualize nature in its relation to God. The use of lists in their Christian context is discussed more fully below, pp. 16-7. On the use of rhetoric and allegorical exegesis by Christian bishops, see Haarhoff, *Schools of Gaul*, pp. 157ff.

³⁰ Augustine, *Serm.* 249.2 [PL 38:1161-2]: children laughing; *Serm.* 52.19-20; 131.5 [PL 38:362-3; 731]: congregants crying out in anticipation. Cf. *Serm.* 56.6 and especially 101.9 [PL 38:379 and 609], where Augustine feels he must continue his explanation because too many are silent: "*plures video silentio requirentes*" ["I see those requiring something more by their silence"]. This further suggests the importance of repetition. The bishop needed to reiterate each point until he was sure all understood. Possidius, *V. Aug.* 6-7 [PL 32:38-9], notes the crowds who appeared for Augustine's public debates with heretics and schismatics, as well as those which congregated at public readings of Augustine's books.

one occasion to punish his flock's misdemeanours by *not* delivering the customary Sunday sermon.³¹ In fact, sermons were so popular that they drew *notarii*, the shorthand recorders of the Roman world, who often sat in the congregation recording the words of their bishops for posterity.³²

The popularity of the spoken word was a bonus for bishops, but secondary to the sermon's ultimate purpose, teaching Christianity. This begs a rather important question: did bishops believe that teaching their flocks certain aspects of time was an official duty? Was time part of the curriculum of the Christian *schola*?

A number of circumstantial points initially prompt an affirmative answer to this question. The pervasive use of time and time-units in the sermons of the Western Fathers in late antiquity is too great to be simple coincidence. Augustine reaffirms this conjecture with a simple rule: "*Quod ergo simpliciter praedicatur, credendum est: quod subtiliter disputatur, intelligendum est.*"³³ Time is certainly discussed "*subtiliter*" as this thesis will demonstrate, suggesting it was something

³¹ Maximus, *Serm.* 42.1-2 [CCSL 23:169-70]. He evidently did so, at least once: "*Satis ad correptionem uestram arbitror posse sufficere...quod anteriori dominica...uos increpans et arguens pro peccato sine aliqua praedicationis consolatione dimiserim*" ["I think that it is sufficient for your correction...that last Sunday...upbraiding and accusing you for your sins, I dismissed you without any consolation of preaching"]. *Serm.* 3.1 [CCSL 23:10]. Lemarie, *Sermons de Chromace d'Aquilee* [SC 154:60], saw in Chromatius' easy style an attempt to establish a dialogue with his congregation. While this is true, the dialogue was rather one-sided: Italian congregations lacked the African exuberance for speaking out. There is no indication in Chromatius' sermons that they ever did.

³² Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 61.22 [CCSL 39:792], contains such a scribal note: "*Et post tractatum de psalmo, cum mathematicus in populo monstraretur...*" [And after treating on the Psalm, when an astrologer was pointed out amongst the people...]. Cf. Ambrose, *Hex.* 5.12.36 [PL 14:236]. Gaudentius, *Praef.* 11 [PL 20:831-2], warns Benevolus, to whom his compilation of sermons was addressed, to be wary of any sermons taken down by *notarii* which Gaudentius himself had not edited. He feared they might inadvertently introduce a mistake into one of his sermons that could be deemed heretical. Marrou, *Education in Antiquity*, pp. 312-313, attributes the survival of so many sermons from the fourth and fifth centuries to these *notarii*. The most thorough study of the *notarii* is that of H.C. Teitler, *Notarii and Exceptores: An Inquiry into the Role and Significance of Shorthand Writers in the Imperial and Ecclesiastical Bureaucracy of the Roman Empire (From the Early Principate to C. 450 A.D.)* (Amsterdam, 1985).

³³ Augustine, *Serm.* 139.1 [PL 38:609]: "Therefore, that which is simply preached is to be believed; that which is discussed with accuracy, is to be understood."

that needed to be understood. It is subject to the repetition and analogy which marked traditional teaching methods: continual references to the sun's role as time-keeper (the year, the day, the seasons) and its subordination to God, against non-Christian belief in the sun's deity, is only one such example.

More exact evidence is also available. Augustine has left us two works which especially delve into Christian education, and these make the Christian teacher's debt to concepts of time more specific. The first of these, *De Catechizandis Rudibus*, written at the request of Deogratias of Carthage (c. 400), provides the catechist with the proper methodology for training new Christians: *Narratio plena est, cum quisque primo catechizatur ab eo quod scriptum est, 'In principio fecit Deus caelum et terram,' usque ad praesentia tempora Ecclesiae.*³⁴ Augustine then provides Deogratias with a sermon to exemplify this methodology when catechizing citizens who were, "*non...rusticanorum, sed urbanorum.*"³⁵ Teaching the historical progress of time is again repeated.³⁶ The course of the two

³⁴ Augustine, *De Cat. Rud.* 3.5 [PL 40:313]: "The narration is full when each is at first catechized from that which is written, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,' down to the present times of the Church." Carroll, *Preaching the Word*, p. 183, noted that Augustine tended to "follow and reflect this temporal unfolding of the Mystery of salvation," especially in teaching catechumens.

³⁵ Augustine, *De Cat. Rud.* 16.24 [PL 40:329]: "not of the countryside, but of the city" (i.e., an average citizen).

³⁶ Augustine, *De Doc. Chr.* 2.28.42 [PL 34:55] emphasizes the relationship between time and history and their relevance for teaching Christians: "*Quidquid igitur de ordine temporum transactorum indicat ea quae appellatur historia, plurimum nos adjuvat ad sanctos Libros intelligendos.... Nam et per Olympiadas, et per Consulium nomina multa saepe quaeruntur a nobis*" ["Therefore whatever is indicated by the order of past times (that which is called history), helps us a great deal to understand the holy Books.... For many things are often sought by us through the Olympiads and through the names of the consuls"]. In this case, appropriate chronology is necessary to avoid error as to the date of Christ's death. According to Sulpicius Severus, *Dial.* 2.7 [PL 20:206], it was traditional for schoolmasters to require the "*locum, tempus, personam*" ["the place, the time, and the person"], for a proper understanding of any event. The same was expected by Christian teachers. *De Doc. Chr.* 2.28.44 [PL 34:56], elucidates this position further. "*Non inter humana instituta ipsa historia numeranda est; quia jam quae transierunt, nec infecta fieri possunt, in ordine temporum habenda sunt, quorum est conditor et administrator Deus*" ["History itself is not to be numbered among human institutions, because those things which are past and cannot be revoked belong to the order of time, of which God is the creator and administrator"]. Speaking of the methodology used to preach the Christian message to pagans, Sider, *Gospel and Its Proclamation*, p. 63, wrote, "It can be seen at a glance that these themes provide an embracing structure of ideas from Creation to the final Judgment."

cities is to be followed from the beginning to the end of the world. Time must be shown to relate in all its parts (past to present; present to future) by means of demonstrating how Old Testament history was, a "*prophetia...hujus temporis*."³⁷ Finally, the catechumen was to be instructed in the progress of time by means of teaching them time's division into six distinct ages.³⁸

Augustine saw time and history as integrally related not only to each other, but to God. The pagan understanding of time and history was by definition alien to the Christian, for it excluded God and Christ. Catechumens coming from a non-Christian milieu thus needed to have the whole of history reinterpreted for them. Without this initial adjustment, the catechumen simply could not be a Christian.

The second work of Augustine which suggests the official nature of teaching about time is his *De Doctrina Christiana*. Scripture itself is replete with references to time,³⁹ and as the fundamental duty of every Christian was to extract from Scripture that which was necessary for salvation, some knowledge of the working of time, both literally and symbolically, was essential. "*Non autem asserit nisi catholicam fidem, rebus praeteritis, et futuris, et praesentibus,*" Augustine

³⁷ Augustine, *De Cat. Rud.* 19.31-33 [PL 40:333-335], provides Deogratias with this entire outline. For Scripture as a "prophecy...of the present time," 19.33 [PL 40:334].

³⁸ Augustine's exposition of the six ages is lengthy. He evidently thought it very important that potential Christians understand time's progress in terms of its relation to God's plan for history. It is discussed in *De Cat. Rud.* at 17.28; 21.38; 22.39 [PL 40:331-2; 338; 338-9]. He reiterates this position for training Christians in *Ennar. in Ps.* 136.1 [CCSL 40:1964]. Augustine's practical application of the six ages will be discussed in chapter two.

³⁹ The best work on time in Scripture remains that of H. Barr, *Biblical Words for Time* (Naperville, 1969).

asserted. "*Praeteritorum narratio est, futurorum praenuntiatio, praesentium demonstratio.*"⁴⁰

To explain this, Augustine turned to a most unlikely source: the *Liber Regularum* of Tyconius the Donatist. In spite of his schismatic alignment, however, Augustine believed that Tyconius' seven rules were keys by which "*divinarum Scripturarum aperirentur occulta.*"⁴¹ The fifth rule, *De Temporibus*, in which Tyconius expounded the methodology by which "*Temporis quantitas in Scripturis frequenter mystica est*" might be uncovered and understood, is particularly relevant.⁴² It prescribed the allegorical interpretation of units of time and numbers (to be interpreted in relation to time), in order to explain various aspects of Christian doctrine, running the gamut from eschatology to how to live one's present life.

Augustine is not our only witness to the use of concepts of time in teaching Christianity. An African contemporary, Quodvultdeus of Carthage, has left several sermons *De Symbolo*, in which he uses time to explain various aspects of Christian doctrine to his catechumens.⁴³ We see another contemporary, Nicetas of

⁴⁰ Augustine, *De Doc. Chr.* 3.10.15 [PL 34:71]: "[Scripture] asserts nothing but the catholic faith in things past, future, and present. It is the history of things past, an announcement of things future, and an explanation of things present." Some emphasis on history was also present in traditional Roman education. See Quintilian, *Instit.* 2.4 [Loeb 124:224-5].

⁴¹ Augustine, *De Doc. Chr.* 3.30.42 [PL 34:81]: "the secrets of divine Scriptures might be opened."

⁴² Tyconius, *Lib. Reg.* 5.1 [Texts and Studies 3:55]: "The quantities of time frequently hidden in Scripture." Cf. Augustine, *De Doc. Chr.* 3.35.50 [PL 34:86]. P. Bright, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius. Its Purpose and Inner Logic* (Notre Dame, 1988), p. 76: "Rule V not only demonstrates the fascination that numbers, patterns and symbols held for the ancient world, but it concerns the very real problems for the scriptural exegete posed by the interpretation of lengths of time in the biblical texts."

⁴³ E.g., Quodvultdeus, *De Symb.* II 6.7 [CCSL 60:343], uses Christ's three days and nights in the tomb to explain one of Augustine's favourite divisions of time, the "*tria tempora saecul'*" ["triple times of the world"]. He also teaches the difference between time and eternity. *De Symb.* II 3.5 [CCSL 60:338] and *De Symb.* III 5.5 [CCSL 60:356]: "*Christus mori docebat ad tempus, et animam et corpus vivere in aeternum*" ["Christ taught [us] to die to time, and that the soul and body lives in eternity"].

Remesiana, in a sermon to his catechumens, speaking of the history of the Church "*ab exordio mundi*."⁴⁴

Eucherius of Lyons, in the mid-fifth century, also demonstrates the use of time in teaching Christianity. Cassiodorus places Eucherius' work, along with Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*, among the elementary texts for the study of Scripture.⁴⁵ His *Liber Formularum Spiritualis Intelligentiae* and *Liber Instructionum ad Salonium* are similar to traditional educational texts in their incorporation of lists.⁴⁶ Eucherius was attempting to produce a sourcebook for the education of clergy, essential for their indoctrination of the laity.⁴⁷ He provides lists of words and numbers found in Scripture with notes on their proper interpretation as an aid to preachers: the sections *De mensibus*, *De solemnitatibus*, and *De numeris* are good examples. Each supplies a pre-packaged interpretation of difficult concepts of time whose presence in Scripture necessitates that they be properly

⁴⁴ Nicetas, *Expl. Symb.* 10 [PL 52:87].

⁴⁵ Cassiodorus, *Instit.* 1.10 [PL 70:1122].

⁴⁶ Polemius Silvius' *Laterculus* [CM 1:518-555], may have had a similar educational intent—it also emphasizes lists of words, many of which were relevant to time. In addition, each month in the calendar section of the *Laterculus* is headed by the names of that month in several languages (e.g., Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, amongst others), reminiscent of the bilingual *Hermeneumata*. Silvius notes in his preface his intent to simplify the calendar for the "*minus docti*" ["less-learned"] [CM 1:518]. See E.S. Dulabahn, *Studies on the "Laterculus" of Polemius Silvius* (Unpublished Ph.d. Thesis, Bryn Mawr College), pp. 33-54.

⁴⁷ Haarhoff, *Schools of Gaul*, p. 45. said of Eucherius, "The pedagogic significance of [his] works of exposition is apparent." According to Eucherius, *Lib. Instr. Praef.* [PL 50:728], Scripture was to be explained, "*secundum historiam, secundum tropologiam, secundum anagogen*" ["according to history (i.e., literally), according to the figure (i.e., symbolically), and according to the spirit (i.e., allegorically)"]. On its use as a training manual for clergy, see Dulabahn, *Studies on the Laterculus*, pp. 139ff.

explained to Christians.⁴⁸

Eucherius' lists are similar to those found in the works of Ausonius,⁴⁹ although markedly less poetic and decidedly more Christian. But bridging their divergent attitudes towards Christianity and Roman culture is a similar educational intent. The use of time and time-units was a necessity, both for practical purposes and for literary exegesis.⁵⁰ Quintilian, the great advocate of Roman education, set the trend several centuries earlier when he insisted that some knowledge of the workings of the heavenly bodies be taught so that the great poets could be understood: "*nec si rationem siderum ignoret poetas intelligat, qui (ut alia omittam) totiens ortu occasuque signorum in declarandis temporibus utantur.*"⁵¹ The same was true for Christianity, for without some knowledge of sun, moon, and stars, many elements of Scripture would make little sense, and the superstitious significance often attached to the heavenly bodies would remain unchecked.⁵²

Ambrose of Milan's *Hexameron*, delivered to neophytes during Easter Week,

⁴⁸Eucherius of Lyons, *Instr.* [PL 50:773-822]: 2.7 (*De mensibus*) [PL 50:818] and 2.8 (*De solemnitatibus*) [PL 50:818-19]. *Form. Spir. Intell.* [PL 50:727-772]: 11 (*De numeris*) [PL 50:769-72]. Cf. Marrou, *Education in Antiquity*, p. 152. It was traditional in classical education for children to be forced to learn lists of words which included time-units. There is a striking similarity in the emphasis on time-units for Christian "children", that is, for the catechumen and neophyte.

⁴⁹See above, n. 29.

⁵⁰Haarhoff, *Schools of Gaul*, p. 68.

⁵¹Quintilian, *Instit.* 1.4.4 [Loeb 124:62-3]: "nor again if he be ignorant of astronomy, can he understand the poets; for they, to mention no further points, frequently give their indications of time by reference to the rising and setting of stars" (trans. H.E. Butler).

⁵²The need to understand time went beyond its exegetical value. Time and history in the pagan *Weltanschauung* were not alien to Christianity simply because they lacked reference to God and Christ. This fundamental difference was compounded by the association of the heavenly bodies with pagan divinities and astrology. It was traditional to emphasize time, whether consciously (as, for example, in the festival), or unconsciously (as, for example, in using lists of time-units to teach the young) both in pagan education and in everyday life, which made it necessary for Christian's to emphasize time as well.

387, demonstrates well the role which time played in Christian education. Ambrose's explanation of the first six days of Creation according to Genesis is filled with literal and symbolic explanations of time. Time is used as polemic, to refute heretical and pagan positions; it is used to explain Scripture, to show man's place in time in relation to God's position in eternity. Gaudentius of Brescia and Zeno of Verona also demonstrate this tendency. Zeno of Verona's sermons are excruciatingly short for the most part; but those given to neophytes all contain some element of time. His provision of an astrology of their new birth (actually a refutation of astrology), is a case in point.⁵³ Gaudentius' sermons, more complete than Zeno's, show the same concern for time. His first words to his neophytes, still dripping from the font, are illustrative: "*Opportuno tempore Dominus Jesus beatissimam festivitatem Paschae voluit celebrari, post autumnum nebulam, post horrorem hiemis, ante aestatis ardorem.*" From whence he passes to an explanation of Creation, crucifixion, resurrection, and eschatology, and the time-frame for each.⁵⁴

Augustine's *Confessiones* may reflect this post-baptismal interest in time.

⁵³ For a discussion of Zeno's astrology of baptism, see below, pp. 41-3. A more traditional refutation of astrology to neophytes is provided by Ambrose, *Hex.* 4.4.13-19 [*PL* 14:206-11].

⁵⁴ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 1.1 [*PL* 20:843-4]: "The Lord Jesus wished the most blessed feast of Easter to be celebrated at an opportune time: after the mist of autumn, after the cold of winter, but before the heat of summer." Gaudentius bases his instructions *ad neophytos* on the Old Testament as well, although he chooses Exod. 12.2, "This shall be the first of the months for you; it is the first in the months of the year," as the basis, rather than Genesis. However, his choice does allow Gaudentius to discuss origins and explain a number of important concepts of time in a Genesis setting (e.g., that Creation occurred in the spring; that it began on a Sunday; the differences between Roman units of time and Christian, etc).

The last four books of the *Confessiones* have long been a source of controversy.⁵⁵

Books one through nine trace Augustine's life from childhood to baptism, but books ten through thirteen lack this autobiographical context, turning instead to philosophical and theological considerations. They do not seem to fit with the apparent intentions of the work.

However, in light of the focus on time evident in the Christian training of neophytes, the final books of the *Confessiones* make perfect sense. After depicting his baptism in book nine, Augustine turns, in book ten, to an examination of man's relationship with God and a consideration of the role of memory and the mind in that relationship. This prepares the reader for book eleven, an investigation of time and eternity (the homes of man and God respectively), which, in turn, allows Augustine to proceed, in books twelve and thirteen, to an exposition of the first six days of Creation in Genesis.

This format has an obvious correlation with Ambrose's *Hexameron* (which Augustine may very well have heard first hand),⁵⁶ even down to the post-baptismal

⁵⁵ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley, 1969), pp. 165ff, sees the *Confessiones* as an "act of therapy." Book 10 is the "self-portrait of a convalescent;" Books 11-13 represent his use of his new self-awareness in the understanding of Scripture. J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine* (New York, 1980), pp. 13-18, called the *Confessiones* "a badly composed book." The only way to achieve unity is to exclude book ten and see Books 1-9 as Providence guiding Augustine to find the truth and Books 10-13 as Augustine's enjoyment of that truth in Scripture. P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin* (Paris, 1950), pp. 21ff, provides a summary of other attempts to decipher the unity of the *Confessiones*. Courcelle's own view is somewhat similar to my own. He sees parallels with *De Catechizandis Rudibus* which Augustine was writing shortly after he finished the *Confessiones*. I.e., Augustine felt a catechist's work was easiest when the initiate had been brought to Christianity through a series of terrors, miracles, dreams, etc: a fairly accurate description of the first nine books of the *Confessiones*. However, Courcelle feels that the whole point of the *Confessiones* is actually the exegesis of Genesis in books twelve and thirteen. O'Meara refutes Courcelle's position while agreeing that the structure of the *Confessiones* does correspond somewhat to techniques of catechetical instruction. Certainly, the explanation of Genesis is not the point of the *Confessiones*, but it does fit in with the instruction that neophytes often experienced in the post-baptismal setting. When we realize the role that time also played in that indoctrination (as we see in book eleven of the *Confessiones*), the correspondence of the pre- and post-baptismal process with the *Confessiones* is even more evident.

⁵⁶ On the possibility that Augustine may have been present when Ambrose preached the sermons which became the *Hexameron*, see below, pp. 22-3.

context. In effect, the final four books of the *Confessiones* may simply be a literary representation of themes that were popular in the inculcation of catechumens and neophytes: God and man; the relationship of time to each; and an explanation of the beginning of time in the context of Genesis (or some suitable Biblical text).

It would seem that elements of time did have a place in the official teaching of the Western Church. Catechumens and neophytes were the initial beneficiaries, but learning about time continued throughout a Christian's life.⁵⁷ Time is a common element in the human experience, one pregnant with meaning in both the Christian and non-Christian milieus. For that reason alone it provided a font of images that bishops could not ignore.

But in a period when the balance between pagan and Christian was beginning to shift to the latter, an emphasis on time proved even more essential. Late antique preachers were faced with the arduous task of re-focusing the mindset of an entire society. This required more than the removal of the old gods. It also necessitated demonstrating that time and history were Christian entities, not separate from God but existing as part of God's plan for humanity. Much of this process was achieved by directing the novitiate's attention to the new epicentre of time, Christ.⁵⁸ Late antique Christians were taught to see Christ as master of time and eternity,

⁵⁷ Marrou, *Education in Antiquity*, p. 315: "Religious training did not end with baptism, of course...witness the importance of readings and preaching in the Church's liturgy."

⁵⁸ Finn, *Early Christian Baptism*, p. 9: "...the underlying conviction was about the resurrection of Christ, which, as early Christians saw it, shattered the normal boundaries of space and time."

containing and encompassing both. His Incarnation was depicted as bringing eternity into the temporal world; His Ascension as taking temporality into eternity. They were taught that Christ stood at the beginning of time as the Creator, at the end of time as Mediator and Judge, and at the centre of time as Saviour. The Christian's task was to learn and believe this, and to do what they could to ensure their own place in eternity.

CHAPTER ONE

IN PRINCIPIO

Augustine's stipulation that a new Christian be provided with a salvation history *ab initio mundi*, suggests that the best way to come to terms with what was taught concerning time--and more importantly, *why* it was taught--is to begin with the beginning of time itself. A. Harnack identified the importance of the doctrine of Creation in the missionary preaching of the first three centuries of the Christian Era, an importance which continued during the period of this study.¹ It is likely that Augustine's emphasis on Creation may be traced to Ambrose of Milan, at whose hands he was baptized on Easter day, 387.² The neophyte Augustine may have been present when Ambrose delivered the nine homilies of the *Hexameron*, his study on the first six days of Creation. The date of this work, although difficult to establish, is generally accepted as Holy Week, 387.³ Even if this is incorrect, using aspects of time and history in the indoctrination of Christians seems to have been

¹ A. Harnack, *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, trans. J. Moffatt, 2 vols. (London, 1904), p. 300. L. Gilkey, *Maker of Heaven and Earth* (New York, 1965), p. 41, sees the doctrine of Creation as the foundation stone upon which the other doctrines of Christianity are based.

² Augustine, *Conf.* 9.6.14 [PL 32:769].

³ F. Holmes Dudden, *Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1935), p. 702, dates it to 387. O. Bardenhewer, *Patrology: the Lives and Works of the Fathers of the Church*, trans. T.J. Shahan (St. Louis, 1908), p. 434, suggested 389, theorizing that it would best coincide with Ambrose's remark as to the "complete victory" over Arianism (i.e., "*iam non multae congregationes sunt, sed una est congregatio, una Ecclesia.*" ["Now there are not many congregations, but one congregation, one Church."]). The "complete victory" refers to the favourable outcome of the basilica controversy, 386. Cf. Lenox-Conyngham, A. "The Topography of the Basilica Conflict of A.D. 385-386," *Historia* 31 (1982): 353-363; H. von Campenhausen, *Ambrosius von Mailand als Kirchenpolitiker* (Berlin, 1929), p. 228, and Holmes Dudden (pp. 270-293), hold that the basilica conflict occurred over two years (385-386), but all agree that the crucial stand-off described by Ambrose in *Epp* 20-21 occurred during the week leading up to Easter, 386. Thus the year before the proposed date of the *Hexameron*. In answer to Bardenhewer, the first anniversary (i.e., 387) of the orthodox victory over the Arians would be a more appropriate time to make just such a comment than in 389 when the events were three years past.

general throughout the West, which assures us that Augustine's early exposure to Christian time came from the mouth of Ambrose.⁴

The *Hexameron* is an excellent starting point from which to examine the connection drawn in late antiquity between the doctrine of Creation and time. Ambrose begins by re-evaluating the concept of cyclical time which was the dominant time-theory in the non-Christian world. "*Neque enim sphaerae potes initium reperire, vel unde coeperit globus lunae, vel ubi desinat menstrua lunae defectio.*"⁵ The same holds true for time, which, it should be noted, Ambrose does not deny is cyclical. He reminds the listener that both circles and time do have beginnings and endings--it is our own inadequacies that keep us from perceiving where they are.⁶

To prove that time has a beginning, Ambrose turns to Scripture. As Augustine was later to prescribe, he begins with *Genesis* 1:1. He borrows a definition from Aristotle, "*Principium autem ad tempus refertur, aut ad numerum,*

⁴Transmitting correct teachings concerning the beginning of time was a hallmark of Ambrose's episcopacy, confirmed by the presence of *De Paradiso* and *De Cain et Abel* in the Ambrosian corpus.

⁵Ambrose, *Hex.* 1.3.10 [PL 14:127]. "You cannot discover the beginning of a sphere or from what point the globe of the moon begins or where it ends its monthly wanings."

⁶Ambrose, *Hex.* 1.3.10 [PL 14:127]. "*Nam etsi sensum subterfugit, veritatem non subruit.*" ["For although it evaded the senses, it did not undermine the truth."]. The idea of a conflict between cyclical and linear time in late antique Christianity is a modern oversimplification, based, for the most part, on Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* book 12, especially 12.20 [Loeb 414:94-95]: "*Nunc enim contra opinionem disputamus qua circuitus asseruntur quibus semper eadem per intervalia temporum necesse esse repeti existimantur.*" ["For our present concern is to refute that cyclic theory according to which the same things must always be repeated at periodic intervals"] (trans. P. Levine). But his arguments here must be reconciled with what he says elsewhere about the "wheel of time" ("*rota temporis*"). Cf. *Ennar. in Ps.* 31.2.2 [CCSL 38:234]. As this thesis will demonstrate, Christian time was not seen so much as simply linear in this period as it was "cyclico-linear".

aut ad fundamentum," applying all three parts to the context of Creation.⁷ Yet it was not enough to show, as opposed to non-Christian views of time, that time did have a beginning. Ambrose attempts to strengthen this assertion by identifying with greater chronological accuracy the actual time-frame of Creation. Once again, Scripture proved helpful: "*Mensis hic initium mensium erit vobis*."⁸ As a consequence of this text and the data gleaned from the Creation account, Ambrose concludes for his neophytes that the Creation took place in the spring: "*In hoc ergo principium mensium, coelum et terram fecit...*"⁹ He verifies this by equating the Hebrew Passover and Christ's Passion, both of which were also celebrated at the beginning of spring in the *initium mensium*.¹⁰

Ambrose was not alone in his attempt to provide Creation with a chronological "accuracy". His influence on his younger contemporary, Gaudentius of Brescia, likewise the bishop of a North Italian see, is evident in the latter's

⁷ Ambrose, *Hex.* 1.4.12. [PL 14:127-128]. "Beginning' refers to time or to number or to foundation." For Aristotle's definition, see intro., n. 2.

⁸ Ambrose, *Hex.* 1.4.13 [PL 14:128]. "This month shall be to you the beginning of months." (*Exod.* 12.2).

⁹ Ambrose, *Hex.* 1.4.13 [PL 14:128]. "In this beginning of the months, therefore, He created heaven and earth." Ambrose never explains how a spring Pasch necessitates that the world was created in the spring. The lapse rests in the belief, prevalent in late antique Christianity, that all of time was "linked" by Christ. He was present at the Creation, entered time at the Incarnation, and would conclude time in his Second Coming. Because Christ was perceived as the link that joins all time, it seemed logical to Ambrose and his contemporaries that, as Christ was crucified in the spring, he created in the spring as well. This idea shall be pursued further in the context of Christological feasts, especially the Nativity and Easter, which were widely perceived as the points at which Christ entered time. For a brief but useful explanation of this idea, see J. Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy*. (Notre Dame, 1956), pp. 288-292.

¹⁰ In the Hebrew context, the *Exodus* text refers to the first month of the Hebrew Year, Nisan. This was widely allegorized as a reference to the crucifixion of Christ which Scripture places in the same month (i.e. this shall be the first month for Christians because Christ suffered in this month). For example, Ambrose, *Hex.* 1.4.13 [PL 14:128], the "*Pascha Domini...quod veris initio celebratur*" ["the Pasch of the Lord, which is celebrated at the beginning of spring"]. Ambrose, *Hex.* 1.4.13 [PL 14:128], claimed Creation took place in the spring because the climate was most conducive to new life then.

understanding of Creation and the beginning of time.¹¹ Twenty-two of his sermons and letters are still extant, fifteen of which Gaudentius himself gathered together at the request of Benevolus, *magister memoriae* at Milan during the basilica controversy.¹² The first ten were delivered during Easter Week. Like Augustine and Ambrose, Gaudentius saw the Creation story as an invaluable starting point for the indoctrination of new Christians. He delivered his first sermon to the neophytes immediately after their baptism during the Easter Vigil. His first task, to provide the listener with the chronological "facts" concerning the beginning of time: "*Nam veris temperie deus condidit mundum.*"¹³

Gaudentius attributes this belief to *Exodus* 12.2, as did Ambrose. But Gaudentius' chronology of Creation is more detailed. He tells the neophyte that Creation occurred in the month of March ("*Martio...mense*"). More importantly, he locates the day of the week on which Creation commenced, Sunday, linking it back to the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, which is the true subject of the

¹¹Historians have recently begun to emphasize the interconnection of the sees of North Italy at this time, especially in regards to the influence of Ambrose. See R. Lizzi, "Ambrose's Contemporaries and the Christianization of Northern Italy," *JRS* 80 (1990): 156-174. On the death of Gaudentius' predecessor, Philastrius, it was Ambrose who recalled Gaudentius from his Eastern pilgrimage to take up the see of Brescia. Gaudentius, *Tr.* 16.2 [CSEL 68:173]. Ambrose was present at Gaudentius' ordination (16.9) Gaudentius' reference to Ambrose as "*communem patrem*" ["common father"], while in the presence of several bishops, suggests that Ambrose was the highest ranking bishop present and, thus, that it was Ambrose who had just ordained him. Ambrose's presence also provides us with one of the only chronological certainties as to Gaudentius: he was bishop of Brescia before Ambrose's death in Easter of 397.

¹²Gaudentius' praise of Benevolus (cf. *Praef.* 5 [CSEL 68:3-4]), for refusing to write down an anti-Catholic law that the Arian empress, Justina, mother of Valentinian II, was attempting to promulgate, identifies this as the same Benevolus mentioned by Ambrose in *Ep.* 20. Benevolus' presence in Brescia at the time that Gaudentius compiled his sermons, suggests we can establish a *terminus ante quem* for the date of Gaudentius' ordination (386). It must have taken place before the death of Ambrose (AD 397) and after the return of Benevolus to Brescia (386). A reference in *Tr.* 21.14 [CSEL 68:188], "*...quattuordecim iam per annos solemnitate huius cultum renovans*," "repeating the cult of this solemnity now for fourteen years," (the feast of his predecessor, Philastrius), tells us Gaudentius was bishop for at least fourteen years. Little else, however, can be squeezed from the text of his sermons which would allow a more definite date to be established.

¹³Gaudentius, *Tr.* 1.2 [CSEL 68:18]. "For God created the world in the springtime."

feast:

*Nam sexta feria, qua hominem fecerat, pro eodem passus est, et die dominica, quae dicitur in scripturis prima sabbati, in quo sumpserat mundus exordium, resurrexit, ut, qui prima die creavit caelum et terram...prima etiam die omnem repararet hominem, propter quem fecerat mundum.*¹⁴

The Creation-Christ-Easter time link portrayed by Gaudentius deserves closer scrutiny as the belief that Christ stood in overlordship to all aspects of time was universal in late antique Christianity. Gaudentius arrives at Sunday as the first day of Creation by simple mathematics--the Sabbath was the day on which God rested; therefore, the *dies dominicus* was the day on which Creation Week commenced. He identifies Christ as the Creator and as the Re-Creator of man (who had fallen in sin with Adam),¹⁵ by linking Creation and the Resurrection, through the day on which they both began, Sunday. The significance of the Easter festival rested mainly in its perception as a symbol of the re-creation of humankind.¹⁶ It should be noted, however, that such time links were never understood to be mere coincidences: Sunday was important to both Creation and Easter because God had

¹⁴Gaudentius, *Tr.* 1.10 [CSEL 68:20]: "For on the sixth day, on which He had made man, he also suffered for him, and on the Lord's day [i.e., Sunday], which in Scripture is called the first of the Sabbath, on which the world took its beginning, He arose, so that, He who created the heaven and the earth on the first day, also on the first day repaired all mankind, on account of whom he had made the world." Cf. also *Tr.* 10.2 [CSEL 68:92], "*Primum diem saeculi esse dominicum diem dies sabbati septimus probat....*" ["The seventh day of the Sabbath proves that the first day of the world is the Lord's day...."] It is evident from Ambrose, *Ex. Ev. sec. Luc.* 4.58 [PL 15:1629] that he, too, believed that Creation began on a Sunday.

¹⁵The theme of re-creation and the correlation of Christ and time is seen especially in the concept of the two Adams (i.e., Adam and Christ). E.g., Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 117.2 [CCSL 24A:709]: "*Primus Adam, novissimus Adam: ille primus habet initium, hic novissimus non habet finem, quia hic novissimus vere ipse est primus....*" ["The first Adam, the latest Adam: that first has a beginning, this newest does not have an end, since this newest really is himself first...."] E. Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption* (London, 1952), p. 29: "The historical figure of Adam of the ancients, and the pre-Copernican view of Time and Space are inseparable. When one disappears, the other vanishes too."

¹⁶A.W. Watts, *Myth and Ritual in Christianity* (London, 1959), pp. 120-1.

planned it that way. Time was never perceived as a separate entity, but as created by and subject to God.¹⁷

The *Expositum de Die Paschae et Mensis* of Q. Julius Hilarianus provides an even more elaborate explanation of the time-scheme of Creation. Little is known for certain about Hilarian, apart from the date of the work, which he affixes in an epilogue as 5 March 397.¹⁸ Ostensibly, Hilarian is attempting to explain the methodology used for dating the annual festival of Easter, something which long proved to be a source of controversy in both East and West.¹⁹ To do this, Hilarian uses the Easter-Christ-Creation time link ("*ad originem mundi...ire compellimur*"),²⁰ demonstrating that his understanding of time was synonymous with contemporary Christian time theory. He argues from *Genesis* 1:1-5 that Creation must have commenced on the day, "*in quo lucem noctemque Dominus Deus fecit aequalem*," identifying it as the "*aequinotius, qui secundum cognominationem mensium Romanorum VIII kalendarum Aprilium invenitur*."²¹

¹⁷Time's subjugation to God was an important part of time-theory in Latin Christianity. It is a theme to which we shall return several times during the course of this thesis.

¹⁸Hilarian, *De Die Pasch. Epil.* [PL 13:1114]. Migne, PL 13:1097 believes he was a bishop in Proconsular Africa, as does P. de Labriolle, *History and Literature of Christianity from Tertullian to Boethius*, trans. H. Wilson (London, 1968), p. 301.

¹⁹It caused particular consternation in the West during our period. E.g., Leo of Rome, *Epp.* 88 [PL 54:927-929]; and the elaborate explanation of Ambrose, *Ep.* 23 [PL 16:1026-1035]. See below, ch. 7, pp. 235-46.

²⁰Hilarian, *De Die Pasch.* 1 [PL 13:1107]. "We are compelled to go to the beginning of the world."

²¹Hilarian, *De Dei Pasch.* 4-5 [PL 13:1108-9], "...on which the Lord God made the light and the night equal....The equinox, which according to the name of the Roman months, is found on the eighth day before the kalends of April."

Hilarian concludes that time and Creation began on Sunday 25 March.²²

Hilarian was responding to the questions of an audience of "*servi Dei*" which suggests a monastic context.²³ It also suggests that a curiosity about the origins of time effected every level of Christian society--laity, secular clergy, and ascetic alike. Creation was never depicted as some distant event without relevance to the present, but rather as the past continually encroaching on the present (via the Creation-Christ-Easter time link), and as a model to explain the reason behind present things.

The model for time itself was regularly sought in the Creation story. This was true of both sanctified time (i.e., the festival) and normal time. The Paschal festivity was regularly juxtaposed with Creation, as Hilarian, Gaudentius, and Ambrose have demonstrated. A similar attitude is present in the Eusebius "Gallicanus" corpus, a group of sermons of highly-controversial authorship which derives from Southern Gaul at the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth centuries.²⁴ "*Dies haec, fratres, si bene perspicimus, duplici nobis sanctificatione*

²²The Romans in the West traditionally observed 25 March as the day of the vernal equinox. Cf. *Calendar of 354* and the *Laterculus* of Polemius Silvius. Hilarian, *De Mundi Duratione* [PL 13:1097-1106], worked out the chronology of time since the Creation, which allowed him to ascribe a year to Creation as well. As it is an eschatological work, it will be more fully examined in chapter two. Quodvultdeus of Carthage, a younger contemporary of St. Augustine and much influenced by the latter, probably held a similar notion to Hilarian as to the calendar date of Creation. Cf. *De Cant. Nov.* 1.9 [CCSL 60:381]: "*Nonne sicut ex initio horis duodecim peragitur dies, eisdemque crementis aetatis tempore, quibus detrimentis hieme peragitur?*" ["Was not, as it were, a day of twelve hours accomplished from the beginning, and by the same increase in the time of summer, by which the decrease in Winter is accomplished?" The reference to a day of 12 hours "*ex initio*" suggests the vernal equinox as the beginning, especially with the references to increasing and decreasing hours on either side of it.

²³Hilarian, *De Die Pasch.* 1 [PL 13:1105].

²⁴G. Morin, "La Collection gallicane dite d'Eusebe d'Emese et les problèmes qui s'y rattachent," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* (1935): 115, attributed the collection to Faustus of Riez at the end of the fifth century. Cf. A. Souter, "Observations on the Pseudo-Eusebian Collection of Gallican Sermons," *JThS* (1946): 57. Morin argues unconvincingly that the collection is anterior to Caesarius of Arles because Caesarius used it (p. 114). It is equivalent to saying that an author never uses his own books once they are finished! I am inclined to agree with Fr. Glorie, the editor of the CCSL critical edition of the Eusebius "Gallicanus" *Collectio Homiliarum* (p. xiv), in naming Caesarius as the editor of the collection, which he compiled from the sermons of various fourth- and fifth-century fathers. Although an argument *ex silentio*, the fact that Gennadius does not mention

veneranda est. Ipsa enim iam in principio nascentis mundi prima facta est...."²⁵

Salvian of Marseilles, writing about the middle of the fifth century when fear of the barbarians was causing some people to proclaim that God was neglecting them, used Creation to show this was impossible.²⁶ A caring Creator would not abandon his Creation, and Salvian pinpoints Christ's Passion as proof that God continued to care for the world.²⁷ Paulinus of Nola, perhaps the most adamant devotee of the cult of martyrs in late antiquity, believed that the location of each saint's tomb had been decided by the Creator at the time of Creation.²⁸ In effect the very foundations of the Christian festival year--Easter, Sunday, and, for some, even the cult of saints--were traced back to the beginning of time. As most other Christological festivals were related to Easter by various time links, they too could ultimately be traced back to Creation.²⁹

Mundane divisions of time were also believed to have originated in Creation,

the corpus under the authentic writings of Faustus of Riez is suggestive, as is the fact that Caesarius knows no collection of sermons anterior to him. And as someone who collected sermons avidly, his failure to mention this collection, which originated from the same area in Gaul, leads one to the conclusion that he did not know about it because it did not exist before he compiled it!

²⁵ Eusebius "Gallicanus" *De Pascha* 9.1 [CCSL 100:239]. "This day, brothers, (i.e., Easter), if we examine it well, ought to be venerated by us with a double sanctification. For to be sure it was itself first made at the beginning of the world's birth...." Cf. *De Pascha* 7.1 [CCSL 100:213].

²⁶ Salvian, *De Gub. Dei* 4.9 [PL 53:81]. "*Totus namque mundus...pignus est Creatoris sui.*" ["For indeed the whole world...is the pledge of its Creator."]

²⁷ Salvian, *De Gub. Dei* 4.10 [PL 53:81]. "*Hoc est ergo illud quod supra dixi, quia plus nos amat Deus quam filium pater....nos Deus diligit, qui propter nos filio suo non pepercit.*" ["This, therefore, is that which I said above, since God loves us more than a father loves a son....God loves us, who for our sakes did not withhold his own son."]

²⁸ Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* 19.17-18 [PL 61:510].

²⁹ Easter was a movable feast, depending on equinox and Sunday for its annual date. Quadragesima (40 days before Easter), Pentecost (50 days after Easter), and Ascension Day (40 days after Easter) all depended on Easter. The Feast of the Nativity was linked to Easter by the belief that Christ had been conceived on 25 March and so, born nine months later on 25 December. The winter solstice also played a role in this connection. A detailed discussion of Christological feasts and their relation to time can be found in chapter seven.

the week being the most blatant example. Ambrose of Milan found the proof of time's origins with God in Creation Week. Writing in 389 to Horontianus, a presbyter, Ambrose explained that God did not require time to create, but used time for a specific purpose:

*...ea quae fiunt, ordinem quaerunt: ordo autem et tempus et numerum plerumque exigit. Illud quoque praecipue, quoniam nobis ad operandum formam daturus, numerum dierum servavit et tempora.*³⁰

Ambrose emphasizes order: God's purpose in taking time to create was to establish the utility of time-units for humanity. Creation Week is, for Ambrose, the very model of the week which still existed, and had existed from the beginning.

Valerian of Cimiez (Gaul), in a sermon delivered some fifty years later, places a similar stress on order. "*Deus nihil prius quam disciplinam fecit,*" Valerian taught, hoping that his flock would apply this model of *disciplina* to their own lives.³¹ The crux of the model is the *disciplina* demonstrated by the regular workings of time, established in the act of Creation: "*Nam cum assistente Sapientia...suis locis suisque temporibus cursum solis lunaeque globum deponeret.*" In effect, Valerian sees the establishment of the year (and day) and month as a model provided by God for the utility of mankind, as Ambrose had

³⁰ Ambrose, *Ep.* 44.2 [PL 16:1136]: "...those things which are made seek order. Order requires both time and number. And especially for the purpose of giving us a model for our works has He observed a number of days and times."

³¹ Valerian, *Hom.* 1.1 [PL 52:691]: "God made nothing sooner than discipline." The twenty, extant sermons of Valerian indicate clearly that control was a priority: he is repeatedly forced to reprimand his flock for inappropriate attitudes. E.g., *Hom.* 4.2 [PL 52:703], chastises his flock for keeping their vows only as long as their headaches last! ["*Sed ista tam facile est promittere quam negare, circa quos tam diu durat spes devotionis implendae quam diu dolor sentitur in capite.*"]. *Hom.* 5 is devoted to the problem of quarrels; *Hom.* 6, is on "otiosis verbis," and so on.

before him.³²

Late antique Christianity placed great value on the establishment of time and individual time-units by God. Time was humanity's "home", their plane of existence. Yet Christians were taught that this was not completely the case for them. Christ had successfully mixed time and eternity, according to Christian theory. It was logical to assume that those who most effectively emulated Christ would be able to do something similar.

The late antique attitude towards baptism, which connected the sacrament to both time and eternity, is a case in point. Ambrose saw baptism in the Creation story, prefigured in the Spirit of God moving upon the waters.³³ Leo of Rome found the whole course of time coming together in the sacrament of baptism:

*...et mirabilior est secunda hominum generatio quam prima conditio: quia plus est in novissimis saeculis reparasse Deum quod perierat, quam a principio fecisse quod non erat*³⁴

Yet baptism was also believed to be the sacrament by which the Christian began to

³² Valerian, *Hom.* 1.1 [PL 52:691-2]. "For when, with the assistance of Wisdom... God placed the globe of the moon and the circling sun in their own places and times...." Augustine traced the origins of another time-unit, the *aetas*, back to Creation as well. See *Serm.* 125.4 and 259.2 [PL 38:691-692; 1197-1198]. The *aetas* shall be discussed in chapter two.

³³ Ambrose, *De Myst.* 3.9 [PL 16:592]. "*Considera autem quam vetus mysterium sit, in ipsius mundi praefiguratum origine.*" ["However, consider how ancient the mystery is, prefigured in the origin of the world itself."]

³⁴ Leo of Rome, *Serm.* 66.1 [PL 54:365]. "...the second birth of men [in baptism] is more admirable than their first creation, since the restoration by God in the end times of that which had perished is a greater thing than the Creation at the beginning of that which was not."

go beyond mundane time, "*a terrenis ad coelestia*."³⁵ The late antique Christian held a curious vision of the universe. They existed in a world controlled by time; but for Christians, that world contained imprints of eternity in the form of feasts and sacraments. They were able to transcend time at certain points because, at certain points, eternity had permeated time.³⁶

The higher state of grace attributed to neophytes is a symptom of the "in between" state in which Christians were understood to exist. When Ambrose died on Holy Saturday, 397, the neophytes claimed they saw him sitting on his episcopal throne. Their Christian sponsors could not see Ambrose, however, "*quia mundatos oculos non habebant*."³⁷ A similar event is reported at the martyrdom of Lawrence, whose luminosity--itself a sign of the increased proximity to eternity of the martyr-to-be--was particularly evident to the newly baptized, because they were "*Christi capaces*" ("receptive to Christ").³⁸ It is noteworthy that other Christians, who had themselves once been neophytes, had not retained this ability--presumably sin had renewed the hold which anchored them to the realm of time.

Other methods by which the Christian could tip the balance of this in

³⁵ Ambrose, *De Sac.* 1.4.12 [PL 16:421]: "from earthly to heavenly things." Cf. Eusebius "Gallicanus", *De Pascha* 10.1 [CCSL 101:247]: "*Prima natiuitate terrenis ingredimur, secunda caelestibus praeparamus*" ["By the first nativity we entered into the world, by the second, we are placed before the heavens"].

³⁶ The best example of the entrance of eternity into secular time was, of course, the Incarnation, life, and Passion of Jesus Christ. The belief that on the day of a feast time had a special quality will be examined more closely below, chapter seven.

³⁷ Paulinus of Milan, *V. Amb.* 48 [PL 14:43]: "...because they had not had their eyes purified." Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 22.8 [CCSL 48:818-9], reports the story of Innocentia, cured of breast cancer by a neophyte.

³⁸ Prudentius, *Po.* 2.376 [CCSL 126:270].

between state in favour of eternity will be encountered in chapter six. At this point, however, we must turn away from the more ethereal beliefs as to time and Creation and return to its practical purposes. It will now be evident that one of the primary applications of the Creation story was its use as a model. Time-units, *ordo*, *disciplina*--all could be located in Creation and proved efficacious simply by demonstrating their institution by God.³⁹ These arguments had the added advantage of reminding the listener that the relationship between God and time was that of Creator and created, master and servant. This proved an important point in the refutation of a number of heresies and of paganism in general.

That heretical beliefs often necessitated a different understanding of time is evident from the earliest days of the Church. Gnosticism focused on the beginning of time, departing radically from orthodoxy by attributing Creation to an evil being who made use of pre-existing matter.⁴⁰ "*Creatio ex nihilo*", designed to deny such gnostic assertions, began to appear as a theological commonplace in the ante-Nicene

³⁹ Ambrose, *De Hel.* 4.6 [PL 14:700], uses Creation to promote fasting: *Itaque ne terrenum quis, aut novellum putet esse jejunium, primus usus mundi a jejunio coepit* ["Therefore, so that no one may think that fasting is earthly or new, the first experience of the world began with fasting"]. Food was not created until the third day. Even then, the "*coelestis disciplina*" continued its fast, "*Quo indicio declaratum est quod per cibos mundus haberet imminui, per quos desiit augeri*" ["By which sign it was declared that through food the world would be destroyed, as through this it had ceased to increase"]. Ambrose is referring here to the fall of mankind, caused by eating (i.e., the apple). This literary artifice more than stretches the point, but it demonstrates well the use of events at the beginning of time to promote present things--in this case, fasting. Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 101.7 [CCSL 24A:624], used a complete run-down of the events of Creation, the entire course of time, and the eventual "un-Creation" to occur at the end of time, to assuage fears of death in his flock: "*cum tu quaeris quare deus mortem...permiserit...nos caelum, terram, mare ex nihilo facta et soluenda iterum in nihilum longo sermone descripsimus*" ["When you asked why God permitted death, we described in a long sermon how heaven, earth, and the sea were made from nothing and how they will again be dissolved"]. Peter was attempting to make his flock see that death was not something to be feared by Christians, but simply written into Creation by God as part of the natural cycle of events. Ambrose, *De Par.* 5.29 [PL 14:287], also recognized the value of the Creation story in calming fears of death: "*...genere animantium naturalis est terror*" ["Fear is natural in all animals that breathe"].

⁴⁰ There were many different gnostic sects, not all of which were of concern to Christians. The Fathers tended to confine their criticisms to those sects which twisted the Christian doctrines of Creation and the role of Christ. See H. Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion* (Boston, 1963), pp. 32-33.

writers.⁴¹ Some gnostic ideas continued to hold an antiquarian interest for Christians long after the threat had dissipated, as is the case with Basilides. Active in the early second century, Basilides' view of time departed from orthodoxy in that it divinized time by equating it with God. He worshipped the high God Abraxas, "*qui quasi annum continens, si juxta Graecorum numerum supputetur.*"⁴² Prosper of Aquitaine's *Epitoma Chronicon*, published in four or five editions in the mid-fifth century,⁴³ indicates Basilides' heresy as well: "*CCCLXV caelos esse credebat, quo numero dierum annus includitur.*"⁴⁴

Prosper's notice of Basilides is considerably longer than that of Jerome's, whose *Chronicon* he was epitomizing. He gleaned the extra data from Augustine, whose own work *De Haeresibus* also contains a reference to Basilides. His system was passé by the fifth century, so we must ask why he continued to fascinate the late antique Fathers.⁴⁵ The answer may be indicated by the notices concerning Basilides, all of which picked the same tenet of Basilidean gnosticism to record--its deification of the year. The tendency to associate divinity with a time-unit, or with

⁴¹ Gilkey, *Maker of Heaven and Earth*, pp. 48-9.

⁴² Jerome, *De Vir. Ill.* 21 [PL 23:671]: "whose name was supposed to contain the year according to the reckoning of the Greeks."

⁴³ The dates of these editions have been deduced from points in the text where Prosper sums up (433, 445, 451, and 455). It is possible that there was also an edition of 443. Cf. Mommsen, *CM* 1:345 and 2:180. S. Muhlberger, "Prosper's *Epitoma Chronicon*: Was there an edition of 443?" *Classical Philology* 81 (1986): 240-244, argues against this position.

⁴⁴ Prosper, *Epit. Chron.* 617 (a. 138) [CM 1:424]: "he believed in 365 heavens, the number of days in the year." Cf. Jonas, *Gnostic Religion*, p. 43.

⁴⁵ S. Muhlberger, *The Fifth-Century Chroniclers: Prosper, Hydatius, and the Gallic Chronicler of 452*. Vol. 27 *ARCA*. (Wiltshire, 1990), p. 70. Cf. Augustine, *De Haer.* 4 [PL 42:26]. Elements of gnosticism did survive in religions such as Manichaeism. Thus they were, in part, current in the fourth and fifth centuries.

the heavenly body associated with that time-unit, was a problem late antique bishops often had to address. Basilides was a reminder of how such ideas could corrupt orthodoxy if allowed to persist.⁴⁶

The greatest challenge to orthodoxy in the fourth and fifth centuries was Arianism. Despite Ambrose's confident acclamation in 387 that a complete victory over Arianism had been won, nothing could be further from the truth.⁴⁷ Within twenty-five years, Arianism was to be re-imported into the empire by the barbarian invaders; in Visigothic Gaul, Suevic Spain, Vandal Africa, and Ostrogothic Italy it was to have a long life as the official religion of the rulers. The necessity, therefore, to continue indoctrinating one's congregation in an orthodox Christology was seriously undertaken by Western bishops.

The conflict between Arianism and orthodoxy arose from the Arian assertion that the Son was inferior to the Father. This belief was founded on what were considered to be certain logical premises: 1) the greatness of the Father precluded his being the Creator; 2) the Son was therefore created in order to create; 3) the Son therefore was a creature who had a beginning; and 4) as the Son also created time, he must himself have been created at some unknown point *before* time.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Hydatius, the fifth-century Spanish chronicler, demonstrates how such esoterica concerning the year and the number 365 could be given a more acceptable framework. See below, ch. 2, n. 83.

⁴⁷ See n. 3.

⁴⁸ J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (San Francisco, 1978), pp. 227-228.

It was the Arian belief that the Son was created before time which proved to be the error in logic that many Western bishops used in their refutations. The first defence against such an assertion was to demonstrate to the flock that there was a difference between time and eternity which the Arians were not observing: "*Arbitror Sanctitatem vestram iam intellexisse quod dico, non posse comparari temporalia aeternis.*"⁴⁹ The combination of time and eternity did not hold up in the face of logic:

*...non erat tempus ante Filium, quia "omnia per ipsum facta sunt." Si omnia per ipsum facta sunt; et tempora per ipsum facta sunt; quomodo possent esse tempora ante Filium, per quem facta sunt tempora?*⁵⁰

The brunt of the argument is that eternity is timeless and therefore can contain no sequence of events. Christ could not have been created "before" time because eternity does not permit "before" or "after". Therefore, if Christ existed before time, which the Arians allowed, He must have *always* existed. This had the effect of reducing the entire Arian argument to the level of absurdity: "*dua...principia sine principio, quod falsissimum est et absurdissimum, et non catholicae fidei, sed quorundam haereticorum errori proprium.*"⁵¹

⁴⁹ Augustine, *Serm.* 117.8.11 [PL 38:667]: "I judge that your holiness has already understood what I say, that temporal things cannot be compared to eternal." Having said this, however, Augustine provides his flock with an example—when a candle is lit, the fire and the brightness exist as coevals; you cannot have one without the other. This is used as an example of the coeternal status of the Father and the Son.

⁵⁰ Augustine, *Serm.* 127.4 [PL 38:708]: "there was no time before the Son, since "all things were made by Him (*John* 1.3)." If all things were made by Him, times also were made by Him, how could times be before the Son, by Whom time was made?"

⁵¹ Augustine, *De Fid. et Symb.* 19 [PL 40:19]: "...two beginnings without a beginning which is very false and most absurd, and not proper to the Catholic faith, but to the error of Heretics." Similar arguments could be used against the Macedonians, who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

Quodvultdeus, the bishop of Carthage who was to be exiled by the Arian Vandal Geiseric in 439, was intimately aware of the dangers that Arianism posed to his flock. Like Augustine, he was quick to observe the breach in logic implicit in the Arian understanding of time and eternity: *tu, haeretice...temporum spatia cogitas. Sed multum erras, illi assignare tempora per quem facta sunt tempora.*⁵² Quodvultdeus' contemporary, Leo of Rome, held the same position, labelling the entire Arian argument based on time as an "*impiam perversitatem.*" Leo's instructions to the people of Rome on this matter are explicit: "*...in Deitate vera nihil temporalitatis agnoscit, sed unius sempiternitatis et Patrem confitetur, et Filium.*"⁵³

This strict differentiation between time and eternity was the basis of the late antique Christian's understanding of time. Cullmann's theory that primitive Christianity did not make a "philosophical, qualitative distinction between time and eternity,"⁵⁴ does not hold true for the late antique Church. Augustine is quite clear here: "*Vera enim aeternitas est, ubi temporis nihil est.*"⁵⁵ A subtle change has been introduced, possibly the result of the Arian attempt to introduce time into eternity

⁵²Quodvultdeus, *De Cant. Nov.* 7.7 [CCSL 60:388]: "you, O heretic, consider the spaces of time. But you err very much to assign time to him through whom time was made." He takes a similar tact in *Adv. Quin. Haer.* 4.37-38 [CCSL 60:275].

⁵³Leo of Rome, *Serm.* 25.3 [PL 54:210]: "...in the true Divinity, there is nothing known of time, but it attributes to the Father and the Son one and the same eternity."

⁵⁴O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, trans. F. Filson (London, 1971), p. xxvi.

⁵⁵Augustine, *Hom. in Ioh.* 23.9 [PL 35:1588]. "For true Eternity is where nothing of time is."

by providing eternity with a chronology of events. Eternity, as explained to the orthodox congregations of the West, was more than just an "endless succession of the ages;" it had become "timelessness" as well.⁵⁶

One final element in the late antique Christian's connection of Creation and time needs to be examined. The belief in the divinity of the sun and the moon, and the efficacy of the planets in foretelling the future, comes under fire in a number of sermons of Western bishops. In seeking to refute these popular, non-Christian notions, no better weapon could be found than the ordering of events in the Creation story. *Genesis* itself went far in demythologizing the sun and the moon. It places the creation of light on the first day, thus detaching it from the luminaries which were not created until the fourth.⁵⁷ By showing that the initial days of Creation preceded without them, *Genesis* relegates them to a position where their possible influence on human destiny becomes dubious.⁵⁸

It is in the context of such ideas that the lengthy explanations found in the sermons of the "true" nature of the origin of the year and the month,⁵⁹ of the foundation of time in Creation, begin to make sense. *Genesis* was accepted as an

⁵⁶ Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, p. 61, emphasizes the difference between the Greek philosophical understanding of eternity as "timelessness" and the primitive Christian's understanding of eternity as an endless succession of time. In late antiquity, the difference no longer existed; eternity was both these things, and no conflict was perceived to exist.

⁵⁷ C. Westermann, *Creation* (London, 1944), p. 44.

⁵⁸ P. Trigo, *Creation and History* (New York, 1991), p. 102.

⁵⁹ See ch. 3, pp. 104ff.

historical document,⁶⁰ within which the foundations of all time-units was set out, and from which valuable "proofs" could be taken to demonstrate the errors of divinizing heavenly bodies. Thus, for example, Ambrose could claim that sun worship, which arose out of the sun's importance to agriculture, was disproved by *Genesis*, which showed that plants had actually been created *before* the sun: "*Junior est herbis, junior feno.*"⁶¹ The very fact that the sun underwent eclipse was, for Ambrose, simply another indication that the sun was far from being worthy of divine honours. It was the "*sol justitiae*" who made the "*solem mundi*" that should be venerated, not the sun itself.⁶²

Some fifty years later, Leo of Rome was forced to apply such arguments in response to errors committed by members of his congregation. He was shocked one Christmas morning to discover an act of sun worship on the very steps of the Church:

*...converso corpore ad nascentem se solem reflectant, et curvatis cervicibus, in honorem se splendidi orbis inclinent. Quod fieri partim ignorantiae vitio, partim paganitatis spiritu, multum tabescimus et dolemus.*⁶³

⁶⁰ B.W. Anderson's warning in *Creation Versus Chaos* (New York, 1967), p. 33, needs to be taken to heart in the context of late antiquity: "Often we detach "creation" from this historical context and consider it as a separate "doctrine"...But this violates the intention of the creation stories. They was to speak to us primarily about history."

⁶¹ Ambrose, *Hex.* 3.6.27 [PL 14:167]: "[The Sun] is younger than the grass, younger than the hay!"

⁶² Ambrose, *Hex.* 4.1.5 [PL 14:187-8].

⁶³ Leo, *Serm.* 27.4 [PL 54:219]: "...turning themselves towards the rising sun, they bow the head and bend themselves in honour of the shining orb. Whether the practice comes from ignorance or from the spirit of paganism, we deplore it."

To correct these abuses, Leo returns his flock to the beginning of time, basing his argument on *Genesis*. "*Quid autem est sol, vel quid est luna...priusquam haec fierent, et dies sine solis officio, et noctes sine lunae ministerio praecessissent.*"

After demythologizing sun and moon, he goes on to stress their practical applications. Once more the emphasis is placed on their role as time keepers--the model for time given by God and, thus, subject to him: "*Sed condebantur ista ad faciendi hominis utilitatem, ut rationale animal nec in distinctione mensium, nec in recursu annorum, nec in dinumeratione temporum falleretur.*"⁶⁴

Maximus of Turin found himself faced with a similar attitude to the moon in members of his congregation at the turn of the fourth century. During an eclipse of the moon he discovered some of his flock howling into the air, a remedy, he was informed, designed to aid the moon in its eclipse. The result was a stern tongue-lashing: "*Mutaris enim sicut luna, dum stultus et insipiens ad motum eius qui christianus fueras incipis esse sacrilegus.*"⁶⁵ In an argument reminiscent of Valerian of Cimiez's use of *disciplina*, Maximus stresses that the key to understanding the moon is obedience: "*ortum defectumque eius intellegant ratione magis quam infirmitate subsistere. Numquam enim tantam rebus cunctis*

⁶⁴ Leo, *Serm.* 27.5 [PL 54:219-220]: "For what is the sun, or what is the moon...before these things were made they were preceded by days without the duty of the sun, and nights without the ministrations of the moon. But they were created for the utility of man to come so that, as a rational animal, he might avoid error in the distinction of the months, in the return of the years, and in the measure of the times (seasons)."

⁶⁵ Maximus of Turin, *Serm.* 30.3 [CCSL 23:118]: "For you are changed just as the moon when, foolish and stupid, you who had been a Christian begin to be sacrilegious in response to its movement." What little is known concerning Maximus of Turin comes from Gennadius, *De Vir.* II. 40 [PL 58:1081-2], which reports that he died sometime during the joint reign of Honorius and Theodosius II (408-423).

*mutationem daret, nisi esset illi haec ratio a creatore conlata.*⁶⁶

The dangers to the Christian message posed by astrology could also be defused by an appropriate understanding of the time frame of Creation. Augustine pointed out versus the Arians, but also against those who believed that fate lay in the stars, that the Creation of time and the eternity preceding it logically excluded such beliefs: *Tu ergo ponis Christum sub fato? Ubi sunt fata? In caelo, inquis, in ordine et conversionibus siderum. Quomodo ergo fatum habet, per quem factum est coelum et sidera?*⁶⁷ Ambrose, recognizing the popularity of astrology, chose to provide his neophytes with a general refutation in his *Hexameron*. Against such beliefs Ambrose's argument remains the model of time set up in the act of Creation: "[Deus] fecit ergo solem, et lunam, et stellas, et praestituit illis mensuras temporum...."⁶⁸ Ambrose will allow that the sun and moon and the stars will also be signs indicating the fulfilment of prophecy, but denies their use in an astrological context.⁶⁹

The pervasiveness of astrology in the popular mind is demonstrated in a

⁶⁶ Maximus of Turin, *Serm.* 31.1 [CCSL 23:121]: "let them understand that its rise and eclipse is from reason rather than infirmity. For would the Creator have subjected all things to such change unless this were His design for them?"

⁶⁷ Augustine, *Hom. in Ioh.* 37.8 [PL 35:1674]. "Why, therefore, do you place Christ under fate? Where are the fates? In heaven, you say, in the order and turnings of the stars. Then how can he be subject to fate, by Whom heaven and the stars were made?"

⁶⁸ Ambrose, *Hex.* 4.4.12. [PL 14:192-193]. "God therefore made the sun, and moon, and the stars, and he allotted to them the measurement of times..."

⁶⁹ Ambrose, *Hex.* 4.4.13. [PL 14:193]. "Non possumus negare quod ex sole et luna signa aliqua colligantur; nam et Dominus dixit: 'Et erunt signa in sole, et luna, et stellis.'... Haec dixit fore signa futurae consummationis: sed conveniens debet curae nostrae mensura servari" ["We are unable to deny that from the sun and moon signs may somehow be gathered; for the Lord said: 'And there were signs in the sun, and the moon, and the stars (Luke 21.25).'... These things he said are to be signs of the future consummation: but appropriately the measure of our care ought to be saved"].

sermon by Zeno, bishop of Verona in North Italy from 362 to c. 372.⁷⁰ Once again we return to neophytes, just come from the font. Zeno's first sermon to these new Christians demonstrates he was keenly aware that, just because they were Christians, it did not mean that they were fully conscious of the different stance which Christianity held in regards to time: "*Sed curiositatem vestram bene novi...fortassis requiratis et a nobis, qua genitura signo...vestra vos peperit mater.*"⁷¹

Zeno turns their natural superstition into a Christian interpretation of the signs of the zodiac, a brief synopsis of which follows:

- Aries: symbol of Christ (i.e., "*agnus*")
- Taurus: Christ as the sacrificial bull,⁷²
- Gemini: the twins as symbols of the two testaments of Scripture;
- Cancer: the "*incurabilis Cancer*" of idolatry, unchastity, and avarice;
- Leo: Christ is "*Leo noster*;"
- Virgo: Christ incarnate proceeds from the Virgin;
- Libra: Christ came so we might know "*aequitatem iustitiamque*;"
- Scorpio: He shall tread all serpents under foot;
- Sagittarius: a symbol of the Devil;
- Capricorn: again, a symbol of the Devil;
- Aquarius: Christ is "*noster Aquarius*;"
- Pisces: Jews and Gentiles joined together in one people of Christ.⁷³

⁷⁰These dates for Zeno are a general approximation. A. Bigelmair, *Zeno von Verona* (Munster, 1904), pp. 52-3, established the dates based on the number of Easter sermons. Of course, against his argument, it should be mentioned that, 1) Bigelmair is basing his calculations on the number of *extant* Easter sermons—there may have been considerably more; 2) Zeno's sermons are, for the most part, notoriously short—it is possible that the Easter sermons as we have them have suffered in transmission and that several of them might be snippets of a single sermon. C. Truzzi, *Zeno, Gaudenzio e Cromazio* (Brescia, 1985), pp. 50-3 believes that Zeno's reference to the relief of hardships (*Tr.* 1.14.11) can be dated to the aftermath of the battle of Adrianople. G. Jeanes, "Early Latin Parallels to the Roman Canon? Possible References to a Eucharistic Prayer in Zeno of Verona," *JThS* 37 (1986): 427, notes correctly that Zeno's reference is vague and could refer to another event.

⁷¹Zeno, *Tr.* 1.38.2 [CCSL 22:105]: "But I knew your curiosity well....perhaps you may seek from us, by which begetting signs...your mother brought you forth."

⁷²An obvious reference to the sacrificial use of bulls. Zeno may be referring to the taurobolium, an appropriate reference in a baptismal context.

⁷³Zeno, *Tr.* 1.38.3-7. [CCSL 22:105-106].

J. Daniélou has traced the symbolic use of the zodiac in the early Church. Along with the hours of the day and the months of the year, the predominant use of the signs of the zodiac was as a symbol of the twelve apostles. Daniélou acknowledges the uniqueness of "*la curieuse application que fait Zénon de Vérone du zodiaque aux nouveaux baptisés,*" without attempting to explain it.⁷⁴ Within the context of this study, Zeno's use of the zodiac is more understandable. Zeno was not unaware of the value of time-units as symbols of Christ and the apostles--he uses the months as a symbol of the twelve apostles at *Tr.* 2.9.2. If we may judge from the depth of Zeno's symbolic analysis of the zodiac, it would seem that he believed that the neophytes required more than a simple statement of the symbolic correlation between the zodiac and the apostles. That some of them might believe that they could have a horoscope made on the basis of the moment of their new birth must have suggested to Zeno that they were too infected with astrological superstition for such a simple response. Zeno, therefore, turned the zodiac into a symbolic journey through the life of Christ. In so doing, he was attempting to remove the influence of the course of the stars and planets from the minds of his neophytes, and centre them on the truth that lay behind these material creations, Christ.

⁷⁴ J. Daniélou, *Les symboles chrétiens primitifs* (Paris, 1961), p. 142.

Such conscious attempts to "[empty] the heavenly bodies of their divinity,"⁷⁵ marks a unifying theme in the surviving sermons of late antiquity. Thus Augustine's advice to his flock on the feast of the Nativity of Christ: "*Habemus ergo, fratres, solem istum diem; non sicut infideles propter hunc solem, sed propter eum qui fecit hunc solem,*"⁷⁶ Augustine turns the sun into a Christian symbol, as Maximus of Turin attempts to do by depicting the moon as a symbol of the Church, which received its light from Christ, the "*sol justitiae.*"⁷⁷

The Creation story played a central role in this, by demonstrating the theological "fact" that time was a creature of God. This had practical applications in the refutation of heresy and paganism. Freed from any pretensions to divinity, time and time-units could be used symbolically and literally to assist a congregation in gaining a firmer understanding of Christianity. This, in turn, would accelerate the demythologization of time.

Conversely, we have also seen that Christian teaching did not demand the total demythologization of time. The Creation-Christ-Easter time link reintroduced divinity into time, but with time in a subservient position. Certain times were perceived as special because of their relationship to Christ rather than to the sun,

⁷⁵Westermann, *Creation*, p. 44.

⁷⁶Augustine, *Serm.* 190.1 [PL 38:1007]: "Therefore brothers, let us hold this day sacred; not as the unbelievers on account of this sun, but on account of him who made this sun." Leo of Rome, *Serm.* 22.6 [PL 54:193], also uses the feast of the Nativity to speak against the "*impliam superstitionem*" of sun worship.

⁷⁷Maximus of Turin, *Serm.* 31.2 [CCSL 38:122]: "...*si Christus dominus soli rectius comparatur, lunae quid nisi ecclesiam conparabimus?*" ["...if the Lord Christ is rightly compared to the sun, what shall we compare to the moon if not the church?"].

moon or other planets. This belief in the special quality of time when it is closely associated with Christ is a theme to which we shall return in chapter seven. Our next task is to expand the Creation-Christ-Easter time link to include the end of time. This is more appropriate to late antique Christianity, which juxtaposed all of time, from Creation to eschatological fulfillment, with Christ.

CHAPTER TWO

Eschatology and Chronology: Approaches to the End of Time in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries

*...mundus de fine principium sumit; fine innovatur, non deficit creatura;
saeculum deficit non creatori, sed crimini; neque iustis, sed peccatoribus
finiuntur elementa.*¹

The words of Peter "Chrysologus", bishop of Ravenna in the mid-fifth century, are representative of the late antique Christian understanding of time. Western homiletic tradition placed the listener firmly within the shadow of the Creation drama. At the same time, congregations were turned repeatedly to face the bright light of eschatological hope:

Creation and consummation, first things and last things, are inseparably joined together, like Siamese twins. The first words of the Bible, "in the beginning," have as their counterpart the prophetic expectation, "in the end."²

This suggests a somewhat cyclical view of time. In our investigation of Christian eschatology we shall see more clearly that the theory of linear time, for which Augustine is largely responsible, is not completely appropriate to this period.³ Late antiquity was a period of transition--the ancient view that time was cyclical was beginning to give way to the medieval view that time was linear. In the fourth and

¹Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 47.5 [CCSL 24:262-3]: "...the world takes its beginning from its end; creation is renewed by its end, not depleted; the world does not fail for the creator, but for the criminal; nor are the elements depleted for the just, but for sinners."

²Anderson, *Creation Versus Chaos*, p. 110. Cf. Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, p. 29.

³As suggested above, *intro.*, n. 11.

fifth centuries we find both time theories present, often meshed together into a cyclico-linear format. Ambrose's contention that our inability to perceive where a circle begins does not mean it does not have a beginning is indicative of this development. The circle has an end as well, however imperceptible.⁴

Gunkel's famous axiom, "*Urzeit gleich Endzeit*"⁵ (beginning time equals end time), may be of some assistance here. To interpret this formula as meaning the two times are identical⁶ is as erroneous as the position that the latter will be completely different from the former.⁷ If we remember that "*gleich*" can also mean "like," we arrive at a more acceptable formula (beginning time is *like* end time) for the context of the late antique understanding of the two.

Eschatological expectation took many forms in the fourth and fifth centuries, and it will be impossible to deal with them all completely. There is, for example, a rich tradition both within the homiletic literature and in other Christian writings, of painting eschatological pictures for the listener or reader. Prudentius, a Spanish poet active at the turn of the fourth century, depicts the cities of the world carrying baskets of relics to the Last Judgement.⁸ Peter of Ravenna describes the final

⁴For Ambrose's comments on the circle, see above, ch. 1, n. 6.

⁵H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (Göttingen, 1895).

⁶As does Anderson, *Creation Versus Chaos*, p. 115.

⁷As, for example, Brunner, *Creation and Redemption*, p. 102, who feels that Gunkel's formula makes Christian time as cyclical as the "pagan" understanding of time.

⁸Prudentius, *Po.* 4.5-16 [CCSL 126:286].

passing away of the sun, moon, and stars.⁹ Even Augustine, who was notably more eschatologically sober than many of his contemporaries, cannot resist taking his flock on a guided tour of the levels of hell, nor setting out for the world in his *De Civitate Dei* his interpretation of the order of the final events of time.¹⁰

Instead, this chapter will examine the controversy over eschatological immediacy which characterizes much of the pertinent literature of the period. Especially of interest will be the use of chronological calculations--a characteristic of late antique millenarianism--in attempting to date the end of the world. How pervasive was the influence of millenarianist conceptions in the fourth and fifth centuries? May we agree with R.A. Markus' pronouncement that, "chiliasm can scarcely have been a live force in Augustine's day"?¹¹

i. Definitions of Chiliasm

The history of millenarianism is tinged with fanaticism: in the eighteenth century, Corrodi could write his *Critical History of Millenarianism* in the belief that the subject would provide "rich material for merriment."¹² Recently the subject has seen more serious treatment. Attempts to define millenarianism, or chiliasm as it

⁹ Peter, *Serm.* 120.8 [CCSL 24A:724-5].

¹⁰ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 85.17-18. [CCSL 39:1189-91]; *De Civ. Dei* 20.30 [Loeb 416:436ff]. According to Augustine, the order of eschatological events at the end of time is as follows: 1. the return of Elijah; 2. conversion of the Jews; 3. persecution of the Antichrist; 4. Christ's judgement; rising of the dead; 5. destruction and renewal of earth. All these eschatological pictures use emotional triggers (a useful rhetorical device), such as joy and fear, to keep the congregation on their spiritual "toes".

¹¹ R.A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 20-21. Kelly, *Christian Doctrines*, p. 479, expresses a similar opinion: "...the influence of millenarianism...was rapidly on the wane in the West."

¹² Cf. J. Pieper, *The End of Time. A Meditation on the Philosophy of History*, trans. M. Bullock (London, undated), p. 113.

is also known, have been many and varied. Prete's definition of millenarianism has become the standard. He stresses two elements which are found in all full-scale millenarianism: the foundation of an earthly, material Kingdom over which Christ will rule; the duration of the Kingdom will be a millennium.¹³

In the context of late antiquity, however, chiliasm was normally linked to chronological calculations as to when the end would occur. Not all who made such calculations fit neatly into the modern understanding of the term. The eschatology of Sulpicius Severus, for example, for all its sense of immediacy and complex chronology, does not appear to contain two of the essential elements of millenarianism: an earthly Kingdom which will last a millennium.¹⁴ When the movement against such ideas began to grow in the fourth and fifth centuries, the concept of a material millennium was only part of the problem. Intimately connected with this was the refutation of the idea that human beings were able, indeed, were allowed, to date the End Times. It is this aspect of the attack on chiliasm on which we shall focus our attention.

¹³ S. Prete, "Sulpicio Severo e il millenarismo," *Convivium* 26 n.s. (1958): 395-404. N. Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (London, 1972), p. 13, provides a more liberal definition. Millenarianism is a loose term which is applied to a more general type of salvationism: 1) it will be enjoyed by all the faithful; 2) it will happen on earth, not in heaven; 3) it will happen soon; 4) it will totally transform life on earth, making all things perfect; 5) it will be accomplished by or with the help of supernatural forces. Cohn also differs from Prete in that he is willing to include under the rubric "Millenarian", groups that did not restrict the earthly millennium to only one thousand years (p. 23).

¹⁴ Thus, G.K. van Andel, *The Christian Concept of History in the Chronicle of Sulpicius Severus* (Amsterdam, 1976), p. 132 says of Severus, "it seems to me to be wrong to brand this sort of eschatology as millenarianism, since both criteria mentioned in Prete...are lacking." Sociological definitions of millenarianism, as, for example, provided by R. Wallis, *Millennialism and Charisma* (Belfast, 1982), p. 1, seem, however, to place Severus more firmly in the millenarian tradition: "Millennialism—a form of belief and its associated movement which anticipates a total and supernatural transformation of the physical world, with the elimination of its present evils and indignities and, characteristically, the elevation of believers to the status of an elite."

ii. Chiliasm in the Ante-Nicene Church

Chiliasm with its accompanying chronological calculations dominated the thought of Christians in the ante-Nicene Church.¹⁵ The idea, simply stated, is that the whole course of time can be found typologically symbolized in the six days of Creation. This in itself is not unexpected, as our own investigations have suggested the rich symbolism inherent in the doctrine of Creation. But chiliasts went beyond the symbolic. Based on the interpretation of certain scriptural texts,¹⁶ they believed that one day for God was equal to 1,000 years in earth time. Thus each day of creation represents a temporal epoch of 1,000 years and, as God rested on the seventh day, the world would rest when its sixth "day"--6,000 years--was completed.

The earliest Judaeo-Christian appearance of this idea is found in the *Book of Jubilees*, a Jewish pseudepigraphical work dating to the second century B.C. This set the tone for the concept of a "World Week" of 6,000 years. It was to have a long life in apocryphal literature that normally fell outside accepted canons of Jewish and Christian literature, but which nevertheless often more accurately represented

¹⁵ W. Bousset, *The Antichrist Legend. A Chapter in Christian and Jewish Folklore*, trans. A.H. Keane (London, 1896), p. 245. J. Daniélou, "La typologie millénariste de semaine dans le christianisme primitif," *Vigilae Christianae* 2 (1948): 11. Daniélou traced the development back to Irano-Babylonian sources, through which it passed into Jewish apocalyptic and, finally, into Christian writings (p. 5).

¹⁶ The most important texts were 2 *Peter* 3:8; the Creation story itself as presented in the first chapters of *Genesis*; and *Revelations* 20:1-6 which discusses the millennial reign of Christ on earth.

popular sentiment.¹⁷ However, the World Week also found a place in accepted Patristic literature. Several of the best known names of the second century, Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, and Irenaeus of Lyons, were firm believers in either chiliasm, the 6,000-year time frame, or both.¹⁸

The extent to which chiliast calculations effected the ante-Nicene Church is particularly evident in the foundation of Christian chronography in the third century. What is known of the histories of Jude, Julius Africanus, and Hippolytus demonstrates quite clearly that all were chiliasts working within the 6,000-year time scheme. Of the three, Hippolytus was to have the most influence on chiliast chronology in subsequent centuries. The date he provides for the completion of the 6,000 years--about 500--is significant, and we shall return to it later in this chapter. For the present, it should be noted that chiliast calculations seem to have been, to a great extent, the actual purpose of these histories. Thus the very foundation of Christian historiography is largely the result of eschatological considerations.¹⁹

¹⁷ W.M. Green, "Augustine on the Teaching of History," *University of California Publications in Classical Philology* 12 (1944): 315-32, traces the World Week of six thousand years through the apocalyptic and pseudepigraphical literature. Cf. also E.C. Dewick, *Primitive Christian Eschatology* (Cambridge, 1912), p. 321ff, who examines millennial calculations as found in the Christian Sibylline and apocalyptic literature. Cohn, *Pursuit of the Millennium*, pp. 29-30, points out that although the belief that *Revelations* was a spiritual allegory, not to be seen as a basis for believing in an earthly millennium, became the official orthodox doctrine in the fourth and fifth centuries, it did not replace material millennial hopes in the apocalyptic literature. Such materialism "persisted in the obscure underworld of popular religion" which the apocalypses came to represent.

¹⁸ *Ep. Barn.* 16 [PG 2:769-772]; Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 40 and 51 [PG 6:561-4 and 587-90]; Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adv. Haer.* 5.28.3; 30.4; 32.2; [PG 7:1200-7; 1207; 1210-11]; for Papias of Hierapolis see Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.39 [PG 20:295-302].

¹⁹ Cf. A.A. Mosshammer, *The Chronicle of Eusebius and Greek Chronographic Tradition* (London, 1979), p. 149. Little is known about Jude, outside Eusebius' remarks that he wrote on Daniel 9:24-27 (the seventy weeks), he ended his account in the tenth year of Severus (AD 202-203), and that he was probably misled into making such calculations by the severity of the persecution. Such remarks are typical of the fourth century reaction to chiliast calculations. B.E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 78, notes Eusebius' contempt for millenarians such as Papias and Nepos of Arsinoe (*H.E.* 3.39; 7.24 [PG 20:295-302; 691-6]). Julius Africanus presented the whole of history in terms of 6,000 years, which he, like Jude, believed was almost finished. Little of Africanus' work has survived, but H. Gelzer, *Sextus Julius Africanus und die byzantinische Chronographie* (Leipzig, 1898), pp. 24-26, has managed to reconstruct much of Africanus' chronology, placing it firmly within this tradition. Hippolytus, writing about the middle of the third century,

Eschatological immediacy continued to be a hallmark of millennial calculations into the early fourth century. Cyprian of Carthage, writing in the midst of the Decian and Valerian persecutions of the 250s, believed that the World Week was rapidly coming to an end in his own day.²⁰ Victorinus of Pettau, martyred in 304, has left us a commentary on *Revelations* that includes the myth of a Nero *redivivus* as a precursor to Antichrist, which was to influence the apocalyptic attitudes of Martin of Tours, Sulpicius Severus, and Commodian over a century later.²¹ Lactantius, writing his *Divinae Institutiones* in the first decade of the fourth century, likewise places temporal history into the 6,000-year scheme. Eschatological immediacy does not seem to have affected him, however; like Hippolytus he places the completion of the World Week in the future. He, too, sees the years c. 500 as of crucial importance.²²

iii. The Reaction against Chiliast Calculations

This brief survey of millennial eschatology in the ante-Nicene period demonstrates how pervasive such ideas were at the dawn of the Christian empire.

based his chronology on that of Africanus. Like Jude, he based many of his chronological calculations on Daniel. In his *Commentary on Daniel* 4.23ff [SC 14:307ff], Hippolytus used calculations to prove that Christ was born 5,500 years after Creation, and the world was, therefore, not due to end for some 260 years. Muhlberger, *Fifth-Century Chroniclers*, p. 14, stresses that Hippolytus was writing to refute the belief that the end was imminent—once again a response to the difficulties of the time. While this is true, it is also evident that Hippolytus was indeed a millenarian: his chronology, fixing the expiration of the 6,000 years at about the year 500, was to play an important role in later chiliast calculations.

²⁰ Cyprian, *Ad Fort.*, praef. 2 [PL 4:653].

²¹ Victorinus of Pettau, *Apocal.* 13.16 [PL 5:338]. There also survives fragments of Victorinus' *De Fabrica Mundi*, [PL 5:301-16], which interprets the Creation week in eschatological detail, with the seventh day as representing the seventh millennium in which Christ will rule on earth. For the problems as to the date of Commodian, see below, n. 100.

²² Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* 7.14-25 [PL 6:779-813]. For the date c. A.D. 500, see the discussion of Hippolytus' chronology, n. 19 above. Lactantius, *De Morte Persecutorum* 2 [PL 7:295-8], discusses the Nero tradition as well, but rejects it.

By the end of the fourth century a reaction against chiliasm was growing. Jerome rejected millenarian materialism in a number of his works,²³ in favour of an allegorical interpretation of the new Jerusalem of *Rev.* 21. Instead of an earthly millennium, he proposed a spiritual Jerusalem.²⁴ As to chiliast calculations, he was in firm agreement with Eusebius in assigning the error to fear engendered by the persecutions, which seemed to portend the "*mundi...occasum*".²⁵ Ambrose of Milan also appears to condemn the belief that the history of the world was limited to 6,000 years, preferring to see the number as a symbol.²⁶

It was Augustine of Hippo who took up the anti-chiliast argument most ardently--somewhat surprising in light of the penchant for numerical symbolism which characterizes many of his writings, and his sermons in particular. He does, in fact, admit to having been enamoured with the chronological calculations associated with millenarian tendencies early in his Christian life.²⁷ However, he changed his opinions; his sermons and the *De Civitate Dei* provide the most comprehensive anti-millenarian arguments to survive this period.

²³ E.g., Jerome, *Comm. in Dan.* 2.17f [PL 25:522f] and *Comm. in Is.* 16.59.12ff [PL 24:602f].

²⁴ Jerome, *In Ezek.* 11.36 [PL 25:355]. Jerome mentions the names of several of the people who erroneously held to the belief in a material millennium: Tertullian, Lactantius, Victorinus of Pettau, Sulpicius Severus and Irenaeus.

²⁵ Jerome, *De Vir. Ill.* 52 [PL 23:695]; Eusebius, *H.E.* 6.7 [PG 20:445-8].

²⁶ Ambrose, *Exp. Ev. Sec. Luc.* 7.7 [PL 15:1701]. "...*malumus sex dies per symbolum intelligere.*" ["...we prefer to understand the six days as a symbol."]. However, Ambrose will require closer investigation, as he is not always clear in this area.

²⁷ Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 20.7 [Loeb 416:284-5]: "*Nam etiam nos hoc opinati fuimus aliquando.*" ["For we, too, were once of this opinion"] (trans. W.C. Greene).

Augustine was aware of a number of chiliast modifications to the World Week of 6,000 years. Some had added 1,000 years to the time frame, thus making the eighth day (synonymous with Sunday and eternity for the late antique Christian), the symbol of the earthly millennium.²⁸ Various other time schemes had been discovered, as Augustine notes in his *De Civitate Dei*: "...alii quadringentos, alii quingentos, alii etiam mille ab ascensione Domini usque ad eius ultimum adventum compleri posse dixerunt."²⁹ The existence of so many and varied chiliast calculations suggests that such activities were perhaps more widespread than most modern historians and theologians are willing to admit.

One of the main arguments used against millennial calculations was the very fact that they had repeatedly proven wrong:

*Aliquis quasi computat sibi: Ecce ab Adam tot anni transierunt, et ecce complenetur sex millia annorum, et continuo, quomodo quidam tractatores computaverunt, continuo veniet dies iudicii: et veniunt, et transeunt computationes, et adhuc remoratur sponsi adventus.*³⁰

Augustine sees the failure of these calculations in *Acts* 1.6-7 which forbids any attempt to know the eschatological times and seasons. He repeatedly warns his

²⁸ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 6.1 [CCSL 38:27]: "*Qui adventus, computatis annis ab Adam, post septem annorum milia futurus creditur.*" ["Which coming, by computing the years from Adam, is believed to be after 7,000 years.]. On the symbolism of Sunday as the eighth day of the week, see below, ch. 4, pp. 157ff.

²⁹ Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 18.53 [Loeb 416:78]: "...some have said 400, some 500, some even 1000 years may be completed from the Lord's ascension until his last coming." He mentions also at 18.54 [Loeb 416:80], a non-Christian oracle which claimed "...*coleretur Christi nomen per trecentos sexaginta quinque annos, diende completo memorato numero annorum sine mora sumeret finem.*" ["...the name of Christ should be worshipped for 365 years, and then, after the completion of that number of years, it should without delay come to an end."] (trans. W.C. Greene).

³⁰ Augustine, *Serm.* 93.8 [PL 38:576]: "Someone, as it were, computes for himself: Behold so many years have passed since Adam, and the 6,000 years are completed, and then, according to what certain expositors have computed, the day of judgement will immediately come: and they come, and the computations pass, and the coming of the Bridegroom is still delayed."

flock that no one should attempt to gain, "*scientiam illius temporis, computatione aliqua annorum.*"³¹ Instead, the 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth, as seen in *Rev.* 20.1-6, was to be interpreted allegorically. It is a symbol of the period after the Incarnation or of the entire history of the world; it is not to be taken literally as 1,000 years.³²

Augustine substitutes an individual eschatology for millenarian expectations. He is tempted at one point to tell his flock, "*Non enim tantum remanet de saeculo, quantum iam exemptum est,*"³³ but generally he prefers to stress the uncertainty of the End Times. The "*dies iudicii*" may be far off: but "*tuus certe dies ultimus longe abesse non potest.*"³⁴ Even the longest possible life is nothing but the "*aura...matutina.*"³⁵ when compared to the duration of eternity. And there is, of course, a chance that the End Times may be just around the corner: *Finis saeculi utrum hic aliquem nostrum inveniat, nescio: et fortasse non inveniet. Tempus cuique nostrum, proximum est, quia mortales sumus. Inter casus ambulamus.*³⁶

³¹ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 6.1 [CCSL 38:27]: "...the knowledge of that time, by any computation of years." Cf. *Serm.* 97.1 [PL 38:589]; *Serm.* 109.1 [PL 38:636]; *De Civ. Dei* 18.53 [Loeb 416:78].

³² Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 20.7 [Loeb 416:282ff].

³³ Augustine, *Serm.* 151.2 [PL 38:815]: "For not as much of the world remains as has run out already." At *De Civ. Dei* 18.40 [Loeb 416:14], Augustine says, "...*ab ipso primo homine...nondum sex annorum milia compleantur*" ["...from that first man...not yet 6,000 years have elapsed"] (trans. W.C. Greene).

³⁴ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 36.1.10 [CCSL 38:344]: "...your last day at any rate cannot be far off."

³⁵ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 36.1.10 [CCSL 38:344]: "morning breeze."

³⁶ Augustine, *Serm.* 109.1 [PL 38:636]: "Whether the end of the world shall find any of us here, I do not know: and perhaps it will not. Our time is very near to each of us, because we are mortals: we walk in the midst of chances."

Augustine was opening certain emotional doors for his flock. He emphasized the darker aspects of eschatology, more characteristic of the medieval view of the End Times, attempting to evoke fear as an inducement to reform: "*Time cum est quando timeas. Longe est quidem dies iudicii: sed uniuscuiusque hominis dies ultimus longe esse non potest; quia brevis est vita.*"³⁷ The responsibility to prepare for the End Times is placed squarely on the individual. That was another reason for Augustine's rejection of chiliast calculations--it was too easy not to prepare when you knew that the end was fifty or five hundred years away. Conversely, if you did not know when the end would be, it was best to prepare immediately, "*...ut semper sit paratum cor ad expectandum quod esse venturum scit, et quando venturum sit nescit.*"³⁸ This message--time is short, prepare now--was to be the basis of episcopal prescriptions as to how their flocks should spend their allotted time (chapter six).

a) Cyclico-Linear Time and the *Aetas*

There were other methods by which the late antique Christian could grasp the whole course of time that did not incorporate the offensive 6,000-year chronology. Not all were without some eschatological emphasis, but they were less

³⁷ Augustine, *Serm.* 82.12 [PL 38:512]: "Fear while there is time for fear. The day of judgement is indeed far off: but the last day of every man cannot be far off; for life is short."

³⁸ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 36.1.1 [CCSL 38:336]. "...so that the heart may always be prepared to expect that which it knows is coming, but it does not know when it will come." Cf. *Serm.* 170.10 [PL 38:932]. The "*novissimus dies*" is the end of the world, but it is also the individual's "*dies mortis*".

chronologically precise and made no attempt to date the End Times. The persistence of the cyclical view of time evident in episcopal preaching had the effect of seeing time as a single unit where first things and last things were inextricably intertwined. Echoes of Gunkel's *Urzeit gleich Endzeit* appear in Gaudentius' belief in the "*elementorum futuram renovationem...post huius saeculi finem*,"³⁹ as they do in the sacrament of baptism: "*promissionem domini cernimus esse completam renovatas ad instar caeli ac terrae neophytorum animas intuentes et corpora*."⁴⁰

Sulpicius Severus, an ardent supporter of the 6,000-year chronology, demonstrates how easily this more linear understanding of history could be combined with the cyclical. In a conversation which his hero, Martin of Tours, was purported to have held with Satan, Martin's speech takes on a decidedly Origenist tone, suggesting that he viewed time as a single, great circle:

*Si tu ipse, o miserabilis, ab hominum insectatione desisteres, et te factorum tuorum vel hoc tempore cum dies iudicii in proximo est, poeniteret; ego tibi vere confisus in Domino Jesu Christo misericordiam pollicerer.*⁴¹

³⁹ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 3.1 [CSEL 68:33]: "The future restoration of all elements...after the end of this world."

⁴⁰ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 3.2 [CSEL 68:33]: "We see the promise of the Lord fulfilled as we see the souls and bodies of the neophytes restored after the manner of heaven and earth." Zeno of Verona, *Tr.* 1.2.26 [CCSL 22:21-22] taught a similar opinion as to man's origin and his ultimate, cyclical, restoration: "...quemadmodum etenim ille princeps iniquitatis suo semine per invidiam protoplastos ex angelis in homines derivavit, ita dominus omnes in se credentes sancti spiritus semine a mortuis rursus gloriosus in angelos excitabit" ["...as for instance since that prince of iniquity through treachery drew off the first man from the angels into human beings by his own seed, so the Lord will raise up from the dead all believers containing the seed of the spirit of holiness and turn them back again into glorious angels"].

⁴¹ Sulpicius Severus, *V.Mart.* 22. [PL 20:172-3]: "If you yourself, O wretched one, would cease to prey upon mankind and would repent of your deeds, now that the Day of Judgement is near, I have such trust in the Lord Jesus Christ that I would promise you mercy." This statement probably is the result of Severus' close friendship with Paulinus of Nola. Paulinus was associated with Rufinus of Aquileia, Melania the Elder, and the monastic establishments on the Mount of Olives which were carrying on the pro-Origen side of the Origenist controversy, raging at the end of the fourth century. It is another example of the great faith which Severus places in Martin of Tours. Severus' strong attachment to the saint probably lead him, naively, to believe that such words coming from the mouth of Martin would carry weight in the controversy.

For Martin, and for Severus, time was quite capable of at least one revolution, in which that which had been in the beginning (before Satan's fall) could be restored--if the devil were to correct himself. They knew that Satan would not do this: thus time was *potentially* cyclical, but linear in reality.

The uniting theme of all these comments is that time was perceived as a single, unified epoch; as a cycle or age. Ambrose of Milan's remarks to his neophytes expresses this best:

*Sicut igitur circuitus unus, ita dies unus. Nam plerique etiam hebdomadam unam unum diem dicunt; quod in se quasi in unum redeat diem, et quasi septies in se recurrat. Est autem circuitus figura haec a se incipere, et in se reverti. Unde et saeculum unum interdum Scriptura dicit.*⁴²

But time envisioned as a circular movement of fall and restoration was not predominant in the late antique West. Time tended more regularly to be divided into a various number of epochs, normally of unequal length. The division of history into two parts was the simplest such division, and the one implicitly accepted by all Christians. This division is the ultimate expression of the prevailing view that Christ's life was the central point in time. Ambrose was in the habit of using the seasons as a symbol of the division between the two ages: before Christ

⁴²Ambrose, *Hex.* 1.10.37 [PL 14:144]: "Therefore just as there is a single revolution [of time], so there is one day. For there are many who call even a week one day, because it returns to itself, just as one day does, and, as it were, seven times revolves back on itself. This is the figure of a circle, to begin with itself and to return to itself. Hence, Scripture speaks at times of an age of the world." And even Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 6.2 [CCSL 38:28], the great exponent of the linear concept of time, cannot help but perceive time in a cyclical sense of motion, as opposed to an eternity: "*et quoniam omnia tempora septem dierum istorum repetitione voluntur, octavus forte ille dictus est, qui varietatem istam non habebit*" ["and since all times have their revolution in a repetition of those seven days, that is called the eighth day which will not have that variety"].

was winter, after Christ, spring. Zeno of Verona made the same division.⁴³ Some bishops, at least in their extant sermons, never went beyond this. Leo of Rome lumped everything before Christ under the ominous heading "*nox profunda*", the same term which he applied to all traditional Roman religious practices.⁴⁴ Leo prefers to speak of the period after Christ in a more ominous, eschatological sense, as living "*in ultima mundi aetate*."⁴⁵

When we come to the evidence for a threefold division of time, we return to the influence of Augustine, who repeatedly taught the idea of the *tria tempora* to his flock: "*Arbor ficulnea, genus humanum est. Triennium autem, tria sunt tempora: unum ante legem, alterum sub Lege, tertium sub gratia*."⁴⁶ Like the twofold division of time, the threefold division also places all of time within the context of salvation history. The *tria tempora* were especially useful in drawing the flock's attention to their current lives "*sub gratia*"--a time of preparation, connected intimately with Christ whose intercession defers punishment until the eschatological drama is ready to commence. Quodvultdeus of Carthage incorporates this threefold division of time into his catechetical training: "*tres dies tria tempora saeculi*

⁴³ Ambrose, *De Isaac*, 4.35 [PL 14.514]: "*Ante adventum Christi hyems est, post adventum ejus flores sunt*" ["Before the advent of Christ it is winter, after his advent, there are flowers."]. Cf. Hex. 4.5.22 [PL 14.199]. Zeno, *Tr.* 1.33.1-2 [CCSL 22:84] also uses the winter/spring image. For Zeno's symbolic use of the seasons, see p. 116.

⁴⁴ Leo, *Serm.* 42.5 [SC 74:39].

⁴⁵ Leo, *Serm.* 23.4 [PL 54:203]: "in the last age of the world".

⁴⁶ Augustine, *Serm.* 110.2 [PL 38:638]: "The fig tree [Luke 13] is the human race. And the three years are the three times; one before the Law, the second under the Law, the third under grace." Cf. *Ennar. in Ps.* 29.2.16 [CCSL 38:184]. *De Doc. Chr.* 2.16.25 [PL 34:48].

ponentes, ante Legem, sub Lege, sub Gratia."⁴⁷ Outside of Africa, Gaudentius of Brescia uses the *tria tempora* to explaining the significance of the Wedding Feast which Christ attended on the third day: "*Dies itaque fuit in mandato primus ab Adam usque ad Moysen; secundus dies fuit sub lege Moysi; tertius dies est sub gratia salvatoris.*"⁴⁸

The most important and widespread large division of the whole of time was the *aetas*. In a very early sermon, *De Paradiso* (c. 375), Ambrose uses a four-age system to explain the history of time, basing his interpretation on the four rivers that flowed from Paradise.⁴⁹ Later in his episcopal career, Ambrose favoured the division of time into eight ages: "*Itaque septima mundi aetas conclusa est; octava illuxit gratia, quae fecit hominem jam non hujus mundi esse, sed supra mundum.*"⁵⁰ The octave indicates Sunday, known variably as the first and the eighth day of the week due to the intricacies of Roman time-reckoning. Ambrose counts seven ages before Christ. The present age, the eighth, is linked to Sunday because the whole age, thanks to the intervention of Christ, has become one of potential salvation--a particularly positive understanding of time.

⁴⁷ Quodvultdeus, *De Symb.* II 6.7 [CCSL 60:343]: "The 3 days [Christ's 3 days and nights in the tomb] are the triple times of the world placed before the Law, under the Law, and under Grace.

⁴⁸ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 8.23 [CSEL 68:66]: "The first day, therefore, was under the commandment from Adam to Moses. The second day was under the law of Moses. The third Day is under the grace of the Saviour." Again we find the division of time being taught to new Christians, this time to neophytes during the week following Easter.

⁴⁹ Ambrose, *De Par.* 3.19-22 [PL 14.282-3].

⁵⁰ Ambrose, *Ep.* 44.14 [PL 16.1140]: "Thus, the seventh age of the world being completed, the grace of the octave has shone upon us, which has made men no longer to be of this world, but above it."

It was the six-ages division of time which proved to be the most widely accepted, and the most long-lived. Augustine's suggestion that the catechumen be taught this division as a basic part of Christian indoctrination was noted in the Introduction. Augustine continued to emphasize this division of time to his regular flock as well, returning to the idea repeatedly:

*...quia erit sabbatum huius saeculi, cum transierint sex aetates. Quasi sex dies saeculi transeunt. Unus dies ab Adam usque ad Noe transiit; alius a diluvio usque ad Abraham transiit; tertius ab Abraham usque ad David transiit; quartus a David usque ad transmigrationem Babyloniae transiit; quintus a transmigratione Babyloniae usque ad adventum Domini nostri Jesu Christi.... In sexta aetate, in sexto die sumus.*⁵¹

From Augustine, the idea of the six ages spread to Quodvultdeus, and is found in Eusebius "Gallicanus".⁵² It was to become one of the dominant divisions of time in the Middle Ages.⁵³ The appeal of the six ages rests in its very similarity to the 6,000-year chiliast chronology. In refuting chiliasm, Augustine realized that popular enthusiasm for its chronology necessitated a reinterpretation of the texts upon which it was based. Thus the World Week became the six ages of history. Augustine removed what he considered to be the offensive chiliast chronology and replaced it with the *aetas*. The *aetas* was a more fluid unit of time, chronologically imprecise and, therefore, less open to millennial speculations.

⁵¹ Augustine, *Serm.* 125.4 [PL 38.693]: "...because it will be the sabbath of this world when 6 ages have passed. Just as if six days of the world have passed. One day passed between Adam and Noah; another between the flood and Abraham; a third from Abraham to David; the fourth from David to the Babylonian Captivity; the fifth from the Babylonian Captivity to the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ....We are in the sixth day, in the sixth age." Cf. *Hom. in Joh.* 9.16; 15.9 [PL 35:1465; 1513]; *Serm.* 259.2 [PL 38:1197].

⁵² Quodvultdeus, *Liber Promissionum* 1.7 [CCSL 68:20]; Eusebius "Gallicanus", *De Epiphania Domini* II 2 [CCSL 101:57].

⁵³ Green, "Teaching of History," pp. 315-332, traces the use of the six-ages scheme of history through to the end of the Middle Ages.

iv. Chiliasm and Chronology in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries

a) Chronological Arguments For and Against Chiliasm

We have already witnessed the importance attached to chronology in allowing the Christian to fix his place within the scheme of salvation history. The dating of Creation undertaken by Hilarian, Ambrose, and Gaudentius, as well as Augustine's requirement that a catechumen be trained in the course of history from Creation to the present time, are indicative of this. Chronology was by no means an exact science in late antiquity, however. Calculations are extant from a number of sources and they often diverge markedly in their tallies. But there were two predominant strains of chronology which did achieve a certain degree of agreement. These were the chiliast, 6,000-year chronology, and what I have termed the "official" chronology of the Church. The following chart tabulates the similarities in each strain, and the differences between the two types:

TABLE 1
Differences Between Official and Chiliast Chronology

| | Creation to Flood | Flood to Abr. | TOTAL | Creation to Christ | TOTAL TO 433 | DATE OF 6,000 YRS. |
|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|-------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| * <i>LG</i> | 2,242 | 1,143 | 3,385 | 5,500 | 5,937 | 496 |
| *Hilarian | 2,237 | 1,012 | 3,249 | 5,500 | 5,935 | 498 |
| *Severus | 2,242 | 1,017 | 3,259 | 5,500 | 5,935 | 498 |
| * <i>F.V.Post</i> | 2,242 | 1,143 | 3,385 | 5,500 | 5,935 | 495 |
| Jerome | 2,242 | 942 | 3,184 | 5,199 | 5,634 | --- |
| Orosius | --- | --- | 3,184 | 5,199 | 5,634 | --- |

Prosper 2,242 942 3,184 5,228 5,634 ---⁵⁴

The first major difference between the two chronologies occurs in the period from the Flood to Abraham (column 2). Except for Hilarian and Severus,⁵⁵ chiliast calculations attributed 1,143 years to this period, versus 942 years in the Eusebius-Jerome tradition.⁵⁶ Eusebius used the Septuagint as the basis for this number; Jerome and his continuators (Orosius and Prosper) used it as well.⁵⁷ By the time of Abraham, chiliast chronology includes an additional 201 years; by the Incarnation, this difference has increased to 301 years. In the chiliast tradition, the Incarnation is invariably dated as occurring 5,500 years after Creation; in the official chronology, the number is usually 5,199 years.⁵⁸

The aberration in Prosper's tally of the years between Creation and the

⁵⁴ An asterisk ("*") denotes a source which used chiliast chronology. Column 1 indicates the number of years calculated to have elapsed between Creation and the Flood, column 2, between the Flood and Abraham. Column 3 provides the sum of these two figures; column 4, the summation of years between Creation and the Incarnation. Column 5 indicates the number of years elapsed in 433, when Prosper published the first edition of his *Epitoma Chronicon*. Finally, column 6 indicates the date of the completion of the 6,000 years, calculated from summations made in the documents as to how much of the 6,000 years had elapsed at the time of writing. I have not included a similar date for sources using the official chronology, as the 6,000-year time scheme was irrelevant to them. *LG* = *Liber Generationis*; *F.V.Post* = *Fasti Vindobonenses Posteriores*—these two documents will be discussed below.

⁵⁵ The differences in Hilarian and Severus are minor, and easily reconciled. They use the period from the Flood to the *birth* of Abraham, rather than from the Flood to God's promise to Abraham, made approximately 120 years later. Adding 120 to their figures brings the tally up to 3,369 for Hilarian and 3,379 for Severus, much closer to the traditional figure of 3,385 years. The differences of a few years are probably the result of the difficulties involved in sorting through the generations and calculating their lengths as found in the *Genesis* genealogies.

⁵⁶ The relevant time spans are given at *LG II a.* 334 174-175 [*CM* 1:129]; Hilarian, *De Mun. Dur.* 5 [*PL* 13:1100]; Severus, *Hist. Sacr.* 1, 3, 5 [*PL* 20:977]; and *F.V.Post.* 74 [*CM* 1:278]. For 942 years see Jerome, *Chron.* 2044 [*PL* 8:547]; Prosper, *Epit. Chron.* 384 [*CM* 1:409].

⁵⁷ "Eusebius, Chronicle of", *DCB* 2:350.

⁵⁸ For 5,500 years see *LG II a.* 334 148 [*CM* 1:131]; *F.V.Post* 74 [*CM* 1:278]; Sulpicius Severus leaves the reader to calculate the years from Creation to Incarnation from the data he provides. Gelzer, *Sextus Julius Africanus*, 2:107-201 worked out Severus' chronology (5,500 years). Hilarian, *De Mun. Dur.* 15 [*PL* 13:1104], actually provides 5,530 years: "a fabrica mundi usque ad passionem Christi Salvatoris nostri, anni sunt 5530" ["From the Creation of the world to the passion of our Saviour, Christ, there are 5,530 years. This would still place the year which Hilarian accepts for the Incarnation at approximately 5,500. For the 5,199 years of the official chronology, see Orosius, *Adv. Pag.* 1.1 [*PL* 31:669-90]; and Jerome, *Chron.* 2044 [*PL* 27:547].

Incarnation, 5,228 years rather than 5,199 years (column 4), is the result of his using both Jerome's chronology and the *Liber Generationis* (= LG).⁵⁹ The confusion is evident in the period from Flood to Abraham. Although epitomizing Jerome and giving the same figure of 942 years in his summation, elsewhere he records the period as 1,146 years.⁶⁰ It is likely that some erroneous combination of numbers from the two sources is responsible for the extra 29 years which Prosper attributes to the Creation to Incarnation period.

Aside from these minor differences, each of the documents is relatively consistent with the chronographic system to which it subscribed. This is most clearly demonstrated by the number of years elapsed between Creation and 433 (the year Prosper's *Epitoma Chronicon* was first published). Dealing first with the non-chiliasm sources, Prosper himself sums up his chronicle as follows: "*ab Adam usque in tempus supra scriptorum consulum anni VDCXXXIII*."⁶¹ Orosius, writing in 417, counted 5,617 years.⁶² By adding 16 years, the difference between the dates of publication, we arrive at 5,633 years. Assuming that Prosper wrote later in the year than Orosius would correct the one-year deficit and allow the same total of

⁵⁹ Muhlberger, *Fifth-Century Chroniclers*, p. 61ff, has the LG as one of Prosper's sources. The carelessness in his chronology seems to stem from combining the chiliasm LG chronology with Jerome's chronology.

⁶⁰ 942 years, *Epit. Chron.* 384; 1318 [CM 1:409; 474]; 1,146 years, *Epit. Chron.* 28 [CM 1:386].

⁶¹ Prosper, *Epit. Chron.* 1318 [CM 1:474]: "From Adam until the time of the consuls written above (i.e., Theodosius 13 and Maximus = A.D. 433), 5,634 years."

⁶² Orosius, *Adv. Pag.* 7.43 [PL 31:1174].

5,634 years from Creation to 433. Jerome, writing in 379, calculated 5,579 years had elapsed since Creation.⁶³ By adding 54 years, the difference between 379 and 433, we again arrive at 5,633 years. The same correction allows a consistent 5,634 years from Creation.⁶⁴

Are the similarities in the non-chiliasm chronology significant? It could be argued that the consistency is a result of continuation: Jerome took over Eusebius' chronology, Orosius and Prosper adapted Jerome's. However, we know that both Eusebius and Jerome were ardently anti-millenarian.⁶⁵ The same can be said of Orosius and Prosper,⁶⁶ both disciples of Augustine, the great opponent to chiliasm of his age. Beginning with Eusebius, there appears to have been a conscious effort made to drop the 6,000-year scheme from Christian chronology, which had been synonymous with chiliasm chronology before him. It seems likely that this change was largely due to a growing anti-millenarian movement in portions of the Church hierarchy. It was this chronology that became officially accepted by the Church as it sought to deter the influence of chiliasm. Just as Christian chronography had originally developed in response to chiliasm, its new face was, in part, a response

⁶³ Jerome, *Chron. a. Abr.* 2395 [PL 27:507-8].

⁶⁴ Most Christians of this period held that the ecclesiastical year began in March (see chapter three). Thus, if Prosper had summed up before March of 433, he would have calculated 5,633 years; if he summed up in, say, October 433, he would have calculated 5,634 years.

⁶⁵ On Eusebius' disdain for chiliasm, see above, n. 19.

⁶⁶ Prosper was aware of chiliasm chronology from his use of the *Liber Generationis*. He evidently preferred to remain within the Eusebius-Jerome chronological tradition.

to chiliasm as well.

Although there are some slight disagreements in the lengths of the early time periods used by the chiliasts, all agree in placing the Incarnation 5,500 years after Creation. Simple mathematics indicates that the 6,000 years would be completed in the last few years of the fifth century. When these calculations were originally made by Julius Africanus and Hippolytus, in the third century, the End Times were believed to be over two hundred years away.⁶⁷ Eschatological immediacy was thus not a major issue. This would not have been the case for chiliasts living in the fourth and fifth centuries, whose proximity in time to the last decade of the fifth century must have been a cause for great concern.

The chiliast writings listed in the chart demonstrate the consistency of the date for the termination of the 6,000 years (column 6). The first chiliast document, the *LG*, is actually an anonymous continuation of the chronicle of Hippolytus. It was included in the *Calendar of 354* which in itself is not chiliast. But the use of chiliast chronology in a predominantly secular document suggests how pervasive the influence of the Hippolytan chronological tradition was, as does its inclusion in a number of consular *fasti* in subsequent centuries.⁶⁸

The *LG* is corrupt in places. At one point it lists the number of years between

⁶⁷ Africanus' chronology was similar to Hippolytus'. Writing his *Chronographiae* in 221, he calculated 5,723 years since Creation. This provides a date of 498 for the completion of the 6,000 years. 498 seems to have been the most popular date. On Africanus, see Mosshammer, *Chronicle of Eusebius*, p. 37.

⁶⁸ As, for example, in *F.V.Post*, written in the early sixth century. For the influence of chiliast chronology on the *fasti*, see pp. 69-71.

Creation and the consulship of Optatus and Paulinus as 1,017 years.⁶⁹ Hippolytus' own summation is more useful: "*fiunt igitur (omnes anni ab Adam) usque in hunc diem anni VDCCXXXVIII.*"⁷⁰ Hippolytus wrote in 234; the *LG* was summed up in 334. Thus from Creation to 334 was actually 5,838 years, not 1,017. According to this chronology, the 6,000 years would elapse in 162 years; by adding 162 years to the date of the summation (334), we arrive at the date 496 as the supposed End Times.

Hilarian provides us with our next prediction of the End Times. He lists the period between Creation and the Passion of Christ as 5,530 years,⁷¹ which leaves 470 years until the 6,000 years are completed. When Hilarian wrote his *De Mundi Duratione* in 397, "*in consulatu Caesarii et Attici; die nono kalendas Aprilis, anni transierunt 369. Restant itaque anni 101 ut consummentur anni 6000....*"⁷² Again the date to watch occurs in the last decade of the fifth century--about 498 for Hilarian.

The same date was predicted by Sulpicius Severus. Although not a millenarian in the strict sense, as noted previously, the chronology which he worked

⁶⁹ Mommsen discusses the problems in the text at *CM* 1:88. For the date of the consulship of Optatus and Paulinus (334), see *Fasti Consulares* 334, Section 8 of the *Calendar of 354* [*CM* 1:61].

⁷⁰ *LG* I [*CM* 1:315]: "All the years from Adam until the present day were, therefore, 5,738 years."

⁷¹ See above, n. 58.

⁷² Hilarianus, *De Mun. Dur.* 17 [*PL* 13:1105]. "...in the consulship of Caesarius and Atticus, on the nones of April, 369 years have passed. Therefore there remains 101 years until the 6,000 years are completed."

out in his *Historia Sacra*, written in the first decade of the fifth century (403), places him firmly within the Hippolytan chronological tradition. Severus begins his chronicle by noting that the world was created almost 6,000 years ago, "*quamquam inter se parum consentiant qui rationem temporum investigatam ediderunt.*"⁷³ Severus is an interesting case because he argues in direct opposition to Augustine. He, too, notes the variety in chiliast calculations, but attributes the fault to antiquity rather than God's will. Whereas Augustine taught that such calculations were intrinsically wrong because God disallowed knowledge of the date of the End Times, Severus believed that such calculations were not to be censured.⁷⁴ In fact, he uses the chiliast chronology to supplement his belief that the End Times were near, rather than as the basis for it. The true basis of his eschatological beliefs is Martin of Tours: "*Atque haec esse postrema tempora prophetae annuntiant.*"⁷⁵ Severus' eschatological expectancy comes directly from Martin, whom he believed to be a prophet of the End Times, a theme to which we shall return later in this chapter.

Severus' devotion to Martin's eschatological views are widely represented in Severus' writings. It is likely that, when Severus came to write his chronicle, he

⁷³ Sulpicius Severus, *Hist. Sac.* 1.2 [PL 20:95]: "...although those who have performed an investigation into the reason of the times agree little among themselves."

⁷⁴ Sulpicius Severus, *Hist. Sac.* 1.2 [PL 20:95]. The calculations "*calumnia carere debent*" ["...ought to be free from censure"].

⁷⁵ Sulpicius Severus, *Hist. Sac.* 2.3 [PL 20:130]: "And the prophets declare that these are the final times."

wanted to demonstrate Martin's eschatological expectancy with chronology: it was natural for him, therefore, to rework the traditional, millenarian theme of the 6,000 years of world history.

Severus takes his account up to the consulship of Stilicho (403), at which time he claims that 372 years have elapsed since the crucifixion of Christ.⁷⁶ Thus, it would appear that at the writing of his chronicle, Severus believed that approximately 5,905 years had elapsed since Creation. He, too, believed that the Antichrist, and the accompanying eschatological drama, would commence before the end of the century, in 498.

The last document in the chart which uses chiliast chronology, the *Fasti Vindobonenses Posteriores* (= *F.V.Post*), provides a different slant because it was compiled *after* the important final years of the fifth century (early sixth century). Its mother document, the *Fasti Vindobonenses Priores* (= *F.V.Pr*), written in the fifth century, *before* the culmination of chiliast predictions, is useful for comparison. These *fasti* are part of the *Consularia Italica*, edited by Mommsen in the first volume of his *Chronica Minora*. They are predominantly secular sources, which provide little outside the names of the consuls; occasionally they list important historical events under the names of that year's consuls. However, some of the notes betray that the anonymous authors of these works also had Christian

⁷⁶ Sulpicius Severus, *Sacred History* 2.27 [PL 20:144].

affiliations.

F.V.Pr is an interesting example of the combination of secular and Christian views, as in the following chronological summation: "*fiunt omnes anni, ex quo terra condita est usque ad Gaium Iulium Cesarem anni VXLIII.*"⁷⁷ We are struck immediately by the attempt to place secular events within a Christian chronology, a characteristic of the Eusebius-Jerome chronological tradition. The figure given--5,044 years to Caesar--verifies that the anonymous author subscribed to the official chronology rather than the chiliast. By adding the years from Caesar's birth to the birth of Christ, about 97 years, we arrive at 5,141 years between the Creation and the Incarnation--quite close to Orosius' 5,199 years.

The anonymous author of the *F.V.Post* was of a different mindset, however. Although his adaption of the *F.V.Pr* is very similar to that original, one of his major changes is the chronology. He forgoes the official Christian chronology of the Eusebius-Jerome tradition, and places himself firmly within the Hippolytan chronological tradition. Thus he lists 2,242 years between Adam and Noah, 1,143 years between Noah and Abraham, and 5,500 years from the Creation to the Incarnation.⁷⁸

The explanation for the change in chronology must rest in the dates when

⁷⁷ *F.V.Pr* 8 [CM 1:274]: "There were 5044 years from the creation of the world up to Gaius Julius Caesar."

⁷⁸ *F.V.Post.* 74 [CM 1:278]. So, too, do we find the Hippolytan chronology associated with chiliast chronology in the *Barbarus Scaligeri* (named after the man who discovered it), a seventh century consular *fasti*, also from Italy. Cf. *BS* 80 [CM 1:278].

these two *fasti* were compiled. The *F.V.Pr* was published at the end of the fifth century when the End Times loomed ominously large for followers of the chiliast chronology. Its use of the official chronology under these circumstances indicates the author's anti-millenarian stance. The *F.V.Post* did not need to be wary of chiliast predictions, as the last decade of the fifth century had already passed without incident. In purposefully using the 6,000-year time scheme, *F.V.Post* suggests that it was the chiliast chronology that was the most popular, even though the eschatological aspects of it were now moot.

b) Eschatological Expectation and the Extent of Chiliasm in Late Antiquity

Thus far our investigation has delineated two different attitudes as to the end of time: first, that the End Times were rapidly approaching and would commence in a specific year; second, that the End Times *might* be rapidly approaching because the date is uncertain. These two views prompt two questions. To what extent was eschatological expectancy heightened in the fourth and fifth centuries? How much of this eschatological expectancy was of the chiliast variety?

In answering the first question, we should recall the effect of the persecutions in prompting eschatological expectations during the ante-Nicene period. Bad Times equal End Times is hardly an unusual equation in Christian history! It is not difficult to demonstrate that the rubric "bad times" was applicable to the West in the late fourth and fifth centuries. With the defeat of Roman forces at the battle of

Adrianople in 378, the Western Roman Empire began a losing battle which was to see the last Western emperor, Romulus Augustulus, removed from his throne a century later. Marauding bands of barbarians became commonplace in Italy, Gaul, Spain, and Africa; war, pestilence, and famine almost the normal state of life. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the belief that the End Times had dawned was widespread in the West during this period.

Thus we see Valerian of Cimiez in mid-fifth-century Gaul, a land torn by war, warning his flock of the coming judgement day, telling them to prepare by healing their spiritual "*vulnera*" with an "*inundatione lacrymarum*."⁷⁹ So, too, in Africa, about the same time, do we find Quodvultdeus of Carthage echoing the words of his master, Augustine, in this warning to his catechumens: "*Finis mundi in proximo est; et si, ut quidam putant, in proximo non est, dies ultimus uniuscuiusque nostrum incertus est*."⁸⁰ In Italy, Peter of Ravenna was issuing warnings to his flock as well. Theirs was the "*novissimum tempus*," and, more ominously, "*saeculi vicinus est finis*."⁸¹ In Spain, Gregory of Elvira warned his own flock in the 370s that the "*finem saeculi*" was close at hand.⁸² A century later, in

⁷⁹Valerian of Cimiez, *Hom.* 8.5 [PL 52:719]: "*Non enim poteris in illa die futuri iudicii aliter invenire refrigerium, nisi vulnera tua...laveris inundatione lacrymarum*" ["For you will not be able to find rest on that coming judgement day unless you wash your wounds with an abundance of tears"].

⁸⁰Quodvultdeus, *De Symb.* III 8.7 [CCSL 60:360]: "The end of the world is near; and if, as some certainly think, it is not near, the last day of each person is uncertain to us."

⁸¹Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 36.3 [CCSL 24:209], "*novissimum tempus*"—the "last time", *Serm.* 47.4 [CCSL 24:262], "...the end of the world is near."

⁸²Gregory of Elvira, *Tr. Orig.* 3.10 [CCSL 69:21].

a Spain torn by war and the machinations of the Sueves and Visigoths, Hydatius could fill his chronicle with an assortment of evil omens and portents, and show how Biblical prophecies as to the end of the world were being fulfilled before his eyes.⁸³

Humanity's common experience of time and time-units proved useful in eschatological preaching. In order to give the listener some taste of eternity and End Time events, bishop's regularly reinterpreted mundane time in a symbolic, eschatological sense. The following chart provides examples:

TABLE 2
Time-units Used Eschatologically

Augustine

| | |
|--|---|
| <i>Serm.</i> 87.1 [PL 38:530] | - <i>tempus...spiritualis vindemia[e]</i> |
| <i>Serm.</i> 97.1 [PL 38:589] | - <i>diem novissimum</i> |
| <i>Serm.</i> 125.4 [PL 38:692] | - <i>sabbatum huius saeculi</i> |
| <i>Serm.</i> 125.9 [PL 38:696] | - <i>in tempore quinquagenario</i> |
| <i>Hom. in Joh.</i> 19.16 [CCSL 36:199] | - <i>hora ut resurgant mortui</i> |

⁸³ E.g., Hydatius, *Chron.* 57 [SC 218:120]: the marriage of the Visigothic King Athaulf to Placidia as a realization of the prophecy in *Dan.* 11.5-6 concerning the marriage of the daughter of a King to the King of the North, a sign of the last times; the four plagues described in *Ezek.* 14.21 being fulfilled in Spain (c. 48) [SC 218:116], etc. The most fascinating of these portents—and the most strange—comes at the end of his chronicle (*Chron.* 253 [SC 219:179]), in 469. He records the capture of four fish bearing the Latin numerals for the number 365, thus *anni circulum continentes*. The meaning of this mysterious portent is lost. Tranoy, SC 219:179, n. 3, feels the portent is simply indicative of "the depth of Hydatius' [eschatological] despair." Muhlberger, *Fifth-Century Chroniclers*, p. 262 argues against this. If the portent of the fish was an indication that the cycle of time was coming to an end, it is too obscure to tell us what end, and when. He argues consistently that Hydatius' *Chronicon* was not as eschatologically orientated as some would have us believe. R.W. Burgess, *Hydatius: A Late Roman Chronicler in Post-Roman Spain. An Historiographical Study and New Critical Edition* (D.Phil. Thesis, Oxford, 1989) argues in favour of Hydatius' eschatological orientation. I am inclined to agree. Four fish bearing the numbers 365 might be interpreted as predicting the return of Christ—often symbolized by the fish—in four years. Another interpretation is provided by the preceding chapter where Hydatius speaks of the year as being scattered or mixed up ("*annus...diffunditur*"). The numbers for the year appearing on a fish might symbolize the physical manifestation of the "lost shape" of the year—a pun showing that Hydatius, in spite of his "gloom and doom" attitude, had not lost his sense of humour. At any rate, it is fairly evident from his chronicle that Hydatius did suffer from a heightened sense of eschatological expectancy. His adherence to the Eusebius-Jerome chronology (he was a continuator of Jerome) stopped him from using the chiliast 6,000-year time scheme, but he certainly would have agreed with them as to the proximity of the End Times.

Gaudentius

- Tr. 2.19 [CSEL 68:28] -*in mane illius futurae resurrectionis*
 Tr. 5.10 [CSEL 68:46] -*illum futurum diem festum*
 Tr. 10.22 [CSEL 68:99] -*beatissimus dies*
 Tr. 9.18 [CSEL 68:80] -*vesperum...mundi*

Leo

- Serm. 25.2 [SC 49:26] -*in die retributionis*

Zeno

- Tr. 1.36.3 [CCSL 22:92] -*perpetuae felicitatis tempus*

Valerian

- Hom. 8.3 [PL 52:718] -*futuris messibus*
 Hom. 8.5 [PL 52:719] -*in illa die futuri iudicii*
 Hom. 9.5 [PL 52:722] -*tempus...justae retributionis*

Eschatological immediacy seems to have been a fact of Christian life in late antiquity, whether one subscribed to chiliasm or not. In part, this was a reaction to chiliasm.⁸⁴ As we saw in Augustine, an individual eschatology required the Christian to maintain a permanent state of readiness. Episcopal preaching focused on this, promoting a heightened eschatological expectancy by returning to the subject repeatedly. It should already be apparent, however, that eschatological expectancy did not necessitate holding millenarian views, nor agreeing with eschatological calculations. It is necessary, therefore, to turn to a more detailed examination of the sources to see how widespread such views actually were in the fourth- and fifth-century West.

Hilary, bishop of Poitiers in the mid-fourth century, exhibits a fondness for

⁸⁴It was also a reaction to the difficulty of the times, as suggested above.

chiliasm calculations. On a number of occasions he mentions that the time-span of the world was to be 6,000 years, placing the birth of Christ 5,500 years after Creation.⁸⁵ But he also stressed the uncertainty of the final eschatological drama. Like Augustine, Hilary believed that God provided man with a long period of time in which to work towards repentance, something which was aided by the fear engendered by not knowing exactly when the Second Coming would be.⁸⁶ The late antique Christian author whose works have survived under the name of Ambrosiaster, held more strictly to millenarian views. He believed that the crumbling Roman Empire was a sign that the End Times were rapidly approaching. Soon Antichrist would come, and after his brief reign, Christ would follow, ruling over his saints for a millennium.⁸⁷

Within the extant homiletic literature there is an assortment of evidence for teaching millenarian views and eschatological calculations. Gregory of Elvira, in the 370s, taught his flock that when the End Times came--which would be very soon--the heavenly Jerusalem would descend to the earth and inaugurate a 1,000-year reign of Christ on earth. He bases his own calculations as to the commencement of the eschatological drama on the number six, as presented in the

⁸⁵ Hilary of Poitiers, *Comm. in Matt.* 17.1; 20.6 [PL 9:989; 1029-30].

⁸⁶ Hilary of Poitiers, *Comm. in Matt.* 26.4 [PL 9:1057]; Cf. Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, p. 94.

⁸⁷ Ambrosiaster, *Comm. in 2 Thess.* 2; *Comm. in 1 Cor.* 15.52 [PL 481-4; 285-6]. For a discussion of Ambrosiaster's millenarianism, see Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, p. 479.

six days of Creation:

*Ut ergo sex diebus mundus est factus et sexto millesimo anno figura saeculi istius praeteribit, ita et senarius numerus Antechristi cum omni malitia sua sexto die domini qui sextus millesimus annus est finietur...et septimo die domini regnum sanctorum erit.*⁸⁸

The position of Ambrose of Milan is considerably more difficult to establish. He expressly condemns the view that the time allotted to the world could be limited to 6,000 years.⁸⁹ Yet in an earlier sermon, preached on the death of his brother, Satyrus, he seems to suggest a different calculation "*Ergo isti avi quingentesimus resurrectionis annus est, nobis millesimus: illi in hoc saeculo, nobis in consumatione mundi.*"⁹⁰ Ambrose may be dating the end of the world to the 1,000th year after Christ, or, as Augustine, he may be using the number 1,000 allegorically, as a symbol of the 1,000-year reign of Christ mentioned in *Rev. 20.1*.⁹¹ The matter is not clarified by his subsequent comments in *De Excessu Satyri* with which he explains the number seven, the sabbath, and the 7,000 men mentioned in 1 Kings 19.18:

Ergo umbra futurae quietis in diebus, mensibus, annis, mundi ipsius tempore figuratur...quod in ipso fine hebdomadis, quasi mundi sabbato,

⁸⁸ Gregory of Elvira, *T.O.* 18.17-18 [CCSL 69:134-5]: "Therefore, just as the world was made in six days and in 6,000 years the figure of that world will perish, so the number six is a figure of the Antichrist, with all his malice, who on the sixth day of the Lord—the 6,000th year—will be ended...and on the seventh day of the Lord will be the kingdom of the saints."

⁸⁹ See n. 26 above.

⁹⁰ Ambrose, *De Exc. Saty.* 2.59 [PL 16:1331]: "So to that bird [the Phoenix] there are 500 years to the resurrection, to us, 1000: to it in this world, to us at the end of the world."

⁹¹ Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 20.7 [Loeb 416:282-293].

*spiritalia a nobis non carnalia opera flagitantur.*⁹²

It is possible Ambrose was adapting the World Week of 6,000 years into one of 7,000 years, which Augustine also refuted.⁹³ Ambrose remains elusive, but it is likely that early in his episcopal career, Ambrose, too, succumbed to millennial calculations. His rejection of the 6,000-year scheme does not mean that he rejected the idea of an identifiable period of time completely. Possibly the early attachment to millenarian calculations to which Augustine confessed is the result of Ambrose's teachings on this matter.⁹⁴

There can be no doubt that two other bishops connected to Ambrose, Maximus of Turin and Gaudentius of Brescia, related eschatological calculations to their flock, and we may suspect Ambrose's influence.⁹⁵ Gaudentius' view of the extent of time echoes the 7,000-year plan suggested by Ambrose and refuted by Augustine: "...*expectamus etiam illum vere sanctum diem, septimi millesimi anni diem, qui adveniet post istos sex dies, sex milium quippe annorum saeculi.*"⁹⁶ It is

⁹² Ambrose, *De Exc. Saty.* 2.108 [PL 16:1406]: "Therefore the shadow of rest to come is figured in time, in the days, months, and years of this world...because in that end of the week, as it were the sabbath of the world, spiritual works are required by us, not bodily."

⁹³ See above, pp. 53-5.

⁹⁴ U.E. Simon, *The End is Not Yet* (Aberdeen, 1964), pp. 43-4 believes that Augustine held the view that the end of the world would occur around AD 1000, or about 1,000 years after the advent of Christ. Although the evidence for this is slight and Augustine's later adamant refutation of such calculations makes it extremely doubtful that, if he did hold this view, he continued to hold it, it does seem to echo Ambrose's own comments concerning the phoenix and the 1000th year as the time of the resurrection. See above, n. 90.

⁹⁵ Chromatius of Aquileia, *Tr. in Math.* 54A.9 [CCSL 9A (*Supplementum*):633-4], proposed the traditional 6,000-year time scheme, however.

⁹⁶ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 10.15 [CSEL 68:97]: "...we also truly await that holy day, the day of the 7,000th year which will come after those six days, indeed, the 6,000 years of the world."

impossible to conclude whether Gaudentius viewed the 7,000th year as an earthly millennium (traditional chiliasm) or as a symbol of eternity. His chronology is markedly different from many of his contemporaries, however. Later in the same sermon he claims that "*dimidio numero annorum saeculi*" have passed."⁹⁷ Possibly Gaudentius had in mind physically placing the Incarnation at the chronological centre of the time line, dividing time into equal segments of before Christ and after Christ.

A 7,000-year scheme was also taught by Maximus of Turin, early in the fifth century; once again Maximus' scheme echoes that suggested by Ambrose:

*"...ita et septem dierum curriculo septem milium annorum spatia distinguuntur, per quae sacerdotalium praedicationum tubae ipsi saeculo excidium adnuntiant iudicium conminantur."*⁹⁸

In fact, a survey of fifth-century sources seems to suggest that the devotion to chiliast chronology was increasing, rather than on the wane. In 418, a Dalmatian bishop, Hesychius of Salona, wrote to Augustine, claiming that the rapid spread of Christianity was a sign that the End Times were approaching. Augustine brings up Hesychius' letters in *De Civitate Dei* 20.5 at the point in his argument where he refutes chiliast calculations. This would indicate that Hesychius subscribed to such

⁹⁷ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 10.20 [CSEL 68:98]: "half the number of the years of the world."

⁹⁸ Maximus, *Serm.* 94.2 [CCSL 23:378]: "...so also the course of 7 days indicates the space of 7,000 years during which the trumpets of priestly preaching announce destruction to the world and threaten judgement."

beliefs.⁹⁹

This eschatological approach was particularly strong in Gaul. The Christian poet Commodian, writing probably in the mid-fifth century,¹⁰⁰ espoused a full-fledged chiliasm. There was to be 6,000 years of history,¹⁰¹ after which the heavenly Jerusalem would descend to earth. A material kingdom lasting 1,000 years would be followed by the Last Judgement.¹⁰² Orentius of Auch, also writing in Gaul in the mid-fifth century, believed he was living through the "*funera mundi*".¹⁰³ He, like Commodian, described the imminent Second Coming and the Last Judgement in great detail.¹⁰⁴

The greatest Gallic prophet of the imminent end of time was, of course, Sulpicius Severus. He speaks of false prophets, such as Anatolius, exposed by Martin's disciple Clarus; of a Spanish youth who claimed to be Elijah, and of a man in the East who claimed to be John the Baptist: "*Ex quo conijcere possumus,*

⁹⁹ Augustine, *Ep.* 197 [PL 33:899-901], is his response to Hesychius' initial queries. He explains the anti-chiliasm argument, and quotes Acts 1.7. *Ep.* 198 [PL 33:901-904] is Hesychius' reply. He seems to echo Augustine almost verbatim, but he still cannot see how Daniel's 70 weeks apply to only Christ's birth and not the Second Coming (*Dan* 9.24). Augustine, *Ep.* 199 [PL 33:904-25] is forced to refute the arguments again in even more detail. This includes a refutation of chiliasm chronology.

¹⁰⁰ The dating of Commodian has been a subject of some controversy. Because of the similarities of his work with Victorinus of Pettau and Lactantius, he was believed to have lived sometime in the third century. (e.g., Bousset, *The Antichrist Legend*, p. 80). More recently, scholars have come to some agreement at placing Commodian in the middle of the fifth century. See, for example, Cohn, *Pursuit of the Millennium*, p. 28; Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, pp. 162-3.

¹⁰¹ Commodian, *Instr.* 35.6 [PL 5:27]: "*Finitis sex millibus annis immortales erimus*" ["We shall be immortals at the end of 6,000 years"].

¹⁰² Commodian, *Instr.* 44.1-9 [PL 5:230-1]. For the Last Judgement, see *Instr.* 35 [PL 5:227].

¹⁰³ Orentius of Auch, *Comm.* 2.185 [PL 51:995].

¹⁰⁴ Orentius, *Comm.* 2.347-92 [PL 51:999].

istiusmodi pseudoprophetis existentibus, Antichristi adventum imminere."¹⁰⁵

Martin had told him how the last things would unfold: the return of Nero, not actually dead, but waiting for his eschatological cue;¹⁰⁶ his defeat of the ten kings; the final persecution of the Christians; his defeat at the hands of the true Antichrist; and, finally the return of Christ and judgement. These events were already moving towards their frightening conclusion as Severus wrote, reporting Martin's prophecies on the subject:

*...non esse autem dubium, quin Antichristus malo spiritu conceptus iam natus esset, et in annis puerilibus constitutus, aetate legitima sumpturus imperium. Quod autem haec ab illo audivimus, annus octavus est. Vos aestimate quam iam in praecipiti consistant quae futura metuuntur.*¹⁰⁷

Severus' arguments did not go without comment from the anti-chiliasm party.

With the magic number 6,000 almost fulfilled, Gennadius of Marseilles set his mark on the debate with the publication of his *De Viris Illustribus*, a continuation of Jerome's work, in the last decade of the fifth century. That Gennadius was deeply concerned with the debate over chiliasm and millennial calculations is evident from his own writings which he lists at the end of this work: *De Mille Annis et De*

¹⁰⁵ Sulpicius Severus, *V. Mart.* 23-4 [PL 20: 173-4]: "From which we can infer that, with false prophets of this kind existing, the advent of the Antichrist is imminent."

¹⁰⁶ The myth of Nero *redivivus* was an old one by the fifth century. M. Bodinger, "Le mythe de Néron de l'Apocalypse de saint Jean au Talmud de Babylone," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 206 (1989): 21-40, traces it back to its origins in the years immediately following Nero's death and the crisis of the empire in AD 68-69. Commodian, keeps the Nero legend as well, but in two forms. In the first, *Carm.* 825-41 [CCSL 128:103-4], Nero comes forth as the Antichrist, only to be replaced by another Antichrist, much like the tradition found in Severus. But at *Instr.* 41 [PL 5:231-2], Nero is presented as the only Antichrist. Cf. Sulpicius Severus, *Hist. Sac.* 2.28-33 [PL 20:144-8], for Nero coming as precursor to Antichrist, and for the tenth persecution (Diocletian's) as the last.

¹⁰⁷ Sulpicius Severus, *Dial.* 2.14 [PL 20:212]: "There was no doubt, in fact, that Antichrist was already born, conceived by an evil spirit. He is now a child and will assume the supreme power when he comes of age. It is now eight years since we heard these things from him. You can estimate how quickly this fearful future may be upon us."

Apocalypsi beati Joannis.¹⁰⁸ Several of the works of other authors provided by Gennadius suggest similar concerns: *De Resurrectione* and *De Vita post Mortem* by James of Nisibis; an exposition on the *Revelations* by Tychonius; the "*pravum ingenium*" in which Vigilantius the Presbyter expounded the Vision of Daniel; the ability of Gennadius of Constantinople to expound Daniel, word for word; and the African bishop Pomerius' *De Resurrectione*.¹⁰⁹ On several occasions in the work he takes the opportunity to denounce the chiliast position. He agrees, for example, with the doubts expressed by Tychonius, as to a reign of the righteous on earth for 1000 years after the resurrection.¹¹⁰ He notes of the *Chronicon* of James of Nisibis that it "*comprimit ora eorum qui praesumptuosa suspicione de adventu Antichristi, vel Domini nostri, inaniter philosophantur,*" thus beginning his own work with a strong anti-chiliast statement.¹¹¹

It is in this context that his reference to Sulpicius Severus becomes even clearer. Gennadius claims that Severus was led astray by the Pelagians in his old age. After returning to orthodoxy, Severus is reputed to have realized that his mouth was responsible for getting him into so much trouble: "*silentium usque ad*

¹⁰⁸ Gennadius, *De Vir. Ill.* 100 [PL 58:1120], i.e., *On the Millennium and On the Apocalypse of St. John*.

¹⁰⁹ Gennadius, *De Vir. Ill.* 1 (James of Nisibis); 18 (Tychonius); 35 (Vigilantius); 90 (Gennadius of Constantinople); 98 (Pomerius). [PL 58: 1061, 1071, 1078, 1113, 1117].

¹¹⁰ Gennadius, *De Vir. Ill.* 18 [PL 58:1071]: "*Mille quoque annorum regni in terra justorum post resurrectionem futuri suspicinem tullit*" ["He doubts that there will be a 1,000 year reign of the just on earth after the resurrection"].

¹¹¹ Gennadius, *De Vir. Ill.* 1 [PL 58:1062]: "It closes the mouths of those who on some presumptuous suspicion inanely philosophize concerning the advent of Antichrist or of our Lord."

mortem tenuit, ut peccatum quod loquendo contraxerat, tacendo poenitens emendaret."¹¹² Gennadius may be making a veiled reference to Severus' chiliast calculations. Martin's fame was widespread by the end of the fifth century, mostly as a result of Severus' extensive writings on the saint--writings which clearly demonstrated that Severus' eschatology rested upon Martin's own teachings. Gennadius, therefore, could not denigrate Severus for his calculations without, at the same time, bringing Martin into a questionable light. Thus there could be no outright condemnation of Severus' position, even though Gennadius was quick to do so elsewhere. Instead he claims that Severus learned silence, very probably a reference back to the first chapter of *De Viris Illustribus* in which he noted that James of Nisibis' *Chronicon* "*comprimit ora*" of those who adopted millenarian positions and made eschatological calculations.

v. Conclusions

We must disagree with the conclusion that chiliasm could "scarcely have been a live force in Augustine's day."¹¹³ Not only was eschatological expectancy on the increase in the fourth and fifth centuries, but much of it seemed to be of the chiliast variety, especially in its fondness for chiliast chronology. Jerome and

¹¹²Gennadius, *De Vir. Ill.* 19 [PL 58:1071]: "[Severus] kept silent until his death, so that he might atone by means of a penitent silence the sins which he had contracted by speaking." Placing his discussion of Severus immediately after Tychonius, whom he had just praised for expressing opinions opposite to those of Severus, also suggests that Gennadius is here criticizing Severus' millennial calculations.

¹¹³See above, n. 11.

Augustine were men of great stature in the late antique Church. Their disdain of chiliasm could not go unnoticed in the West. But the loudness of their reaction presupposes a chiliast chronology that was so popular as to be seen as problematic. Gennadius, who was part of this "official" attempt to turn up the volume in the struggle against chiliasm, suggests the same. By emphasizing an individual eschatology, Augustine sought to remove the surety which the chiliast chronology seemed to promise. By promoting the six-ages division of time, he sought to replace the chronology itself.

It was the wisest choice that Augustine could make. The persistence of a 6,000-year chronology based on the Creation Week indicates its firm hold on the popular mind during the fourth and fifth centuries. The saga of Creation Week was an integral part of the preaching of the late antique Church. It was the basis of a large part of the Christian's understanding of time. To see time's end in time's beginning was not a difficult task in such a milieu. Only a re-interpretation of the same texts could successfully replace any chiliast taint. Despite assurances to the contrary, however, it is doubtful that people could easily put aside the 6,000-year time scheme, especially when the majority of chiliast calculations all pointed to the same, crucial period: the last few years of the fifth century.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, pp. 122-123, points out that chiliast calculations continued to be an important factor in the apocalyptic, apocryphal literature of the fifth century. The long version of the *Apocalypse of Thomas*, written, probably, in the 420s, and the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, (late-fifth century) demonstrate the growth of "popular interest in apocalyptic speculation," in the fifth century. Similar popular interest in the end of time at the end of the fourth century is demonstrated by B. Kötting, "Endzeit prognosen zwischen Lactantius und Augustinus," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 77 (1957): 125-39. Daley and Kötting illustrate the extent of the influence of millenarianism and chiliast calculations which the Augustinian reaction faced.

The Antichrist did not come. The 6,000 years came and went at the end of the fifth century, and it is to that point in time that the real decline of chiliasm should be attributed. Only in witnessing the error of chiliast predictions could the popularity of this brand of eschatology be diffused.¹¹⁵ Even then the memory of that period lived on long afterwards. So we see the number listed in the *F.V.Post.* for no other possible reason than that it was perceived as a crucial point in time: "*fiunt ergo ab adventu domini usque ad consulatum Viatoris anni D, ab Adam autem anni VI milia.*"¹¹⁶ A notice in the *Paschale Campanum*, an Italian consular list from the turn of the seventh century, is particularly revealing. The year is 496: "*Alii delirantes hoc consule dicunt Antecristum nasciturum.*"¹¹⁷ Thus the memory of that time lived on into the eighth century; and perhaps the *Paschale Campanum* is witness to an eschatological scare which was widespread some two centuries before.

¹¹⁵ It was not impossible to insist on re-ordering the chronology either. In the twentieth century the Jehovah's Witness have used the same texts, including the 6,000-year chronology, to make the same eschatological predictions!

¹¹⁶ *F.V.Post.* 650 [CM 1:330]: "There were from the advent of the Lord until the consulate of Viator (AD 495), 500 years; from Adam, however, 6,000 years."

¹¹⁷ *Paschale Campanum* 496 [CM 1:330]: "Other crazy people say that in this consulship the Antichrist is born." Another notice is listed under the year AD 493, and is the same.

CHAPTER THREE

Units of Time I: Year, Month and Seasons

The timelessness which characterized eternity for a late antique Christian existed at both ends of time. In between rolled time and mortality. Mortality had a purpose in Christian theology--it was humanity's punishment for the first sin. Time, too, had its purpose: the *cursus solis* and the *globus lunae*--the sun and the year, the moon and the month--even the *quattuor tempora*, the four "times" (seasons), were given "*suis locis suisque temporibus*."¹ Time was never perceived as a mere by-product of the creative act, but rather as an important and intended part of Creation: "*Fecit ergo solem, et lunam, et stellas, et praestituit illis mensuras temporum....*"²

Bishops are inconsistent concerning the depth of the awareness of the workings of time in late antiquity. Some sermons suggest that the average Roman was more attuned to time than we are in the twentieth century.³ Ambrose implies this in the following message to his flock:

...fulgores quoque diversos intelligit singulorum, quando hesperus surgat, quando lucifer: cur ille vespertinus, hic matutinus irradiet: quos motus Orion habeat, quos luna defectus: quemadmodum sol suos norit

¹So Valerian, *Hom.* 1.1 [PL 52:691-2]. "...their own places and their own times."

²Ambrose, *Ep.* 44.2 [PL 16:1136]: "God therefore made the sun, and moon, and the stars, and he allotted to them the measurement of times...."

³We, on the other hand, are more enslaved by time. Note the twentieth century devotion to clocks, appointments and deadlines!

*occasus, circuitus quoque cursus sui solemnitate custodiat.*⁴

Elsewhere he claims the opposite, taking late antique intellectuals to task for their disputes about the "*solis cursu coelique*"⁵ when, in fact, "*quid loquantur, ignorent.*"⁶

Augustine seems to agree with this view:

*Sicut autem plurimis notus est lunae cursus, qui etiam ad passionem Domini anniversarie celebrandam solemniter abhibetur; sic paucissimis caeterorum quoque siderum vel ortus, vel occasus, vel alia quaelibet momenta sine ullo sunt errore notissima.*⁷

But what does Augustine mean by "*sine ullo...errore?*" The text is ambiguous. Many knew the course of the moon because of its relevance to Easter. This he considered an appropriate knowledge, *sine ullo errore*, of the workings of time. So Augustine may not be saying that very few correctly understood the workings of time, as the text first suggests. Rather he seems to be claiming that many understood it, but most of those did so erroneously, the error being in understanding it in a non-Christian manner. Ambrose would have agreed with this: it is the

⁴ Ambrose, *Hex.* 6.9.67. [PL 14:269]: "He [mankind] understands the diversity of each of the stars, when the evening star arises, when the morning star, why one shines in the evening, the other in the morning. He knows the movements of Orion and the phases of the moon very well. He understands that the sun knows its own setting, and how it preserves its own course with regularity." Hilarian, *De Die Pasch.* 3 [PL 13:1108], speaks of a distant time when God had not yet shown "...*cursum solis ac lunae, nemo hominum apprehendebat verni aestatisque tempora, autumnii et hiemis metas.*" ["...the course of the sun and moon, no one of mankind understood the times of spring and summer, the boundaries of autumn and winter."]. Hilarian thus intimates that the opposite was generally considered true in the fourth century.

⁵ Ambrose, *De Exc. Sat.* 2.86 [PL 16:86]: "the course of the sun and of the heavens."

⁶ Ambrose, *De Exc. Saty.* 2.86 [PL 16:1339]: "they do not know what they are talking about."

⁷ Augustine, *De Doc. Chr.* 2.29.46 [PL 34:57]: "Although the course of the moon, which is relevant to the celebration of the anniversary of the passion of the Lord, is known to many, so there are only a few who know very well the rising or setting or the other movements of the stars without any error."

sapientes, the philosophers, who do not know what they are talking about in relation to time.

Augustine condemned the observation of celestial phenomena in an astronomical setting. Although such considerations were not in themselves "*superstitio*," they might naturally lead to astrology and its commensurate dangers: the line between astronomy and astrology was often hard to define in antiquity.⁸ But he does not condemn observing the stars *in toto*: "*non ut ex eis aliquid trahere in nostra facta et eventa tentemus, qualia genethliacorum deliramenta sunt, sed quantum ad ipsa pertinet sidera.*"⁹ Solstices, equinoxes, eclipses, the workings of the year and the sun, of the moon and the month--all found a place in the homiletic tradition of the West, especially in their extensive use for symbolic purposes.¹⁰ It was only the orientation of such knowledge that could be dangerous.

Unfortunately for the late antique bishop, the orientation of the average congregant's knowledge of celestial phenomena was generally of the dangerous sort. This was unavoidable--the pagan milieu had a rich tradition of investigation into the mechanics of time which stretched back for centuries. Homer knew of solstices,

⁸ Augustine, *De Doc. Chr.* 2.29.46 [PL 34:57]. Dabbling in astronomy may lead to "*perniciosissimo errori*" ["the most pernicious error"], therefore it is best to condemn it outright.

⁹ Augustine, *De Doc. Chr.* 2.29.46 [PL 34:57]: "We do not attempt to extract from them anything of our fates or deeds in the manner of the absurdities of astologists, but only those things which pertain to the stars themselves."

¹⁰ Which is not to claim that the average Roman knew when the next eclipse would occur, only that he was familiar with the phenomenon, even if this engendered some degree of mythologization as to the sun and the moon. In fact, the attribution of divinity to the sun and the moon was an important reason for their continual presence in the sermons (i.e., so that they might be demythologized by placing them within a Christian context). What it does suggest was that the average Roman was more attuned to astronomical phenomena. Notes indicating the dates of solstices and equinoxes are found in the *Codex-Calendar of 354* and the *Laterculus* of Polemius Silvius, placing them within the course of the non-Christian festival year. Modern calendars with similar notices are relatively few.

and Hesiod, who reckoned time from them, also links the rising and setting of certain stars to the cycle of the year.¹¹ Hesiod exemplifies the early importance of astronomical indicators for agriculture, which held true for the Romans, as demonstrated by reference to such agricultural works as Cato's *De Agricultura* and Columella's *De Re Rustica*.¹²

The introduction of astrology from the East added to the agricultural use of astronomy an interest in the stars' prophetic significance. Juvenal mentions the inclusion of astrological information in calendars of the early empire was increasing.¹³ So we find astrological motifs in the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore in the third century, as well as in the illustrations of the *Codex-Calendar of 354*.¹⁴ The *Hemereologia*--lists of time-units designed to show their correspondence to

¹¹ Homer, *Ody.* 15.403 [Loeb 105:144-147]; Hesiod, *Op.* 619-640 [Loeb 57:48-51]. Cf. "Astronomy," *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford, 1977), p. 134. M.P. Nilsson, *Primitive Time-Reckoning* (Oxford, 1920), p. 311ff, discusses the use of such astronomical phenomena for calendaric purposes.

¹² E.g., Columella, *De Re Rus.* 11 [Loeb 408:48-171], gives the farmer's calendar, providing zodiacal information which correlated to the agricultural year. The Roman year, originally ten months in length, was purported to have been established by Romulus (Plutarch, *Numa* 18 [Loeb 46:366-369]; Lydus, *De Mens.* 1.16 [Teubner, p. 9]). This year, running from March to December, was purely an agricultural year, designed to coincide with the period between planting and harvest. See E.J. Bickerman, *Chronology of the Ancient World* (London, 1968), pp. 44-5. E. Courtney, "The Roman Months in Art and Literature," *Museum Helveticum* 45 (1988):33-57, brings together the literary and archaeological evidence for the months from late antiquity and the period subsequent. Courtney emphasizes the role of agricultural and astrological imagery in these sources (p. 38ff). The calendar was unstable until Julius Caesar inserted 90 days in 46 BC to bring the calendar, thrown off by the haphazard intercalation of the pontiffs, back into line with the seasons. Caesar settled on a solar year of 365.25 days, allowing for the insertion of one day every four years to keep the calendaric year in line with the course of the sun. But the pontiffs added one day every three years after his death. In 9 BC, Augustus omitted intercalation for the next sixteen years, in an attempt to correct this error. The presence of a stable calendar did not obviate the farmer's need to keep track of the seasons, however. Planting and harvesting remained, as they still do, a matter of intuition. Cf. Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.14.14 [Teubner, p. 69]; Censorinus, *De Die Nat.* 21.89 [Teubner, pp. 52-3].

¹³ Juvenal, *Sat.* 6.565-581 [Loeb 91:128-131].

¹⁴ Both have been studied extensively in two works by M.R. Salzman, *On Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1990), and "New Evidence for the Dating of the Calendar at Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 111 (1981): 215-227.

Roman counterparts--similarly demonstrate the widespread interest in astrology.¹⁵ One, the *Leyden Hemerelogion*, dated to the end of the third century, contains a miniature of the sun's course as it travels through the signs of the zodiac.¹⁶ In fact, astrology had become such an intricate part of the non-Christian calendaric tradition that Polemius Silvius, in 448, specifically states his intent not to include such data in his own calendar.¹⁷

These two facts--that the Roman Empire was an agrarian society, and that astrology had become such a potent force--plus the tendency to deify celestial bodies (especially the sun), dictate not only that a heightened awareness of time was general in antiquity, but that it was also a necessity. It was this mind-set which accompanied the majority of novitiates into the Christian religion. The result was that bishops needed to Christianize time-units and the heavenly bodies associated with them. Their methods in relation to the year, month, and the seasons, are the concern of this chapter.

¹⁵W. Kubitschek, "Die Kalenderbücher von Florenz, Rom und Leyden," *DenkschrWien*, 3 (1915): 54ff discusses the early scholarship of the *Hemerologia*. Kubitschek discovered the *Vatican Hemerelogion* which he compared to those of Florence and Leyden.

¹⁶Dulabahn, *Studies on the Laterculus*, pp. 119ff. She discusses the *Hemerologia* extensively for their connection to educational techniques of the Romans. They are essentially the Eastern counterparts of the *Hermeneumata*, discussed in the introduction.

¹⁷So he tells us in *De signis* in the introduction to his *Laterculus*. See below, n. 54.

i. The Year and the Month

a) Beginning of the Year

According to the predominant Christian view, time began on Sunday 25 March (c. 5,502 B.C. for chiliasts, c. 5,201 B.C. in the official chronology). It is not surprising to discover that the majority of Western bishops taught that the year began on the same date, as all time-units logically began at the moment time itself began. Thus the New Year beginning on 25 March had associations with Easter as well.¹⁸ Zeno of Verona for whom several Easter sermons dated to the 360s and early 370s have survived, highlights this aspect of time for his neophytes, using images replete with the cyclical majesty of time: "*dies magnus aduenit, menses in tempora, tempora in annos, annos in saecula padens.*"¹⁹ Time's cycles nevertheless roll forward in a linear fashion, leading to the *dies magnus*.

Zeno understood the educational value of the concept of the New Year. The cycle of the year was familiar to his flock; it proved a useful symbol to contextualize the whole of time within Christ's Passion and Resurrection, and the resurrection

¹⁸ We have already encountered the connection between the year, the month, and Creation in chapter one. For example, Gaudentius, *Tr.* 1.2 [CSEL 68.18], comments, based on *Exod.* 12:2 which states that March is the first month of the year, "*Nam veris temperie deus condidit mundum*" ["For God created the world in the springtime"]. Cf., Ambrose, *Hex.* 1.4.13 [PL 14:128]; Hilarian, *De Del Pasch.* 5 [PL 13:1108]; Quodvultdeus, *De Cant. Nov.* 1.9 [CCSL 60:381]. Eusebius "Gallicanus", *De Pasch.* 9.1 [CCSL 101:239], at least suggests that Creation, and thus, the year, began at Easter: "*Ipsa enim iam in principio nascentis mundi prima facta est.*" ["For to be sure it was itself first made at the beginning of the world's birth..."]. But this may well be a reference to the idea that Christ's Passion was destined from the beginning of the world. For evidence that the editor of Eusebius "Gallicanus" placed the New Year in December, see below, pp. 99-100.

¹⁹ Zeno, *Tr.* 1.58 [CCSL 22:133]: "the great day has come around, bending the months into seasons, the seasons into years, the years into ages." *Tr.* 1.57 [CCSL 22:132], where Zeno's traditional introduction in his Easter sermon has a slightly more linear bent: "*Idem sui successor idemque decessor, longaeua semper aetate nouellus, anni parens annique progenies antecedit sequiturque tempora et saecula infinita*" ["The same successor of itself and the same retiring, always young with the ancient age, parent of the year following it and offspring of the year it followed." Cf. *Tr.* 1.44.1; 2.19.1 [CCSL 22:117; 193].

promised to all Christian's at time's end:

*[Annus p]rofecto sacramenti dominici imaginem portat, nam occasu passionem resurrectionemque ortu rediuiuo concelebrat, per quem nobis quoque resurrectionem futurae beatitudinis pollicetur.*²⁰

A century later, Peter of Ravenna used a similar image about the recurring nature of the year. But for Peter, who lived in the time of the Hunnic invasion of Italy and a disintegrating Roman Empire, the stress is on the "*diem retributionis*" rather than the hope of heaven: "*Annus domini perficitur temporibus, non senescit, qui tamdiu suo recurrit in circulo, quamdiu nos ad diem retributionis adducat.*"²¹

Peter's use of "*annus domini*"--the year of the Lord--identifies this year from Easter to Easter as the religious or ecclesiastical year. The *annus domini* was a fluid unit of time; like feasts which were dependent on Easter (e.g., Pentecost), it was movable. It could begin (and end) as early as March or as late as May, in opposition to the civil or secular year which always commenced on 1 January.²²

²⁰Zeno, *Tr.* 1.58 [CCSL 22:133]: "Actually, [the year] carries the image of the Lord's sacrament, for it celebrates the Passion by setting and the Resurrection by the renewed rising, through which the resurrection of future blessedness is also promised us." cf. *Tr.* 1.57 [CCSL 22:132].

²¹Peter of Ravenna, *Serm* 73.1 [CCSL 24A.447]. "The year of the Lord is completed by time, which for so long recurs in a cycle, not drawing to a close until it leads us to the day of retribution." A similar use of *annus domini* is made by Gaudentius, *Tr.* 1.19 [CSEL 68:22]: "*cognovimus mensem novorum sanctum et annum domini acceptum et diem retributionis*" ["We understood the holy month of the first fruits and the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of retribution"]. Gaudentius places the whole of time within the context of time's beginning. He relates Creation to the first month, and to the year--all of which culminate in the Day of Judgement. The turning of the *annus domini* is the link between Creation and eschatological fulfilment.

²²Ambrose, *Ep.* 23 [PL 16:1026-1035], went into great detail on the time of the New Year while attempting to explain how to calculate the date for Easter to the bishops of Aemelia. He has March as the first month on the authority of Scripture (i.e., *Exod.* 12.2; *Lev.* 23.5, [Ep. 23.9]), although it may occur up to the nones of May, depending on the appearance of the moon (Ep. 23.18 [PL 16:1033]). It is within this period from March to May that Easter is to begin and thus, the commencement of the ecclesiastical year is found here as well. The start of the ecclesiastical year also depends on the equinox: "*incipit autem mensis non secundum vulgarem usum, sed secundum consuetudinem peritorum ab aequinoxio, qui dies est duodecimo kalendas Aprilis, et finitur undecimo kalendas Maii*" ["The month therefore begins not according to vulgar usage, but according to the custom of learned men, from the equinox, which is the 21st of March, and ends on the 21st of April." Ep. 23.16 [PL 16:1032]. In dating the vernal equinox to 21 March, Ambrose is following the correct day for its observance. Generally in the West the equinox was believed to occur on the 25th of March.

In the fourth and fifth centuries distinctions between ecclesiastical year and civil year were sharply maintained. Chromatius of Aquileia, bishop of the North Italian see from 388-c.408, actively promoted the traditional identification of the first month of the year as March. He attempts to dissuade his flock from using the civil year by appealing to the logic of nature: "*Quomodo ergo mensis ianuarius primus anni potest intellegi, cum in illo mense totus mundus quodammodo sine gratia inueniatur et aridus?*"²³ The world is effectively dead in January; it is a time of endings, not beginnings, unlike the spring when "*herbae pratorum velut de morte resurgunt.*"²⁴

The natural world during its spring rebirth was infinitely more susceptible to Christian imagery than January. The yearly cycle of seasons was frequently depicted as being empathetically aligned to the death and rebirth of Christ. In the spring, "*ipse aer laetus est nouitate temporis.*"²⁵ Thus, for Chromatius, the natural world, in tandem with time's cyclical nature, point to one, and only one, New Year: "*Mensis ergo primus uel tempus nouum hoc tempus paschae est, quo etiam ipsa mundi elementa innouantur.*"²⁶

²³Chromatius, *Serm.* 17.3 [CCSL 9A:77]: "How, therefore, could January be understood as the first month of the year when in that month the whole world is in a way found without grace and is arid?"

²⁴Chromatius, *Serm.* 17.3 [CCSL 9A:77]: "...for example, the grasses of the meadows rise again from death."

²⁵Chromatius, *Serm.* 17.3 [CCSL 9A:77]: "...the air itself rejoices in the new year."

²⁶Chromatius, *Serm.* 17.3 [CCSL 17.3]: "Therefore the first month, the new time, is this time of Easter, when the elements of the world are renewed."

Chromatius' rejection of the civil year beginning in January was not the normal practice of late antique bishops.²⁷ The civil New Year was traditionally the date upon which consuls entered office, making it a difficult day to ignore completely. It was more common to acknowledge both (not always positively in regards to the secular New Year, as we shall see) and simply reinforce the differences between the two. Sidonius Apollinaris, bishop of Clermont (Gaul) in the 470s (c.469-c.479), is an interesting case in point. Son-in-law of the emperor Avitus and an aristocrat in his own right, Sidonius was a poet of some repute before he entered the episcopacy. In one poem from the mid-460s, we find him discussing the secular New Year in a traditional, non-Christian manner: "*Ianus forte suas bifrons Kalendas anni tempora circinante Phoebus sumendas referebat ad curules.*"²⁸ Obviously the reference here is to the New Year beginning on the kalends of January. Some ten years later, however, Sidonius, now a bishop, makes a firm distinction between the secular New Year and the ecclesiastical one: "*sic quoque tamen compotem officii prius agere curavi, quam duodecimum nostrum, quem Numae mensem vos nuncupatis, Favonius flatu teporo pluviisque natalibus*

²⁷ Hilarius, *De Die Pasch.* 1 [PL 13:1107], agrees with Chromatius that there is only the ecclesiastical year, which begins at Easter in the Scriptural first month: "*non ut Aegyptii ex quarto kalendarum Septembrium die, aut ut Romani e kalendis Januariis*" ["not as the Egyptians from 29 September, nor as the Romans from 1 January"].

²⁸ Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carm.* 23.307-310 [Loeb 296:307-309]: "Phoebus was beginning a new yearly cycle, and two-faced Janus was bringing back his kalends, the day when the new magistrates take their seats" (trans. W.B. Anderson).

maritaret."²⁹ Numa's month refers to February, as it was believed that King Numa had established February at the time when the Roman year also began in March and extended for only ten months.³⁰ By calling February the twelfth month, Sidonius places himself within the Christian camp (note his use of *our "duodecimum [mensem]"* versus their "*Numae mensem*") and accepts March rather than January as the beginning of the year. However, he does not, as was the case with Chromatius, attempt totally to deny that at least two New Years were in use.

Chromatius' firm denial of 1 January is a response to the non-Christian festivities attached to the civil New Year. Chromatius had a reputation as a preacher but he was probably not a great man of letters. He is not mentioned in Jerome's catalogue of writers (c.392), even though Jerome apparently held him in

²⁹ Sidonius, *Ep.* 9.16.2 [Loeb 420:598-9]: "But even so, I strove to fulfil my obligation before the west wind with its warm breath and native rains should arrive to fertilize the month that we reckon the twelfth and you call Numa's month" (trans. W.B. Anderson).

³⁰ Thus the "*decem*" in *December*. Numa purportedly added January and February to the ten-month agricultural year of Romulus, and changed the New Year from the kalends of March to the kalends of January. Cf. Cicero, *De Leg.* 2.12.29 [Loeb 213:406-7]; Plutarch, *Numa* 18.3 [Loeb 46:366-9]; Ovid *Fasti* 1.39-44 [Loeb 253:4]; Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.13.3 [Teubner, p. 61]. But A.K. Michels, *The Calendar of the Roman Republic* (Princeton, 1967), p. 99ff, shows that the move was a much later development (post-154 BC). Salzmann, *On Roman Time*, pp. 109ff notes the use of traditional New Year associations with 1 March in the Panegyrist of AD 297 to Constantius I, while H. Stern, *Le Calendrier de 354; étude sur son texte et ses illustrations* (Paris, 1953), p. 78, feels that this tradition led fourth-century emperors to adopt 1 March as the date for designating their Caesars. The continued importance of 1 March may suggest that, for a time, two New Years were accepted—an agricultural-religious year beginning 1 March, and a civil year beginning 1 January. Eventually, however, the two were merged and the kalends of January became the beginning of the civil-religious year, with 1 March necessarily maintaining its agricultural associations (and, with the presence of the festival of Mars, the Roman patron, on 1 March, as in the *Codex-Calendar of 354*, some of its religious associations as well). But as Salzmann rightly notes (p. 109), the traditional association of 1 March with the beginning of the year was widely known in the fourth and fifth centuries, and the astrological year also began in March, at the solstice. In fact, Macrobius, *Somn. Scip.* 1.21.23 [Teubner, pp. 88-9], describes not only the beginning of the astrological year in March, but the attribution of the beginning of the world to that month as well. A similar attribution of the origin of the world to March may be found in Vergil, *Georg.* 2.336-339 [Loeb 63:136-9]; but the belief in a world without beginning or end—time as an endless succession of cycles—was more generally held in antiquity. The Christians of this period also acknowledged more than one New Year, but Stern (p. 233ff) is not quite correct in saying that the Christians sporadically attempted to revive 1 March as the beginning of the year. The use of March as the beginning of the year was not a revival, in any sense, of the old Roman year, but the result of the association of the foundation of time with Creation and the presence of the feast of Easter in that month. The eventual acceptance of 1 January as the beginning of the Christian year falls outside this period, but it will be discussed briefly below.

high esteem.³¹ Lemarié has shown that Chromatius' library contained many of the works of the great Christian authors (e.g., Cyprian, Ambrose, Jerome, etc.), but a notable lack of classical references. He attributes this to Chromatius' attempt to tailor his sermons to suit his audience.³² In a city the size and importance of Aquileia--a city which had produced Christian scholars the calibre of Jerome and Rufinus--the need to tailor his sermons to such a degree seems doubtful. It certainly was not the case for Ambrose in Milan (Chromatius' mentor), nor Augustine in the much smaller city of Hippo, whose preaching contains many examples of classical learning.

It is more likely that Chromatius' classical education was restricted. It was, therefore, of little use in attacking the pagan festivities of the kalends of January. What he did know was Christian time theory: the New Year commenced in the spring; it was tied, through Easter and Christ, to Creation and eschatological fulfilment. Thus he concentrated his flock's attention on the natural and cyclical imagery that spring suggested to the late antique mind.

Other ecclesiastics chose to face the pagan festivities of the kalends of January with more force. Even in the mid-fifth century, Christian participation was

³¹ Only one non-homiletic work can be attributed to Chromatius, the *Tractatus in Matthaeum*, which the editors of the CCSL critical edition date to 400-407 (p. vii), thus placing it after Jerome's *De Vir. Ill.*; but it is not mentioned by Gennadius either. Chromatius was not unimportant, however. Aquileia was a large city on the crossroads between East and West. Both Rufinus and Jerome had lived in the area and knew the bishop well. Jerome dedicated several works to him: in the preface of his *In Abacum* [PL 25:1273A], Jerome calls Chromatius, "*episcoporum doctissime*." Rufinus produced his translation of Eusebius at Chromatius' behest. Chromatius was one of the three Western bishops to receive a letter from John Chrysostom at the time of his troubles in 404.

³² J. Lemarié, "Chromace et son temps, Le prédicateur," SC 154:61.

still a problem. Salvian of Marseilles believed that marking the New Year with such activities could only have a negative effect on the course of the year itself: *Et cum haec omnia ipsi agant qui annis nomina tribuunt... credimus nobis bene annos posse procedere qui a rebus talibus ordiuntur?*³³ Peter of Ravenna's reaction was so strong that he felt some of his congregants would feel he was overreacting:

*Sed dicit aliquis: non sunt haec sacrilegiorum studia, uota sunt haec iocorum; et hoc esse nouitatis laetitiam, non uetustatis errorem; esse hoc anni principium, non gentilitatis offensam.*³⁴

Peter would not be swayed, however. Those who participated could not perceive the fine line which separated fun from sin, so Peter was forced to draw that line for them: "*Nemo cum serpente securus ludit; nemo cum diabolo iocatur inpune.*"³⁵

This kind of reaction to episcopal restrictions--"but we're just having a bit of fun!"--must have been common. Christian abuse of pagan festivities was widespread, and the kalends of January was particularly attractive, if the number of sermons insisting on restriction of Christian involvement is any indication. Augustine once returned to Hippo to discover that members of his congregation were involved in "*superstitiosa pagana*" during his absence. Augustine responded with a severe tongue-lashing; the flock grumbled, blaming him for not warning

³³ Salvian, *De Gub. Dei* 6.2 [PL 53:110]: "And when these men who give their names to the years...do such things, are we to believe that years can proceed well which are begun with things of that kind?" Salvian here refers to the auguries performed by the consuls on the kalends of January when they took office for the year.

³⁴ Peter, *Serm.* 155.5 [CCSL 24B:964]: "But someone will say: 'these things are not the study of sacrilegious rites, they are only the longing for fun, and it is joy over the new era, not the error of the old. This is the beginning of the year, not the offense of paganism.'"

³⁵ Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 155.5 [CCSL 24B:964]: "No one plays safely with a serpent; no one jokes with the Devil with impunity."

them beforehand. As the kalends of January approached, Augustine recalled the incident to his flock and pointedly warned them not to make the same mistake again: "*Ecce episcopus praemonet; moneo, praedico, denuntio...adjuro, obstringo, nemo faciat. Ego me absolvo.*"³⁶ One senses a certain degree of cynicism in Augustine as to the potential effectiveness of his own words. He expects some to participate anyway; but this time he has done his duty; those who do become involved in the festivities will no longer be able to blame him.

The kalends of January and Saturnalia, which occurred the week before, gave the turn of the year strong pagan associations. Some bishops responded by adding a second Christian New Year. Much of the rich imagery supplied to Easter and the ecclesiastical New Year by the vernal equinox could be found in other celestial events. The solstices were also adapted for Christian use by their association with events connected to the life of Christ.³⁷ The winter solstice, for example, was tied to the Feast of the Nativity.

Peter of Ravenna, who recognized a civil year beginning on 1 January, and

³⁶ Augustine, *Serm.* 196.4. [PL 38:1021]: "Listen, the bishop now forewarns. I warn; I command beforehand, I denounce...I adjure, I constrain—let no one do this. I absolve myself." Maximus of Turin points out the hypocrisy of confessing Christianity and participating in pagan festivals: "*Quomodo igitur potestis religiose epifaniam domini procurare, qui Iani kalendas quantum in uobis est, deuotissime celebrastis?*" ["How, therefore are you able to celebrate the epiphany of the Lord religiously, who have celebrated the kalends of Janus with your greatest devotion?"]. Instead of observing time in a pagan manner, Maximus prescribes devoting pagan festivals to church attendance or fasting. (*Serm.* 63.2 [CCSL 23:266-7]). Maximus believed that Christmas occurred on 25 December due to God's providence, in order to sanctify a period of the year heavily indebted to pagan festivities: "*Bene quodammodo deo prouidente dispositum est, ut inter medias gentium festiuitates Christus dominus oriretur, et inter ipsas tenebrosas superstitiones errorum ueri luminis spendor effulgeret*" ["It was well indeed disposed by the provident God that among the festivities of the gentiles, Christ the Lord should have been born, and that amid the dark superstitions of errors the splendour of the true light should shine forth"]. (*Serm.* 96.1 [CCSL 23:390]).

³⁷ The autumnal equinox lacked this association in late antiquity, although some held it to be the date of the conception of John the Baptist. A more detailed investigation of the equinox and the solstice will be undertaken during the discussion of Christological feasts (chapter seven).

an ecclesiastical year beginning at Easter, also speaks of a year beginning with the feast of the Nativity: "*Quotiens transcursis anni metis dies dominicae natiuitatis aduentat...*" The Incarnation is depicted as a shock to the eyes on account of the "*novum lumen*" which emanates from his feast, a reference to the solstice which also occurred, by Roman reckoning in the West, on 25 December.³⁸ As the shortest day of the year, the winter solstice lent itself superbly to Christian symbolism. As daylight physically increases from the winter solstice, so, metaphorically speaking, the "true light" of Christ increases from his birth at the Nativity until His Passion and Resurrection at Easter.³⁹

Like his contemporary, Peter of Ravenna, Leo of Rome also accepted two Christian New Years. A number of his sermons preached to promote the fast of the tenth month, which he names December, identify March as the beginning of the ecclesiastical year at Rome.⁴⁰ Other sermons delivered on or before 25 December, suggest that this, too, marked the beginning of the year: "*Reparatur enim nobis salutis nostrae annua revolutione sacramentum, ab initio promissum, in fine*

³⁸ Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 146.1 [CCSL 24B:900]: "Each time a year reaches the end of its course and the day of the Lord's nativity arrives...." For the date of the winter solstice, see the calendar of Polemius Silvius, *PL* 13:688. The association of 25 December with the festival of Sol Invictus, is demonstrated by the *Calendar of 354* [*PL* 13:687].

³⁹ Maximus of Turin, *Serm.* 61A.1 [CCSL 23:249], in the early fifth century, also used this alignment of nature and time with the Nativity of Christ: "*tempus nos admonet quod domini Christi natalis in proximo est; nam praedicationem meam praeuenit dierum extrema conclusio*" ["Time warns us that the birthday of the Lord Christ is near, now that the extreme conclusion of the days has anticipated my preaching"]. The shortening hours of daylight is understood to be the world's way of "*loquitur imminere aliquid quo in melius reparatur*" ["...saying that something is imminent by which it will be repaired for the better. The shortness of the hours is the world hoping that "*annum suum*" ("His year") will begin again at the Nativity. Maximus also uses solstitial imagery to incite his flock to better things: "*sicut in illa die mundus spatia suae lucis extendit, ita et nos nostram iustitiam protendamus*" ["Just as on that day the world extends the period of its light, so let us prolong our righteousness." The Feast of the Nativity at Turin will be discussed below, chapter seven.

⁴⁰ There are eight sermons extant dealing with the December fast. Leo, *Serm.* 12-20 [*PL* 54:168-190]. He refers to March as the "*sacer novorum mensis*" ["sacred month of renewal"], *Serm.* 60.3 [*PL* 54:344].

redditum, sine fine mansurum."⁴¹

Is it possible that there was some regional variation in what was considered to be the beginning of the Christian year? At Rome the *Codex-Calendar of 354* suggests an ecclesiastical year beginning with the Nativity was regular by the mid-fourth century. The *Depositio Episcoporum* and the *Depositio Martyrum* both begin with 25 December.⁴² The calendar of non-Christian festivals central to the *Codex-Calendar of 354* begins with 1 January.⁴³ The pagan festival year and the civil year both began with the kalends of January, so this is to be expected. Eusebius "Gallicanus," which makes considerable symbolic use of the connection between winter solstice and increasing daylight that we have encountered in other bishops,⁴⁴ begins the order of its homilies with the Nativity of Christ. As the homilies then proceed chronologically through various feasts, it appears that the editor of the corpus intended to arrange the homilies in the form of a calendar, and

⁴¹ Leo of Rome, *Serm.* 22.1 [PL 54:193]: "The return of the year brings back, in effect, the mystery of our salvation, promised at the beginning of time, and given to the end to continue without end." Using the language of the cyclical return in this context demonstrates that Leo sees the Nativity of Christ, like Easter, as initiated in Creation. Because of the Creation-Christ-Easter time link, any Christological feast could, in a metaphoric sense, be located in Creation. Christmas, like Easter, could embrace both beginnings and endings, Creation and eschatology.

⁴² Sections eleven and twelve of the *Codex-Calendar of 354* (CM 1:70-71). The first feast mentioned in the *Depositio Episcoporum* is that of Dionysius (6 Kal. January). The *Depositio Martyrum* begins with the *natus Christus*. Cf. Salzman, *On Roman Time*, p. 45. Further discussion of 25 December as the beginning of the year in Rome can be found in W.H. Frere, *The Calendar*, Vol 1. in *Studies in Early Roman Liturgy* (Oxford, 1930), p. 76.

⁴³ For the actual calendar of the Codex, see PL 13:675-688, where it has been placed beside the calendar from Polemius Silvius' *Laterculus* for comparison.

⁴⁴ E.g., Eusebius "Gallicanus", *De Natale Domini* II.1-2 [CCSL 23]: "*Hodie nox deficientibus tenebris minoratur, et dies additus luce producitur*" ["Today the night is threatened by setting free the darkness, and the augmented day is produced by the light"].

that he, too, placed the Christian New Year on 25 December.⁴⁵

The feast of the Nativity of Christ originated at Rome, and it is not surprising that it is at Rome and in Italy that we see the greatest evidence for the spread of 25 December as the beginning of the Christian year. In Africa, which prided itself on its separateness in spite of its connections with Rome, this does not seem to have been the case.⁴⁶ Quodvultdeus and Hilarian both suggest that the ecclesiastical year began with the feast of Easter.⁴⁷ The contention that this date remained traditional is supported by the *Calendar of Carthage*, which was put together gradually in the last half of the fifth century and was probably completed at the time of its latest entry in 505.⁴⁸ This, our sole remaining example of an African calendar, lists its first feast in April.⁴⁹ Thus we may suspect that Easter remained the beginning of the year in Africa.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Morin, "La Collection gallicane," pp. 95ff established the order of the homilies according to the manuscripts and the *Capitula* which heads the collection. The *Capitula* reads like a calendar—only the dates of the festivals are absent.

⁴⁶ The relationship between Rome and Africa was often rocky. E.g., the mid-third century controversy over rebaptism; the difficulties between the Council of Carthage and Zosimus of Rome over Pelagianism in the second decade of the fifth century. The schismatic Donatists in Africa specialized in separatism. They felt that Acts 4.32, which refers to Christ eating and sleeping under the mid-day sun, was proof that Christ resided spiritually in Africa and that the true Church (the Donatists) was also there. See Augustine, *Serm.* 138.9 [PL 38:].

⁴⁷ For Quodvultdeus see ch. 1, n. 22; for Hilarian, ch. 1, n. 21.

⁴⁸ G.G. Willis, *St. Augustine's Lectionary* (London, 1962), p. 59, and C. Lambot, "Les sermons de S. Augustin pour les fetes des martyrs," *Analecta Bollandae* 67 (1949): 249, support this theory as to the creation of the *Calendar of Carthage*. H. Delehaye, *Les origines du Culte des Martyrs*, vol. 20, *Subsidia Hagiographica* (Brussels, 1933), p. 396, and Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 477, believe that the entire calendar was to be dated to 505 or later because it lists the deposition of Eugenius of Carthage, who died in that year.

⁴⁹ *Calendar of Carthage*, [PL 13:119-1230], that of the martyr Mappalicus, 19 April.

⁵⁰ The feast of the Nativity of Christ was known in Africa. The *Calendar of Carthage* lists it [PL 13:1227-8], and a number of Augustine's sermons celebrate it. It does suggest, however, that, at the close of the fifth century, Christmas did not gain the importance in Africa that it held on the other side of the Mediterranean.

In Gaul the opposite was true. The *Hieronymian Martyrology*, the first edition of which was probably produced at the end of the sixth century in Gaul, has a festival year beginning with 25 December, just like Eusebius "Gallicanus" and the *Depositiones* of the *Calendar of 354*.⁵¹ A calendar of Vigils and Feasts attributed to Perpetuus, bishop of Tours (460-490), begins with the feast of the Nativity as well.⁵² The Calendar of Polemius Silvius produced in Gaul in 448-9 presents alternative information. Silvius began his calendar with the traditional, non-Christian date of 1 January, although he did not fail to draw the readers attention to the proximity of that date to the Nativity:

*Nos calendarum rationem secuti a Ianuario, cuius ante dies octo et sol ad celsiorem tramitem surgens recurrit et quod est amplius dominus et deus noster dei filius Iesus Christus corporaliter natus est, ordiemur.*⁵³

Silvius' calendar represents a transitional stage in the final merging of the Christian and Roman calendar dates for the New Year. The *Codex-Calendar of 354*, separates Christian and non-Christian calendaric data. The calendar of traditional pagan festivals is filled with references to astrological data. Christian festivals are listed in sections eleven and twelve. When Silvius produced his

⁵¹The *Hieronymian Martyrology* can be found in *Act. SS* November 2:1-195, as edited by Duchesne. Cf. L. Duchesne, "A Propos du Martyrologe Hiéronymien," *Analecta Bollandiana* 17 (1898): 426-7.

⁵²The calendar of Perpetuus survives in Gregory of Tours, *H.F.*, 10.31 [PL 71:566]. Gregory wrote at the end of the sixth century. Gregory tells us that he took the evidence from a written list, suggesting such late evidence for the mid-fifth century is trustworthy.

⁵³Polemius Silvius, *Laterculus, De anno* [CM 1:519]: "We begin the reckoning of the calendar following January, eight days before which the sun returns, crossing over to a more elevated place. What is more, the Lord and our God, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is born into the body."

Laterculus he specifically excluded the astrological information, traditional in Roman calendars, as "*ars profanus*," focusing more on weather prognostications.⁵⁴ Forecasting the weather was a more acceptable means, *sine ullo errore*, of "predicting" the future, especially in an agrarian society where it could prove useful.⁵⁵ He also reduced significantly the number of notations dealing with pagan festivals while at the same time incorporating several notices relating to Christian festivals.⁵⁶ Thus, data which we find separated in the *Codex-Calendar of 354* was grouped into the same document by Silvius in 448-9.

It appears that we are witnessing a change in the traditional date of the Christian New Year. At the beginning of our period, March and Easter are the predominant associations for the beginning of the *annus domini*. In the mid-fourth century, probably at Rome, a movement began which saw 25 December as the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, likely in response to the popularity of the kalends of January. From Rome it appears to have spread to Northern Italy--Maximus of Turin in the early-fifth century already demonstrates the influence of this new date. Not much earlier, North Italian bishops like Zeno of Verona,

⁵⁴ Polemius Silvius, *Laterculus*, *De signis* [CM 1:518]: "*De signis nihil est quod dicatur, quia non sunt, etiamsi dicantur*" ["Nothing is to be said concerning the signs of the zodiac, since they are nothing even if they are mentioned"]. Meteorological notes can be found at the nones of January and 3 kalends February where storms are expected ("*Tempestatem significat*") [PL 13:676]. Scholars agree that Silvius had access to the *Codex-Calendar of 354* while creating his own calendar in 449. Cf. Salzman, *On Roman Time*, p. 4; Stern, *Calendrier de 354*, p. 35.

⁵⁵ Cassiodorus, *Inst.* 2.7.4 [PL 70:1218], claimed (mid-sixth century) that astronomy was useful in providing "*opportunitatem navigationis...tempus aratum...aestatis coniculam...autumni suspectos imbres*" ["the appropriate time for sailing...the time for ploughing...of the summer's heat...of the autumn's suspected rains"].

⁵⁶ E.g., the Epiphany on 6 January; Machabees on 1 August [PL 13:676; 682].

Chromatius of Aquileia, Ambrose of Milan, and Gaudentius of Brescia all subscribed to the traditional date of March as the beginning of the Christian year. In the mid-fifth century we find both March and 25 December used by Leo of Rome and Peter of Ravenna. The change to 25 December reached Gaul by the same time, as demonstrated by Perpetuus of Tours and the homilies included in Eusebius "Gallicanus".

No such change can be demonstrated for Africa. But the Vandal invasions of Africa in the 429 and the subsequent establishment of an Arian, Vandal kingdom in the former province, make it doubtful that ecclesiastical relations, already strained, would have improved between Africa and Rome.

To begin the ecclesiastical year with the feast celebrating the Nativity of Christ is logical in a metaphoric sense. But calendars surviving from the early Middle Ages demonstrate that the final shape of the Christian calendar owed more to the combinations attempted by Polemius Silvius. The later volumes of the *Patrologia Latina* include a large number of Christian calendars, many undated but undoubtedly later than the fifth century. All these calendars begin with 1 January--all list the Circumcision of Christ as the festival to be celebrated on that day. Thus we see what was effectively the incorporation of the traditional, non-Christian date for New Year into the Christian tradition: a merging of two traditions as to the start of the year. The kalends of January was given a feast which not only attempted to

Christianize a day with strong pagan attachments, but did so by the use of an event from Christ's life which could be linked to the Nativity. If Christ had been born on 25 December, then Jewish law would have dictated he receive his circumcision on 1 January. Presumably the intention was to counter the influences of the pagan festival year by beginning the Christian year on 1 January as well.⁵⁷

b) The Year and the Month: Literal Interpretations and Anti-Pagan Polemic

Several late antique bishops provided their congregations with precise, even technical data concerning the workings of the year and the month. The purpose of such literal explanations was predominantly anti-pagan and anti-astrological. Bishops continued the demythologization of sun and moon, which was part of their exegesis of the Creation story, by explaining the regularity of their courses in detail. The intended result was to connect time to Christ rather than to pagan gods and the exigencies of fate. Ambrose's astronomical explanation of the year and the month is a good example:

In annos quoque ordinati sunt sol et luna: luna per trecentos dies duodenis vicibus suum cursum conficiens, consummat annum, secundum Hebraeos, aliquibus diebus adjectis; secundum Romanos, bis sexto semel intra quinquennium unius diei adjectione celebrato. Sostitalis quoque annus est, cum sol expleto per omnia signa circuitu, in id unde

⁵⁷ There is no evidence for the feast of the Circumcision in the fourth and fifth centuries. What claims to be an ancient Gallic Martyrology [PL 72:607-624], begins with 1 January. The notation, "*Depositio Gregorii papae beatae memoriae...*" ["Deposition of Pope Gregory of blessed memory..."] on 12 March [PL 72:611], suggests that this Martyrology could not be earlier than the seventh century. There is also a Martyrology attributed to Protadius of Besancon, dated to 624, which begins with the feast of the Circumcision on 1 January. Other calendars, representing Spain, Italy and Gaul, can be found in the PL, volumes 85 and 106. All begin on 1 January.

*principium cursus sui sumpsit, recurrit.*⁵⁸

Technical definitions of the year according to the Hebrews and the Romans, and the solstitial year, in which the sun moves through the various signs of the zodiac, are traced back to their institution at Creation. The sun and moon are "*luminaria magna*," but are actually less important than the time-units that rule them: *Solem in potestatem diei, lunam et stellas in potestatem noctis.*"⁵⁹ For Ambrose, this is the proof that the sun and moon are neither divine nor in control of man's fate: their movements are regulated by the course of the year and by the night and day. They are, in effect, in the power of time-units.

The seasons, too, could be traced back to *Genesis*. They were to be viewed as a natural product of the sun's annual course. Ambrose explained seasonal variation in detail, showing how each of the seasons is produced by the sun's movements. In winter, the sun is in the south: it is therefore cold and nights are longer. The sun moves north as spring approaches,⁶⁰ eventually returning to its equinoctial position causing the days and nights to become of equal length, which

⁵⁸ Ambrose, *Hex.* 4.5.24 [PL 14:200]: "The sun and the moon also are regulated by the years. The moon in twelve units of 30 days completes a year: according to the Hebrews, with the addition of a few days; according to the Romans with an intercalary day added every fourth year. There is also the solstitial year, when the sun, having accomplished its circuit through all the signs of the zodiac, returns to the point from which its course arose."

⁵⁹ Ambrose, *Hex.* 4.5.24 [PL 14:200]: "The sun is in the power of the day, the moon and stars in the power of the night."

⁶⁰ The movement of the sun northward is accurate to a point. It is, of course, the tilt of the earth and the earth's orbit closer to the sun as summer approaches that actually produces this phenomenon. But the widely-held belief in geocentrism dictated that it was the sun that was perceived as moving northwards. Sidonius, *Ep.* 2.2.1 [Loeb 296:416], mentions a similar movement of the sun in producing the seasons: "*iam ver decedit aestati et per lineas sol altatus extremas in axem Scythicum radio peregrinante porrigitur*" ["Spring is now giving place to summer, and the sun, travelling upward through its highest latitudes, is obtruding an alien ray upon the region of the North Pole"] (trans. W.B. Anderson).

allows the seeds to germinate. As the sun continues to rise to the north, towards the summer solstice, the days become longer, the nights shorter, the heat increases, and even shadows become shorter at noon. Finally the sun begins to travel south again and thus autumn is produced which breaks the excessive heat of summer. This, Ambrose informed his flock, was the way the year worked "*apud nos in parte Occidentis*."⁶¹

Leo of Rome used a somewhat less technical explanation of the workings of time-units:

*Sed condebantur ista ad faciendi hominis utilitatem, ut rationale animal nec in distinctione mensium, nec in recursu annorum, nec in dinumeratione temporum falleretur: cum per inaequalium horarum impares moras, et dissimilium ortuum signa manifesta, et annos sol concluderet, et menses luna renovaret.*⁶²

In Leo's description we see two very familiar concepts: the attribution of time-units and the celestial bodies which dictated their courses to God's creative act; and a demonstration of the utility of time-units. However, his use of *inaequalis* and *dissimilis* seems to disagree with the promotion of the regularity of time-units we have seen elsewhere.⁶³ This is because, theologically speaking, regularity could

⁶¹ Ambrose, *Hex.* 4.5.21-23 [PL 14:198-199]: "...among us in the West." He points out that those who live in the south have different seasons: "*Caeterum sunt qui per duos totius anni dies sine umbra fuerint*" ["There are others who are without shadows for two days of the year"], a fairly accurate description of life near the equator.

⁶² Leo, *Serm.* 27.5 [PL 54:219-20]: "But these stars were created for the utility of man to come, so that, as a reasonable animal, he might avoid all error in the distinction of months, in the return of the year, and in the measure of the seasons: it is in effect by the longer variability of the unequal hours and by the clear signs of its dissimilar risings, that the sun fixed the year, and that the moon determined the renewal of the months."

⁶³ E.g., time-units used as a model for order or discipline because of their regularity. Zeno, *Tr.* 1.4.5 [CCSL 22:32], uses the regularity of the moon's monthly course as an example for the Christian virtue of patience: "*Luna quoque, quae quibusdam videtur errare curriculo menstruali, solemnes suae ignes aetatis quod numquam prorogat inportune nec derogat...*" ["The moon also, which seems to

easily imply perfection (e.g., God was believed to be "regular" in his immutability). Taken one step further, perfection, especially in a traditional context, could imply divinity. Thus late antique bishops were forced to demonstrate that heavenly bodies underwent change:

*Corpora caelestia non in se stant: habent quasdam mutationes suas, etsi occultas; certe de locis in loca mutantur, adscendunt ab oriente in occidentem, et rursus circumeunt ad orientem.*⁶⁴

The moon was the most visible example of change. This made it a very popular source of symbolism for the late antique Church. Ambrose uses the phases of the moon as an allegory for the Church which wanes with apostates but waxes once more on account of its martyrs.⁶⁵ In almost the same breath, however, he reminds the listener once again that the sun and the moon were not to be seen as divine: "*Non ergo sol aut luna fecunditatis auctores sunt; sed Deus Pater.*"⁶⁶

Augustine provided his flock with two technical descriptions of the phases of the moon. According to the first theory the moon is half-black, half-white, and revolves in its own orbit. Initially, the black half faces the earth. On the third day of the cycle the moon has turned sufficiently in its orbit to allow the horns to

wander by a certain monthly course, because it never extends nor withdraws its own appointed fires of life..."]

⁶⁴ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 121.6 [CCSL 40:1806]: "The heavenly bodies do not stand in themselves: they have certain changes of their own, although hidden. Certainly they are changed from place to place; they ascend from the east into the west, and go round to the east again."

⁶⁵ Ambrose, *Hex.* 4.2.7 [PL 14:190]: "...in persecutionibus discessione minuitur, ut martyrum confessionibus impleatur" ["...it is diminished in persecution by division, as it is filled up by the confessions of martyrs"].

⁶⁶ Ambrose, *Hex.* 4.4.7 [PL 14:190]: "The sun and the moon, therefore, are not the authors of fertility, but God the Father." It follows that they were not to be worshipped for their importance to agriculture.

appear.⁶⁷ By the fifteenth day of the cycle, the white half of the moon has turned to face the earth completely, thus achieving a full moon. By the thirtieth day of the cycle the process is reversed and the moon is again invisible. Augustine suggests demonstrating this to oneself by holding a half-white, half-black ball in front of your face and slowly turning it.⁶⁸ The important aspect of the theory for Augustine is not the astronomical significance of the moon's course, but rather, how such a monthly cycle could lend itself to Christian imagery: "*Secundum hanc opinionem luna in allegoria significat ecclesiam, quod ex parte spiritali lucet ecclesia, ex parte autem carnali obscura est.*"⁶⁹

The second theory is closer to the astronomical facts (geocentrism aside). According to this opinion, the moon does not have its own light, but receives light from the sun. At the beginning of the cycle, the moon is closer to the sun so its unilluminated side faces the earth. By the fifteenth day it has moved opposite the sun--demonstrated for Augustine by the fact that the moon rises in the east as the sun sets in the west--and so, the moon is full. The cycle reverses itself to the thirtieth day when the moon once again disappears from view. Once more, it is the

⁶⁷ Augustine, *Hom. in Ioh. Ep.* 1.12 [PL 35:1986-7]. Geminus, *Uranol.* 7.39 [Aujac, p. 175], said that the first or second day of the cycle was more usual. Bickerman, *Chronology*, pp. 17-18, says almost all Mediterraneans began the month at the appearance of the new crescent. Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.15.9 [Teubner, pp. 70-1]: in early Rome, the Pontifex minor was responsible for announcing the new moon, and thus, the new month, to the King.

⁶⁸ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 10.3 [CCSL 38:75]: "*Nam et si facias pilam ex dimidia parte candidam, et ex dimidia obscuram, si eam partem quae obscura est ante oculos habeas, nihil candoris vides, et cum coeperis illam candidam partem ad oculos convertere...*" ["For if you make a ball half-white and half-black, and if you hold that part which is black before your eyes, you will see nothing of the white; but when you begin to turn the white part to your eyes..."].

⁶⁹ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 10.3 [CCSL 38:75-76]: "According to this opinion, the moon signifies the Church in allegory because the Church shines from its spiritual part, but is dark in its carnal part."

allegorical significance which Augustine stresses: "*luna intellegitur ecclesia, quod suum lumen non habeat, sed ab unigenito Dei Filio, quo multis locis in sanctis scripturis allegorice sol appellatus est.*"⁷⁰

The planets and stars were thus both mutable and regular, an important stipulation in Christian arguments against their deification.⁷¹ These characteristics were seen as proof that the luminaries were, for all their grandeur, only creatures. And as creatures, they were subject to the will of God:

*Propone tibi solem, lunam, et stellas, quae coeli lumina etsi praeclaro fulgent nitore, creaturae sunt tamen, et ad quotidianum ministerium vel surgunt, vel occidunt, servientes dispositioni creatoris aeterni.*⁷²

Ambrose demonstrated this pointedly to his flock by referring to the changes which were inflicted on heavenly bodies. The sun could be obscured by clouds, and could suffer eclipse.⁷³ How then, could they also be divine: "*Si praestantissimus, quo*

⁷⁰ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 10.3 [CCSL 38:76]: "the moon is understood as the Church, because it does not have its own light, but is lit by the only-begotten Son of God, Who in many places in holy Scripture is allegorically called the Sun." This theory does not take into account the earth's tilt nor the moon's orbit at five degrees from the earth's. Augustine's explanation seems to suggest that the sun, moon, and earth are all in a direct line. This system would produce a monthly solar eclipse at the beginning of the cycle, when the moon came between the sun and the earth, and a completely invisible full moon, when the earth came between the sun and the moon and blocked the sun's illumination of the latter. But aside from this, the theory is essentially correct. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 10.2 [Loeb 413:256], notes a similar imagery used in pagan tradition: "*Dat etiam similitudinem ad illa incorporea de his caelestibus conspicuis amplisque corporibus, tamquam si sit sol et ipsa sit luna. Lunam quippe solis obiectu inluminari putant*" ["Plotinus] goes on to draw a comparison between these bodiless beings and the vast and prominent bodies in the sky, likening God to the sun and the soul to the moon. They believe of course that the moon derives its light from the rays of the sun" (trans. D.S. Wiesen). Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads* 5.6.4.16-19 [Loeb 444:210-1].

⁷¹ We have already seen several examples of this in chapter one. For example, Ambrose's refutation of sun worship by pointing out that the sun was created after the plants, even though the sun has been worshipped for its importance in the generative process. *Hex.* 3.6.27 [PL 14:166-7]. Leo of Rome, *Serm* 27.4 [PL 54:218-9], in which he chastises his flock for bowing to the sun while entering the church on the feast of the Nativity of Christ, responded with a technical description of the year. In another sermon delivered on the feast of the Nativity (*Serm.* 22.6 [PL 54:198-9]) Leo stresses that the sun, moon, and stars, while they are agreeable to God, in that they were created by him for his purposes, ought not to be worshipped: "*adoretur Deus, qui condidit, non creatura, quae servit*" ["God who created is adored, not the creature which serves"].

⁷² Ambrose, *Ep.* 34.7 [PL 16:1075-6]: "Consider the sun, moon, and stars; although these heavenly lights shine with excellent brightness, nevertheless they are only creatures. They rise and set to their daily duties, serving the disposition of the eternal Creator."

⁷³ Ambrose, *Ep.* 35.7 [PL 16:1076].

obectu terrae patitur saepe defectus; quantae majestatis qui ait: 'Adhuc semel ego movebo terram'."⁷⁴

That arguments based on the mutability and regularity of the sun and moon were judged effective in the battle against paganism is demonstrated by their inclusion in Prudentius' *Contra Symachum*:

*ausus habere deum solem, cui tramite certo condicio inposita est vigilem tolerare laborem uisibus obiectum mortalibus.... Solem certa tenet regio, plaga certa coercet, temporibus uariis distinguitur.*⁷⁵

The *Contra Symachum* was a refutation of paganism in general. The sun, in Prudentius' description, is restricted in its daily and yearly course. It has a specific task it must perform, a task which it performs before the eyes of men and for their benefit. How, then, he concludes, could the sun be deemed a god when it must do that which the true God designed it for (i.e., mark time)? As with Ambrose and Leo, as with the general opinion of late antique Christian astronomical observations, the restrictions imposed by its creaturely status made the sun a servant, not a god.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Ambrose, *Hex.* 4.1.2 [PL 14:188]: "If [the sun], which from the interposition of the earth often undergoes eclipses, is a very outstanding object, how much more is the majesty of Him who says: 'Yet a little while and I shall move the earth.'"

⁷⁵ Prudentius, *Con. Sym.* 1.310-329 [CCSL 126:196-7]: "Some have dared to have the sun as God, but have imposed on it the necessity of enduring its sleepless labour in the eyes of men.... The sun is held in a fixed region, confined to a certain place, and is distinguished by various times." Prudentius was a Spanish poet who wrote at the turn of the fourth century. The *Contra Symachum* was written in the first decade of the fifth century, an entry into the altar of victory controversy between Ambrose, representing the Christians, and the Roman noble Symmachus, representing the pagans, in 384.

⁷⁶ This demythologization of the sun was applied to the moon as well. E.g., Maximus of Turin's outrage when members of his flock howled at the moon during a lunar eclipse. Some among them were thinking quickly, it seems—having realized that Maximus considered such noise unworthy of Christians, they attempted to Christianize their actions by claiming that they were helping God. Maximus scoffed at this, and took the opportunity to refute the ritual by reminding his flock that the moon was a creature and subject to God, and not a deity itself: "*tanquam infirmus enim et inbecillus, nisi uestris adiuuaretur uocibus, non possit luminaria defendere, quae creauit*" [As if [God] were weak and feeble and unable to protect the luminaries which He created, unless helped by your voices"]. He demonstrates that the moon's rising and setting, its monthly course, and even lunar eclipses are natural occurrences—part of the regularity of the moon's course as it was established by God (*Serm.* 30.2 [CCSL 23:117-8])—by pointing out that the moon undergoes an eclipse of sorts nightly when it sets. Ambrose, *Hex.* 4.8.31 [PL 14:203], echoes a similar superstition. He claims it is foolish to be saddened each time the moon wanes, that "*sapiens non cum luna mutatur*" ["a wise man is not changed with the moon"], but realizes it is a natural thing. The moon, like the Church,

Astrology was susceptible to the same kind of arguments. Technical explanations of the workings of time, demonstrations of the restrictions and mutability of the sun and the moon, and allegorical interpretations once more figure prominently in the attempt to make the validity of astrology suspect.⁷⁷ Augustine, for example, was ready to admit that the sun and moon did assert some influence on the earth:

*Cum igitur non usquequaque absurde dici posset ad solas corporum differentias adflatus quosdam valere sidereos, sicut in solaribus accessibus et decessibus videmus etiam ipsius anni tempora variari et lunaribus incrementis atque detrimentis augeri et minui quaedam genera rerum, sicut echinos et conchas et mirabiles aestus oceani.*⁷⁸

These influences are natural, however--for Augustine they are part of the regulation of time created by the sun and moon as established by God. But to believe that the planets influenced human destiny was not to be allowed. The stars were more rightly to be seen as regulators of time or as symbols of Christ, as Augustine depicts them in one of his anti-Arian lessons:

is subject to frequent risings and settings. Another instance of lunar superstition is related by Ambrose--the belief that the rising moon, especially the new moon, brought rain. He refutes this idea, logically enough, by claiming that if it were true, then each time the moon re-appeared from concealment behind the clouds it would be accompanied by rain. At one point after a dry spell, Ambrose overheard someone comment that the rain would come with the new moon: "*Et quamvis cupidi essemus imbrum; tamen ejusmodi assertiones veras esse, nolebam. Denique delectatus sum, quod nullus imber effusus est; donec precibus Ecclesiae datus*" ["And although we all desired the rain, nevertheless I did not wish such assertions to be true. Therefore, I was delighted, because no rain fell until it was given by the prayers of the Church"] *Hex.* 4.7.30 [PL 14:202]. Caesarius of Arles, in the sixth century, composed a sermon to be used by parish priests who faced the same practice Maximus of Turin encountered a century earlier. He suggests participants be shown that the moon's course was natural (*Serm.* 13.5 [CCSL 103:67-8]). In a later sermon he mentions the superstition again and the use of trumpets and bells in an attempt to help the moon in its labours. Again he points out that such things are natural: "*et cum illa homini rationabili exhibeat deo ordinante servitium, homo illi ad iniuriam dei stultum reddit obsequium*" ["Now, since at God's bidding it renders service to rational man, why does man render foolish obedience to it, to the injury of God?"]. (*Serm.* 52.3 [CCSL 103:231]).

⁷⁷ As, for example, Zeno, *Tr.* 1.38 [CCSL 22:105-6], where he re-interprets the signs of the zodiac in a Christian manner for his neophytes, as discussed in chapter one, above.

⁷⁸ Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 5.6 [Loeb 412:156-7]: "It is not entirely absurd to say, with reference only to physical differences, that there are certain sidereal influences. We see that the seasons of the year change with the approach and the receding of the sun. And with the waxing and waning of the moon we see certain kinds of things grow and shrink, such as a sea-urchin and oysters, and the marvellous tides of the ocean" (trans. W.M. Green).

*Per luciferum enim, aut stellas omnes significat, et per stellas tempora, quia fecit Deus stellas in signa temporum, ut ante tempora invenias natum esse Christum.*⁷⁹

We encountered arguments based on the strict separation of time and eternity in the refutation of Arianism. Time indicated movement or progression; eternity always has been and always will be the same. The two were, therefore, not compatible (and thus Christ could not have been created before time but must always have been). Arguments based on the "logic" of time were used to discount astrology as well. How, for example, could certain planets be considered under the influence of the gods whose names they bore, when history showed that those planets had not always been named after those gods?⁸⁰

Augustine's famous refutation of astrology in Book 5 of the *De Civitate Dei* makes a different kind of argument based on time. He uses the example of twins who live different lives. Born at the same time, they would have the same horoscope and thus, the same future. That they regularly do not is used as proof to refute astrological prognostications. Ambrose of Milan locates the illogic of astrology in its division of time:

Nam et ipsi vitalem illum signorum duodecim circuitum in duodecim partes dividunt: et quia triginta diebus sol duodecimam partem sphaerae ejus quae inenarrabilis habetur, regreditur, quo gyros solis anni circuitu

⁷⁹ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 92.6 [CCSL 39:1296]: "For by the morning star all stars are signified, and by the stars, time is signified, because God made the stars as signs of the times (seasons), so that you may know that before time, Christ was born."

⁸⁰ Augustine, *De Doc. Chr.* 2.21.32 [PL 34:51].

*compleatur, in triginta portiunculas....*⁸¹

These divisions continue with Ambrose pointing out the absurdity of the entire system as a result. The slightest error in judgement produces an erroneous horoscope, because the divisions of time are so infinitesimally small. Astrology, therefore, is simply "*ridiculum...credere.*"

Astrology was completely at odds with the view of time accepted by the late antique Church. It gave a power to the celestial bodies which bishops sought to undermine. One could not be both astrologer and Christian, according to strict episcopal theory. Yet the laity was not always in agreement with episcopal theory. Sidonius Apollinaris, before his elevation to the episcopacy, was fond of incorporating astrological data into his poetry.⁸² Ausonius of Bordeaux, who lived one hundred years before, was of the same bent. Both men were professed Christians; both men incorporated traditional, non-Christian ideas about time into their poetry.⁸³

It is doubtful that Ausonius and Sidonius considered themselves any less Christian because of this. They represent a segment of the laity whose attitudes

⁸¹ Ambrose, *Hex.* 4.4.14 [*PL* 14:194]: "For those men divide that vital circuit of twelve signs into twelve parts. And since in thirty days the sun moves through a twelfth part of this indescribable sphere, by which circuit of the year the course of the sun is completed, each of these twelve parts is divided into thirty smaller divisions...."

⁸² E.g. Sidonius, *Carm.* 15.52-66 [*Loeb* 296:228f]; *Carm.* 22.2 [*Loeb* 296:260f].

⁸³ Ausonius, *Eclogae*, Section 14 in R.P.H. Green, *The Works of Ausonius*. (Oxford, 1991), is comprised of poems which deal with most aspects of Roman time, from Roman festivals to descriptions of the week, month, year and zodiac. The *Eclogae* reads much like a poetic textbook—not surprising in that Ausonius, a rhetor of Bordeaux, was one of the best known teachers of his day.

about the compatibility of Christian and pagan culture was more relaxed. Others were much less tolerant. Paulinus of Nola, an ex-student of Ausonius who was converted to the monastic life and was destined to become the bishop of Nola, was unwilling to accept what he considered to be the half-hearted Christianity of his former mentor.⁸⁴ For Paulinus, Christianity was to be an all or nothing affair; Ausonius tried to show Paulinus that there could be a middle ground. The correspondence between the two friends eventually came to an end--both men had stated their side of the debate without being able to influence the other.

Sidonius Apollinaris resolved the dichotomy which Paulinus believed he saw in Ausonius. Before becoming a bishop, he could write in praise of the astrological acumen of his friend Anthedius: *siquidem nullum hoc exactius compertum habere censuerim quid sidera zodiaci obliqua, quid planetarum vaga, quid exotici sparsa praevaleant*.⁸⁵ Some years later, when he came to write a letter to a rhetor of Perigueux, Lupus, Sidonius the bishop betrays a new attitude towards astrology. The letter concerns the grisly end of Lampridius, a former correspondent of Sidonius and once rhetor of Bordeaux. He can still praise Lampridius for his poetry, still admire the way he used traditional forms. But as a member of the episcopacy,

⁸⁴ R.P.H. Green, "The Correspondence of Ausonius," *L'Antiquite Classique* 49 (1990): 191-211, discusses this literary exchange between Ausonius and Paulinus. The breakdown their friendship due to such tensions is best illustrated by the verse letter written to Ausonius. *Carm.* 11 [PL 61:461]: "*neglectaque...crimen amicitiae*" ["the crime of neglecting friendship"] is the charge which Ausonius has laid against Paulinus (as well as being afraid of his wife). Lines 20-29 express Paulinus' pains at such accusations.

⁸⁵ Sidonius, *Carm.* 22.2 [Loeb 296:260-1]: "I should think no one knows more perfectly the special influence of the various heavenly bodies--the slanting signs of the zodiac, the roaming planets, or the scattered stars of the extra-zodiacal region" (trans. W.B. Anderson).

he cannot tolerate the fact that Lampridius consulted astrologers:

*atque utinam hunc finem, dum inconsulte fidens vana consultat, non meruisset excipere! nam quisque praesumpserit interdicta secreta vetita rimari, vereor huius modi catholicae fidei regulis exorbitaturum et effici dignum, in statum cuius respondeantur adversa, dum requiruntur inlicita.*⁸⁶

This is the second time we have seen a difference between Sidonius the poet and Sidonius the bishop: his use of the traditional Christian beginning of the year, March, versus the kalends of January; and his new, anti-astrological stance. Certain attitudes concerning time went hand-in-hand with the more intense devotion to Christianity, as seen, for example, in a *servus dei* such as Paulinus of Nola, or with the elevation to the episcopacy (or, in some cases, both). As a bishop, Sidonius took his episcopal duties seriously, which included the inculcation of his flock with appropriate beliefs concerning time. When those beliefs came into conflict with former professions, Sidonius was willing to toe the Christian line.

ii. Symbolism of the Year, Month, and Seasons

a) The Year and the Month

The year, month, and seasons, like the sun and the moon, provided a rich source of images which bishops regularly availed themselves of in the indoctrination of their flocks. This often involved making simple associations between a time-

⁸⁶ Sidonius, *Ep* 8.11.13 [Loeb 420:472-3]: "I only wish that our friend had not deserved this end by seeking vain advice with such ill-advised credulity. For I fear that everyone who presumes to pry into banned and secret and prohibited mysteries will thus deviate from the rules of the Catholic faith, and by enquiring into unlawful matters he deserves to get answers that bode ill for him" (trans. W.B. Anderson).

unit and a Christian doctrine or personality. Zeno of Verona was particularly fond of giving traditional ideas about time a Christian face, as we saw in his reinterpretation of the twelve signs of the zodiac for his neophytes. Zeno attempted the same thing, on a greatly reduced scale, with the months and the seasons which made up the year. So the twelve months are symbols of the prophets, while the seasons are symbols of the four Gospels.⁸⁷

In a sermon only recently attributed to Chromatius of Aquileia we find him making a similar symbolic use of the months.⁸⁸ For Chromatius, the months are symbols of the apostles, as Christ is symbolized by the year: *illic et duodecim fructus duodecim mensium, id est apostolicae praedicationis, quae annum Dei acceptabilem...distinguunt.*⁸⁹ Elsewhere we find time imagery being used to make specific Scriptural texts more comprehensible to the listener. Peter of Ravenna, in discussing the daughter of the synagogue ruler whom Christ healed, could not help but take her age, twelve, and see it as a symbol of human life and time: *"Nam iste numerus tempus humanae uitae concludit, qui ut annum faciat, duodecim*

⁸⁷ Zeno, Tr. 1.33.4 [CCSL 22:84]: *"Dies uero ad sacramentum pertinet resurrectionis domini nostri Iesu Christi...cui duodecim horae in apostolis, duodecim menses seruiunt in prophetis; quem euangeliorum salutaria quattuor praedicant tempora"* ["Truly the day pertains to the sacrament of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ...whom the twelve hours serve in the apostles, the twelve months serve in the prophets; whom the beneficial seasons of the four Gospels predict"]

⁸⁸ Chromatius, *Serm.* 43 [CCSL 9A *Suppl.*:616-17]. The sermon was originally attributed to Ambrose of Milan [CCSL 9A *Suppl.*:615].

⁸⁹ Chromatius, *Serm.* 43 [CCSL 9A *Suppl.*:616]: "there the twelve fruits of the twelve months, that is of the apostolic preaching, which distinguishes the acceptable year of the Lord." Cf. *Serm.* 19.1 [CCSL 9A:89], for a comparison of the sun to the Gospels: *Dicta prophetica mysteriorum nubibus obumbrata sunt; dicta uero euangelica claritate solis iustitiae illustrata* ["The words of the prophets are hidden by the clouds of mysteries; truly the words of the Gospels shine with the clarity of the Sun of Justice"]. Chromatius is attempting to demonstrate the differences between the Old and New Testaments for his flock--the former is prediction, the later, fulfilment. His use of cloudy versus sunny in this context is designed to make the differences apparent by reference to well-known meteorological phenomena.

distinguitur et numeratur in mensibus."⁹⁰

Augustine in his *De Doctrina Christiana* taught prospective bishops the importance of number symbolism: it made the duty to preach on the Scripture much easier. Augustine's example is the 40-day fast of Moses, Elias and Christ:

*Habet enim denarium quater, tanquam cognitionem omnium rerum intextam temporibus. Quaternario namque numero et diurna et annua curricula peraguntur: diurna matutinis, meridianis, vespertinis, nocturnisque horarum spatiis; annua vernis, aestivis, autumnalibus, hiemalibusque mensibus.*⁹¹

The quadragesimal fast⁹² thus becomes a symbol not only of time itself, but also of how the Christian should devote temporal existence to Christian activities. Paulinus of Nola would have been pleased, as the total devotion of time to God was the basis of asceticism. It may seem curious to see such an ideal being prescribed to the laity, but Augustine was not alone in this. The late antique bishop saw it as his duty to push his flock towards Christian perfection. In this context we should remember the different attitudes toward time demonstrated by Sidonius the poet and Sidonius the bishop. Of course, what bishops expected and what the laity did were not

⁹⁰ Peter, *Serm.* 36.4 [CCSL 24:210]: "For that number concludes the time of human life. In order to make a year twelve months are marked off and counted."

⁹¹ Augustine, *De Doc. Chr.* 2.16.25 [PL 34:48]: "For it has four tens, to indicate the knowledge of all things involved in times. The day and the year both run their courses in four parts: the day in hours of morning, noon, evening, and night; the year in the months of spring, summer, autumn, and winter."

⁹² The use of the number forty, especially as connected to time in the context of Quadragesima, held widespread appeal for bishops in late antiquity, and we shall return to its use in chapter seven.

always the same things.⁹³

One of the most popular uses of time symbolism in the sermons is one that we have already briefly encountered--the linking of the sun and moon to Christ and the Church.⁹⁴ This, too, could be seen as a typological explanation of Scripture:

*Luna ipsa, qua prophetis oraculis species Ecclesiae figuratur, cum primum resurgens in menstruas reparatur aetates, tenebris nobis absconditur: paulatimque cornua sua complens, vel e regione solis absolvens, clari splendore fulgoris irrutilat.*⁹⁵

More often, the image proved a useful way in which to convey Church history, an intricate part of the early training of every Christian. The Church, like the moon, had experienced its own waxings and wanings.⁹⁶ Paulinus of Nola saw the period before the conversion of the Gentiles as one of darkness. Now that they have been added to the Church, it shines "*lumine..pleno lunae.*"⁹⁷ For Gaudentius of Brescia, the moon, as a symbol of the Church, shone so brightly with the end of the persecutions that he could even compare it to the sun:

⁹³The subject of episcopal prescriptions (i.e., the Christianization of daily life), will be the focus of chapter six. Lay-reactions to these prescriptions are discussed in chapter nine.

⁹⁴Christ was widely regarded as the *sol justitiae*. This was based on a scriptural reference to the Sun of Justice in *Mal.* 3.20. Up until now, we have been discussing the sun's connection to the year. It obviously could be connected to another time-unit as well, the day, just as the moon, thus far linked to the month, also plays a role in defining the night (see chapter five). By the end of this chapter the symbolic use of these celestial bodies as found in the sermons will not be exhausted--they really were quite pervasive! For a more detailed discussion of the *sol justitiae*, see the investigation of Christological feasts, below (chapter seven).

⁹⁵Ambrose, *Ep.* 18.24 [PL 14:979]: "The moon itself, which in the prophetic oracles represents the Church, when it first rises again, and repairs its monthly wanings, is hidden from us by darkness, but gradually filling its horns, or completes them as she comes opposite the sun, and shines with bright and glorious splendour."

⁹⁶Ambrose, *Hex.* 4.8.32 [PL 14:204]: "*ergo Ecclesia, sicut luna defectus habet et ortus frequentes*" ["Therefore the Church just as the moon has its frequent risings and settings"].

⁹⁷Paulinus, *Ep.* 23.33 [PL 61:279]: "...with the full light of the moon."

*Lunam quoque, id est ecclesiam, quae in pace crescit, in persecutione minuitur--minuitur autem globo plenitudinis, non lumine claritatis--nunc eam sicut solem cernimus per totum splendere orbem.*⁹⁸

For Augustine, the increasing fullness of the moon is a symbol of the Church's slow movement through time towards Christ and eschatological fulfilment:

*'Fecit lunam in tempora.' Intellegimus spiritualiter ecclesiam crescentem de minimo, et ista mortalitate vitae quodammodo senescentem; sed ut propinquet ad solem.*⁹⁹

The astronomical relationship between the sun and the moon--the fact that the moon receives its light from the sun--was a natural source of powerful imagery that was used repeatedly in the sermons. Thus Augustine's report of the two theories to explain the phases of the moon and the allegorical interpretations he applied to each.¹⁰⁰ Ambrose, too, was fond of the image,¹⁰¹ while Maximus of Turin used it at length to redirect his flock from their superstitious howling at the moon in eclipse:

Unde si Christus dominus soli rectius comparatur, lunae quid nisi ecclesiam comparabimus? Nam ipsa sicut luna, ut inter gentes luceat,

⁹⁸ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 3.3 [CSEL 68:33]: "Now we see the moon also. It is the Church, which increases in peace, and diminishes in persecution--diminishes, however in its round fullness, not in its intensity. Now the moon shines just like the sun throughout the whole world."

⁹⁹ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 103.3.19 [CCSL 40:1516]: "'He made the moon for the seasons.' We understand spiritually the Church increasing from the smallest size and growing old as it were from the morality of this life; yet so that it draws closer to the sun."

¹⁰⁰ See above, pp. 107-9.

¹⁰¹ E.g., Ambrose, *Hex.* 4.8.32 [PL 14:204]: "*Fulget enim Ecclesia non suo, sed Christi lumine; et splendorem sibi arcessit de sole iustitiae*" [For the Church does not shine on its own, but with the light of Christ. Its brilliance has been obtained from the Sun of Justice']. Cf. *Ep.* 18.24 above, n. 95.

*mutuatur lumen a sole iustitiae.*¹⁰²

The symbolic uses of the sun and moon and their associated time-units were numerous. The coincidence of twelve months or twelve signs of the zodiac with twelve apostles or twelve prophets made these time-units useful as mnemonic devices for interpreting Scripture. The relationship between Christ and His apostles could be explained by typological reference to the year and the months; the relationship between Christ and the Church by reference to sun and moon.

Mutability, so important in anti-pagan polemic, proved useful in symbolism, too. Augustine and Ambrose both used the sun and the moon as symbols to show their flocks the difference between the steadfastness of the true Christian and the mutability of the hypocrite: "*Sapiens permanet sicut sol; stultus autem sicut luna mutatur.*"¹⁰³

Augustine was particularly fond of using time-units in this larger symbolic sense. He makes extensive use of time-units to explain the subtle differences between time and eternity to his flock. The "*annus*" might symbolize eternity in much the same way that the year defined by the course of the sun symbolizes terrestrial existence: *Ergo speremus venturos nos ad hos annos stantes, in quibus*

¹⁰² Maximus, *Serm.* 31.2 [CCSL 23:122]: "Thus, if the Lord Christ is rightly compared to the sun, to what shall we compare the moon if not the Church? For, just as the moon itself, it borrows light from the Sun of Justice, so that it may shine among the nations."

¹⁰³ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 73.19 [CCSL 39:1018]: "The wise man endures like the sun; the fool is changed like the moon." Ambrose, *Hex.* 4.8.31 [PL 14:217]: "...*sapiens non cum luna mutatur; sed permanebit cum sole*" ["...the wise man is not changed with the moon, but endures with the sun"]. For Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 60.8 [CCSL 39:770], the moon also symbolizes all of mankind—to change, to be mutable, is as much a part of the natural state of humans as it is of the heavenly bodies: "*Luna enim figurate in scripturis pro mutabilitate huius mortalitatis ponitur*" ["For the moon by a figure in the Scriptures is put for the mutability of the mortal state." Cf. Peter of Ravenna, n. 90 above, where the year is used as a symbol of the mortal state.

*non circuitu solis peraguntur dies, sed manet quod est sicuti est, quia hoc solum vere est.*¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, all time-units, in the very manner in which they return again and again, can be taken as images of eternity:

*Vicissitudo enim temporum sibi succedentium, dum luna minuitur et rursus impletur, dum sol omni anno locum suum repetit, dum ver, vel aestas, vel autumnus, vel hiems sic transit ut redeat, aeternitatis quaedam imitatio est.*¹⁰⁵

b) The Seasons in Symbolism

One rather popular symbolic use of the seasons was encountered in chapter two: the division of time into two periods, before and after Christ, with reference to winter and spring.¹⁰⁶ That Christ had suffered in the spring was, for Ambrose, a fulfilment of the prophecy in *Cant.* 2.11 that the winter is now past:

*...venit pascha, venit indulgentia, venit remissio peccatorum, cessavit tentatio, imber abiit, procella abiit et quassatio. Ante adventum Christi hyems est, post adventum ejus flores sunt.*¹⁰⁷

Zeno of Verona made the same division of time. For him winter is synonymous

¹⁰⁴ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 101.2.14 [CCSL 40:1449]: "Therefore, let us hope that we may reach these lasting years, in which days are not spent in the revolution of the sun, but what is remains just as it is, because it alone truly is."

¹⁰⁵ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 9.7 [CCSL 38:61]: "For the change of seasons succeeding one another, while the moon is diminished, and again is increased, while the sun each year returns to its own place, while spring, or summer, or autumn, or winter passes away so that it may return, is in some manner an imitation of eternity." Augustine also used time-units to demonstrate symbolically how time and eternity were not mutually exclusive for the Christian. This is a manifestation of the theory that a Christian's plane of existence was in between the temporal and eternal realms. See, *Ennar. in Ps.* 60.8 [CCSL 39:770], where Augustine compares his flock's temporal existence to the moon: "...nascitur, crescit, perficitur, senescit et occidit" ["...it is new, increases, is full, decreases, and vanishes"]. At the same time, however, they are also part of a new generation which will rise again, "et permanebimus in aeternum cum Deo, quando iam non sicut luna" ["and we shall remain in eternity with God, because we are now no longer like the moon"].

¹⁰⁶ We saw this in Ambrose, *Hex.* 1.4.13 [PL 14:128]: "post hybernas glacies atque hyemales caligines serenior solito verni temporis splendor eluceat" ["after the winter's ice and darkness the splendour of springtime shines forth all the more clearly"].

¹⁰⁷ Ambrose, *De Isaac* 4.35 [PL 14:514]: "Easter has come, pardon has come, the remission of sins has come, temptation has ended, the rain is gone, the storm and the affliction are gone. Before the coming of Christ it is winter, after His coming there are flowers." Almost the same thing was taught by Ambrose to his neophytes at *Hex.* 4.5.22 [PL 14:199].

with the "*longa nox*"--both are seen as symbols of eternal death.¹⁰⁸ Zeno, who, as we have seen, applied a symbolic link between Christianity and time-units such as the months and the signs of the zodiac, does the same thing for the seasons. Spring is the time when the "*ecclesiae flores*", the neophytes, are born. Summer represents the "*fidelis...populus*." Autumn is "*martyrii locus*." The first three seasons of the ecclesiastical year thus typologically signify the true Christians of the Church, from neophyte to martyr. As would be expected, the winter refers to another type altogether: "*Hiems namque pigra, sordida et tristis ad eos pertinet, qui idolatriae deseruientes*."¹⁰⁹

Gaudentius' use of the seasons as symbols is more far-reaching, in that it includes all of time and all the peoples of the world:

*Oportuno tempore dominus Iesus beatissimam festivitatem paschae voluit celebrari post autumnum nebulam, post horrorem hiemis, ante aestatis ardorem. Oportebat enim solem iustitiae Christum et Iudaeorum caliginem et rigorem gentilium ante ardorem futuri iudicii placido resurrectionis suae lumine dimovere.*¹¹⁰

For Gaudentius, spring was a metaphor not only for the coming of Christ, but for

¹⁰⁸ Zeno, *Tr.* 1.33.1 [CCSL 22:84]: the "sordid and sorrowful winter" ["*hiems...sordida et tristis*"], and the long night ("*longa nox*") as "*aeterna mors*." Leo of Rome also referred to the period before Christ with reference to the night (i.e., the "*nox profunda*"). See above, p. 57. The recurrent theme of winter-spring, before Christ-after Christ is also found in Gaudentius, *Tr.* 1.1 [CSEL 68:18]; Maximus, *Serm.* 58.1 [CCSL 23:224]; and Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* 31.231ff. It is often merged with the use of winter-spring imagery to explain the concept of resurrection, discussed below, pp. 122ff.

¹⁰⁹ Zeno, *Tr.* 1.33.2-3 [CCSL 22:84]: spring, the "flowers of the Church;" summer, "the people of the faith;" autumn, "the place of the martyr;" winter: "For indeed the winter pertains to those sluggish, sordid, and ill-humoured ones, those devoted to idolatry."

¹¹⁰ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 1.1 [CSEL 68:18]: "The Lord Jesus wished the most blessed feast of Easter to be celebrated at an opportune time after the mist of autumn after the cold of winter, but before the heat of summer. For it was necessary that Christ, the Sun of Justice, scatter both the darkness of the Jews and the coldness of the Gentiles before the heat of the future judgement by the gentle light of His resurrection."

the Christian people, and for resurrection. The "*autumni nebulam*" symbolizes the "*Iudaeorum caliginem*,"¹¹¹ the "*horrorem hiemis*," the "*rigorem gentilium*." Finally, the "*aestatis ardorem*" symbolizes the coming judgement.¹¹²

The connection of the doctrine of resurrection to spring and to the beginning of the year is a natural extension of spring as the season of rebirth: "*Sic enim post hiemalis rigoris frigidam quodammodo sepulturam pullulare elementa omnia festinarunt, ut resurgente domino et ipsa consurgerent.*"¹¹³ Paulinus of Nola found the doctrine of resurrection exemplified in plants, the stars, and the traditional winter-spring imagery: "*Vere resurgentum cunctis nova rebus imago / Post hiemis mortem vivificata redit.*"¹¹⁴ But the use of time imagery in teaching the doctrine of resurrection is particularly evident in Ambrose's *De Excessu Satyri*. He preached a sermon on the resurrection in response to the death of his brother Satyrus, in which he turned the end of the year into an explanation of resurrection:

Ergo et nostram resurrectionem et si non credis fide, non credis exemplo, usu es crediturus. Et aliis quidem fructibus, ut viti, oleae, pomisque diversis anni aetas extrema habilis maturandis: nobis quoque mundi

¹¹¹ Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* 9.3 [PL 61:186], uses winter rather than autumn as a symbol of of the Jews. The winter and the Sabbath, symbolize the time when, "*in otio spiritalium negotiorum, et bonorum operum sterilitate. Sabbatum enim otiosum est, et hiems nuda nascentium*" ["spiritual works are idle and good works sterile. For the Sabbath is idleness and the winter barren of birth"].

¹¹² Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 73.20 [CCSL 39:1018], applies seasonal imagery to different types of Christians. The neophyte is like the spring; those more fervent in the faith are like the summer ["*Ferventes spiritu aestas est. Tu, inquam, fecisti spiritu ferventes; tu fecisti et novellos in fide; ver est.*"] Elsewhere summer is used as a symbol of the present age: "*Aestas nostra, revelatio Christi est*" ["Our summer is the revelation of Christ"] (*Hom. in Ioh.* 28.11 [PL 35:1627]). Summer can also signify worldly prosperity, just as worldly adversity is signified by the winter. Cf. *Ennar. in Ps.* 41.16 [CCSL 38:472].

¹¹³ Maximus of Turin, *Serm.* 56.1 [CCSL 23:224]: "For after the icy burial, so to speak, of a rigorous winter, all the plants hasten to bud forth so that they themselves might rise with the rising Lord."

¹¹⁴ Paulinus, *Carm.* 35.237-8 [PL 61:681]: "When spring arises again all things have a new image, revived and restored after the death of winter."

*consummatio tamquam extremus anni finis accommodam resurgendi praescripsit aetatem.*¹¹⁵

The best way to teach the doctrine of resurrection, according to Ambrose, is to provide examples taken from the listener's experience. Thus he appeals to the annual completion of the agricultural year, the harvest, and takes it as an image of the final resurrection: as crops are harvested annually, so there will be a final harvest during which the Christian crop will be harvested into heaven. Nature itself provides the logical example for Ambrose, because, "*in omnibus sibi fetibus aequae natura respondet, nec in sola hominum successione degenerat.*"¹¹⁶ In effect, examples from nature are useful because they are repetitive and regular--exactly the same thing that appealed to bishops when they used the concept of time and time-units in their sermons.

The harvest season was particularly applicable to Christian allegory for obvious reasons. Maximus of Turin used harvest imagery during the celebration of the feast of St. Cyprian (14 September). The harvest of martyrs was an appropriate image, especially in the case of Cyprian whose festival coincided with the beginning of the grape harvest:

Quae quidem passio uindemiis comparanda est. Sicut enim uuarum

¹¹⁵ Ambrose, *De Exc. Sat.* 2.62 [PL 16:1332-3]: "Therefore, if you do not believe in our resurrection by faith, nor by example, you will believe by experience. For many products, as the vine, the olive, and different fruits, the end of the year is the fit time for ripening: and for us also the consummation of the world, as though the end of the year, has prescribed the proper time for rising again."

¹¹⁶ Ambrose, *De Exc. Saty.* 2.63 [PL 16:1333]: "in all its produce nature remains consistent with itself, nor does it fail in the generation of men alone."

*expressione uinum funditur, ita et sanctorum martyrio uini uice sanguis effunditur, nisi quod uua temporales fructus praestat passio sempiternos.*¹¹⁷

Valerian of Cimiez used similar agricultural imagery to show his flock the true road to a Christian life. Valerian differentiated two ways in life: the broad and easy way--the road to Hell; and the narrow way. He demonstrated this with reference to the life of the farmer: "*aut quis umquam legitimo tempore agri sui fructum recepit, nisi prius multiplicato rudem terram sudeo confecerit?*" As the farmer first had to work hard to achieve the rewards of the harvest, so the Christian had to work hard, if he was to participate in the eschatological harvest still to come.¹¹⁸

Augustine's use of harvest imagery tended to be primarily eschatological, too.¹¹⁹ He speaks at one point of two harvests. The first harvest was a symbol of the Jews to whom the prophets had been sent to proclaim the coming Christ--the first crop of Christians, the immediate harvest of the personal ministry of Christ and his apostles. The apostles had planted too, as had those who preached the word in subsequent centuries, and it was from these seeds that the final crop of Christians

¹¹⁷ Maximus, *Serm.* 10.1 [CCSL 23:35]: "Indeed, this suffering ought to be compared to the grape harvest. For just as the wine is poured out by the squeezing of the grapes, so also blood is poured forth instead of wine with the martyring of the saints, although the vine produces temporal fruits and suffering everlasting ones.. Zeno of Verona also used autumn as a symbol of the martyr. See above, n. 109.

¹¹⁸ Valerian, *Hom.* 2.4 [PL 51:698]: "Or who ever brought in the harvest at the proper time unless first he prepared the hard earth with many furrows?"

¹¹⁹ There was extensive use of seasonal imagery in African mosaics. Several works on the subject have been produced. E.g. K. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa* (Oxford, 1978); D. Parrish, *Season Mosaics of Roman North Africa* (Rome, 1984). Parrish discusses the months in the mosaics on p. 52.

was to be harvested in the End Times.¹²⁰

iii. Conclusions

As sources of symbolism, time-units allowed the bishop to further his flock's understanding of the Christian religion, and the doctrines with which it was underpinned. The association of the months and the apostles was a simple mnemonic device which nevertheless made the relationship between Christ and the apostles much clearer. On a deeper level, the symbolic use of time-units could help clarify important Christian concepts, such as the doctrine of Resurrection. They also allowed the listener to place himself within the course of time by relating time to God, both in its conception and completion.

In late antiquity, a bishop's duty to explain Christianity to his congregation involved the refutation of paganism. Both allegorical interpretation and technical explanation of time-units were readily applied to anti-pagan and anti-astrological polemic. By emphasizing that the origin of the planets and stars rested with God, that they were mutable and followed a regular course, bishops had a potent means of demythologizing these luminaries.

Yet the demythologization of the sun and the moon did not mean that the time-units connected to them were completely deprived of religious associations.

¹²⁰ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps. 64.17* [CCSL 39:837]. Cf. *Hom in Ioh. 15.32*, where Augustine also uses the harvest as an eschatological symbol: "Of this harvest were flung forth a few grains, and sowed the whole earth, and there arises another harvest which is to be reaped at the end of the world." Elsewhere, *Serm. 87.1*, Augustine speaks of the current season of the wine harvest as a symbol of the Church's work in harvesting new Christians for God: "*Est enim modo tempus vindemiae corporalis. Est autem et spiritualis vindemia, ubi Deus gaudet ad fructum vineae suae*" ["For now it is the time of the material wine harvest. But there is also a spiritual vintage, where God rejoices in the fruit of His vineyard"].

The "*annus domini*" placed the yearly cycle firmly within an acceptable Christian context. The combination of religious and secular year found in the pagan calendar was not a characteristic of the Christian calendar in late antiquity. Instead, the two years were kept separate and distinct, which, in itself, was a response to the traditional associations attached to the kalends of January. The movement to 1 January as the beginning of the Christian year, which occurred in the early Middle Ages, represents the final merging of the Christian and pagan calendric traditions. Not only did 1 January--now given a Christian meaning--become the beginning of the year, but, like the pagan calendar, the Christian calendar had become an amalgamation of both the religious and the civil years.

CHAPTER FOUR

Units of Time II: The Week

The week of seven days--the *dies hebdomadis*¹--was an especially important time-unit in late antiquity, for Christians and non-Christians alike. The Jewish week could claim some antiquity. The Christian week, a modification and reinterpretation of this Jewish antecedent, was a relatively new phenomenon. So, too, was the planetary week which was steeped in astrology. Both the Christian week and the planetary week underwent their primary development during the first three centuries of this era; both came into vogue during the course of the fourth century. Later centuries would see these two weeks amalgamated into the weekly cycle by which we live our lives, a week beginning with Sunday in the Christian tradition, but whose daily names found their origins in the planets and gods.

Such an amalgamation did not occur during the period of this study, at least not as far as the official hierarchy of the Church was concerned. But in the development of the concept of the week, this period is a crucial one; a time of flux when the two predominant weekly cycles existed side by side. As we would expect it was the Christian hierarchy, especially through the medium of the sermon, which worked most ardently to suppress the competition. Aside from its blatantly non-

¹As it is used by, for example, Augustine, *Hom. in Joh.* 30.5 [PL 35:1634], who speaks of the *dies dominicus* as the eighth day "*in diebus hebdomadis*" ("in the days of the seven days" or, as we would say, "in the days of the week").

Christian association with the planets and pagan gods, the planetary week was essentially an astrological system. It allowed the user to understand which days were lucky or unlucky, which god was responsible for a particular day, even any hour of the day.

The week served an alternate function, only incidentally related to the marking of time. This may be extrapolated from the appearance of the Jewish, Christian, and planetary weeks in antiquity. The seven-day week was and always had been a unit of time linked to the supernatural. The week, more than any other unit of time, was a regulator of religion, whether for sabbath observance, Sunday worship, or the production of daily horoscopes.²

To examine the understanding and use of the week in fourth- and fifth-century Latin Christianity it will first be necessary to familiarize ourselves with the various manifestations of the seven-day week in antiquity. This will include a brief summary of the development of the Christian and planetary weeks in the first three centuries. Arriving in late antiquity we shall focus our attention on the Christian attitude towards the planetary week. Was the planetary week seriously perceived as a threat? Did the Christian hierarchy propose an alternative system? Such questions will inevitably lead us to the two most important days of the Christian

² I find the remarks of Rose, "Time-Reckoning," *OCD*, p. 1075, incomprehensible: "Strictly speaking, neither Jews nor Christians observe a week, since both officially reject astrology...." Rose seems to believe that the planetary week which was based in astrology preceded even the Jewish week. This is doubtful in that there is little evidence for it before our era. Regardless, astrology is not without its own religious sentiment; at the very least it deals with forces which are above the control of mankind.

week--the *dies dominicus* and the *dies sabbati*. The allegorical uses to which Christian bishops put this unit of time, as well as the symbolic significance of the two special days in the Christian week, will also be investigated.

The early history of the hebdomadary cycle is shrouded in mystery. Some place the origins of the seven-day week with the Babylonians, who held every seventh day of the month to be taboo.³ This seven-day cycle was tied to a lunar month, differentiating it distinctly from the Jewish week which ran its seven-day cycle regardless of the state of the moon.⁴ In any case, the evidence for a fixed seven-day cycle which pre-dates that of the Jews is unclear. Although it is certainly possible that the hebdomadary cycle existed before the Jews,⁵ the first specific evidence for it is found only with them.⁶

The significance of the seven-day cycle for the Jews was otherworldly. The weekly commemoration of Yahweh's day of rest was only one aspect of this. The week itself was a continual cycle based on and proceeding from the original

³E.g., Nilsson, *Primitive Time-Reckoning*, p. 171; H.H.P. Dressler, "The Sabbath in the Old Testament," in D.A. Carson, ed. *From Sabbath to Lord's Day* (Grand Rapids, 1982), p. 24.

⁴W. Rordorf, *Sunday. The History of the Day of Rest and Worship in the Earliest Centuries of the Christian Church*, trans. A.A.K. Graham (London, 1968), p. 9. F.K. Ginzel, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie* (Leipzig, 1906-14), pp. 191ff, lists a number of subdivisions of the lunar month found in antiquity, including seven-, eight-, and nine-day cycles. But as these cycles are not independent of the lunar month, they are not weeks "in our sense of a regular cycle." B.R. Rees, "The 10-Day Week: Fresh Papyrological Evidence," *The Classical Review* 69, n.s. 5 (1955): 143, discusses evidence for a ten-day week which was based on astrology (the division of the year into 36 decades, each under the supervision of a constellation which rose and set during that period).

⁵J. Morgenstern, "Sabbath," in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* 4:137, insists that the seven-day week was known to the Canaanites and subsequently bequeathed to the Hebrews. This is uncertain. See Dressler, "Sabbath," p. 35, n. 2.

⁶Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 9; Nilsson, *Primitive Time-Reckoning*, p. 324ff argues that the Jewish seven-day week was originally a market week, and that Sabbath observance in the traditional Jewish sense was a later addition.

Creation Week. It was also an eschatological symbol, especially in the Jewish pseudepigraphical tradition.⁷ It is these aspects of the week--Creation and eschatology--which Judaism bequeathed to Christianity. The shape of the Christian week in late antiquity, its mode of expression and symbolic significance, maintains much of its Jewish flavour, and it is clear that the Jewish week is the true antecedent to its Christian counterpart.

Some have maintained that the Christian week would not have established itself without the help of the planetary week and the spread of astrology. Colson, for example, argued that the weekly cycle based on Sunday observance continued only because Gentile converts had already been prepared for a seven-day cycle by the diffusion of the planetary week.⁸ Such an argument does not take into account the vast importance of Sunday worship to Christianity. Established as it was in the very early days of the Church, and nestled in a seven-day cycle that could be traced back to Creation itself, it is extremely doubtful that the influx of Gentile converts would have had a say in the matter. Weekly Sunday worship was an integral part of the Christian religion long before the toleration of Christianity saw Gentiles

⁷E.G. Westermann, *Creation*, pp. 64-65. The relevance of the Creation week to Judaism, and especially to Christianity, was examined in chapter one. The eschatological significance of the week, especially in the chiliast tradition was discussed in chapter two. There will necessarily be some overlap in our examination of the week, but it will be kept to a minimum.

⁸F.H. Colson, *The Week; An Essay on the Origin and Development of the Seven-Day Cycle*, (London, 1926), p. 107. Cf., F. Cumont, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain* (Paris, 1963), p. 155; Salzman, *On Roman Time*, p. 8. Against this position it should be noted that the sources indicate that Judaism attracted a substantial number of Gentile converts without any detrimental effect to Sabbath observance or the Jewish week. For converts to Judaism, see Josephus, *Antiq.* 20.8.11.195 [*Loeb* 433:492-3]; *Bell. Jud.* 2.20.2.560 [*Loeb* 203:538-9], as well as the Gentile converts to Judaism mentioned throughout the *Acts of the Apostles* who observed the Sabbath without compunction (10.2; 13.16; 17.4, etc).

"flocking" to the Church. It is not the spread of the planetary week that is responsible for the acceptance of the Christian cycle: "*l'influence de la Synagogue paraît incontestable pour l'adoption du cycle hebdomadaire.*"⁹

There was, however, a certain amount of contact between the Christian and planetary weeks, especially through their Jewish antecedent. Colson believed that the planetary week began to develop in the first two centuries B.C., but the evidence is rather sparse.¹⁰ Tibullus, a Roman poet of the first century B.C. mentions a prohibition against travelling on the *dies Saturni*.¹¹ Rordorf's contention that such laws concerning Saturday indicate Jewish influence is not without viability.¹² Confusion as to Jewish Sabbath practices was evident, as Tacitus admits when he claims that many people concluded that the Jewish Sabbath indicated that the Jews venerated Saturn.¹³ Judaism had spread throughout the empire by the first century B.C.¹⁴ Sabbath observance accompanied it. Even the fact that the planetary week

⁹C. Pietri, "Le temps de la semaine a Rome et dans l'Italie chrétienne (IV-VIe s.)." In J-M Leroux, *Le temps chrétien de la fin de l'antiquité au moyen-âge (IIIe-XIIIe s.)* (Paris, 1984), p. 65. Cf. Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 39.

¹⁰Colson, *The Week*, p. 51, although on p. 6 he states that the planetary week cannot be traced back much before this era. M.M.B. Turner, "The Sabbath, Sunday, and the Law in Luke/Acts," in Carson, ed., *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*, p. 133, claims that the planetary week "was in general use at the time", referring to the turn of the first century A.D. This is a patent oversimplification based on the little evidence that exists.

¹¹Tibullus, *El.* 1.3.17ff [Loeb 6:206-7], died in 19 B.C. Such a prohibition is also mentioned by Ovid, *Rem. Amor.* 2.19f [Loeb 232:192-3], in connection with the Jewish sabbath.

¹²Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 29.

¹³Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.4 [Loeb 249:178-81]. K. Bude, "The Sabbath and the Week," *JThS* 20 (1929): 1-15, argued that Sabbath observance developed out of an earlier Saturn day observed by Kenites in the desert.

¹⁴Cf. Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* 7.3.3.43 [Loeb 210:516-7]; *Antiq.* 14.7.2.115 [Loeb 365:506-9].

begins on Saturday could be the result of the influence of the Jewish sabbath.¹⁵

It is difficult, however, to agree with Rordorf's thesis that such tentative connections between the Sabbath and the *dies Saturni* suggest that "the planetary week as a whole developed in association with the Jewish week."¹⁶ It is not clear that Tibullus restricts his travel on the *dies Saturni* on account of sabbatarian influence. Tibullus' comment may have no more to do with the Jewish sabbath than Ausonius' proverb four centuries later that one should, "*Ungues Mercurio, barbam Iove, Cypride crines.*"¹⁷ In fact, when evidence for the planetary week finally becomes widespread, in the fourth century A.D., Saturday seems to be traditionally perceived as an unlucky day. The *Codex-Calendar of 354* stresses Saturday's dubious character: "*qui nascentur periculosi erunt.*"¹⁸

Evidence from the fourth century A.D. as to the character of the *dies Saturni* in the first century B.C. is perhaps stretching the point. Tertullian, writing at the end of the second century, notes that non-Christians kept the *dies Saturni* in idleness and feasting. This may indicate that Saturday was considered to be unlucky and therefore not appropriate for work, but the special status of Saturn in

¹⁵As Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 30 argues. Colson, *The Week*, p. 42, contended that the planetary week would have ended on Saturday if it owed its development to the Jewish week.

¹⁶Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 31.

¹⁷Ausonius, *Ecl.* 26 [Loeb 96:202]: "Cut nails on Mercury's day, Beard on Jupiter's day, Hair on Venus' day."

¹⁸*Calendar of 354, Imagines Planetarum VII* (Sect. 4) [CM 1:42]: "Those who are born [on Saturday] are born dangerously." Not only the day itself is dangerous, but the individual hours of the day ruled by Saturn were considered dangerous or unlucky as well. Section 4 divides each day into two groups of twelve hours, one the hours of the night, the other the hours of the day. Each hour lists the planet which rules it and the character of the hour (ie, *Noxia, Communis, Bona*). The *dies Saturni* is *noxia*, as is each *hora Saturni*.

Africa does nothing to assure us that Tertullian's comments are applicable elsewhere.¹⁹ In the mid-first century A.D., Petronius mentions a calendar attached to a doorpost with paintings of the seven planets and indications as to which days were lucky or unlucky.²⁰ Although this is not a clear indication of the planetary week, the existence of unlucky days is noteworthy. It is difficult to establish how early the *dies Saturni* came to be considered unlucky; the evidence for its very existence before the first century A.D. is minuscule. The Roman calendar traditionally held that specific activities were either restricted or allowed on certain days.²¹ Days considered *religiosus* in the Republican period were perceived as unlucky when it came to conducting public or private business, but not rites associated with the state cult.²² In short, Tibullus' reluctance to travel on the *dies Saturni* may be the result of the unlucky character of the day rather than sabbatarian influence.

What of Rordorf's contention that the planetary week began with the *dies Saturni* because of the influence of the Jewish week and Sabbath? The fact that the planetary week *begins* with the *dies Saturni* rather than ends with it, as the Jewish

¹⁹Tertullian, *Apol.* 16.11 [CCSL 1:116]; Colson, *The Week*, p. 26.

²⁰Petronius, *Saty.* 30 [Loeb 15:44-5].

²¹The use of the letter "N" in many pre-imperial calendars stood for *dies nefasti*, days on which *legis actio* was not permitted. Michels, *Calendar of the Roman Republic*, p. 29.

²²Michels, *Calendar of the Republic*, pp. 64-5.

week does, is an argument against such a supposition.²³ The obscurity which enshrouds the origins of the planetary week allows for no definitive statement as to the reason it begins on the *dies Saturni*, but the myths surrounding the god Saturn and his Greek counterpart, Kronos, may hold a key. Saturn was the progenitor of the gods; he came first and begat those who followed. Logic dictates that the day which bore his name come first as well. Furthermore, the position of Saturn as the father of time was another logical reason for a day in his honour to be considered first. Even the unlucky character of the *dies Saturni* may rest in myth--Kronos' cannibalization of his children makes him a sinister figure, and it is that character which he bequeathed to the *dies Saturni*.

Certainly there is no need to associate the foundations of the planetary week with the spread of the Jewish Sabbath and the Jewish week. For that matter, it would be wrong to assume that Tibullus' reference to the *dies Saturni* indicates that all the days had received planetary names: one day with a planetary name does not indicate the existence of the planetary week *in toto*, even in limited circles.²⁴ By the beginning of the empire, however, there is calendaric evidence to show that a seven-day cycle was beginning to take hold in the West. The earliest of these calendars, the *Fasti Sabini*, not only lists the Nundinals A-H to mark the traditional eight-day

²³ Above, n. 15.

²⁴ Horace, *Sat.* 2.3.288-292 [Teubner, p. 208]: "*Jupiter...illo mane die, quo tu indicis ieiunia.*" ["Jupiter...on that day on which you indicate a fast"]. This may perhaps be a reference to Thursday, the *dies Jovis*, but it is unclear. Thursday was a fast day for Jews, however, so once again we may have an example of Jewish influence here. Cf. Colson, *The Week*, p. 124.

market week of the Romans, but also incorporates another row of letters, A-G (Hebdomadals), which indicate the existence of the seven-day cycle.²⁵ J. Heurgon argued that a seven-day week, separate from the planetary and Jewish weeks, already existed in the first century B.C. He rejected general opinion which saw the *Fasti Sabini* as representing a stage in the development of the Jewish or planetary week, and proposed that it was a holdover of a seven-day cycle tied to the lunar month. At the time Heurgon wrote, the *Fasti Sabini* was the only calendar with hebdomadals known to exist before the *Calendar of 354*. Since then, new calendars bearing hebdomadals, such as the *Foronovani*, have come to light, which makes his theory that the *Fasti Sabini* was a continuation of a seven-day cycle tied to the lunar month doubtful.²⁶

The evidence suggests that the planetary week began to spread at the beginning of this era, perhaps slightly before the foundation of Christianity. It is with the first century A.D. that the evidence begins to increase. There is a graffito inscription at Pompeii which lists the days of the week and their planetary

²⁵ CIL 1, p. 220. The *Fasti Sabini* is dated to the reign of Augustus.

²⁶ J. Heurgon, "Octavo Ianam Lunam. Traces d'une semaine de sept jours chez Varron et Caton," *Revue des études latines* 25 (1947): 236-249. Heurgon bases his arguments on suggestions of a seven-day agricultural week in Cato, *De Agr.* 37 [Loeb 283:54-5]; Varro, *Re Rus.* 1.37 [Loeb 283:260-1]; Columella, *De Re Rus.* 11.2.11 [Loeb 408:74-7]; and Pliny, *NH* 16.74.190 [Loeb 370:510-1], for the most part. The *Fasti Sabini* was produced after the Julian reform of the calendar—months that were now thirty and thirty-one days long had no hope of being divided into four equal parts of seven. Colson, *The Week*, p. 34 was uncertain as to the significance of the *Fasti Sabini*. He felt it might be a local variation on the market week—odd when placed in conjunction with the eight-day nundinal cycle, but possible. He also felt it might have been intended for the Jews. Heurgon's and Colson's difficulties lay in the lack of other calendaric evidence to support interpreting the *Fasti Sabini* as evidence for the planetary week. Discoveries of calendars bearing hebdomadals in recent years make it seem very likely that the *Fasti Sabini* is, in fact, the earliest calendar to mark a seven-day week, probably of the planetary variety. *Fasti Foronovani* is found at CIL 9:4769.

associates.²⁷ Plutarch wrote a treatise to explain why the days named after the planets were not in the same order of the planets. Unfortunately, only the title survives.²⁸ Evidence also comes from Christian authors. Both Justin Martyr in the mid-second century and Tertullian, about fifty years later, refer to Saturday and Sunday by their planetary names--*dies Saturni* and *dies Solis*.²⁹ It is noteworthy that they did so in works specifically addressed to non-Christians, suggesting that they tailored their terminology for their audience. Perhaps both felt they would be more easily understood than the Christian equivalents. Finally, and most importantly, Dio Cassius, writing in the early third century, is the first to claim that the planetary week was in general use; he also emphasizes its specifically astrological orientation.³⁰

The Christian week also established itself during the first three centuries. The spread of the planetary week depended on a number of factors, including a parallel increase in the interest in astrology. However, it is impossible to tell how

²⁷ E. Schürer, "Die siebentägige Woche im Gebrauche der christlichen Kirche der ersten Jahrhunderte," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des Urchristentums* 6 (1905): 26-7 gives this inscription and a second from Pompeii which leaves out Mercury's day. Colson, *The Week*, p. 32, conjectured that these inscriptions were products of schoolboys practising their lessons--not successfully in the second case.

²⁸ Plutarch, *Propos de Table*. 4.7 [Fuhrmann 2:45-6].

²⁹ Justin Martyr, *I Apol.* 67.3 [PG 6:430-1]; Tertullian, *Apol.* 16.11 [CCSL 1:116].

³⁰ Dio Cassius, *Rom. Hist.* 37.18-19 [Loeb 53:128-31], who attempts to explain the order of the planetary week. He emphasizes its significance is astrological, although it is determined by the order of the planets arranged by distance. The week is divided into 168 hours. The first hour of the first day is under Saturn, the second hour, Jupiter, etc. After twenty-four hours, the first hour of the second day belongs to the Sun, the first hour of the third day, to the Moon, and so on. The planet that ruled the first hour of each day gave his name to the day. The astrological orientation of the planetary week as explained by Dio is seen in Section 4 of the *Codex-Calendar of 354* [CM 1:42ff] which lists the days of the week, as well as which planet rules each hour of the day and night. On the *dies Saturni*, the first hour of the day is ruled by Saturn, the second by Jupiter, and so on.

quickly it spread and what levels of society were effected. This was not the case for the Christian week. Christianity inherited a hebdomadary cycle from Judaism, as it did the emphasis on Creation and eschatology which the week engendered. Knowledge of the Christian week spread with the religion: as more people entered the Church, more people came to understand the Christian week. The week, like all the other time-units we have examined, was based upon a model which, it was believed, God had established in Creation. As such, it was part of the Christian system and needed to be taught to new Christians, especially in late antiquity when new converts might well be infected with the astrological bias of the planetary week. The planetary week, although linked to astrology, was neither the product nor the mainstay of an organized religion,³¹ but developed and spread naturally, reflecting people's interest in astrology or the gods; the Christian week, by contrast, was enforced--it was an inescapable part of the religion itself.

The first difference between the Jewish, Christian, and planetary weeks involves the special position of certain days. The planetary week began with Saturday. Both the Jewish and Christian weeks end with Saturday and begin with Sunday. The main difference between the two latter hebdomadary cycles is a matter of emphasis. The Jews emphasized the last day of the week, the Sabbath.

³¹ Astrology pre-existed the planetary week. It was first and foremost concerned with the movement of the heavenly bodies through the signs of the zodiac. The planetary week, on the other hand, did seem to have its beginning in astrological speculation. It may have made astrological speculation more easy (and thus further added to the spread of astrology), but it was not a necessary part of the pseudo-science.

Christianity translated this emphasis to the first day of the week, Sunday, although the Sabbath retained a good deal of symbolic importance.³² These two days--the *dies sabbati* and the *dies dominicus*--were the only two days in the Christian hebdomadary cycle to receive their own names. It is appropriate, therefore, that we begin our examination of the Christian week with them.

i. Sunday and the Sabbath

The term *dies dominicus* first appears in *Rev.* 1.10, although the position of Sunday as a day of Christian worship is an earlier development.³³ The Sabbath initially remained a day of worship, especially amongst Jewish-Christians: both Justin Martyr and Irenaeus of Lyons countenance continued attendance at the synagogue on the Sabbath.³⁴ In spite of this, there can be no doubt that it was the *dies dominicus* that was of primary importance to the majority of Christians.³⁵ In the fourth century the practice of attending the synagogue for Sabbath worship was

³² Carson, *Sabbath to Lord's Day*, p. 14.

³³ Sunday was already important in the first century (e.g., *Acts* 20.7; *1 Cor.* 16.2). When exactly the shift from Saturday to Sunday occurred is controversial. Turner, "Sabbath, Sunday, and the Law," pp. 100-157, argued Sunday worship was not a phenomenon of the apostolic age, although it originated in that period. Cf. Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 43ff, for Sunday as the day of worship even for New Testament Christians. The shift was accelerated by the Resurrection, which took place on a Sunday, and by subsequent Sunday appearances of Christ before the Ascension. Cf. W. Hodgkins, *Sunday: Christian and Social Significance* (London, 1960), p. 11ff.

³⁴ Justin Martyr, *Dial. c. Tryp.* 47.1 [PG 6:575-9]; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 1.26.2 [PG 7:686-7].

³⁵ Evidence for Sunday worship in the pre-Nicene period is widespread. Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 67.3 [PG 6:430-1], discusses weekly worship on the *dies Solis*. Cf. Tertullian, *Apol.* 39 [CCSL 1:150-153]. Pliny, *Ep.* 10.96 [Loeb 59:402-3], in a letter to Trajan concerning Christians, mentions that they met "*stato die*," and we may assume that this fixed day was Sunday. In the mid-third century, Cyprian, *Ep.* 63.16 [CSEL 3, pt. 2:714], speaks of the celebration of the eucharist on Sunday evenings (and of an occasional celebration on Saturday evening as well).

listed as a heresy by Philastrius of Brescia.³⁶

The significance of the *dies dominicus* in late antiquity rested in its relation to Christ. The cyclical repetition of Sunday denoted the continued intrusion of the divine into the temporal sphere--only the Easter festival was granted more esteem. Sunday worship was understood to be a microcosm of the greater celebration in its weekly re-creation of Christ's Resurrection. This connection was repeatedly stressed in the sermons, as seen, for example, in Zeno of Verona: "*Dies [dies dominicus] uero ad sacramentum pertinet resurrectionis domini nostri Iesu Christi*;"³⁷ and Augustine: "*Una sabbati est, quem jam diem dominicum propter Domini resurrectionem mos Christianus appellat*."³⁸ On account of this Sunday acquired its own special character. It was a day of joy--no fasts were allowed and prayers were said standing instead of prostrate or kneeling.³⁹

³⁶ Philastrius of Brescia, *De Haer.* 141 [113].1 [CCSL 9:304-5]. We can see this process underway especially in Tertullian, *Ad Nat.* 1.13.3-5 [CCSL 1:32], where he associates the Sabbath with the *dies Saturni*.

³⁷ Zeno, *Tr.* 1.33.4 [CCSL 22:84]: "[Sunday] truly pertains to the sacrament of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ." On the connection between the Resurrection and Sunday, see J. Flamant, "Temps sacré et comput astronomique," in J-M Leroux, ed., *Le temps chrétien de la fin de l'antiquité au moyen-âge (IIIe-XIIIe s.)* (Paris, 1984), p. 39.

³⁸ Augustine, *Hom. in Joh.* 120.6 [PL 35:1954]: "It was the first of the Sabbath which Christian custom now calls the Lord's Day on account of the resurrection of the Lord." Leo, *Ep.* 9.2 [PL 54:626], refers to Sunday as the "*dies resurrectionis*", as does Quodvultdeus, *De Symb.* II 6.3 [CCSL 60:343], and Ambrose, *Ep.* 23.11 [PL 16:1029]. Ambrosiaster, *Quaest.* 95 [PL 35:2289], "...ut totum quod ad salutem humanam pertinet, dominico die et inchoatum et adimpletum noscetur." ["...so that all things which pertain to human salvation are begun and accomplished on the day of the Lord." Maximus of Turin, *Serm.* 44.1 [CCSL 23:178]: "*Dominica enim nobis ideo uenerabilis est atque sollemnis, quia in ea saluator uelut sol oriens discussis infernorum tenebris luce resurrectionis emicuit*" ["For the Lord's Day is venerable and solemn to us because on it the Saviour, just as the rising sun, flashed out from the darkness of hell with the light of resurrection"]. Innocent of Rome, *Ep.* 25.4.7 [PL 20:555]: "*Si diem dominicum ob uenerabilem resurrectionem Domini nostri Iesu Christi non solum in Pascha celebramus, uerum etiam per singulos circulos hebdomadarum...*" ["If we celebrate the Lord's Day on account of the venerable resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ not only in Easter, but also through the single circle of the week..."]. Innocent is attempting to explain that *all* time needs to be devoted to God (see chapter six).

³⁹ Maximus, *Serm.* 44.1 [CCSL 23:178]. The "*continuata festiuitas*" of Sunday is the reason for this. Fasts were never held on Sunday, as noted by Tertullian, *Orat.* 23 [CCSL 1:372-3]. Tertullian's view was standard: Sunday was a day of joy; anything that suggested concern (i.e., kneeling to pray or fasting) was not allowed. Leo, *Ep.* 15.4 [PL 54:682] equates Sunday fasting with heresy. The Priscillianists in Spain were accused of fasting on the Nativity of Christ as well as on Sunday, as did the Manichees. Elsewhere, *Serm.* 42.5 [PL 54:279], he criticizes the Manichees for there fasts on Sunday, by which they condemn, "*diem nostrae laetitiae*" ["the day of our joy"]. Sunday was the only appropriate day for ordinations (e.g., *Ep.* 6.6; *Ep.* 9.1-2 [PL 54:620, 625-6]). Sunday was also the day of Easter and indispensable in its calculation. Gaudentius, *Tr.* 1.4-9 [CSEL 68:19-20], attempts to explain this to his neophytes. Cf., Hilarius, *Tr.* 1.4-9 [CSEL 68:19-20], attempts to explain this to his neophytes. Cf., Hilarius, *Tr.* 1.4-9 [CSEL 68:19-20], attempts to explain this to his neophytes.

In contrast to the universally acknowledged importance of Sunday, the Sabbath engendered mixed views. It was often depicted as the symbolic antithesis of Sunday. In discussing the differences between Sunday and the Sabbath, Gaudentius demonstrates that the Jewish concept of sabbath rest is incorrect: "*Requies igitur dei non laboris remedium, sed coeptorum finis est operum, siquidem, postquam perfecit mundum, opus suum regere non desistit.*"⁴⁰ According to Augustine, the Sabbath is a symbol, not a literal command to rest: "*Sabbatum enim spirituale hoc est, non habere peccatum.*"⁴¹ Eusebius "Gallicanus" sees God's refusal to supply manna to the children of Israel on the Sabbath, but not Sunday, as a denial of the Sabbath and of Judaism: *iam tunc Christus ab ecclesia, cui dominicum resurrectio consecrauit, recipiendus ostenditur; et synagogae, ad quam cultus sabbati pertinebat, negandus esse praedicitur.*⁴²

In spite of this attitude towards the Sabbath, however, Saturday was increasingly an important day of worship in the late antique church.⁴³ At Hippo,

De Die Paschae 15 [PL 13:1113]; Ambrose, *Ep.* 23 [PL 16:1026ff]; Leo, *Epp.* 88, 127, 131, 138. [PL 54:927ff, 1070ff, 1081ff, 1101ff]. Maximus, *Serm.* 44.1 [CCSL 23:178], explains the joy of Pentecost with reference to Sunday: "*Ad instar ergo dominicae tota quinquaginta dierum curricula celebrantur, et omnes isti dies uelut dominici deputantur; resurrectio enim dominica est*" ["Therefore the whole circle of fifty days is celebrated on the model of the Lord's Day, and all those days are thought of as Lord's Days; for the Lord's Day is the resurrection"].

⁴⁰ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 10.3 [CSEL 68:93]: "Therefore God's rest is not the remedy of labour, but the end of the beginning of His works. In fact, after he had completed the world, He did not stop ruling his work."

⁴¹ Augustine, *Hom. in Joh.* 44.9 [PL 35:1717]: "For the spiritual Sabbath is this: to have no sin."; Cf. *Hom. in Joh.* 20.2 [PL 35:1556]. Paulinus, *Ep.* 9.3 [PL 60:186], uses a similar image: "*Sabbatum enim otiosum est...*" ["For the Sabbath is a day of idleness..."], especially in its lack of good works ("*bonorum operum sterilitate*"). Augustine, *Hom. in Joh.* 3.19 [PL 35:1404]: "*Spiritualiter obseruat sabbatum christianus, abstinens se ab opere seruil*" ["The Christian observes the Sabbath spiritually, abstaining from servile work." (i.e., from sin).

⁴² Eusebius "Gallicanus" *De Pasch.* 6.4 [CCSL 100:200]: "For at that time Christ, to whom the resurrection devoted the Lord's Day, is shown to be received by the Church; and it is predicted of the synagogue, to which the cult of the Sabbath pertained, that it must be denied."

⁴³ Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 146 traces the importance of Saturday for the Church to its role as the last day of Creation.

Saturday was the "*dies sermonis*," the day when "*maxime hi assolent convenire, qui esuriunt verbum Dei*."⁴⁴ Saturday also became a day which many Christians devoted to fasting.⁴⁵ Nicetas of Remesiana pleads with his flock to dedicate at least Saturday and Sunday to the service of God. This, he claims, will assist in the purification of "*dierum quinque vel noctium, quibus stupore carnali ingravescimus, aut mundanis actibus obsessi laetamur*."⁴⁶ It is in the incorporation of the Sabbath as a secondary day of Christian worship that the *dies sabbati* earned its place as one of the named days of the Christian week.⁴⁷

ii. The Planetary Week and Christian Week in Conflict

The *dies dominicus* and the *dies sabbati* were the backbone of the Christian week. The other days of the Christian week did not receive names. The Christians adapted the Jewish method of counting the days, with slight modifications. Jewish reckoning proceeded from the sabbath (*una sabbati* or *prima sabbati* = Sunday, *dua sabbati* = Monday, etc), even though Sunday was acknowledged as the first day of the week. For the Christians, however, Sunday was a named day; and this new

⁴⁴ Augustine, *Serm.* 128.6 [PL 38:716]: "those who hunger for the word of God especially meet together." Also, *Hom. in Joh.* 46.8 [PL 35:1732].

⁴⁵ Innocent, *Ep.* 25.4.7 [PL 20:555], mentions the custom of fasting on both Friday and Saturday at Rome; no Eucharist was held on these two days. As the devotion of set days of the week (and periods of the year) to fasting is part of the process by which bishops attempted to increase the amount of time during which their flocks were fixated on Christ, it will be more fully discussed in the context of the Christianization of time and the season of Quadragesima (chapter seven).

⁴⁶ Nicetas of Remesiana, *De Vig.* 2 [PL 68:367]: "the five days or nights during which we sink our bodies in sloth, and defile our spirits with worldly acts."

⁴⁷ This by no means exhausts the evidence for Christian activities on Saturday and Sunday in late antiquity. See below, chapter six.

emphasis on Sunday meant that reckoning from the Sabbath was less important.

Thus the Christian week was reckoned as follows: *dies dominicus* = Sunday, *II feria* or *II dies* = Monday, etc. Augustine explained the difference to his flock:

*Prima sabbati dicitur primus dies, quem dominicum etiam nominamus; secunda sabbati, secundus dies; tertia sabbati, tertius dies; quarta sabbati, quartus; quinta ergo sabbati, quintus a dominico die; post quem sexta sabbati sextus dies; et ipsum sabbatum, septimus dies.*⁴⁸

This was the official method of reckoning the week for the late antique Church.⁴⁹ Authority for this method came from the account of Creation in *Genesis* where the days are numbered from Sunday to Saturday. But although the concept of counting days was not unknown in the Roman world (counting backwards from the kalends, nones, and ides as seen in Roman calendars, for example), it was not the most colourful method available for keeping track of the days of the week. This may, in part, explain the rich allegorical treatment which the week received in the homiletic literature. The hebdomadary cycle came to represent Creation, the course of time (both in the chiliast tradition and in the six ages system of Augustine and his continuators), and time's end. And in this diversity we may be witnessing a hint

⁴⁸ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 80.2 [CCSL 39:1121]: "The first of the Sabbath is called the first day, which we also call the Lord's Day; second of the Sabbath, the second day; third of the Sabbath, the third day; fourth of the Sabbath, the fourth day; the fifth of the sabbath, therefore, is the fifth from the Lord's Day; after which the sixth of the Sabbath is the sixth day, and the sabbath itself, the seventh day."

⁴⁹ Examples of this method are numerous. Leo, *Serm.* 42.5 [PL 54:279], mentions the first and second days of the week in referring to the fasts of the Manichees ("*prima et secunda Sabbati*"). Quodvultdeus, *De Symbolo* II 6.3 [CCSL 60:343], uses the official terminology in his explanation of Easter. Friday is the "*sexta feria*", Saturday is the "*sabbata*", Sunday is the "*dies dominicus*." Ambrose, *Ep.* 23.10-11 [PL 16:1029-1030], uses the terminology in attempting to explain the reckoning for Easter to the bishops over whom he acted as Metropolitan. The Last Supper occurred on the "*quinta feria*", Christ was crucified on the "*sexta feria*", remained in the tomb on the "*sabbatum*", and finally arose on the "*dies dominicus*". See also Hilarian, *De Die Pasch.* 15 [PL 13:1113]. Cf. Pietri, "Le temps de la semaine," p 73, for his discussion on the use of Christian method of reckoning the days of the week.

of propaganda; a none-too-subtle attempt to "sell" the Christian seven-day cycle in light of the popularity of its non-Christian counterpart, the planetary week.

By the mid-fourth century the popularity of the planetary week had increased significantly. It was used extensively in the *Codex-Calendar of 354*. Section 4 of the Codex (*Imagines Planetarum VII*) included illustrations of the planetary mentors of each day of the week, and a description of each day's and each hour's character (for astrological purposes). The list of consuls in the Codex even provided the day of the planetary week on which the consuls entered office.⁵⁰ The pervasiveness of planetary terminology is evident in the *Codex Theodosianus* as well, important because it demonstrates its use in official circles. The laws promulgated affecting the character of Sunday are of especial interest.⁵¹ *Dies Solis* rather than *dies dominicus* was the norm for most of the fourth century, even in laws with specifically Christian concerns. In 321, Constantine promulgated two laws permitting work stoppages on the "*dies Solis*."⁵² Valens, in 368, forbade tax

⁵⁰ E.g., the consuls for 354: "*Constantio VII et Constantio III, Sat.*" [CM 1:61]. As the consuls traditionally entered office on the kalends of January, we know that the first day of January in 354 was a Saturday. This agrees with the calendar section of the Codex, which begins with the hebdomadal letter A [PL 13:675], demonstrating that the Christian influences on the Codex did not extend to the author's understanding of the week, which rested solely in the planetary cycle of seven days, beginning on Saturday.

⁵¹ Rordorf, *Sunday*, pp. 162ff argues quite persuasively that it was during this period that Sunday, formerly a day of worship only, was also being transformed into a day of rest, much like the Jewish Sabbath. Fourth-century laws which gave Sunday a holiday status accelerated this process.

⁵² The laws in question, CJ 3.12.1 [Krueger, p. 127] and CTh 2.8.1 [Mommsen, p. 87] are dated to 3 March 321 and 3 July 321. There is some question as to the religious affections of Constantine at this time--was he Christian or a devotee of *Sol Invictus* (or, as seems more likely, somewhere in between)? The wording of CTh 2.8.1, "*videbatur diem Solis veneratione sui celebrem*" ["it seems that the day of the Sun, which is celebrated on account of its own veneration", suggests a reverence for the sun rather than Christian affiliations. The *Interpretatio* of this law, written much later, uses "*sancto die dominico*" ("on the holy Lord's Day"), rather than the planetary equivalent. The change reflects the preference of Theodosius II, and other emperors of the fifth century mentioned in the *Codex Theodosianus*.

collectors to sue Christians, "*Die Solis, qui dudum faustus habetur.*"⁵³ A law issued in May of 386 by Theodosius I and Valentinian II forbade spectacles to be held on the "*dies Solis*" because they tended to disturb divine worship.⁵⁴

Later that year (3 November 386), a law dealing with the suspension of litigation on Sunday issued by the same emperors, qualifies its use of planetary terminology: "*Solis die, quem dominicum rite dixere maiores.*"⁵⁵ This qualification is interesting because two subsequent laws (7 August 389 and 17 April 392) also issued by Theodosius and Valentinian II (and Arcadius), revert to the use of *dies Solis* only.⁵⁶ If this is a simple case of preference for the planetary terminology, why was *dies dominicus* included in the law of 3 November 386?

A closer examination of the law of 7 August 389 makes the question more complex. It is a list of official holidays, some of which were pagan (e.g., the kalends of January; birthdays of the emperors). This might explain the presence of *dies Solis* were it not for the fact that it is used in a Christian context; it is deemed a holiday in the same section as the two weeks which make up the "*dies paschae*." Thus the absence of *dies dominicus* is particularly striking. Why use the planetary

⁵³ CTh 8.8.1 (21 April, AD 368, 370, or 373) [Mommsen, p. 401]: "On the day of the Sun, which has long been held auspicious (or lucky)". Repeated at CTh 11.7.10 [Mommsen, p. 587].

⁵⁴ CTh 15.5.2 (20 May 386) [Mommsen, p. 819], it was later reissued to Rufinus, Praetorian Prefect of the East (392-395).

⁵⁵ CTh 2.8.18 (3 Nov.386) [Mommsen, p. 87]: "On the day of the Sun, which our ancestors correctly called the Lord's Day."

⁵⁶ CTh 2.8.19 (7 August 389) [Mommsen, pp. 87-8]; CTh 2.8.20 (17 April 392) [Mommsen, p. 88].

and Christian terms in 386 in a law simply forbidding litigation on Sunday, but in 389 use only the planetary terminology when referring to Sunday as a Christian festival and an official holiday?

Politics may have played a more important a role in these changes than religious devotion. The quaestor responsible for drafting the law of 3 November 386 is unknown, so we cannot state definitively if its decidedly Christian tone was a stylistic emendation reflecting the quaestor's personal beliefs or an imperial preference.⁵⁷ The law was promulgated in North Italy at Aquileia--an area which by 386 had produced some high-profile Christians (e.g., Jerome and Rufinus). Chromatius, already a priest with connections to both of these men, was less than two years away from becoming Aquileia's bishop at the hands of Ambrose of Milan. The same law was also promulgated in Rome twenty-one days later (24 November 386), another area where Christians had a high profile. Possibly it was the presence of such influential Christian leaders that explains the preference for the *dies dominicus* which the law claims. The emperors may have wished to avoid conflict with the Christian hierarchy. Ambrose of Milan, after all, was not one to remain close-mouthed when he judged something to be a threat to the Church.

In fact, 386 was an important year for both Ambrose and Valentinian II. The law of 3 November 386 which stresses the superiority of *dies dominicus* over *dies*

⁵⁷ The *quaestor sacri palatii*, as Jones refers to the office, but see, J. Harries, "The Roman Imperial Quaestor from Constantine to Theodosius II," *JRS* 78 (1988): 134, who demonstrates that this title was rarely applied. The quaestor was responsible for the style of a law, although the content was decided by the emperor (or others) [Harries, "Roman Imperial Quaestor," p 152].

Solis came less than five months after Milan had been gripped by a controversy between the two men. Ambrose's refusal to give up a basilica to the emperor and his mother, Justina, for the use of the Arians had stopped short of bloodshed, but just barely. It had really only come to an end after the discovery of the relics of Gervasius and Protasius in June of 386.⁵⁸

Tensions must have remained high; Ambrose had foiled imperial plans and flaunted imperial authority. But Valentinian II had more pressing concerns. Gratian was dead and Maximus had usurped imperial power beyond the Alps. Ambrose's support was desperately needed: Valentinian had received a letter from Maximus containing veiled threats of an invasion of Italy if the Arians did not stop persecuting Ambrose and the orthodox. Thus, in the summer of 386, Ambrose was sent to Maximus, demonstrating to the usurper that Ambrose and the orthodox were in safe hands.⁵⁹ Valentinian II's use of *dies dominicus* in a law promulgated within Ambrose's metropolitan territory may have been a small gesture of conciliation.

By 389, however, Valentinian II's problems were behind him. Maximus was dead and he was once again in control. Justina's death in 388 must have further diffused the Arian-Orthodox tension at Milan, for it was she who was the ardent Arian of the family. Such a conciliatory gesture as deferring to the official

⁵⁸ Paulinus, *V.Amb.* 14-15 [PL 14:31]: "*Denique ex hoc tempore sedari coepit persecutio...*" ["Therefore from this time the persecution began to subside..."].

⁵⁹ Dudden, *Ambrose*, pp. 345ff. The embassy proved to be a failure at any rate. Maximus invaded in AD 387 and Valentinian II was forced to flee to the east. Paulinus, *V.Amb.* 19 [PL 14:33], refers to the embassy of Ambrose to Maximus on behalf of Valentinian II.

Christian name for Sunday was no longer necessary; thus the law promulgated at Rome on 7 August 389 reverts to the planetary terminology, in spite of the purely Christian context in which it was used.⁶⁰

It would seem then, that, if not the official hebdomadary cycle of the empire, the planetary week was at least the accepted norm for the emperors of the fourth century. It is only after the death of Theodosius I that we see *dies dominicus* replace *dies Solis* in imperial legislation. A law issued at Constantinople under the names of Arcadius and Honorius (27 August 399), begins: "*Die dominico, cui nomen ex ipsa reverentia inditum est.*"⁶¹ The qualification of *dies dominicus* here is reminiscent of Constantine's qualification of the *dies Solis*, "*videbatur diem solis veneratione sui celebrem*", in the original Sunday legislation.⁶² But the law of 399 has an unmistakably Christian bias to it, and, as such, may have been used to signal a change in the official terminology which can be traced to the reign of Honorius and Arcadius. The next law to mention Sunday also uses its Christian name: "*Dominica die, quam vulgo solis appellant.*"⁶³ This time the qualification, that it

⁶⁰ The return to *dies Solis* probably also had a lot to do with the quaestor responsible for the law of 389, Nicomachus Flavianus. Flavianus was, as Harries, "Roman Imperial Quaestor," p. 152, puts it, a "famous hater of Christians;" the same Flavianus behind attempts at a pagan revival during the usurpation of Eugenius. See *PLRE* 1:347-8. The dates of his quaestorship were 388-390. He may have used *dies Solis* rather than *dies dominicus* on purpose, just to irritate Christians. The law was addressed to Albinus, Prefect of Rome (*PLRE* 1:37-8), who was also a pagan. The use of *dies Solis* in a Christian context might have been a joke between the two non-Christians. The quaestor responsible for drafting the 392 legislation is unknown.

⁶¹ *CTh* 2.8.23 (27 August 399) [Mommsen, p. 89]: "On the Lord's Day, to which the name was given out of reverence for it."

⁶² See above, n. 52.

⁶³ *CTh* 2.8.25 (1 April 409) [Mommsen, p. 89]: "On the Lord's Day, which is called the day of the Sun by the vulgar."

was the vulgar who used the planetary terminology suggests that it was now the official Christian hebdomadary cycle that was deemed acceptable.⁶⁴ But it also suggests that the planetary names for the days of the week were in widespread use amongst the *vulgus*.

Indeed, the use of planetary terminology continued unabated in other secular sources. The *Consularia Italica* follow in many ways the methodology established by the list of consuls in the *Codex Calendar of 354*. The incorporation of brief historical notes is common to both, although much amplified in the later *Consularia Italica*. The *fasti* in the *Codex-Calendar of 354* includes special notices as to the Incarnation and Passion of Christ, both listed as taking place on the *dies Veneris* (Friday).⁶⁵ The *F.V.Pr* uses only planetary terminology: an eclipse in 393 occurred on the *dies Solis*; an earthquake in 456 occurred on the *dies Veneris*.⁶⁶ Two related consular *fasti*, the *F.V.Post* and the *Excerpta Sangallensia*, which continues the *F.V.Pr* to 573, use planetary terminology as well. The use of the planetary week in these sources is not surprising; in spite of references to Christ and a few martyrs,

⁶⁴ There is little in the *Codex Theodosianus* to suggest that the Christian mode of reckoning the days of the week was completely accepted. There is a law promulgated by Honorius and Theodosius II, dated 26 July 409, *CTh* 2.8.26 [Mommsen, pp. 89-90], which uses *dies sabbati* rather than *dies Saturni*. But as the law is concerned with Jews this is hardly surprising. But the change to *dies dominicus* in evidence at the beginning of the fifth century does suggest that the Christian week did over-ride its planetary counterpart. One further law, *CTh* 15.5.5 (1 February 425) [Mommsen, p. 820], issued under the names of Theodosius II and Valentinian III gives a list of important Christian holidays. The *dies dominicus* heads the list.

⁶⁵ *Calendar of 354*, 8 (*Fasti Consulares*) [CM 1:56, 57].

⁶⁶ *F.V.Pr.* 520, 577 [CM 1:298, 304].

the orientation is primarily secular.⁶⁷

The evidence from Christian sources, especially the sermons, also demonstrates that the planetary week greatly appealed to the popular mind. When Justin Martyr and Tertullian used *dies Solis* and *dies Saturni* to address non-Christian readers of the second century, there is little to indicate that they saw planetary terminology as a threat. In the fourth century this attitude changed. Philastrius of Brescia's catalogue of heresies, written in the mid-fourth century, condemned all those who believed that the original names for Saturday and Sunday were *dies Saturni* and *dies Solis*:

*Alia est heresis quae dicit nomina dierum, Solis, Lunae, Martis, Mercurii, Iouis, Veneris, Saturni, a deo haec ita posita ab origine mundi, non hominum uana praesumptine nuncupata.*⁶⁸

Gaudentius continued the condemnations of his predecessor, denigrating the use of *dies Saturni*, and stating his preference for *dies sabbati*, "*quem septimum rationabilium corda servabant.*"⁶⁹

Leo of Rome provides further evidence for the spread of the planetary week.

⁶⁷For the background of *F.V.Pr* and *F.V.Post* see pp. 69-70. *F.V.Post* 114, Christ crucified on the *dies Veneris*; 657 (A.D. 501), an earthquake on the *dies Martis*. [*CM* 1:281, 330]. *Excerpta Sangallensia* 550 (A.D. 429), an earthquake in September on the *dies Solis*; 699 (c. AD 539), darkness in the middle of the day on the *dies Saturni*. [*CM* 1:300, 334]. Mommsen discusses these in his introduction to the *Consularia Italica* [*CM* 1:251ff]. One important point: it was the *F.V.Pr* which used official Christian chronology over the 6,000-year chronology. That it did not deem it necessary to use Christian week-reckoning suggests the popularity of the planetary week.

⁶⁸Philastrius, *Div. Haer.* 113 [85].1 [*CSEL* 9:279]: "Another is the heresy which says that the names of the days of the Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jove, Venus, and Saturn, were put so by God from the beginning of the world, not named by the vain presumption of men."

⁶⁹Gaudentius, *Tr.* 1.5 [*CSEL* 68:19], "...which seventh day the hearts of reasonable men kept." Pagan misunderstanding is also evident, according to Gaudentius, in their names for the months of the year: "*quem vetustas humanae memoriae primum mensem tenebat, paganus hunc a Marte Martium nuncuparet*" ["which in the antiquity of human memory was kept as the first month, the pagan would call this March, after Mars"].

His attack on the Manichees for choosing "*in honorem solis ac lunae prima et secunda Sabbati jejunare*," suggests an awareness of the planetary week. But by connecting the *dies Solis* and the *dies Lunae* to the Manichees he is condemning both the cult and the planetary terminology and reasserting the Christian method of counting the days.⁷⁰ But the most severe homiletic condemnation of the planetary week is found in Eusebius "Gallicanus": *ut Solis, Lunae, Martis atque Mercurii, Iouis, Veneris uel Saturni et diuersis elementorum ac daemonum appellationibus dies uocarent, et luci tenebrarum nomen imponerent.*⁷¹

It is its connection to demons, astrology, and other modes of paganism that ensured the negative reaction of the Church as the planetary week spread. Augustine responded by actively teaching the Christian method of hebdomadary reckoning on a number of occasions.⁷² Evidently he believed that the danger of infection was very real and already present in his flock. One sermon is particularly instructive:

Una sabbati, dies dominicus est; secunda sabbati, secunda feria, quem saeculares diem Lunae uocant; tertia sabbati, tertia feria, quem diem illi

⁷⁰ Leo, *Serm.* 42.5 [PL 54:279]: "the first and second day of the week to fast in honour of the sun and the moon". Maximus, *Serm.* 44.1 [CCSL 23:178], taught that the term *dies Solis*, as it is called "*ab hominibus saeculi*" ["by the people of the world"] got its name from Christ, the "*sol iustitiae*" because by arising He illuminates the world. Maximus is reinterpreting the popular name for the day by drawing parallels to the sun symbolism which was widely attached to Christ. Regardless, it is obvious that Maximus is attempting to Christianize a term which he considered unacceptable unless explicitly attached to Christ.

⁷¹ Eusebius "Gallicanus", *De Pascha* 8.3 [CCSL 100:225]: "so that they called the days by the diverse names of demons and the elements, of the Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jove, Venus and Saturn, and they imposed the name of darkness on the light." There are other examples as well. Gregory of Elvira's use of the seven stars as a type of the Church may be an attempt to diffuse interest in the planetary week (*De Arca Noe* 7 [CCSL 69:150]). Quodvultdeus, *Adv. Quin. Haer.* 3.15 [CCSL 60:267], mentions the *dies Mercurii*. Caesarius of Arles, *Serm.* 13.5 [CCSL 103.1:68] condemns non-Christian observances connected to the *dies Jovis*.

⁷² E.g. *Ennar in Ps.* 47.1 [CCSL 38:538]; 80.2; 93.3 [CCSL 39: 1121; 1302-3]; 150.1 [CCSL 40:2191].

*Martis uocant. Quarta ergo sabbatorum, quarta feria, qui Mercurii dies dicitur a paganis, et a multis christianis.*⁷³

Augustine urges his flock to stop doing this, "*Habent enim linguam suam qua utantur.*" Instead, he presses upon them the accepted ecclesiastical method of reckoning the days of the week: "*Melius ergo de ore christiano ritus loquendi ecclesiasticus procedit.*"⁷⁴ Polemius Silvius' condemnation of astrology included the use of the planetary week. He prefers, like Augustine, to stick to the official ecclesiastical methodology with its Scriptural basis:

*Dierum necessum non fuit formas depingi, quia sibi omnes qualitate consimiles sunt, neque ut stulte gentiles locuntur nomina designari, quoniam nullius rei nisi septernarii propter revolubiles ebdomadas numeri, sicut scriptura caelestis edocuit, appellatione censentur.*⁷⁵

The proscriptions of men like Philastrius, Augustine, and Polemius Silvius were not ignored in the non-homiletic literature. The Christian method of hebdomadary reckoning is widespread in Christian sources of the fifth century.

⁷³ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 93.3 [CCSL 39:1302-3]: "The first of the Sabbath is the Lord's Day; the second of the Sabbath, the second day, which those of the world call the day of the Moon; the third of the Sabbath, the third day, which they call the day of Mars. Therefore, the fourth of the Sabbath, the fourth day, which is called the day of Mercury by the pagans, and by many Christians [italics added]." Pietri, "Le temps de la semaine," p. 77, after examining the use of day names in Christian inscriptions representing Rome and Italy, concluded that the average Christian had no difficulty in using the planetary week.

⁷⁴ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 93.3 [CCSL 39:1303]: "For they have a phrase of their own which they may use" and "Therefore the type of speech used by the Church is better from the mouth of a Christian". In attempting to convince these *multos Christianos* to use the accepted ecclesiastical method, Augustine claims, "*Non enim et in omnibus gentibus ista dicuntur*" ["For they are not named this way in all nations"]. But his emphasis on the ecclesiastical method of reckoning the days of the week, his constant harping on the same theme, especially in relation to the planetary terminology, suggest this statement comes from a position of weakness. Other names for the days there may have been, but *nulli Christiani* were not using the other names, but the planetary ones.

⁷⁵ Polemius Silvius, *Lat., De Diebus* [CM 1:518]: "It was not necessary that the form of the days be depicted, since they are all similar in quality, not as the Gentiles foolishly say the names are designated, but of nothing unless, just as heavenly scripture taught, they are considered by the names of the number seven on account of the hebdomadary revolution." Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 93.3 [CCSL 39:1303], like Eusebius "Gallicanus," traced the planetary week to demonic influence: "*Hanc opinionem erroris diabolus confirmavit, Christus evertit. Nos ergo secundum quod loquimur, quarta sabbatorum quartus dies intellegitur a die dominico*" ["The Devil confirmed this erroneous opinion, Christ overthrew it. According to our mode of speech, therefore, the fourth of the Sabbath is understood as the fourth day from the Lord's Day"]. Philastrius, *Div. Haer.* 113 [85].3 [CCSL 9:279] proposed the ecclesiastical method after proclaiming the planetary week a heresy: "*Dierum enim numerus primus, secundus, tertius, quartus, quintus, sextus, septimus, a deo est appellatus*" ["For the number of the days was called by God the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh"].

Prosper's *Epitoma Chronicon* only once mentions a day by name, but he uses the Christian name *dies dominicus* rather than its planetary counterpart.⁷⁶ Hydatius uses the Christian method throughout his *Chronicon*, numbering the days of the week no less than eleven times.⁷⁷ But the most interesting use of the Christian reckoning comes in a number of Easter Cycles produced in the fourth and fifth centuries. These Easter Cycles made extensive use of the consular *fasti*, as dating by consuls was the most convenient method of keeping track of the years. In almost all of these we see a methodology similar to that used in the consular list of the *Codex-Calendar of 354*: 1) the consuls for the year; 2) the date they entered office (i.e., kalends of January); 3) the day of the week they entered office; 4) the day of the moon (in the lunar month) on which they entered office. Appended to this data in the Easter Cycles is the date for Easter in that year. This format is used in the *Liber Paschalis* (447), the *Cursus Paschalis* of Victor of Aquitaine (457), and the *Cyclus Paschalis* (covering the years 354-437).⁷⁸ In each case the day of the week is recorded using the Christian method, in contrast to the planetary week used in the original consular *fasti*. The *Cyclus Paschalis* actually begins in the year 354, the

⁷⁶ Prosper, *Epit. Chron.* 1376 [CM 1:484]. As does one African continuator of Prosper (*Continuatio Codicis Reichenaviensis* 25 [CM 1:490]), who dates the ordination of Deogratias at Carthage to 8 Kal. November, "*die dominico*."

⁷⁷ Hydatius, *Chronicon* 42, 64, 136, 149, 173, 174, 191 (twice), 214, and 225 (twice) [SC 218:114, 122, 142, 144, 154, 154, 160, 166, 170]. The second part of the *Consularia Constantinopolitana* is sometimes attributed to Hydatius. Whether or not this is correct, the focus on events in Spain evident in the notes attached to the consul list do support the theory that a copy of the *fasti* which had originated in Constantinople was taken to Spain. After AD 389 the attached notes are no longer mainly concerned with Constantinople, but show an interest in Western and especially Spanish affairs. See Muhlburger, *Fifth-Century Chroniclers*, p. 26. Regardless, the notes show that the later compiler was very Christian in outlook. See *Con. Con.* 415 [CM 1:246] which mentions the discovery of Stephen by Lucian, dating it to 3 nones December, the "*sexta feria*".

⁷⁸ Victor of Aquitaine, *Cursus Paschalis* [CM 1:667-735]; *Liber Paschalis* [CM 1:501-510]; *Cyclus Paschalis* [CM 1:739-743].

same year that the consular *fasti* in the *Codex-Calendar of 354* ends. This suggests not only that the author used the Codex, but that he consciously substituted the official ecclesiastical method of reckoning the days of the week for the planetary terms used in the earlier source.

We may conclude that, in spite of the resistance of Christian authorities, the planetary week gained a great deal of ground during the fourth and fifth centuries. This was doubtless the case for all levels of society. The *Codex Theodosianus* and the consular *fasti* tend to represent the views of only the official classes. The same can be said for many of the Christian sources: the chronicles and Easter Cycles tend to represent the interests of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. But the sermons allow us to glimpse beneath the hierarchy to the people who filled the churches. And the evidence here clearly suggests that the planetary week was becoming firmly established in the minds of the common man as well.

iii. The Week in Christian Symbolism

In spite of the competition of the planetary week (or perhaps, in part, because of it), the hebdomadary cycle remained one of the favourite sources of symbolism in the late antique Church. As a repetition of the model produced by Creation Week, the weekly cycle maintained its symbolic and spiritual attachment to the beginning of time.⁷⁹ In chapter one we studied the emphasis given to Sunday as the

⁷⁹Cf., Ambrose, *Ep.* 44.2 [PL 16:1136], on Creation taking six days because God wished to provide humanity with a model of order and for time.

first day of Creation Week and thus, the first day of the world. The relative positions of Sunday and Saturday, first and last day of Creation Week, demonstrated their relevance to late antique Christians. Both days were part of the weekly cycle of worship and so, were times of spiritual significance. And both days figured prominently in the allegorical interpretation of the week.

Sunday and Saturday were viewed as symbolic links to Creation, normally through Christ, who was perceived as a physical manifestation of the divine in time. Thus Ambrose believed that Christ's first miracle occurred on a Saturday to signify, "*ut inde nova creatura coeperit, ubi vetus ante desivit.*"⁸⁰ For Gaudentius of Brescia, the later contemporary of Ambrose, the link between Creation, Christ, and the Christian was achieved through Sunday: "*...ut, qui prima die creavit caelum et terram...prima etiam die omnem repararet hominem, propter quem fecerat mundum.*"⁸¹

In chapter two we saw Augustine use the Creation Week as proof that time was to run its course in a series of ages (e.g., "*Non autem sine causa illi dies sic*

⁸⁰ Ambrose, *Exp. Ev. Sec. Luc.* 4.58 [PL 15:1629]: "that thereafter a new creation begins where the ancient one finished before." He also notes that Christ began performing miracles on a Saturday to show that he was not under the Law, but superior to it. Maximus, *Serm.* 43.1 [CCSL 23:174], in a sermon on Christ's healing of the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath, also connects Christ to Creation in the context of the day: "*Non mirum est...et id verbi imperio restituit, quod in principio factura operationis instituit*" ["It is not to be marveled at...that He restored by the command of a word, what He instituted in the beginning by the labour of creation"].

⁸¹ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 1.10 [CSEL 68:20]: "...so that He who created heaven and earth on the first day...also on the first day repaired mankind, on account of whom He had made the world." The idea of the re-creation of mankind through Christ is of central importance to Christianity. The view that Sunday as the day of Resurrection and, thus, a symbol of the Christian's ultimate resurrection, as discussed above (pp. 139-40), is related; it is Christ's sacrifice which allows mankind's re-creation and thus, his ultimate resurrection. Sunday as the *dies resurrectionis*, as, for example, we see in Leo, *Ep.* 9.1 [PL 54:625], is yet another link between Christ, mankind, and time—in the case of the *dies resurrectionis*, the link is eschatological. Cf. Augustine, *Hom. in Joh.* 120.6 [PL 35:1954]; and especially *Serm.* 169.3 [PL 38:96]: "*Domini enim resuscitatio promist nobis aeternum diem et consecravit nobis Dominicum diem*" ["For the rising of the Lord has promised eternity to us, and consecrated to us the Lord's Day"]. Maximus, *Serm.* 44.1 [CCSL 23:178]; Eusebius "Gallicanus" *De Pascha* 6.4 [CCSL 100:200].

sunt ordinati, nisi quia et saecula sic cursura erant, antequam requiescamus in Deo."⁸²). The week, and especially its primary days--Sunday and Saturday--were widely held to be eschatological images. This was expressed in two ways. The first was chiliasm, still a potent force in the fourth and fifth centuries, which saw in the week a microcosm of the whole course of time.⁸³ The second eschatological application of the week is similar to the millenarian view. It also uses the Sabbath and Sunday as symbols of the end of time and eternity, but without any accompanying chronological calculations.

It was a natural extension of the Sabbath, as the last day of the week, to be depicted as a symbol of the end of the world or the eternity which followed. Thus God's rest on the Sabbath was seen allegorically as a type of the rest of the Christian in eternity at the end of time: "*Sabbatum enim septimus dies est quo requieuit Deus ab omnibus operibus suis, magnum intimans mysterium quietis nostrae futurae ab omnibus operibus nostris.*"⁸⁴ Gaudentius of Brescia's description of the future Sabbath is worth stating here as it shows its symbolic use in the

⁸² Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 92.1 [CCSL 39:1290]: "For the days were not ordered to run so without reason, but because the ages were to run likewise before we rest in God."

⁸³ The connection between the week and chiliasm was covered in chapter two. Pietri, "Le temps de semaine," pp. 65-66, traces the week, in part, to the influence of the World Week of the millenarian tradition.

⁸⁴ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 80.2 [CCSL 39:1121]: "For the Sabbath is the seventh day, on which God rested from all His works, intimating the great mystery of our future resting from all our works." Cf. *Serm.* 259.1; 125.4 [PL 38:1196, 692]. Augustine used the Sabbath as a symbol of eternity itself, (although Sunday was more usual in this sense), and uses it as such in his six-ages system: "*Ipse etiam numerus aetatum, veluti dierum, si secundum eos articulos temporis computetur qui scripturis videntur expressi, iste sabbatismus evidentius apparebit, quoniam septimus invenitur*" ["The very number of ages also, like the number of days in Creation, if reckoned according to the divisions of time which seem to be indicated in the Scriptures, throws more light on that Sabbath rest, for it comes out as the seventh age"]. *De Civ. Dei* 22.30 [Loeb 417:382-3] (trans. W.M. Green).

millenarian tradition:

*Quotquot enim primum diem, id est dominicum diem, nuncupamus sanctum...expectamus etiam illum vere sanctum diem, septimi millesimi anni diem, qui adveniet post istos sex dies, sex milium quippe annorum saeculi, quibus completis requies erit vera sanctis et fideliter credentibus in resurrectione Christi.*⁸⁵

Yet although the Sabbath was well suited to eschatological symbolism, the use of Sunday in this context was even more popular. This was achieved by depicting Sunday as the eighth day as well as the first day of the week. Augustine explained it to his flock: "*Tunc velut ad caput reditur. Quomodo enim cum peracti fuerint isti septem dies, octavus ipse est qui primus*";⁸⁶ as did Ambrose: "*Idem autem dies primus atque octavus, quia Dominica dies in se recurrit.*"⁸⁷

In part, the identification of Sunday with the eighth day, as well as its use as an eschatological symbol, can be traced to a number of Psalms with the mysterious heading, "*In finem, pro octavo*". The heading obviously held eschatological connotations and, thanks to the oddities of Roman counting, the eighth day could be identified with Sunday:

⁸⁵ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 10.15 [CSEL 68:97]: "For as often as we call the first day holy, that is, the Lord's day...we also truly look for that holy day, the day of the seven thousandth year which will come after those six days, indeed, the six thousand years of the world. When they are completed there will be true rest for the saints and for those faithfully believing in the resurrection of Christ." Cf. Ambrose, *De Obi.* *Theod.* 29 [PL 16:1395], delivered after the death of Theodosius I in January of 395: "*Haec est requies sabbati magni, ut unusquisque sanctorum supra mundi sensibilia sit, in illo intelligibili secreto totus intentus, atque adhaerens Deo. Haec est requies illa sabbati, quo requievit Deus ab omnibus operibus mundi istius*" ["This is the rest of the great Sabbath that each one of the saints is above the sensible things of the world, wholly intent upon that intelligible mystery and adhering to God. This is that rest of the Sabbath on which God rested from all the works of this world"]. For a similar eschatological use of the Sabbath in Ambrose, see *De Exc. Saty.* 2.108 [PL 16:1347].

⁸⁶ Augustine, *Serm.* 259.2 [PL 38:1198]: "Then we return as it were to the beginning. For just as when seven days have passed, the eighth day itself becomes the first". Cf. *Serm.* 169.3 [PL 38:916].

⁸⁷ Ambrose, *De Hella* 19.69 [PL 14:721]: "Moreover, the first and the eighth day are the same, because the Lord's day returns to itself."

*"Octauum diem iudicii posse intellegi, in sexto psalmo dictum est. Potest et 'pro octauo' intellegi pro aeterno saeculo, quia post hoc tempus quod septem diebus uoluitur, dabitur sanctis."*⁸⁸

The use of the eighth day as an eschatological symbol had a certain logic to it, based on the perception of time which Augustine taught: the present time is a cycle of seven days. This is more than a simple statement that the week was a symbol of time. The week was also one way in which time was perceived to move literally--a linear movement from Creation to End Time that recurred cyclically:

*Septuplum solet pro toto computari: quoniam septem diebus voluitur tempus, et finito septenario, rursus ad caput reditur, ut eadem forma volvatur. Per hujusmodi formae revolutiones saecula transeunt.*⁸⁹

The weekly cycle of seven days, then, was seen as representing the whole course of time. By depicting Sunday as the eighth day, the bishop had a unit of time which was outside that cycle: *"et quoniam omnia tempora septem dierum istorum repetitione uoluuntur, octauus forte ille dictus est, qui uarietatem istam non habebit."*⁹⁰ Thus the eighth day, which could not exist literally in a

⁸⁸ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 11.1 [CCSL 38:82]: "It was said on the sixth Psalm that the eighth can be understood as the Day of Judgement. 'For the Eighth' can also be understood 'for the eternal age,' because after this time which is a cycle of seven days, it will be given to the saints."

⁸⁹ Augustine, *Serm.* 83.7 [PL 38:518]: "Seven is usually computed for the whole, since time revolves in seven days, and when the seventh day is ended, it returns to the first, that the same form may revolve again. Through such revolutions the ages pass away". Augustine connects time to the cyclical repetition of the week on several occasions. Cf. *Serm.* 95.2, "*Totum enim tempus significat qui dicit, septies. Unde septem dierum volumine saecula provolvuntur*" ["For he who says seven times signifies the whole of time. For in this world there are continual revolutions of seven days"]; *Serm.* 114.1 [PL 38:652]: "*septem quippe diebus venientibus et reduntibus totum voluitur tempus*" ["of course the whole of time revolves in seven days which come and go"]; *Ennar. in Ps.* 118.31.4 [CCSL 40:1771]: "*et per septem dies currentes et recurrentes, tempora uniuersa uoluuntur*" ["and through the cycle of seven days, all time revolves"]. Also *Ennar. in Ps.* 125.3; 147.5 [CCSL 40:1847, 2143]. Using the week in this manner was not restricted to Augustine. Gaudentius, *Tr.* 7.24 [CSEL 68:59], calls upon his neophytes to do no evil "*per septem dies totius vitae nostrae, quia iidem revolvuntur in saecula*" ["for the seven days of our entire life, because the same revolve into eternity"]. An interesting use of week symbolism by which he warns the listener to be good while living in time, because time leads to eternity. Ambrose, *Hex.* 1.10.37: "*Sicut igitur circuitus unus, ita dies unus. Nam plerique etiam hebdomadam unam unum diem dicunt; quod in se quasi in unum redeat diem, et quasi septies in se recurra*" ["Therefore just as there is one revolution [of time], so there is but one day. For there are many who call even a week one day, because it returns to itself like one day, and seven times, as it were, revolves back on itself"].

hebdomadary cycle could be used as a symbol of the eschatological fulfillment of time, and yet also demonstrate the dichotomy which existed between time and eternity:

*'In circuitu impii ambulat,' id est, in temporalium rerum cupiditate, quae septem dierum repetito circuitu, tamquam rota uoluitur; et ideo non perueniunt in octauum, id est in aeternum.*⁹¹

The Sabbath could never be susceptible to such imagery. In spite of the significance given to the seventh day on account of *Genesis*, and its place as a secondary day of Christian worship, it was the *seventh* day, and seven was synonymous with time. Moreover, the Sabbath maintained its connection to Judaism. It never completely lost this "taint" and, as we have seen, was susceptible to both positive and negative symbolism. Sunday, however, was only used positively, and proved to be the superior source for eschatological symbolism. Sunday could be the eighth day as well as the first. Thus it could exist outside the hebdomadary cycle which represented time:

Sed tamen ille septimanus, etsi bene nascatur, ad labores nascitur: qui autem octavo die regenerationis sortitur mysteria, consecratur per gratiam et ad haereditatem regni caelestis vocatur. Magna in virtutibus Spiritus sancti hebdomadis gratia, eadem tamen hebdomadam sonat,

⁹⁰ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 6.2 [CCSL 38:28]: "And since all time revolves in a repetition of those seven days, that as it happens is called the eighth day which will not have that variety."

⁹¹ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 11.9 [CCSL 38:84]: "'The impious walk in a circle' (Ps. 11.8); that is, in the desire of temporal things, which revolves like a wheel in a repeated circle of seven days. And therefore they do not arrive at the eighth, that is, at eternity."

*ogdoaden consecrat.*⁹²

iv. Conclusions

The use of the number eight in Christian eschatology was not new to the fourth century. It had a long tradition reaching back to the early days of Christianity.⁹³ That Sunday was considered superior to Saturday, as seen in the preceding statement of Ambrose's, was for Ambrose, clear proof of the pre-eminence of Christianity over Judaism.⁹⁴ Eighth day symbolism created a fully Christian week, one that began and ended with the *dies dominicus*:

*Sabbatum autem est dies septimus; dominicus uero post septimum, quid nisi octauus, idem qui primus habendus est?... A dominico autem usque ad dominicum octauus est dies: ubi Testamenti Noui reuelatio declaratur.*⁹⁵

A seven-day cycle which both begins and ends with Sunday was the ultimate expression of the devotion of time to Christ. With Sunday as the eighth day, the week became a temporal expression of Christ and eternity: Sunday is the alpha and

⁹² Ambrose, *Ep.* 44.3 [PL 16:1137]: "But although he who is born on the seventh day is born well, he is born to labour. However, he who is born on the eighth day obtains the mysteries of regeneration, is consecrated by grace, and is called to the inheritance of the celestial Kingdom. Great in the virtues of the Spirit is the grace of the holy number seven, but the same grace answers to the number seven, and consecrates the number eight."

⁹³ Rordorf, *Sunday*, pp. 275ff studies the significance of Sunday as the eighth day of the week. In part it can be traced back to the influence of chiliasm. Eight may also have been associated with Sunday because baptism was administered on Sundays. Baptism corresponded to circumcision which always took place on the eighth day after birth.

⁹⁴ As is Ambrose's statement later in the same letter (*Ep.* 44.14 [PL 16:1140]: "*Quis autem dubitet majus esse octavae munus, quae totum renovavit hominem, ut jam nihil possit dolere? Itaque septima mundi aetas conclusa est; octava illuxit gratia, quae fecit hominem jam non hujus mundi esse, sed supra mundum*" ["Who then will doubt that the office of the octave is greater, which renewed the whole man, so that now he is not able to be susceptible to pain? Therefore the seventh age of the world concluded, the grace of the octave shines, which makes man now not of this world, but above the world"]. Here the eighth age of the world is synonymous with the Christian age, while the seventh is the age of the Jews which preceded it. But life as a Christian in this eighth age places that Christian "*supra mundum*", so that the eighth age is an expression of eternity as well.

⁹⁵ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 150.1 [CCSL 40:2191]: "The Sabbath is the seventh day. But what is the Lord's Day after the seventh except the eight, which also is held to be the first day?... But from Lord's Day to Lord's Day is eight days: in which the revelation of the New Testament is declared."

omega, not just of the week, but of the entire course of time. It is the first day of the week, the first day of Creation. It is the last day of the week, the first and only day of eternity.

But is this symbolic replacement of the Sabbath as the end of the week only aimed at Judaism? Ambrose's depiction of the character of those born on Saturday and Sunday, (i.e., those born on the seventh day are born to labour; those born on the eighth day obtain the mysteries of regeneration), has all the hallmarks of a classic Jewish versus Christian statement. But the idea behind this statement--that the day one is born somehow effects one's character or destiny--is patently astrological, even if Ambrose is using it in a purely metaphoric sense.

In the primitive Church, the use of the eighth day symbolism may well have served to show that the *dies dominicus* had superceded the *dies sabbati*.⁹⁶ But in the fourth and fifth centuries, the Jewish week was hardly the most potent adversary to the Christian hebdomadary cycle. The Christian week had wholly superceded the Jewish cycle from which it had descended, as far as Christians were concerned. In the context of late antiquity, it was the planetary week which was seen by the Christian hierarchy as being the most vital threat to the Christian week. The *dies dominicus* as the eighth day was more than just an eschatological symbol, more even than proof that the Christian cycle had supplanted its predecessor. It was, in

⁹⁶Rordorf, *Sunday*, p. 276, suggests this as an impetus for accepting eighth day symbolism in the primitive Church.

all probability, another tool in the conflict between the Christian and planetary weeks. Time was comprised of a repetition of seven days, and the week was a symbol of worldliness when it did not acknowledge the *dies dominicus*. "In circuitu impii ambulat," Augustine reminded his flock. They are trapped forever in time, "*quae septem dierum repetito circuitu, tamquam rota uoluitur; et ideo non perueniunt in octauum, id est in aeternum.*"⁹⁷ In light of the prevalence of the planetary week suggested by the sermons, the impious who walk in a circle of seven days cannot help but include those who observed the planetary week. And such observances prevented the believer from ever reaching the *aeternum diem dominicum*.

⁹⁷ See above, n. 91.

CHAPTER FIVE

Units of Time III: The Day

The *dies* is the easiest to recognize of the major time-units. Unlike the year, season, and month, the boundaries of the day are difficult to blur. The frequent exchange of sun and moon (or, at least, light and dark) are highly visible markers. That visibility prompted late antique bishops to use it often in their sermons. The predominant use of the day was for symbolic purposes, but, as with the other time-units, literal definitions proved advantageous as well. It is with the mechanics of the day and its constituent parts that we shall begin our investigation.

i. The Day and its Divisions

The Roman civil day began and ended at midnight.¹ The ante-Nicene Church chose to compute its day from evening to evening,² and bequeathed that day to late antique Christianity, although it is not the only day that was accepted. Hilarian used a "*dies lunaris*," which began and ended in the evening, to explain why the Paschal vigil began Saturday evening rather than after midnight on Easter Sunday.³ Peter of Ravenna agreed, but only as a concession to Easter; all other days ran from

¹ Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.3.2 [Teubner, 9]. Salzmann, *On Roman Time*, p. 31. The astrological day, as seen in Section IV of the *Codex-Calendar of 354*, began at sunset, however, and proceeded from evening to evening.

² A.A. McArthur, *The Evolution of the Christian Year* (London, 1953), p. 14; cf. Pietri, "Le temps de la semaine," p. 80.

³ Hilarian, *De Die Pasch.* 6 [PL 13:1109-10].

midnight to midnight: "*Hoc nescit dies saeculi.... Vesper finit, in inchoat diem.*"⁴

Ambrose of Milan preferred the day described in *Genesis*, beginning and ending in the morning.⁵ Augustine acknowledged this Scriptural day, but he taught his flock that a day proceeding from morning to morning was only pertinent to God. Man had turned from light to darkness, therefore, "...*nunc dies a noctibus computemus.*" Thus, for Augustine's flock, the day beginning with evening became a symbol of mankind's search to escape from darkness into the light.⁶

The discussions of time which so dominate Ambrose's *Hexameron* pay particular attention to the day. As with the other time-units, Ambrose directs the neophyte to Creation: "*Tempus enim ab hoc mundo, non ante mundum: dies autem temporis portio est, non principium.*"⁷ This statement has a classically anti-Arian flavour; we encountered Augustine making a similar distinction between time and eternity in refuting Arian arguments that Christ was a being created before

⁴Peter, *Serm.* 74.2 [CCSL 24A:451]: "The day of the world does not know this.... Evening ends the day, it does not begin it."

⁵Ambrose, *Hex.* 1.10.38 [PL 14:144]: "...*ut et a luce inchoare diem doceret, et in lucem desinere*" ["...so that it [Scripture] teaches that the day begins in light, and in light comes to an end"].

⁶Augustine, *Serm.* 221 [PL 38:1090]: "...we now compute the days from night". The day's progression from dark to light as a symbol of mankind's journey from the night of sin to the day of salvation is aptly put by Augustine: "*non a luce ad tenebras, sed a tenebris ad lucem venire conamur*" ["...we do not attempt to come from light to darkness, but from darkness to light"]. We note here also a difference in the Easter festivities at Hippo. Augustine cites this as the reason why the Easter vigil begins at midnight at Hippo. Hilarius and Peter of Ravenna (above) used arguments as to the beginning point of the day to explain beginning the Easter vigil on Saturday evening. Quodvultdeus, a younger contemporary of Augustine, evidently saw the day as proceeding from midnight to midnight as well. See below, p. 166.

⁷Ambrose, *Hex.* 1.6.20 [PL 14:132]: "For time is from this world, not before the world. And the day is a portion time, not time's beginning."

time.⁸ In the context of the *Hexameron*, however, the intent is undoubtedly anti-pagan. The day is a "*portio temporis*", not the beginning of time--it is therefore natural and not an object to be worshipped. The same differentiation--natural versus supernatural, or natural versus divine--is subsequently stressed for the sun as a refutation of sun worship.⁹

If the day was natural rather than divine, then it had certain characteristics and qualities which could be demonstrated and defined. Ambrose and his contemporaries¹⁰ undertook to provide such definitions, as we have seen them do in their discussions of the year, month, seasons, and week. In so doing, they open for us a window to the minds of their congregations, steeped in classical ideas about time which were sometimes not aligned with Christian ideals. At the same time, late antique bishops could prepare the minds of their flocks for symbolic exegesis of time-units by first providing literal definitions. For such reasons nothing that

⁸ For anti-Arian arguments based on the "time" sequence of eternity and time, see pp. 35-8. A subsequent statement by Ambrose, *Hex.* 1.9.34 [PL 14:143], has an anti-Manichaean feel to it in its division of day and night. "*Unde et discretio fit inter lucem et tenebras; ut separata lucis natura atque tenebrarum, nihil videatur intra se habere confusum*" ["Which is why a separation between light and darkness was made, so that, having been separated, there would seem to be no grounds for confusing the nature of light and the nature of darkness."]

⁹ This has been encountered already in Ambrose's teaching that the sun is younger than the plants (ch. 1, n. 61). Not only the refutation of sun worship, but of astrology as well, as we have seen in previous investigations of Christian polemic against the pseudo-science: "*Cum enim dies horas suas complere coeperit, sol debitum sibi cognoscit occasum. Est ergo in diei potestate sol, et luna in potestate noctis, quae temporum vicibus obedire compellitur*" ["For when the day begins to complete its hours, the sun recognizes that its setting is owed. The sun, therefore, is in the power of the day, and the moon is in the power of the night, which is compelled to obey by the changes of time"]. Ambrose, *Hex.* 4.2.7 [PL 14:190]. Ambrose follows up these remarks with a general refutation of astrology (*Hex.* 4.4.12ff [PL 14:192ff]).

¹⁰ Leo, *Serm.* 27.5 [PL 54:220], makes the same argument. The sun and moon are simply "*visibilibus creaturae et corporeae lucis elementa...Sicut enim alia diurna, alia nocturna sunt tempora, ita diversam in luminaribus qualitatem Creator instituit*" ["...elements of corporeal light and visible creatures...For just as there are, on the one hand, times of the day and, on the other, times of the night, so the Creator instituted diverse qualities in the stars"]. Augustine, *Serm.* 167.1 [PL 38:909]: "...*dies isti, quantum pertinet ad spatia horarum, ordinati sunt: ducunt vices, agunt tempora; oritur sol, occidit sol, transeunt tempora*" [...these days, as far as it pertains to the spaces of the hours, are regular; they follow in succession, they make up time; the sun rises, the sun sets, time passes"]. Augustine notes that these are "*dies mali*", but not because of time itself, which is not evil: "*Per malitiam hominum et miseriam hominum ducuntur dies mali*" ["Evil days are led through the malice and misery of men"].

concerned time-units was considered to be too mundane for discussion, even when the information passed on would be categorized in our day as blatantly obvious. Thus, for example, Ambrose taught that day and night are "*vices temporum*."¹¹ Even the fact that the day was comprised of twenty-four hours was not considered to be too trivial for discussion: "*sed legem statuit, ut viginti quatuor horae diurnae atque nocturnae diei tantum nomine definiantur*."¹²

The Romans traditionally divided the day into two parts: twelve hours of daylight and twelve hours of night. The length of a Roman hour varied with the time of year; only at the equinoxes would each hour be sixty minutes in length. For Quodvultdeus of Carthage, twelve varying hours of daylight were a gift from God. Their increase in summer and decrease in winter were a continual cycle that pointed back, as all time-units did, to Creation.¹³ Zeno of Verona saw in the varying length of the hours a lesson in *patientia*. In a sermon delivered, he tells us, in May, he praises the sun as an example of patience--without that virtue the day could not be divided equally, "*duodenis non dicam spatiis, sed momentis horarum*."¹⁴

Aside from the obvious twofold division of the day (*dies* and *nox*) and its

¹¹ Ambrose, *Hex.* 1.6.20 [PL 14:132]: "changes of time".

¹² Ambrose, *Hex.* 1.10.37 [PL 14:144]: "but [Scripture] established a law that the twenty-four hours of the day and of the night should be defined by the name of day only." Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 15.14 [Loeb 414:489], defined time-units to refute pagans and heretics who found the long lives of the biblical patriarchs unbelievable: "*Prorsus tantus etiam tunc dies fuit quantus et nunc est, quem viginti quattuor horae diurno curriculo nocturnoque determinant*" ["For the day even then was just as long as it is now, a period defined by twenty-four hours in the course of a day and a night"] (trans. P. Levine).

¹³ Quodvultdeus, *De Cant. Nov.* 1.9 [CCSL 60:381]. See above, ch. 1, n. 22.

¹⁴ Zeno, *Tr.* 1.4.4 [CCSL 22:31]: "I shall not say by twelve intervals, but by the revolutions of hours."

division into twenty-four units (*horae*), a fourfold division was also acknowledged. Augustine prescribes using the four parts of the day--*matutinus*, *meridianus*, *vespertinus*, and *nocturnus*--as a tool for bishops to help their flocks understand the significance of the number four for the Christian religion.¹⁵ Ambrose uses these terms in the *Hexameron* as well, but prefers making the following divisions:¹⁶

1. *Lumen Diei* = Dawn to Sunrise
2. *Dies* = Sunrise to Sunset
3. *Lumen Diei* = Sunset to Star Rise
4. *Nox* = Star Rise to Daylight

At first glance the two periods of daylight (*lumen diei*) which Ambrose differentiates seem somewhat artificial. But this is not the only time Ambrose notes the presence of light without the sun,¹⁷ nor is he the only one of his contemporaries to do so. Maximus of Turin also portrayed the time between dawn and sunrise as a specific period dividing night from day.¹⁸ These periods of light without the visible presence of the sun are Scriptural in origin and, for Ambrose and Maximus at least, are useful in the refutation of paganism. Ambrose goes on to demonstrate from Scripture the existence of light before the creation of the sun, as seen in the

¹⁵ Augustine, *De Doc. Chr.* 2.16.25 [PL 34:48]. That is, morning, noon, evening, and night.

¹⁶ Ambrose, *Hex.* 4.3.8-11 [PL 14:191-192].

¹⁷ E.g., *Hex.* 1.9.35 [PL 14:143]: "*Advertimus itaque quod lucis ortus antequam sol diem, videatur aperire...et status limes nocti et diei videatur esse praescriptus*" [Therefore we notice that the rising of light seems to open the day before the sun...and an established boundary of night and day seems to have been prescribed].

¹⁸ Maximus, *Serm.* 29.1 [CCSL 23:112], which he bases on Scripture (i.e., Ps. 21, entitled *In finem pro susceptione matutina* [Unto the end, for the rising of the morning]). Dawn, for Maximus, is a symbolic period of preparation. It removes the darkness of night, allows our eyes to become accustomed to the light, and so prepares them for the rising of the sun (i.e., the *sol iustitiae*). Night is a symbol of the darkness of the world (paganism).

first chapters of *Genesis*. The two periods of daylight without the sun are thus further proof that the sun was created and not the Creator. He demythologizes the sun to the point that light itself--the sun's greatest attribute--is not dependent upon it. His flock is to conclude from this that the sun is not worthy of worship.¹⁹

The proper understanding of the mechanics of the day proved especially necessary in unravelling one of the central mysteries of the Christian religion: Christ's three days in the tomb. Even using the Roman method of inclusive reckoning, the time between Christ's Friday deposition and His pre-dawn resurrection on Sunday was not strictly three days. The difficulties this caused are especially evident in Ambrose's depiction of the sun's crisis as it tries to discern some way to make its movements coincide with Christ's prophecy:

*...didicerat hoc sol, servabat praeceptum. Dubitabat ergo, dicens: Quid facio? Orior, et dies est: occido, et nox est. Si cursum meum servavero, demorabor mundi salutem....Sed quid faciam? Ipse vult post triduum fieri resurrectionem.*²⁰

Quodvultdeus discussed this problem with his catechumens, noting that many had investigated this ambiguity. He provides two alternatives to make the Scriptural

¹⁹ Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 11.7 [Loeb 413:449-453] also recognizes the existence of light without the sun in a similar context. Although, he admits, there may be a physical light in existence, he prefers an allegorical interpretation. E.g., the half-light of dusk represents the knowledge of created beings; the equivalent at dawn represents increased knowledge of God. Augustine's fourfold division of the day is clarified here: "*sed qualis illa sit lux et quo alternante motu qualemque vesperam et mane fecerit, remotum est a sensibus nostris, nec ita ut est intellegi a nobis potest*" ["But the nature of that light, by what shift back and forth it caused morning and evening and what kind of thing evening and morning were are questions far beyond the reach of our perception"] (trans. D.S. Wiesen). This suggests that Augustine's term *vespertinus* was equivalent to Ambrose's period between sunset and star rise; his term *matulinus*, to Ambrose's period between dawn and sunrise.

²⁰ Ambrose, *Job et Dav.* 1.5.14 [PL 14:803]: "The sun had learned this and was preserving His precept. Therefore it kept hesitating, saying: 'What do I do? I rise and it is day, I set and it is night. If I keep my course, I shall delay the salvation of the world....But what do I do? He wishes the resurrection to take place after three days.'"

three days tally with the facts. The first counts the night of the sixth *feria* and the sixth day itself as one day and night period (i.e., from Thursday midnight to Friday midnight). The night and day of the *dies sabbati* is the second day; the night and day of the *dies resurrectionis* is the third day. The second alternative seems to have been the more popular one. The three hours of darkness which accompanied Christ on the cross are depicted as a mini-night of the first day. The remainder of Friday completes the first day. The final two days remain the same.²¹

ii. The Day in Symbolism

The allegorization of the day and its constituent parts is abundant in the homiletic literature. The day, night, and hours leant themselves easily to a variety of images because they were so familiar. The sheer volume of this imagery makes it necessary, therefore, to restrict ourselves to the more important examples.

a) Christological Symbolism

One of the most prevalent of images in the sermons of late antique bishops was that of Christ as the day. The equation of Christ with the sun, especially in the image of *sol iustitiae*, which was traditional even in the ante-Nicene Church, allowed Christ easily to be associated with this time-unit: "*Dies iste qui circuitu solis hujus impletur, paucas horas habet, dies praesentiae Christi usque in*

²¹ Quodvultdeus, *De Symb.* II 6.3 [CCSL 60:343]. Ambrose, *Job et Dav.* 1.5.14 follows the second argument, as does Gaudentius, *Tr.* 3.12 [CSEL 68:35] (see ch. 9, pp. 286-7).

consummationem saeculi extenditur."²² Often there is a tendency in using this image to compare Christ as light or Christ as day with darkness or night, symbolizing the world, time, evil, etc. So, for example, Gaudentius, who taught that the "*nox mortis*", symbolizing the present, would succumb to an age of perpetual light and be conquered by the "*sole iustitiae*".²³ Maximus of Turin used a similar image: "*Lux enim Christi...non tenebris obscuratur. Lux, inquam, Christi dies est sine nocte dies sine fine.*"²⁴

It was a natural extension to portray the twelve hours of daylight as the apostles, as we saw the depiction of Christ as the year evoked the association of the apostles with the twelve months. Peter of Ravenna depicts the period preceding Christ's physical intervention in time as, "*diuturna tempora tetrae noctis.*" With Christ's appearance, the "*aeternus dies*" shine's forth, altering the world with the "*aurorae suae...splendore*". After the "dawning" of Christ, the day (also Christ), proceeds in twelve parts, that is, the twelve apostles: "*...qui duodecim suas horas*

²² Augustine, *Hom. in loh.* 44.6 [PL 35:1716]: "That day which is completed by the circuit of this sun, has few hours; the day of the presence of Christ is extended until the end of the world."

²³ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 1.23 [CSEL 68:23]. Cf. *Tr.* 8.22 [CSEL 68:66], where Gaudentius gives the rule for comparing Christ to the day: "*Dies lucis est, fratres carissimi, et ideo praeceptis domini, qui verum lumen est, aequissime comparatur...*" ["A day is of light, most beloved brothers, and therefore it is most suitably compared to the same precepts of the Lord, who is the true light"].

²⁴ Maximus, *Serm.* 53.2 [CCSL 2:214]: "For the light of Christ...is not obscured by darkness. The light of Christ, I say, it is day without night, day without end." Cf. Quodvultdeus, *De Acced. ad Grat.* 2.11.9 [CCSL 60:468], where Christ is the "*sol iustitiae*" and the "*unus permanens dies*". Such imagery is, of course, eschatologically suggestive. Augustine was particularly fond of using the day as an image of eternity. See, for example, *Serm.* 217.3 [PL 38:1084]: "*Ubi nihil transit, unus est dies. Et dies Christus est, et Pater dies*" ["When nothing passes, there is one day. And Christ is day and the Father is day..."]; *Hom. in 1 Ep. loh.* 2.5 [PL 35:1992]: "*Ille unus dies ibi est sine tenebris, sine nocte, sine spatiis, sine mensura, sine horis*" ["That one day there is without darkness, without night, without spaces, without measure, without hours"]. The imagery can have more sinister connotations when it is applied to the Last Judgement, e.g., *Hom. in 1 Ep. loh.* 3.3 [PL 35:1998]: "*Horam enim pro tempore posuit novissimo; quia in novissimis temporibus veniet Dominus noster Jesus Christus...certe prius veniet Antichristus, et tunc veniet dies iudicii*" ["For he put 'hour' for 'the last time', since our Lord Jesus Christ will come in the last time...Certainly Antichrist will come first and then will come the Judgement Day"]. Also *Serm.* 170.10 [PL 38:932]: "*Novissimus dies, erit finis saeculi*" ["The last day will be the end of the world"]. See chapter two for further examples of day used eschatologically (e.g., as synonymous with *aetas*, as the day of judgement, etc).

in apostolis suis duodecim signanter aptaret."²⁵

As noted above, the church of Ravenna under Peter observed the Roman civil day proceeding from midnight to midnight. This image therefore had a special significance for his congregation, greater than the mnemonic association of the day and its hours with Christ and his apostles. In fact as used by Peter, the day and its divisions become a microcosm of the whole course of time, with night signifying the time before Christ, and Christ and his apostles representing the *tempora christiana* which began with Christ. The image thus had the benefit of allowing the congregation to grasp the centrality of Christ in time and the subjugation of time to Christ, expressed in a manner that was much easier to digest.²⁶ The same objective normally lies behind the image when it appears in the sermons of other bishops, as the following example from Ambrose demonstrates:

Ergo si dies totum tempus est mundi, habet utique etiam in saeculis horas suas: aut ipsa saecula horae sunt. Horae autem diei duodecim sunt; unde bene in mysterio dies Christus, cujus apostoli duodecim, qui

²⁵ Peter, *Serm.* 170.3 [CCSL 24B:1041-1042]. I.e., "After the long time of harsh night, our Christ, the eternal day, by the long awaited splendour of his dawning, shone forth into light. [Christ] desired that his twelve hours signify his twelve apostles." The Church accepted the traditional division of twelve hours of daylight and twelve hours of night. Bickermann, *Chronology*, p. 16.

²⁶ This was extended to specific days (e.g., the significance attached to the *dies sabbati* and *dies dominicus* as seen in the previous chapter), and even to specific hours of the day. Chromatius of Aquileia, *Serm.* 3.5 and 10.3 [CCSL 9A:14, 45], attached particular importance to the sixth hour. E.g. Peter was hungry at the sixth hour because that was the hour at which Christ was crucified. Dinner, which was normally taken at the sixth hour, was therefore seen as a symbol of Christ. He was crucified at that time, "*ut nobis passionis suae caelestes escas et spiritales epulas exhiberet*" ["so that he might show to us the heavenly food and the spiritual banquet of his passion"]. Augustine, *Hom in loh.* 15.9 [PL 35:1513], uses Christ's rest at the well at the sixth hour as a symbol of the sixth age of the world. *Hom in loh.* 7.10 [PL 35:1442], has the tenth hour—the time when Peter and Andrew first joined Jesus—as a symbol of the Law. *Serm.* 87.7 [PL 38:533]: the first, third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh hours are used as symbols of the progress of time and of the calling of souls to Christ, based on the parable of the workers (*Matf.* 20.1ff). Ambrose, *Exp. Ev. Séc. Luc.* 7.222-3 [PL 15:1759], like Augustine, uses the same hours to describe the progress of Christian history to his flock. The third hour represents the epoch of Noah; the sixth, the epoch of the Patriarchs; the ninth, that of the prophets; and the eleventh, "*sacer producit adventus*". Ambrose also sees in the parable of the workers a certain eschatological quality. He discusses the theory that one thousand years are like one day in the eyes of the Lord, which, in turn, is an "*hora in nocte*". As Ambrose saw the eleventh hour as a symbol of Christ's time on earth, then his eschatological symbolism here is probably designed to demonstrate the whole of time in symbols of the hours; the "*hora in nocte*" would thus signify eschatological Last Hour.

*caelesti lumine distinctis in se gratiae vicibus refulserunt.*²⁷

b) The Night in Symbolism

The day was predominantly used as a positive symbol,²⁸ enhancing the distillation of Christian doctrine into a more teachable form. The night was generally used as a negative symbol, designed to demonstrate to the congregation that which was to be avoided. By using such symbols, late antique bishops were tapping into one of the most effective of all images--the tension between good and evil as symbolized by day versus night, light versus darkness.²⁹ Even when used as a solitary symbol, night (or evening) tended to imply something better, something opposite, existed. More often than not, however, night was used in conjunction with the day (or morning) to emphasize the tension between good and evil.

²⁷ Ambrose, *Exp. Ev. Sec. Luc.* 7.222 [PL 15:1759]: "Therefore, if the entire time of the world is a day, he certainly has these hours as centuries: or the centuries themselves are hours. But there are twelve hours in a day. Therefore, in allegory, Christ is the day, and his twelve apostles are filled with the celestial light in whom grace has its distinct phases." Cf., Zeno, *Tr.* 1.33.4 [CCSL 22:84]: Christ is the "*sine nocte dies*," the twelve apostles are the twelve hours; the prophets are the twelve months; the four Gospels symbolize the seasons. Cf., Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 56.5 [CCSL 39:680]. But Augustine, *Hom. in Ioh.* 22.7 [PL 35:1577], also used *hora* on its own, apart from the apostles, as a symbol for the present age (synonymous to his use of *dies*, *dies hebdomadis*, and *aetas*): "*Non enim hora de qua locutus est Dominus, una erit hora de duodecim horis unius diei. Ex quo locutus est usque ad hoc tempus, et usque ad finem saeculi, ipsa una hora agitur*" ["For the hour of which the Lord spoke will not be one of the twelve hours of the day. From the time that he spoke until this time, and until the end of the world, that same hour is pressing on"].

²⁸ However, day could be a symbol of the present time or life on earth, or of time in general, and could sometimes be used negatively under such circumstances, especially when attempting to show one's flock difference between time and eternity. E.g., Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 12.2 [CCSL 39:85]: "*Per diem' autem continuationem significat, ut dies pro tempore intellegatur*" [And 'through the day' signifies continuance, so that day is understood as time"]. *Ennar. in Ps.* 101.2.14 [CCSL 40:1449]: "*circuito solis peraguntur dies*" ["days spent in the circuit of the sun"] are compared to "*annos stantes*" of eternity. *Ennar. in Ps.* 101.1.12 [CCSL 40:1435], where days spent in worldliness are "*dies declinantes*" and "*dies tui*". *Ennar. in Ps.* 90.1.7 [CCSL 39:1259], where day is a symbol of those who sin in full knowledge (set against night, which is a symbol of those who sin in ignorance). Cf. also *Ennar. in Ps.* 33.2.17 and 38.10 [CCSL 38:293, 389].

²⁹ Night touched the late antique psyche in much the same way as it does our own. Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 18.2.4 [CCSL 38:108], used night to represent obscurity--its darkness evoked things carnal and undesirable. "*Noctem enim ad quietem corporis datam esse cognoscimus*" "Night is passed in sleep and forgetfulness," said Ambrose, *Hex.* 1.10.38, "*non ad muneris alicujus vel operis functionem, quae somno et oblivione transcurritur*" [For we know that the night is given to the quiet of the body, which it passes in sleep and oblivion. It is not designed for any task or transaction"]. Eusebius "Gallicanus", *Hom. II, De Nat. Dom.* II 2 [CCSL 101:23]: the "*noctis damna*" and the "*nox...tenebris*". The anxiety caused by night, whether on the surface (as it is with many children) or deeply buried is basic to the human experience--and it is this part of the Christian's psyche that the expansive use of night imagery in the sermons is designed to probe. At its simplest, the dichotomy between day and night was used to divide existence into two parts: Christian versus non-Christian. E.g., Augustine, *Hom. in Ioh.* 11.4: "*Qui ergo renati sunt, noctis fuerunt, et diei sunt: tenebrae fuerunt, et lumen sunt*" ["Therefore they who are born again were of the night, and now are of the day: they were of darkness, and now are light"]. Clearly, becoming a Christian was considered to be a movement from darkness to light.

This tension was often presented as a tension in time; a dichotomy between bad or negative time and good or positive time. When used in such a manner, night became a symbol of the present age or the time preceding Christ. The "*nox saeculi*", according to Augustine, would some day give way to the eternal day, "*ille nec oritur, nec occidit*": the "*matutinus*" to come at the end of time.³⁰ Echoes of this are found throughout Western homiletic literature. Gaudentius of Brescia taught his neophytes that the *nox mortis* was a symbol of the evils of the present age, which included paganism, Judaism, and heresy. Even the days of Christians are covered by "*quibusdam nebulis*". But the evils of the present would one day be conquered by the *sol iustitiae*, thus ushering in a new age of "*lumen aeternum*".³¹ "*Nox profunda*" was the term which Leo of Rome applied, both to the age which preceded Christ, and to those who lived without Christ in the present age.³² For Paulinus of Nola, it was "*nox saeculi*" which was a symbol of the evils of this world.³³

The themes of death and rebirth are strongly present in the dichotomy between night and day. The mini-death of sleep could be evoked by Paulinus of

³⁰ Augustine, *Hom. in Ioh.* 17.8 [PL 35:1532]: "...that day neither sets nor rises." Cf. *Ennar. in Ps.* 119.29.4, where night equals "*hoc totum saeculum*" ["the whole of this world"], and *Serm.* 169.17 [PL 38:925].

³¹ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 1.23-25 [CSEL 68:23]. Augustine, *Hom. in Ioh.* 93.4 [PL 35:1867], uses the night to symbolize the Jews and contrasts it with the "*diem Christianorum*".

³² Leo, *Serm.* 55.5 [PL 54:325]. Cf. Zeno, *Tr.* 1.33.2 [CCSL 22:84].

³³ Paulinus, *Epp.* 23.33 and 24.8 [PL 61:279, 290], as he did the evening. The night could also be spiritually interpreted as the passion of Christ, "*quae et dies illuminavit*" ["which also illuminated the days"]. Gaudentius, *Tr.* 3.12 [CSEL 68:35], uses the evening as a symbol of the world because Christ suffered in the most recent times of his age.

Nola as symbolic evidence in support of the doctrine of Resurrection: "*Noctes atque dies, ortus obitusque vicissim / Alternant: morior nocte, resurgo die.*"³⁴ The many depictions of the present world as night which are found in the sermons could not help but imply the great dawning which was to follow, "*in mane illius futurae resurrectionis.*"³⁵ It was one of Augustine's favourite images, used as a potent reminder of what was in the present, and how things would be in the future resurrection:

*...mane cum nox huius saeculi transierit, mane quando iam latronum insidias et diaboli et angelorum eius non expauescimus, mane quando iam non ad lucernam prophetiae ambulamus, sed ipsum Dei Verbum tamquam solem contemplamur.*³⁶

The dichotomy between night and day also proved useful in teaching about the error of sin. Sometimes the imagery was very general, as, for example, it was used by Maximus of Turin: "*...cum diaboli tenebris uniuersus mundus esset oppressus, et caligo referta criminibus saeculum possideret.*" It is at this point, when the world is at its darkest, that Christ, the *sol iustitiae*, brought the world back

³⁴ Paulinus, *Carm.* 35.231ff [PL 61:681]: "Night and Day, rising and setting, succeed each other. I die at night, I rise again at day."

³⁵ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 2.19 [CSEL 68:28]: "in the morning of that future resurrection."

³⁶ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 58.2.10 [CCSL 39:752]: "...in the morning when the night of this world will have passed away; in the morning when we no longer dread the treachery of robbers and the devil and of his angels; in the morning when we no longer walk by the lamp of prophecy, but we contemplate the Word of God Himself—the sun, as it were." Cf. *Ennar. in Ps.* 54.18; 64.13 [CCSL 39:670, 834]; 129.6 [CCSL 40:1894]; *Hom. in Ioh.* 17.8 [PL 35:1532]; *Serm.* 169.17 [PL 38:925]. Mid-day was also used eschatologically. "*sed numquam est clarior lux quam medio die*" ["but never is the light more clear than at noon"], thus it was the perfect time for judgement (*Ennar. in Ps.* 36.1.7 [CCSL 38:342]). Cf., *Ennar. in Ps.* 54.18 [CCSL 39:670]: "*Finis enim in meridie est, sed unde non declinatur in occasum. In meridie enim lux excelsa est, splendor sapientiae, feruor dilectionis*" ["For the end is at noon, when [the sun] is not declined into setting. For the light is high at noon, the splendour of wisdom, the fervour of love"].

into the light.³⁷ Ambrose used night as a symbol of darkness, evil, sin, and the fall: the "*liberatio nocturna*," he believed, depended on watching carefully for the coming light.³⁸

Often, however, the imagery was more exact, with night becoming the symbol used to explain either specific sins or aspects of the human experience. Eusebius "Gallicanus" spoke of the "*infidelitatis [noctem]*" which could only be shattered by the light of faith.³⁹ Night could be used for the proud, as a symbol of the fear of the ungodly who forsake God,⁴⁰ or as a simple sign of ignorance.⁴¹ In effect, night was anything that proved a detriment to salvation: "*Iniquitas, malignitas, mendacium, homicidium, dolus, et quidquid huiusmodi est, ipsa nox est.*" It is only when these pass away that salvation can be assured, that the "*nox*" can succumb to the "*mane*".⁴²

³⁷ Maximus, *Serm.* 62.2 [CCSL 23:262]: "...when the whole world was oppressed by the darkness of the devil and the gloom brought on by sins had possessed the world." Cf., *Serm.* 29.1 [CCSL 23:112-3]. Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 77.4 [CCSL 39:1065], taught that the true Christian was day when compared to non-believers. But when compared to the virtuous angels, even Christians are night (i.e., "*Nox et dies: dies in comparatione infidelium; nox in comparatione angelorum*").

³⁸ Ambrose, *De Pat.* 5.29 [PL 14:683]. Cf. Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 41.16 [CCSL 38:472], where "*prosperitas saeculi*" is signified by day, and "*adversitas saeculi*" by night; and *Ennar. in Ps.* 64.13 [CCSL 39:834], where evening signifies the "*tribulationem saeculi*."

³⁹ Eusebius "Gallicanus" *De Nat. Dom.* II 2 [CCSL 101:23].

⁴⁰ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 118.15.7-8 [CCSL 40:1713-14].

⁴¹ Augustine, *Serm.* 93.8 [PL 38:576].

⁴² Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 5.5 [CCSL 38:21]: "Iniquity, malignity, lying, murder, guile, and all that kind of thing, are the night itself."

iii. Conclusions

The day and night were used primarily as symbols. This is particularly evident in the Church's ability to accept a civil day beginning and ending at midnight. The Church tended to differ with traditional modes of time-keeping. March or December, rather than January, were accepted as the beginning of the year. The week was to begin on Sunday and be numbered, not on Saturday and be given names attached to divinities. Where they did not differ, they were actively reinterpreted. The hours of the day became the apostles, rather than susceptible to the influences of various planets, as in astrology. The months, several of which had strong pagan associations, could also be seen as symbols of the apostles.

Midnight, however was already charged with pertinent symbolism. The dichotomy between light and darkness made it an apt means of expressing the differences between Christian and non-Christian. It also made time itself clearer by symbolically dividing it into Christian *tempora* and the time which had come before Christ, the *nox profunda*. But its most important purpose was eschatological: night and day were the prime temporal examples of the differences between time and eternity.

Technical explanations of the workings of the day and night had the same purposes we have come to expect: anti-pagan and anti-astrological polemic. Thus prepared with "correct" definitions of time-units--definitions which always

demonstrated their institution by and subjection to God--the congregant could view time as a Christian entity and see in it all the important doctrines of Christianity: eschatology, Creation, and Christ.

Literal and symbolic exegesis of time-units directed the listener ultimately to one conclusion: all time comes from God. Helping a congregant to that conclusion was a bishop's first task, one that began with the catechumenate. His second task was to show his flock what to do with that knowledge. Thus Western bishops promoted the devotion of time to Christian activities. The remainder of this thesis is concerned with the methods they used to Christianize time. Once again the sermons will be the main body of evidence, as it was normally in the sermons that bishops prescribed how much of the congregation's time was to be devoted to religion. Chapter six will examine episcopal suggestions as to daily prayer, church attendance, fasting, and the like; chapters seven and eight will investigate Christological and Non-Christological feasts respectively.

CHAPTER SIX

Tempus vitae nostrae temporum auctori

For the ante-Nicene Church, the ideal Christian was the one who gave up his time for Christ--the martyr and the confessor. In the fourth and fifth century, when persecution was generally absent, one could no longer die *for* Christ. The next best thing was to devote all one's time *to* Christ. This became the focus of asceticism in late antiquity, as we see, for example, in Martin of Tours, at the end of the fourth century: "*Numquam hora ulla momentumque praeteriit, quo non aut orationi incumberet aut insisteret lectioni.*"¹ This ideal was to become a defining characteristic of Christianity in the early Middle Ages.

Not every Christian had Martin's ascetic leanings, however. The average Christian was not able (or willing)² to devote twenty-four hours a day to Christian activities. Yet the corollary to the episcopal message "all time comes from God," was almost always the same as it was for ascetics: give the *temporem vitae nostrae* to God. Few bishops seemed fully to realize how difficult this would be for their flocks. Peter of Ravenna sensed it when he qualified his prescription: "*Demus deo aliquid temporis vitae nostrae.*"³ But even for him, "something" of life did not

¹Severus, *V.Mart.* 26 [PL 20:175]: "Neither an hour nor any moment passed in which he did not devote himself to prayer or apply himself to reading."

²For a glimpse of the reaction of the average Christian to episcopal prescriptions, see ch. 9, pp. 289ff.

³Peter, *Serm.* 21.5 [CCSL 24:126]: "Let us give to God *something* of the time of our life."

mean restricting Christian activities to Sundays and festivals. By its very nature Christianity could not be a part-time religion; it had to have a daily element. So we see Peter in the same breath command his flock not to waste the whole day, but to give, "*item pars diei et noctis ipsi temporum...auctori.*"⁴

I have borrowed Peter of Ravenna's ideal--*tempus vitae nostrae temporum auctori*--because it typifies episcopal expectations in the late antique West, which shall be the focus of this chapter. The specificity of episcopal prescriptions varies. Some simply promote frequent Christian activities such as almsgiving, fasting,⁵ and prayer, or unspecified Christian activities on a daily basis. Others are more detailed, giving the activity, how often and, at times, even when it should occur. An investigation of public and private worship is an immense task, so we shall restrict ourselves primarily to those acts of Christian piety prescribed in the sermons.⁶ The sermon, as the basic means of disseminating ideas from bishop to congregation, was the prescriptive literature *par excellence*.

⁴Peter, *Serm.* 21.5 [CCSL 24:126]: "the same part of the day and the night to the Author of time Himself." Cf. *Serm.* 44.7 [CCSL 24:250], where Peter tells his flock: "*Meditetur ergo in lege domini, et meditetur die ac nocte*" ["Therefore, let him reflect on the law of the Lord, and let him reflect by day and by night"]. O. Hardman, *A History of Christian Worship* (London, 1937), p. 27, put the matter succinctly: "From the beginning it was recognized that the Christian religion is concerned with the whole of life; and days, weeks, and years began to be marked accordingly." Cf. B. Fischer, "The Common Prayer of Congregation and Family in the Ancient Church," *Studia Liturgica* 10 (1974): 123-4; and P. Dufresne, *La Liturgie familiale. Histoire-Theologie-Pastorale* (Montreal, 1973), p. 11.

⁵Fasting in relation to the Christianization of time will be discussed in more detail in chapter seven in the section on Quadragesima. In this chapter it will only be touched on in the most general terms.

⁶Discussing private and public worship in a single chapter requires massive distillation. Christian worship has been the subject of a large number of works. Three classic studies are those of J. Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy*. Trans. F.A. Brunner (Notre Dame, 1980); G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (Westminster, 1946); and L. Duchesne, *Christian Worship: Its Origin and Evolution* (London, 1903).

i. General Prescriptions

In spite of reservations as to how much time it was physically possible to give to God,⁷ bishops consistently preached an ideal to their flocks. Peter of Ravenna's suggestion that "*item pars diei et noctis*" be given over to Christian activities is found throughout the West. Valerian of Cimiez's ideal embraced an unending singing of psalms ("*in honore nominis sui jugiter exsultare nos voluit*), as a temporal expression and imitation of the eternal joy that awaited the true Christian.⁸ Gaudentius advised his neophytes to sanctify their homes with constant prayers and frequent psalms: "*sit sermo Dei, et signum Christi in corde, in ore, in fronte, inter cibos, inter pocula, inter colloquia, in lavacris, in cubilibus, in ingressu, in egresso, in laetitia, in moerore....*"⁹ Elsewhere he expanded on this blueprint for living the true Christian life, teaching his neophytes to gather at the Church during their spare time as well: "*convenite ad ecclesiam: orationibus, hymnis, psalmis, et canticis spiritualibus nobiscum vigilanter incumbite. Haec sint otii vestri opera.*"¹⁰

⁷E.g., Augustine, *Hom. in Joh. Ep.* 8.1 [PL 35:2035]: "*Qui Deum laudat lingua, non semper potest*" ["He who praises God with his tongue, cannot always do it."]

⁸Valerian, *Hom.* 10.5 [PL 52:724-5]: "...in honour of His name He wishes us to exult perpetually" Perpetual joy on earth was perhaps used by Valerian as a symbol of the eternal joy of heaven. In any case, such unceasing joy was a duty expected of the ideal Christian: "*Haec sit exsultatio cordis nostri, ut die noctuque laetemur in Domino*" ["Let this be the exultation of our heart, that we might rejoice day and night in the Lord"].

⁹Gaudentius, *Tr.* 8.18 [PL 20:890]: "Let the word of God and the sign of Christ be in the heart, in the mouth, on the forehead when eating, drinking, talking, in the baths, in the bedroom, on entering and leaving, in joy and sorrow...."

¹⁰Gaudentius, *Tr.* 4.17 [PL 20:871]: "Gather at the church. Wait vigilantly with us in prayers, hymns, psalms and spiritual canticles. Let these be the works of your leisure."

Like Gaudentius, Ambrose of Milan prescribed an ideal regime. "*Nullum tempus vacet a pietatis officio*," especially those times when the contemplation of God tended to be at its lowest: nights and holidays.¹¹ In response to the question, how much time should we spend in prayer? Ambrose reminded his flock the Christ spent a night in prayer to show them how frequent prayer strengthened the will.¹²

Augustine, like Peter of Ravenna, was more sensitive to the abilities of his flock. Although he promoted Christian activities vigorously (e.g., almsgiving, prayer, etc, "*semper haec tenenda sunt*"),¹³ he also realized that this was not possible for the average Christian. He compromised by dividing Christian worship into both an external and an internal ideal. The tongue cannot always praise God, he once acknowledged, but the soul can: "*Alternet pro tempore sonus vocum, perpetua sit vox interiorum*."¹⁴ For Augustine, Christian activities were the externalization of this internal ideal of perpetual praise.

¹¹ Ambrose, *De Isaac* 5.38 [PL 14:541]: "Let no time be free from pious duty."

¹² Ambrose, *De Cain* 2.6.22 [PL 14:541]: "*Pernoctabat Dominus in oratione, non ut sibi prodesset, sed ut nos doceret*" ["The Lord spent a night in prayer, not to benefit Himself, but so He might teach us"].

¹³ Augustine, *Hom. in Ioh. Ep.* 8.1 [PL 35:2035-6]: "these are always to be practised." Augustine's sensitivity to his flock is noted by Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, pp. 250ff.

¹⁴ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 102.2 [CCSL 40:1451-2]: "Let the sound of our voices be according to the time; but let our interior voice be perpetual." Conversely, *Serm.* 95.2 [PL 38:581], interprets the scriptural injunction to praise God seven times a day as "all the time" (because seven is a symbol for time): "*Semper laus ejus in ore meo*" [His praise is always in my mouth]. *Ennar. in Ps.* 37.14 [CCSL 38:392], explains the scriptural command, "*Sine intermissione orantes*" ["Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17)], in more realistic terms. "*Numquid sine intermissione genu flectimus, corpus prosternimus, aut manus leuamus?*" ["Are we to be bending the knee, prostrating the body, or lifting up the hands without ceasing?"]. The true expression of unceasing prayer lies in the heart's never ending desire for God: "*Est alia interior sine intermissione oratio, quae est desiderium*" ["There is another prayer without ceasing, which is desire"]. Prudentius, *Po. Pref.* 37-38 [CCSL 126:2], began his work with the pledge of a similar ideal: "*Hymnis continet dies / nec nox ulla uacet quin dominum canat*" ["It [my soul] connects the days with hymns \ Nor is any night free from singing of the Lord"].

a) Tools of Power: Almsgiving, Fasting and Prayer

The promotion of non-liturgical Christian activities is an ever present theme in Western sermons. Almsgiving, fasting, and prayer were normally linked together as a unit: works which Christians could perform on a daily basis which would demonstrate their soul's fixation on God.¹⁵ The efficacy of these three activities was based on the relationship between baptism and sin. Those who died immediately after baptism were believed to be without sin. The longer one lived after baptism, however, the more sins one contracted. To combat this, Christian activities were prescribed to repurify the soul. Augustine used the image of a sinking ship being saved by the pump in explaining the concept to his flock: "*Non tantum autem debemus orare, sed et eleemosynam facere; quia quando sentinatur ne navis mergatur, et vocibus agitur et manibus.*"¹⁶

Some bishops prescribed such activities on a daily basis. Leo of Rome taught that "*quotidiana renovatio*" via almsgiving and prayer was the only remedy for post-baptismal sin.¹⁷ Valerian of Cimiez depicted acts of Christian piety as *medicina*. Some people, he claims, thought that giving alms once was enough. But sin was committed daily and an "*infirmetas quae in diem crescit, medicinam in diem*

¹⁵ E.g., Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 43.2 [CCSL 24:242]: "*Oratio, misericordia, ieiunium: sunt haec tria unum.... Est namque orationis anima ieiunium; ieiunii uita misericordia est*" ["Prayer, mercy, and fasting: these three are one....For fasting is the soul of prayer and mercy is the life of fasting"]. Cf. Leo, *Serm.* 12.4 [PL 54:171].

¹⁶ Augustine, *Serm.* 56.11 [PL 38:382]: "We ought not only to pray, but to do alms, because it is observed that the ship will not sink when both the voices and the hands are at work."

¹⁷ Leo, *Serm.* 44.1 [PL 54:286]: "Daily renewal".

requirit."¹⁸ Augustine turned an Epicurean adage to his advantage, Christianizing it to promote frequent Christian works: "*Jejunemus et oremus et donemus; cras enim moriemur.*"¹⁹

The supernatural power which such activities purportedly possessed rested mainly in their ability to cleanse post-baptismal sins. The special status of the neophyte--symbolized by the wearing of white robes during Easter Week--was often expressed in terms of their supernatural abilities, as we have seen. Works of piety were viewed as a means of recapturing this proximity to God: "*Haec hominem praestant angelum, homini deitatis deferunt haec honorem.*"²⁰ Thus it was claimed that the prayers and alms of living Christians could benefit those Christians who were already dead,²¹ and that those possessed by demons could sometimes be exorcised "*sola jejuniorum et orationum virtute.*"²²

In this state of transcendence, the Christian could sense God's power more

¹⁸Valerian, *Hom.* 9.2 [PL 52:720]: "a sickness which develops daily requires daily medicine." *Hom.* 19.4 [PL 52:751] notes that all the grace one acquires from years of good works perishes, "*si sub unius horae spatio...depravetur*" ["if he is deprived for the space of one hour"].

¹⁹Augustine, *Serm.* 150.7 [PL 38:812]: "Let us fast, and pray, and give, for tomorrow we shall die." Again, however, it is Augustine, *Hom. in Ioh. Ep.* 8.3 [PL 35:2037], who promotes a more realistic approach to acts of Christian piety. Works were to be accomplished, "*pro tempore, pro horis, pro diebus*" ["according to the time, according to the hours, according to the days"]. One could not always be fasting, giving alms, etc. The "*officia charitatis*" are to be exhibited "*pro tempore*;" the charity within is to have no intermission. His realism did not stop him from promoting certain daily acts of piety, however. E.g., *Serm.* 181.7-8 [PL 38:983-4]: sin is forgiven by means of daily prayer; such medicine should be applied by a daily recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

²⁰Peter, *Serm.* 43.3 [CCSL 24:243]: "These show man to be an angel; these bring man honour from God."

²¹E.g., Augustine, *Serm.* 172.2 [PL 38:936-7].

²²Leo, *Serm.* 87.3 [PL 54:439]: "solely by the power of fasts and prayers."

easily, even turn that power to his own or the community's benefit.²³ There were pressing reasons for bishops to insist on this. According to episcopal theory, the power generated by acts of piety could also be used against the enemies of this world. The theme is especially notable in the sermons of Italian bishops, who, in the fifth century, were repeatedly faced with the incursions of barbarians. Maximus of Turin taught his flock that Christ had not left Christians defenceless against worldly foes: "*Arma autem haec nostra sunt, quibus nos saluator instruxit: oratio misericordia atque ieiunium.*" Such tools were depicted as containing great power; a better defense than ramparts and arrows, even more efficacious than sending ambassadors to neighbours to seek military aid. Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving were believed to be potent acts of piety by which a frightened people could send a "*legationem ad deum*", and so gain a much more effective ally.²⁴

Peter of Ravenna placed the blame for the ravages of the barbarians squarely on the shoulders of Christians: "*Dei flagella ueniunt, sed nostrae prouocant culpa.*"²⁵ But he also taught that the Christian who undertakes acts of piety has a

²³Peter, *Serm.* 43.3 [CCSL 24:243], claimed acts of piety so impressed God that they allowed the Christian to influence events on earth: "*Haec regunt prospera, haec aduersa propellunt*" ["They govern prosperity and drive out adversity"]. Maximus, *Serm.* 81.3 [CCSL 23:333], suggested to his flock an inverse relationship between God and troubles: "*Quanto enim deo uiciniore fuerimus, tanto aduersarii nostri a nobis longius repellentur*" ["For the closer we are to God, the further our adversaries are repelled from us." According to Maximus, the most effective approach to God is to imitate God. Since God is merciful, holy and never eats, imitating Him requires fasting, prayers, and almsgiving.

²⁴Maximus, *Serm.* 83.1 [CCSL 23:339]: "These are our weapons, with which the Saviour has instructed us: prayer, mercy, and fasting." Acts of piety as weapons was a popular concept. Cf., Ambrose, *Ep.* 63.103 [PL 16:1269]: "*Bonum scutum oratio, qua...maledictum repellitur, et in ipsos qui maledixerint, frequenter retorquetur, ut suo telo vulnerentur*" ["Prayer is a good shield, by which...curses are repelled, and throws them back on the heads of those who utter them, so that they are wounded by their own weapons"]. *Ep.* 15.6 [PL 16:997], tells the story of Acholius, who defeated the enemy in Macedonia, "...*non gladiis, sed orationibus: non telis, sed meritis*" ["...not with swords but with prayers, now with weapons but with good works"]. On sending a "legation to God" via pious acts, see Maximus, *Serm.* 81.3 [CCSL 23:333].

²⁵Peter, *Serm.* 20.4 [CCSL 24:120]: "The scourges of God come, but our faults provoke them."

mighty weapon against such foes: "*afflictione ieiunii, precum gemitu, effusione fletuum iugiter clamaremus: 'Domine, salua nos, perimus'*."²⁶ For Leo of Rome, who twice faced the threat of barbarian attempts to capture Rome, obtaining God's power to thwart the enemy was of the upmost importance. He promoted the individual's good works, but favoured a more organized approach, believing that the greatest power to fight such enemies was received when good works were done in tandem with other Christians.²⁷

ii. Daily Worship: Public and Private

Thus far we have restricted our investigation to homiletic prescriptions of a more generic sort. Words such as "frequent" and "perpetual" were applied, normally without conditions as to what time units were involved. It is implied that such activities should be undertaken on a daily basis; the Christian view of time, the *tempus vitae nostrae temporum auctori*, supports that interpretation, at least as an ideal presented to a bishop's flock. Daily fasting was not possible for most, nor could everyone afford to give daily alms. Exceptions were made for these.²⁸ But prayer was a daily *medicina* that could be applied without exception, both in public

²⁶ Peter, *Serm.* 20.4 [CCSL 24:119]: "by the affliction of fasting, by the groans of prayers, and by a profusion of tears we would cry out perpetually: 'Lord save us! We are perishing!'" On the supernatural power of tears, see Maximus, *Serm.* 76.2 [CCSL 23:318].

²⁷ Leo, *Serm.* 88.1 [PL 54:441-2]: "...*potentissimus Dei populus, quando inunitatem sanctae obedientiae omnium fidelium corda conveniunt*" ["...the people of God are most powerful when the hearts of all the faithful come together in the unity of holy obedience"]. This, in part, is his reason for promoting fasts outside of Quadragesima, as discussed in chapter seven.

²⁸ Often in the form of reinterpretations. E.g., Augustine, *Serm.* 206.2 [PL 38:1041]: "*Haec duo genera eleemosynarum, tribuendi et ignoscendi*" ["There are two types of almsgiving: giving and forgiving"]. *Serm.* 205.3 [PL 38:1040] allows fasting to be interpreted as "fasting from strife." (i.e., "*a litibus et discordiis jejunate*" ["Fast from quarrels and strife"].)

and private devotions.

It is difficult to determine how often the late antique lay Christian attended church or undertook private devotions. Sidonius Apollinaris, describing the daily routine of Theodoric II, claimed that the Arian attended a pre-dawn morning service every day.²⁹ Ausonius of Bordeaux speaks of daily morning prayers in his own private chapel, while Prudentius describes an even more exacting regime in his poetry.³⁰ These individual expressions of daily piety reaffirm the conviction that Christianity was believed to require a daily commitment. Unfortunately, there are too few of them to instill any degree of confidence in generalizations as to the daily worship of the average lay Christian.

The sermons can be helpful if we turn the question around and examine it from the hierarchical side.³¹ Rather than asking how often the laity worshipped, we will consider how often bishops suggested that late antique lay Christians *should* attend church or undertake private devotions? The following chart will be useful as a reference:

²⁹ Sidonius, *Ep.* 1.2.4 [Loeb 296:336-8].

³⁰ Ausonius, *Ephem.* 2.8-21 [Loeb 96:15]; Prudentius, *Cath. passim*, is filled with prayers and hymns to be said at set hours of the day as well as at set times in the Church year.

³¹ Bradshaw's fourth principle, in P.F. Bradshaw's, "Ten Principles for Interpreting Early Christian Liturgical Evidence," in P.F. Bradshaw and L.A. Hoffman, eds., *The Making of Jewish and Christian Worship* (Notre Dame, 1991, p. 9, is relevant here: "Legislation is better evidence for what it proposes to prohibit than for what it seeks to promote." The same is true of homiletic prescriptions, as Bradshaw (p. 11), noted: "We generally cannot know whether the practises and customs that they advocated were ever adopted by their congregation, or just politely listened to and then ignored, as the pleas of preachers often are...".

TABLE 3
Daily Worship Prescribed in the Sermons

| <u>Bishop</u> | <u>See</u> | <u>Services</u> | <u>When</u> | <u>Eucharist</u> | <u>Private Worship</u> |
|---------------|------------|-----------------|-------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Ambrose | Milan | Yes | M,E | Yes | Yes |
| Augustine | Hippo | Yes | M,E | Yes | Yes |
| Chromatius | Aquilea | ? | ? | Probably | ? |
| Gaudentius | Brescia | ? | ? | Probably | ? |
| Maximus | Turin | Yes | M | No | Yes |
| Peter | Ravenna | Yes | M | Probably | Yes |
| Valerian | Cimiez | ? | ? | ? | Yes ³² |

a) Morning and Evening Services

In examining what was an acceptable daily routine for Christians, we see that public worship in the morning and evening was widely promoted in the sermons of bishops.³³ In Hippo, the morning service took place about dawn, and seemed to include a corporate recitation of the Lord's Prayer.³⁴ Augustine calls this the "*horam orationis*" on several occasions,³⁵ and promotes daily participation in this

³² A question mark (?) indicates that data is unavailable. "M" represents morning services, "E", evening services. "Probably" indicates a very strong probability (to be discussed below). The chart includes bishops whose sermons provide the most data on the Christianization of daily life. The sermons of other bishops examined in this thesis, who mentioned similar aspects of Christian worship without providing a firm time basis, have not been included.

³³ Twice daily public services, morning and evening, were probably common in the Western Church in the fourth century. Cf., Jungmann, *Christian Prayer through the Centuries*, trans. J. Coyne (New York, 1978), pp. 25-6; Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy*, p. 280; P.F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origin of Christian Worship* (New York, 1992), pp. 187-8. These two services did not originate in the Monastic Office, but monasticism was responsible for turning morning and evening private prayers into public services. See D.Y. Hadidian, "The Background and Origin of the Christian Hours of Prayer," *Theological Studies* 25 (1964): 67; Hardman, *History of Christian Worship*, p. 53. It was natural for fourth-century bishops to attempt to institutionalize hours of the day which their flocks traditionally devoted to God anyway. I believe that twice daily services were the norm throughout the West by the end of the fourth century. Chromatius of Aquilea, Valerian of Cimiez, and Gaudentius of Brescia have left no direct statements for their own sees, but as all three represent the ascetic tradition, I have no doubt that they, too, promoted daily church attendance. Maximus of Turin and Peter of Ravenna mention only morning services, but the same is probably true of them.

³⁴ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps. 38.7* [CCSL 38:408-9], places the current service during the third hour. But public worship in Hippo could be lengthy, as suggested by the length of many of the sermons. *Serm. 58.12* [PL 38:399], tells the neophytes not to worry if they cannot remember the Lord's Prayer, because they will hear it often: "*In ecclesia enim ad altare Dei quotidie dicitur ista Dominica oratio, et audiunt illum fideles.... quia et si quis vestrum non poterit tenere perfecte, audiendo quotidie tenebit*" ["For the Lord's Prayer is said daily in the Church before the Altar of God.... Even if any of you should be unable to get it perfectly, he will learn it by hearing it daily." It is obvious from this that Augustine expected his flock to attend services every day.

³⁵ E.g., Augustine, *Serm. 123.5* [PL 38:686]; *Serm. 181.6* [PL 38:981].

service as a Christian duty: "*surgit quotidie, currit ad ecclesiam Dei, orat, audit lectionem, hymnum cantat.*"³⁶ A similar routine was to be repeated in the evening.³⁷

Episcopal expectations were also high at Milan. A number of references in the surviving sermons of Ambrose show that a rather extensive daily regime was available. Ambrose told his flock on one occasion that morning was not the time for drunkenness, but the time to anticipate the dawn with prayers, hymns and psalms. Although this suggests a daily service of morning public worship (note the similarity to the contents of the morning service at Hippo), there is nothing here to distinguish it as an act of public worship over private worship.³⁸ Ambrose does clearly call upon his flock for twice-daily attendance at the church, however. "*Mane festina, et ad Ecclesiam defer primitias pii voti.*" In this case, Ambrose suggests that participation will be beneficial to one's business affairs and daily transactions.³⁹ He prescribes a similar act of corporate worship for the day's end:

³⁶ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 66.3 [CCSL 39:860]: "He rises daily, he hurries to the Church of God, he prays, he hears a reading, he sings a hymn."

³⁷ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 49.23 [CCSL 38:593]: "*Surgam quotidie, pergam ad ecclesiam, dicam unum hymnum matutinum, alium vespertinum, tertium aut quartum in domo mee*" ["I shall rise daily, I shall proceed to church, I will say one hymn at matins, another at vespers, a third or fourth in my home"].

³⁸ Ambrose, *De Helia* 15.55 [PL 14:751-2]. Cf. *Serm. Con. Aux.* 34 [PL 16:1060], which praises the congregation for its daily profession of faith in the form of a hymn on the Trinity. This versified Creed, the first mention of Ambrose's hymns, was sung "*quotidie totius populi ore*" ["daily by the mouth of the whole people"], strongly suggesting it was part of an act of daily public worship. Cf. Augustine, *Conf.* 9.7.15 [CCSL 27:142], speaks of Ambrose's institution of such hymns. Zeno, *Tr.* 1.33 [CCSL 22:84-85], speaks of Christians singing a hymn to God for "daily profit," (i.e., "*...cotidiani fructus respondent hymnum canentibus deo*"), suggesting a daily act of corporate worship. He continues, "*in huius diei luce gradientes exsultemus*" ["In the growing light of this day let us rejoice"]. But the sermon is entitled *Tractatus Diei Dominici*, and extols the virtues of Sunday. The morning service discussed here is a Sunday service and, although Zeno's praise does point to a daily service, it cannot be stated with certainty that it occurred in the morning.

³⁹ Ambrose, *Expos. Ps. CXVIII* 19.32 [PL 15:1556]: "Hasten to the church in the morning and bring the first-fruits of your prayer." Such morning services were promoted by Ambrose as a means of obtaining God's blessing for one's daily activities: "*securus procedes ad tuos actus*" ["You will proceed with safety to your activities"].

"...et ut quotidie procedentes in Ecclesiam, vel domesticis incubantes orationibus, ab ipso incipiamus, et in ipso desinamus."⁴⁰

Similar prescriptions can be found in Peter of Ravenna and Maximus of Turin, although neither of these North Italian bishops mentions an evening service. Peter of Ravenna, like Ambrose, encouraged morning worship as a panacea against both the day's troubles and the more dire troubles of the world and temporal existence:

*Sed nos, qui ad incerta consurgimus...quid est quod ecclesiam mane nolumus intrare? Quid est quod matutina prece totius diei custodiam nolumus postulare?.... Manicemus, oremus uel humano timore, si non amore diuino.... Mala tempora facit nobis contemptus dei, temporum cursus non facit.*⁴¹

Maximus had the same concerns. While away, he worried about his flock's daily attendance at church: "*Eram etenim sollicitus in dies singulos, quemadmodum*

⁴⁰ Ambrose, *De Abr.* 2.22 [PL 14:488]: "...and so that daily proceeding into the church, or addressing ourselves to private prayers, we may begin with Him and end with Him." Cf. *Hex.* 5.36 [PL 14:237], attempts to shame the flock into participating in these twice-daily services: "*Quis enim sensum hominis gerens non erubescat sine psalmoreum celebritate diem claudere, cum etiam minutissimæ aves solemnem devotione et dulci carmine ortus dierum ac noctium prosequantur?*" ["For what person of normal human sense would not blush to end the day without a ritual singing of psalms, when even the smallest bird ushers in the approach of day and of night with the solemn devotion of sweet song?"]. The third homily of the *Hexameron*, *Hex.* 2.5.22 [PL 14:168], was delivered at one of these evening services—Ambrose ends the sermon when he suddenly realizes that his flock is growing hungry and will have a difficult time finding their way home in the dark. Cf., Maximus, *Serm.* 73.2-5 [CCSL 23:305-7] for a similar use of bird imagery. Paulinus of Milan, *V. Ambr.* 13 [PS 16:52-53], reports that the chanting of the night office began in Milan at the time of the Basilica Controversy: another innovation of Ambrose. Cf. Ambrose, *Ennar. in Ps.* 19 [PL 14:968]: "*Diei ortus Psalmum resultat, Psalmum resonat occasus*" ["The dawn of day resounds with the psalms, and with the psalm re-echoes the sunset"]. *Expos. Ps. CXVIII* 8.48 [PL 15:1383-4], suggests a midday service before the Eucharist, but we cannot tell if this was a separate service. Ambrose says there are days, "*ut statim meridianis horis adveniendum sit in ecclesiam, canendi hymni, celebranda oblatio*" ["that you may come into the church precisely at noon for the singing of the hymns and the celebration of the Oblation"]. It is tempting to see these as two separate services, with a non-Eucharistic first service which was not a daily event. The daily Eucharist at Milan is discussed below, pp. 197-8.

⁴¹ Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 43.4-5 [CCSL 24:244]: "But we who arise to uncertainty...why is it that we are unwilling to enter the church in the morning? Why is it that we are unwilling to request protection for the whole day by morning prayers?...Let us come in the morning, let us pray, at least in human fear if not with divine love....Contempt of God makes evil times for us, not the cycle of time."

salubriter ualeretis, quemadmodum festinanter cotidie ad ecclesiam ueniretis."⁴²

He repeats the theme of "hastening to church" elsewhere, identifying it with the morning service on one occasion: "*Surgentes primo diluculo ad ecclesiam festinemus, referamus deo gratias....*"⁴³

Outside the sermons, the evidence suggests that daily services were widespread in the west. Paulinus of Milan reports that at Rouen under Victricius, the churches were crowded on a daily basis. Paulinus had never been to Rouen, but his poetic praise seems somewhat verified by Victricius' own reference to such daily acts of public worship.⁴⁴ Salvian of Marseilles returns to the "hastening to the church" theme: "*cur ad coelum quotidie manus tendimus...cur ad ecclesiasticas domos currimus, cur ante altaria supplicamus.*"⁴⁵ The emphasis on daily services was so great that it was legislated by canon law, as we see in the Council of Agde

⁴² Maximus, *Serm.* 19.1 [CCSL 23:71]: "For I was anxious every day whether you were in good health and whether you were hastening daily to church." Fisher, "Common Prayer," p. 110, notes the popularity of the "hastening daily to church" theme. We saw it in Ambrose, *Expos. in Ps. CXVIII* 19.32 [PL 15:1556]. Augustine used it repeatedly. E.g., *Ennar. in Ps.* 49.23 [CCSL 38:593]: "*pergam ad ecclesiam*" ["I shall proceed energetically to church]; and *Ennar. in Ps.* 66.3 [CCSL 39:860]: "*currit ad ecclesiam*" ["He hurries to church"]. *Conf.* 5.9.17 [CCSL 27:66], praises Monica for her daily church attendance: "*nullum diem praetermittentis oblationem ad altare tuum, bis die, mane et uespere, ad ecclesiam tuam sine ulla intermissione uenientis*" ["no day permitting the oblation to pass at Your altar, twice a day, morning and evening, coming to Your church without any intermission"].

⁴³ Maximus, *Serm.* 36.4: [CCSL 23:143]: "Rising at the first light of dawn, let us hasten to church, let us give back thanks to God...."

⁴⁴ Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* 18.4 [PL 61:239]. Victricius of Rouen, *De Laude Sanct.* 2 [PL 20:445]: "*Hinc presbyteri et diacones et omnis vobis quotidiano famulatu cognitus minister occurrit*" [This is why the priests, deacons, and ministers who acknowledge their daily service to you have hastened here"]. It is impossible to establish when such daily services occurred in Rouen. Victricius may be referring to a daily Eucharist: the reference is simply too opaque.

⁴⁵ Salvian, *De Gub. Dei* 1.5 [PL 53:36]: "Why do we stretch our hands to heaven daily....Why do we hasten to the churches? Why do we kneel before the altars?"

(506).⁴⁶

b) Daily Eucharist

The controversy as to the extent of daily Eucharist requires us to step outside homiletic prescriptions and take a more general look at this phenomenon. It has been argued that by the start of the fifth century, public Eucharist was celebrated daily by most of the Western clergy (e.g., R. Gryson and H. Bohmer).⁴⁷ The opposite opinion is propagated by D. Callam,⁴⁸ who feels that daily Eucharist was far from common during the period in question: Africa and the Italian sees influenced by Ambrose probably did have a daily Eucharist; "But Rome (ever suspicious of novelty), Gaul, and perhaps Spain did not adopt the practice for several centuries."⁴⁹

Callam's argument is successful to a point. Eucharist was certainly not a

⁴⁶ Council of Agde, Canon 30 [CCSL 148:208]: "*et hymnos matutinos uel uespertinos diebus omnibus decantari*" ["...and morning and evening hymns are to be sung on every day"]. Another Gallic example from about the same period can be found in Caesarius of Arles, *Serm.* 196.2 [CCSL 103:792]. Cf. Fischer, "Common Prayer," p. 111. Nicetas of Remesiana, *De Vig.* 2 [PL 68:367], promoted frequent vigils. Those who are too weak are allowed to restrict this to twice weekly: "*Nec sane onerosum vel difficile videri debet etiam delicatis vel infirmis corporibus in septimana duarum noctium, id est, sabbati atque dominicae, portionem aliquam Dei ministerio deputare*" ["It ought not to seem onerous or difficult, even for those with delicate or infirm bodies, to give a portion of two nights of the week, that is, Saturday and Sunday, to the service of God"]. This suggests that Nicetas preferred nightly vigils or, at least, nightly worship of God, whether private or public.

⁴⁷ R. Gryson, *Les origines du celibat ecclesiastique du premier au septieme siecle* (Gembloux, 1970). H. Bohmer, "Die Entstehung des Zolbates," *Geschichtliche Studien Albert Hauck zum 70. Geburtstage* (Leipzig, 1916), p. 11, argued that from c. 200 on, the Eucharist was celebrated daily.

⁴⁸ D. Callam, "The Frequency of Mass in the Latin Church ca. 400," *Theological Studies* 45 (1984): 613-650. A.J. MacLean, *Recent Discoveries Illustrating Early Christian Life and Worship* (London, 1904), argued along much the same lines. He claimed (p. 87) that "the Eucharist was not celebrated daily in the third and fourth centuries," (and that, in fact, there were no regular public services during this period). Later (p. 128), he concedes that daily Eucharist was not the custom until "the very end of the [fourth century]."

⁴⁹ Callam, "Frequency of Mass," p. 650. Actually, Maximus of Turin, *Serm.* 23.1 [CCSL 23:91], directed his flock to partake of the Eucharist on the "*sacramentorum die*" (Sunday), suggesting he followed the older Roman custom of once-weekly Eucharist. Even with the influence of Ambrose, Maximus did not change this custom. It is a good reminder that the liturgy was still very much in the hands of the local bishop.

daily event in every see, as Augustine once told his flock: "*Hujus rei Sacramentum, id est, unitatis corporis et sanguinis Christi alicubi quotidie, alicubi certis intervallis dierum in dominica mensa praeparatur.*"⁵⁰ However much of the evidence concerning daily Eucharist is very subjective, based on brief references that are sometimes highly symbolic.⁵¹ For example, Callam interprets Siricius of Rome's (384-99) remarks, "*ministerii quotidianis necessitatibus occupantur...aut sacrificium offerat, aut baptizare cogatur,*" as implying that the Mass was not celebrated every day.⁵² But this interpretation does not fit with a letter to Himerius of Tarragona, in which Siricius says, "*per omnia Deo nostro in his, quae quotidie offerimus, sacrificiis placeamus.*"⁵³ In this case, Callam suggests that "*quotidie*" did not have to mean "each and every day," but could mean "frequent," "continual,"

⁵⁰ Augustine, *Hom. in Ioh.* 26.15 [PL 35:1614]: "The sacrament of this thing, that is, of the unity of the body and blood of Christ, in some places daily, in other places at certain intervals of days, is provided on the Lord's Table." Cf., *Ep.* 54.2 [CSEL 34:160].

⁵¹ Even for Rome, where we can be fairly certain that daily Eucharist was not the norm, the evidence is somewhat contradictory. Jerome, *Ep.* 71.6 [CSEL 55:6-7], mentions the daily reception of the Eucharist in Rome and Spain: "*De sabbato quod quaeris, utrum ieiunandum sit, et de eucharistia, an accipienda cotidie, quod Romana ecclesia et Hispaniae observare perhibentur...*" [Concerning the Sabbath which you inquire whether it should be kept as a fast day or, concerning the daily reception of the Eucharist, which it is asserted that the Roman Church and Spain observe...]. At *Ep.* 21.28-27 [CSEL 54:129] he claims that Romans daily partook of the blood and body of Christ: "*hoc convivium cotidie celebratur, cotidie pater filium recipit: semper Christus credentibus immolatur*" ["This banquet is celebrated daily, daily the father promises the son: Christ is always sacrificed for believers"]. Callam sees these remarks as evidence for the continuation of private reception of Communion, rather than a daily public Mass, which seems doubtful when Jerome clearly refers to the "*Romana ecclesia*." Conversely, Ambrosiaster, *Ad Tim.* 1.3.13.3 [CSEL 81, pt. 3:269], writing in Rome c. 380 seems to support Callam's contention. He differs from Jerome by remarking that public daily Eucharist occurred only once a week at Rome. Innocent I, *Ep.* 25.7 [PL 20:556], at the beginning of the fifth century, expressly states that no sacraments were to be celebrated on the weekly fast days, supported by the comments about Roman public worship found in Socrates, *H.E.* 5.22 [PG 67:636] and Sozomen, *H.E.* 7.19 [P.G. 67:1477].

⁵² Callam, "Frequency of Mass," pp. 634-5. Siricius, *Ep.* 5.3 [PL 13:1160]: "...ministers are occupied by daily necessities...either he offers the Sacrifice or he is obliged to baptize." But Siricius might just as easily have been commenting on how busy clerics were, and that their duties included the Eucharist and baptism *each and every day*. Baptism was normally restricted to set times of the year (Easter and Pentecost), but it could be given at any time if necessity dictated. For that matter, the Eucharist was a part of the baptismal rite: the first chance for the neophyte to partake of the most important of Christian sacraments.

⁵³ Siricius, *Ep.* 1.7.10 [PL 13:1139]: "In all things let us be pleasing to our God in these sacrifices which we offer daily."

"everyday" (i.e., commonplace), or "weekday."⁵⁴

Is it not possible that Siricius was, in fact, a proponent of daily Eucharist? Callam argues he was not, partly on the grounds of his position between Ambrosiaster's remarks (c. 380) that Rome did not celebrate the Eucharist daily, and Innocent I's (401-416) orders that the "*sacramenta...non celebrari*" on fast days.⁵⁵ One of Callam's main arguments against a widespread daily Eucharist is that clerical celibacy was not yet common amongst the regular clergy.⁵⁶ But Siricius was a great proponent of the continence of the major orders, and he may have been so for the simple fact that he also believed in celebrating the Eucharist daily, as his decretals seem to imply. Seen in this light, Innocent I's orders against daily Eucharist may have been an attempt to re-establish a tradition that had fallen out of use during the reign of a recent predecessor.⁵⁷

The evidence seems to suggest that Siricius *was* prescribing daily Eucharist to his Spanish correspondent. This is supported by Canon 5 of the First Council of Toledo (400), which prescribes the defrocking of any cleric who does not attend

⁵⁴ Callam, "Frequency of Mass," p. 635. Callam's etymological argument is based on an examination of "cottidie," "cottidianum," in the *TLL* 4 (Leipzig, 1900-), 1089-91.

⁵⁵ Innocent I, *Ep.* 25.7 [*PL* 20:556]: "sacraments...are not to be celebrated." Cf. C. Pietri, "Le temps de la semaine," p. 71.

⁵⁶ Callam, "Frequency of Mass," p. 613.

⁵⁷ Innocent takes great pains to explain that the fasts on Friday and Saturday are apostolic as an explanation for not celebrating the Eucharist on those two days. He seems to be arguing his own position rather than just re-iterating an already established custom.

church for the daily sacrifice.⁵⁸ Of course, the evidence does not allow one to claim that daily Eucharist was common in Spain at the start of the fifth century, but it does imply that the hierarchy was attempting to make it so.

A similar change may have occurred at Aquileia. Chromatius (388-c. 408) seems to have been a proponent of daily Eucharist. He interprets "*panem nostrum cotidianum*" of the Lord's Prayer in this manner.⁵⁹ Elsewhere he comments that his people "*cotidie...caelesti cibo pascuntur.*"⁶⁰ And yet, a nearly contemporaneous lectionary list from Aquileia indicates that daily Communion was not the custom at Aquileia.⁶¹ Thus, for Aquileia, as for Rome between Damasus and Innocent I, the evidence as to the frequency of the Eucharist seems to be contradictory.

Callam points out quite correctly that daily Eucharist was probably the norm in sees whose bishops had ascetic leanings.⁶² Chromatius of Aquileia certainly was that kind of a bishop, and it may be that he established daily Eucharist during his episcopacy. The end of Chromatius' reign was troubled. He and his people were

⁵⁸ Mansi 3:999. Callam, "Frequency of Mass," p. 637, cites this canon as a possible example of *quotidianus* meaning "frequently" or "usually" rather than daily. Again, the interpretation certainly goes both ways.

⁵⁹ Chromatius, *Tr. In Evang. Matt.* 14.5.3-4 [CCSL 9:432-3].

⁶⁰ Chromatius, *Serm.* 32.3 [CCSL 9A:352]: "daily...are nourished by the food of heaven". Callam, "Frequency of Mass," p. 646 points out that this may be an indication that the Mass was celebrated daily at Aquileia only during the Christmas season.

⁶¹ Morin, "L'Anée liturgique a Aquilée." *Revue Benedictine* 19 (1902): 4. Callam, "Frequency of Mass," p. 646.

⁶² Callam, "The Frequency of Mass," p. 650, argues that daily Eucharist originated in the early-Church custom of private Communion in the home. He connects the emergence of a daily, public Eucharist to monasticism. In places where the bishop tended towards asceticism (Callam lists Ambrose of Milan, Eusebius of Vercelli, Martin of Tours, Chromatius of Aquileia, Paulinus of Nola, and Augustine of Hippo), "the ceremonies of daily Communion would have tended quite naturally towards a full celebration of the Eucharist." The continuation of private reservation of the elements is also pointed out by MacLean, *Recent Discoveries*, p. 36.

forced to flee their city on account of a barbarian attack. When Chromatius died as a result, daily Eucharist may have fallen out of use, and his successor may simply not have attempted to re-introduce it, preferring to return to the older custom of less frequent Eucharist (as Innocent I appears to have done at Rome).

This hypothesis is consistent with something we already know about the liturgy of the Latin church in the fourth and fifth century. Without the benefit of a central, legislative power (Rome did not have that power yet), bishops were more or less in control of their see's liturgy. Changes in public and private worship were not necessarily linear. There is nothing to say, for example, that the Eucharist moved from point A--not being celebrated daily--to point B--universally being made available on a daily basis.⁶³ Thus at Rome and Aquileia, the Eucharist may have become a daily occurrence, only to revert back to a less frequent celebration after Siricius and Chromatius had died. Such non-linear progressions may have been more indicative of the West than the surviving evidence suggests, especially at a time when public and private worship was controlled by the predilection of individual bishops.

We may now return to a more precise examination of the evidence for daily Eucharist in the homilies. In light of one idea that was prevalent in late antiquity--the *tempus vitae nostrae temporum auctori*--I tend to interpret *cottidianus* in a

⁶³ Note that, as with other aspects of public and private worship, the availability of daily Eucharist would not mean that congregations communicated daily. It would again be a matter of ideal versus reality. Bishops in sees where the Eucharist was offered daily may have prescribed daily communication, but their flocks were probably not as amenable to the idea.

much narrower sense than Callam when it is used in the context of worship. We should not interpret *cottidianus* as meaning "each and every day" in sees where the mass of evidence happens to support daily Communion, while in other sees, where evidence is paltry, interpreting a similar reference as possibly meaning "frequent". Peter of Ravenna taught his catechumens that Christ was the Bread, "*in ecclesiis conditus, inlatus altaribus caelestem cibum cotidie fidelibus subministrat.*"⁶⁴

Gaudentius of Brescia's message to his neophytes was similar:

*...ut indesinenter ista vitae aeternae mysteria exercerent, quae necesse est a cunctis sacerdotibus per singulas totius orbis Ecclesias celebrari, usquequo iterum Christus de coelis adveniat, quo et ipsi sacerdotes, et omnes pariter fidelium populi, exemplar Passionis Christi ante oculos habentes quotidie, et gerentes in manibus.*⁶⁵

Neither Peter nor Gaudentius appear to mean that the Eucharist was available "frequently" in their sees; both men taught that the *medicina* of the sacrament was available each and every day. The percentage of their flocks which took advantage of such *medicina* on a daily basis cannot, of course, be known.

In Africa, Augustine, as a proponent of daily Eucharist, stands firmly in the African tradition. Cyprian of Carthage mentions daily Eucharist in the 250s and it is possible that such remained the African custom.⁶⁶ Augustine makes numerous

⁶⁴Peter, *Serm.* 67.7 [CCSL 24A:405]: "put in the churches, placed on the altars, who daily supplies the heavenly food for the faithful."

⁶⁵Gaudentius, *Tr.* 2.31 [PL 20:865]: "...that they perform unceasingly these mysteries of eternal life, which are necessarily celebrated by every priest in every single church in the world, until Christ comes again from heaven. In this way the priests and all the faithful people have daily before their eyes and hold in their hands the example of the passion of Christ."

⁶⁶Callam, "Frequency of Mass," p. 647.

references to daily Eucharist, both in Hippo and in other African sees.⁶⁷ Other evidence for the widespread presence of daily Eucharist in Africa comes from Augustine's *Confessiones*, where he comments that Monica communicated every day of her life.⁶⁸ Callam points out that such an unqualified statement would mean that Monica communicated wherever she was, including Cassiciacum and Milan, not just Africa.⁶⁹ Monica's devout habits therefore provide additional evidence for the possibility of daily Eucharist in Rome during the episcopacy of Siricius. Augustine and Monica's lengthy stay in Rome in 388, while waiting for a ship to take them back to Africa, occurred four years into Siricius' reign. If Augustine's statement that Monica communicated every day is to be believed, it means that she did so in Rome, as well.

According to Callam, "No statement by Ambrose that Mass was celebrated daily in Milan is altogether unambiguous." He accepts, however, that daily Mass was the norm in Milan during the episcopacy of Ambrose, due to the "cumulative effect of many references to daily Mass."⁷⁰ There are certainly a great many references to the Eucharist in Ambrose. One such "ambiguous" reference can be

⁶⁷ Callam, "Frequency of Mass," p. 647, n. 123, argues that the reference to daily Eucharist in Augustine, *Serm.* 227 [PL 38:1083-4] (and *Serms.* 56-59 [PL 38:377-402]) refers only to daily Mass during the Easter season. I disagree: in *Serm.* 227, Augustine is addressing his neophytes who had just communicated for the first time. Augustine is issuing a prescription for life, not just for the Easter season. Cf., *Serm.* 132.1 [PL 38:734-5], and 57.7 [PL 38:389], where Augustine, like Peter of Ravenna later, interprets the daily bread of the Lord's Prayer ("*panis noster quotidianus*") as daily Eucharist.

⁶⁸ Augustine, *Conf.* 5.9.17 [CCSL 27:66]. See n. 42.

⁶⁹ Callam, "Frequency of Mass," p. 643.

⁷⁰ Callam, "Frequency of Mass," p. 649.

found in his *De Sacramentis*:

*Si quotidianus est panis, cur post annum illum sumis, quaemadmodum Graeci in Oriente facere consuerunt. Accipe quotidie, quod quotidie tibi prosit.... Qui vulnus habet, medicinam requirit...medicina est coeleste et venerabile sacramentum.*⁷¹

Once again, the audience for such comments is the neophyte. It might be wiser to take Ambrose's remarks as a blueprint for Christian life.⁷²

It is impossible to tell how widespread daily Eucharist was during this period. Certainly Africa and Italy (excluding Rome for the most part) tended towards daily Eucharist. Callam is correct in his assertion that this was not the habit in Gaul, at least the paucity of sources supports that supposition.⁷³ But the legislation of the Council of Toledo does seem to indicate that attempts were either being made to establish daily Eucharist in Spain, or clerics were failing to live up to a duty already common and were thus being threatened with punishment. It is interesting to note that much of the evidence in favour of daily Eucharist comes from addresses to catechumens or neophytes. This is true in the case of Augustine of Hippo, Ambrose of Milan, Peter of Ravenna, and Gaudentius of Brescia. We must conclude that

⁷¹ Ambrose, *De Sacr.* 5.4.25 [PL 16:471-2]: "If it is daily bread, why do you take it once a year as the Greeks in the East are accustomed to do? Take daily what is to profit daily.... He who has a wound requires medicine...the medicine is the heavenly and venerable sacrament."

⁷² Examples of other references to daily Eucharist at Milan can be found in *De Pat.* 9.38 [PL 14:719], and *Ep.* 20.15 [PL 14:1040].

⁷³ Callam, "Frequency of Mass," p. 648. Cassian refers both to daily Eucharist, *Instit.* 6.6 [CSEL 17:120]; *Concl.* 7.30; 9.21; 14.8 [CSEL 13:208, 269, 405]; and weekly Eucharist, *Instit.* 3.2 [CSEL 17:34]; *Concl.* 23.21 [CSEL 13:670-71], but he must be talking about monks. Callam suggests this incongruity may be interpreted as a community Mass on Sundays combined with a private reception of Communion on other weekdays.

references to daily Eucharist in such a context were designed as prescriptions for living the ideal Christian life each and every day.

c) Private Prayer and Praise

Prescriptions for prayer and worship in the home are well represented in the homiletic literature. Maximus of Turin wished his flock to partake daily of prayers and psalms in honour of God in the home. He prescribes a prayer of thanksgiving after eating; he also calls for prayers upon rising, in the evening, "*et si es deuotior, imitare lusciniam, cui quoniam ad dicendas laudes dies sola non sufficit, nocturna spatia peruigili cantilena decurrit.*"⁷⁴ For Maximus the purpose of these dedications is to bind the day and the night together with praises. To be a total Christian, one, ideally, had to think of little else but Christ.

Ambrose of Milan prescribes a similar regimen. He suggests prayers on rising and at sunset,⁷⁵ and also at midday, at midnight, and during the night.⁷⁶ Daily prayer at Hippo was supposed to include repeating the Creed upon rising and going to bed,⁷⁷ a daily recitation of the Lord's Prayer, and other private prayers and

⁷⁴ Maximus, *Serm.* 72.3 [CCSL 23:302]; *Serm.* 73.2 [CCSL 23:305]; *Serm.* 73.5 [CCSL 23:307]: "...and if you are more devout, imitate the nightingale which, since the day alone does not suffice it for praise, runs through the night hours with wakeful song."

⁷⁵ Ambrose, *In Ps. I. Enarr.* 9 [PL 14:924-925].

⁷⁶ Ambrose, *In Ps. Cxviii Exp.* 8.48-54 [PL 15:1314-1317]. Suggesting to one's flock that they rise and pray in the night was popular. Cf. Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 24.4 [CCSL 24.142-3], who divides the night into three watches. Nicetas of Remesiana, *De Vig.* 3 [PL 68:367-8], suggests rising at midnight to praise God, and prayers throughout the night.

⁷⁷ Augustine, *Serm.* 58.13 [PL 38:399]; *De Symb. ad Cat.* 1.1 [PL 40:627].

hymns.⁷⁸ Finally, at Cimiez, Valerian prescribed that his flock daily give thanks to God: "*Christo nostro quotidie gratiarum hostias immolemus.*"⁷⁹

iii. Conclusions

This brief look at the daily life of a late antique Christian should provide the reader with some indication as to the high expectations of the episcopal hierarchy when it came to the devotion of mundane time to God. To begin the day with public and private worship, as so many bishops insisted, was to turn each day into a Christian day, just as beginning the week with Sunday worship, or beginning the year with Easter or the Feast of the Nativity, was understood to sanctify those time-units. Even in the controversy over daily Eucharist we should remember that the continuation of private reservation of the elements during this period⁸⁰ certainly made the Eucharist *available* to the laity on a daily basis, even if the Eucharist was not celebrated daily in every church. The more pious of the laity would certainly have taken advantage of this.

As argued above, *cottidianus* in the context of worship must mean daily when it appears in episcopal prescriptions. The evidence overwhelmingly supports

⁷⁸ Augustine, *Serm.* 213.8 [PL 38:1070]; *Serm.* 110.5 [PL 38:641]; *Ennar. in Ps.* 49.23 [CCSL 38:593], refers to attending church twice-daily and saying other prayers in the home. See above, n. 37.

⁷⁹ Valerian, *Hom.* 3.3 [PL 52:702]: "Let us daily give a sacrifice of thanks to our Christ." Also *Hom.* 3.4 [PL 52:701]: "*Ut auctori tuo oris munuscula quotidie laetus exhibeas*" ["That you may joyfully offer daily to your Creator little presents from your tongue"].

⁸⁰ See above, n. 62.

that, but more so the prevalent idea, the *tempus vitae nostrae temporum auctori*, demanded it:

*Mens igitur nostra cum ipso semper sit: ab ejus templo, ab ejus verbo numquam recedat. Semper in lectione Scripturarum sit, meditationibus, orationibus; ut sermo ejus qui est, semper operetur in nobis, et ut quotidie procedentes in Ecclesiam, vel domesticis incubantes orationibus, ab ipso incipiamus et in ipso desinamus.*⁸¹

The Church located Christ both inside and outside of time. It promised Christians the ability to live in eternity in this world, but only if they followed a strict regimen of fasting, almsgiving, vigils, prayer, daily attendance at Church, and the celebration of the martyrs and of Christological feasts.⁸² Such Christian activities were promoted as the *medicina* of salvation, absolutely necessary when sin dragged one back into the mundane on a daily basis. This is the reason why bishops so consistently prescribed an ideal--the *tempus nostrae vitae temporum auctori*--to their congregations. Spending one's time in the pursuit of Christian activities was understood to turn time itself to one's advantage: time became a tool by which eternity could be achieved. And such an ideal was taught at a very early stage in Christian life, as attested by the presence of prescriptions for daily life in so many sermons addressed to catechumens and neophytes.

Episcopal expectations had much in common with the regimens of ascetics

⁸¹ Ambrose, *De Abr.* 2.2 [PL 14.464-465]: "Let our minds always be with Him; let it never depart from His temple, from His word. Let it always be reading Scripture, in meditations, in prayers, so that the Word of God may always work in us, and that, daily proceeding into the church, or addressing ourselves to private prayers, we may begin with Him and end with Him."

⁸² An examination of Christological and non-Christological feasts will be the subject of the next two chapters.

in the following centuries: set hours of prayer; frequent fasting and almsgiving; psalm-singing and scripture-reading. It is easy to forget that these messages were not being delivered to monks, but rather to congregations filled with laity from all walks of life, and all levels of society. The ascetic establishments which were to be the hallmark of medieval society were only embryonic in late antiquity. Benedictine monasticism was still some twenty-five years away when the period of this study ends in 505. The small groups of *servi dei* which gathered around men like Paulinus of Nola and at Lerins in Gaul rarely had the rigid structure and set rules which were soon to follow. They did have, however, one, basic rule: *tempus nostrae vitae temporum auctori*.

Paulinus of Nola reminds us of the depth of the commitment to the Church expected in late antiquity. He could not comprehend Ausonius' casual attitude to Christianity. For Paulinus it was all or nothing--more accurately, always, not sometimes. This was the same thing that bishops prescribed to the laity under their care. We cannot help but suspect that Ausonius was more representative of the late antique Christian than Paulinus, but we should not pass off episcopal prescriptions as mere rhetoric, either. The laity demonstrates time and time again that its interest in traditional religion and superstition was only dampened by the profession of Christianity, not terminated. In such a milieu, bishops attempted to counter by telling them to devote all their time to God. Rhetoric was a useful tool towards this

end, but the episcopacy took the ideal very seriously. They wanted all their congregants to embrace the ideal. We suspect they were probably pleased if they helped their flocks reach some more acceptable middle ground.

Some did recognize the inability of the average Christian to dedicate *all* his time to God. Augustine addressed this in his division of Christian worship into external and internal expressions, of which only the latter could be truly unending. But the ideal, to spend as much of one's life as possible in the worship of God, was never lost. It became, in part, the impetus for the increase in the number of Christological and Non-Christological feasts which characterizes the fourth and fifth centuries.⁸³

⁸³ H. Davies, *Christian Worship. Its History and Meaning* (New York, 1957), p. 39: "The whole Christian year is an attempt, and a successful one, to relate the wide sweep of the Incarnation to the day-to-day life of the individual believer."

CHAPTER SEVEN

Heaven, Earth, and Time, I: Christological Feasts in Late Antiquity

*Reparatur enim nobis salutis nostrae annua revolutione sacramentum,
ab initio promissum, in fine redditum, sine fine mansurum.*¹

Modern sociological theory tells us that the significance of the festival resides in the times chosen to celebrate, not just what is being celebrated. A festival is an expression of the participant's understanding of the world, "the way in which they feel they belong to society and to history."² In the late antique Christian *Weltanschauung*, the feast was believed to give the participant an active role in God's plan for history. It amalgamated mundane time and eternity into a single commemorative event.³ One could remember--for some even relive--an important past event, while at the same time taste eternity in both the joy of the festival present, and the symbolic link to the festival eternal. This chapter will investigate both the idea of the feast, and the devotion of the year to Christ by means of festivals commemorating various aspects of His life.

¹Leo of Rome, *Serm.* 22.1 [PL 54:193]: "The return of the year brings back to us the mystery of our salvation, promised from the beginning of time, given until the end of time, to continue without end."

²D. Power, ed., *The Times of Celebration*, (New York, 1981), p. vii.

³As opposed to G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, (Westminster, 1946), p. 369: "...time and earthly history, not eternity, have become the primary interest of the calendar."

i. The Role of Feasts in Late Antique Christianity

The reasons why late antique bishops deemed it necessary to explain the purpose of feasts to their flocks have both Christian and non-Christian roots. Feasts were a blatant contravention of Paul's order not to honour days and seasons (Gal. 1:9-10).⁴ This could be a source of embarrassment in a period when festivals were on the increase, especially when misinterpretation of the feast's intent opened up the Church to charges of judaizing and paganism.⁵ As neophytes entered the Church, they brought with them an understanding of festivals that had originated in a non-Christian milieu. This mindset compounded the problem.

The anti-pagan element of the Christian feast took on a number of forms. Augustine and Maximus of Turin urged their flocks to avoid pagan celebrations at all costs. On a pagan feast day it was advantageous to attend church and to fast, which, it was believed, would alleviate the negative influence that such celebrations incurred. For Augustine, fasting on pagan holidays was a means of expressing sorrow in the midst of pagan rejoicing, thus restoring the balance.⁶ Maximus is more adamant--participating in the kalends of January festivities polluted the soul,

⁴ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 1.17 [PL 20:850], told his neophytes of Paul's command, but stressed that there are moments of the year that God does wish us to remember. E.g., Exod. 12.2, "This month shall be the first of the months for you..." is used by Gaudentius as proof of the validity of Christian festivals, as opposed to those observed by Jews and pagans. Zeno of Verona, *Tr.* 1.46A.1 [CCSL 20:119]: Jewish festivals as an "*abominatio...apud deum*" ["abomination before God"].

⁵ Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, 8.27 [Loeb: 413:138-145], answered such charges by pointing out the difference between pagan cults and the veneration of martyrs.

⁶ Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 98.5 [CCSL 39:1382]. Cf. *Ennar. in Ps.* 40.3 [CCSL 38:450], where "*mali christiani*" claim that observing times and days are necessary in the present world. Augustine remarks, "*christiani autem sumus propter vitam aeternam*" ["we, however, are Christians for the sake of eternal life"].

making it unworthy of celebrating a Christian festival (in this case, Epiphany). Even non-participation without church attendance and fasting is deemed insufficient.⁷ Stains of this sort need active participation if one is to be worthy of a Christian feast.

The Church was quick to ascribe pagan feasts to mere human origins,⁸ and thus dismiss them out of hand as of no value. Conversely, a Christian feast was usually linked to supernatural origins. This was especially evident in the Christological feasts that flourished in the fourth and fifth centuries.⁹ Even the choice of which events of Christ's life were to be celebrated was significant. To celebrate *everything* that Christ accomplished was impossible, according to Leo of Rome: "*omnia tempora continuatis erunt deputanda festis, quia omnia sunt plena miraculis.*" Thus, the Church had chosen only the most important events of Christ's life for commemoration (i.e., Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost). All these events had one, common theme: the manifestation of Christ as God in time.¹⁰

Therein lay the main difference between pagan and Christian feasts as

⁷ Maximus, *Serm.* 63.2 [CCSL 23:266-7].

⁸ E.g., Gaudentius, *Tr.* 4.14-15 [PL 20:870-1], taught that all pagan feasts originated in the cult of the dead. Over time, the origins were forgotten and the subjects of the feasts were divinized. Cf. Prudentius, *Con. Sym.* 1.145-58 [CCSL 126:191]. Augustine discusses the origins of pagan festivals at length in his *De Civitate Dei*.

⁹ But, as it is Christ who gives the martyrs their power, his entry into time effects non-Christological feasts as well.

¹⁰ Leo, *Ep.* 16.2 [PL 54:698]: "the entire time of His life would have to be considered a continuous series of festivals, since the entire time was filled with the miraculous." See T.K. Carroll and T. Halton, *Liturgical Practice in the Fathers*, vol. 21, MFC (Wilmington, 1988), p. 315, for Leo's theory that time was a "sacramental representation of biblical history."

understood by late antique Christians. Pagan feasts were deemed ineffective because of their human origins. They were also believed to have a negative effect on time: time devoted to them was detrimental to the soul. Christian festivals were understood to do the opposite. They imbued their days with a certain holiness, even power, that no pagan feast could equal.

The theme of the supernatural power of Christian feasts was expressed in a variety of ways. Sometimes the effects were understood to be very subtle. The feast could keep Christians awake during a long vigil; for non-Christians it was a source of pain and fear.¹¹ Chromatius of Aquileia, in describing the Easter vigil, speaks of Jews and pagans being conquered by an "*occulta quadam gratia ac uirtute nominis Christi*," causing them to experience a residual joy, even though they are not believers.¹² At other times the effects were expressed in more cosmic terms. Nature itself could respond to a Christian feast, as Maximus of Turin contended. The sun could be unusually brighter on Easter;¹³ the air was healthier, the earth more fertile.¹⁴ Even the brevity of the days before the winter solstice was believed to be more than just a natural occurrence; it was a sign of the imminence

¹¹ Augustine, *Serm.* 219.1 [PL 38:1088].

¹² Chromatius, *Serm.* 16.3 [CCSL 9A:74]: "certain hidden grace, and the virtue of the name of Christ."

¹³ Maximus, *Serm.* 53.3 [CCSL 23:215]: "*Nam et solem ipsum arbitror esse in hac die solito clariorem*" ["For the sun itself seems to be unusually brighter on this day"].

¹⁴ Maximus, *Serm.* 58.1 [CCSL 23:224]. In fact, the effect of festivals on nature was not restricted only to Christological feasts. Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* 14.100ff [PL 61:467], uses similar imagery of Felix, aided by the saint's feast day's proximity to the solstice (January 14th).

of Christ's Nativity, and proof that Christ was born on 25 December: "*Igitur quia natalem domini etiam mundo indicante cognoscimus.*"¹⁵

Modern historians have theorized that the origins of feasts such as Christmas and Epiphany reside in pagan celebrations of the solstice.¹⁶ While this may be true, we must recognize that ancient Christians gave this correlation an entirely different emphasis. From the beginning of the catechumenate a Christian was taught that Christ was the Creator, that the sun and moon, which He had set in the sky, continued to serve him.¹⁷ In accordance with this belief it was the feast that was given precedence, rather than the celestial phenomena which occurred around it. In other words, the solstice occurred on 25 December (by traditional Roman reckoning) *because* it was the day Christ had chosen for his birth, *before* there was any such thing as a solstice. The feasts which celebrated His life were believed to pre-exist the sun and the moon as well; just as they will exist in eternity when the sun and moon are no more, and the feast will be perpetual: "*Sed hic dies quem fecit dominus penetrat omnia universa continet caelum terram tartarumque*

¹⁵ Maximus, *Serm.* 61A.1 [CCSL 23:249]: "Therefore, we know the birthday of the Lord because even the world points to it."

¹⁶ See, for example, Carroll and Halton, *Liturgical Practice*, p. 172, for a discussion of the origins of Epiphany in relation to the solstice.

¹⁷ For example, Maximus, *Serm.* 62.1 [CCSL 23:261], calls upon the darkening of the sun at Christ's crucifixion, upon the star which "*per diem alieni temporis officium ministravit*" ["performed a duty through the day at an alien time"], as proof of Christ's control over the regulating forces of time.

complecitur."¹⁸

This link between feast and Christ, forged at time's beginning, to continue until time's end, was responsible for the power which the Christian feast was believed to contain, just as Christ's role as Creator was seen as proof that any pagan festivity based on celestial phenomena was powerless. The Christ-feast could thus go beyond simply commemorating an event: it could be and was depicted as a reoccurrence. That is, the event celebrated was often understood to be happening again, *in the present festival*. Chromatius depicts the Ascension as occurring on the day that the festival was celebrated.¹⁹ Leo of Rome actually prefers his flock to view Easter as a present event: "*ut Pascha Domini non tam praeteritum recoli quam praesens debeat honorari.*"²⁰ Maximus of Turin sees Christ's historical actions present in each Easter solemnity: "*Nam in hac die per resurrectionem Christi aperitur tartarum.*" The very elements rejoice in Christ's resurrection, the reason why Maximus claims that the sun is shining brighter on that day.²¹

¹⁸ Maximus, *Serm.* 53.2 [CCSL 23:214]: "But this day, which the Lord has made, penetrates all things, contains all things, and encompasses Heaven, earth, and Hell." Gaudentius, *Tr.* 5.10 [PL 20:874] also equates eternity and festival; Augustine, *Serm.* 188.2 [PL 38:1004], taught that festivals would not exist in eternity because they were based on days set apart for solemn celebration and, in eternity, there is only one day. Of course, that day will be an eternal festival, *Ennar. in Ps.* 41.9 [CCSL 38:467]. Chromatius, *Serm.* 16.2 [CCSL 9A:73], sees the Easter vigil as an image of eternity when he proclaims that all creatures honour it: "*Haec ergo uigilia non solum hominum et angelorum festiuitas est, sed et Patris et Filii ac Spiritus sancti*" ["This vigil, therefore, is not only a festival of men and the angels, but also for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost"]. We shall return to the theme of Christological feast and celestial phenomena in our investigation of Christmas, Epiphany, and Easter, below.

¹⁹ Chromatius, *Serm.* 8.2 [CCSL 9A:33-4].

²⁰ Leo, *Serm.* 64.1 [PL 54:358]: "the Pasch of the Lord ought to be honoured as a present reality rather than to recall it as a past event." Cf. *Serm.* 29.1; 70.5-6 [PL 54:226-7; 383-4].

²¹ Maximus, *Serm.* 53.1 [CCSL 23:214]: "For on this day Hell is opened through the resurrection of Christ," which fits well with the theory of time he teaches to his flock elsewhere, e.g., *Serm.* 102.2 [CCSL 23:406]: "*Apud potentiam enim dei nihil est abolitum nihil praeteritum, sed pro sui magnitudine omnia illi in praesenti sunt; totum illi tempus est hodie*" ["For with the power of God, nothing is abolished, nothing is past. But by His magnitude all things are present to Him; to Him all time is today"]. Cf. Gaudentius, *Tr.* 13.1 [PL

One might argue that such references are rhetorical, although the repetition of this theme in the sermons of Leo suggests that he did teach that Christ's death and resurrection was an annual, cyclical event. Yet placed within the milieu of the fourth and fifth centuries, the idea of the "eternal return" is a familiar one;²² that the return of festivals marks a "death and rebirth of time itself,"²³ was a basic tenet.

Linear time, which Augustine bequeathed to the Middle Ages, still mingled, in late antique Christianity, with cyclical time, as we have seen on a number of occasions. Those who taught that Christ's death and resurrection were annual events may thus have been unaware that this was a concession to traditional and pagan time; or it may have been intentional: a response to initially non-Christian interpretations of time which converts from paganism must have brought with them into the fold. Augustine, for one, was against using the concept of the eternal return in a Christian context. On a number of occasions he notes that the events celebrated at Easter were not re-enacted annually, suggesting that such an interpretation was widespread, at least at Hippo: *Proinde secundum vocem veritatis, semel Pascha dicimus factum...secundum autem vocem solemnitatis, omni anno dicimus Pascha*

20:933], referring to the birth of Christ as present in the Feast of the Nativity: "*hodie per beatissimam Virginem natus*" ["He who is born today through the most blessed Virgin"].

²²What M. Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York, 1954), p. 117, calls, "the refusal of history."

²³T. Talley, "A Christian Heortology," in D. Power, ed, *Times of Celebration*, p. 14-15.

venturum.²⁴ The very fact that he must point out to his flock that speaking of Easter as present each year was simply a rhetorical device, indicates that there were those in his flock who had interpreted such images in a more traditional fashion.

Other explanations for feasts were less time-orientated, and need not detain us here.²⁵ But explanations were necessary at the time; the festival year was not supposed to exist, not if Scripture had been followed to the letter. Festivals were a Jewish and pagan phenomenon, antithetical to the early Christian belief in the imminence of the *parousia*.²⁶ But the Christian feast did develop, and it was perceived to be a meeting place for time, Christian, and eternity. Time provided the framework for its Creator's worship, and was sanctified as a result. Eternity, in the form of Christ, weaved its way in and out of the feast. In theory, this brought the Christian into closer proximity with the divine at set periods of the year. It also gave the Christian a taste of the joy of eternity still to come. In this sense, the feast was a continuation of Christian eschatology.

²⁴ Augustine, *Serm.* 220.1 [PL 38.1089]: "Thus, according to the voice of truth, we say the Pasch happened once...according, however, to the voice of the feast, we say that the Pasch comes every year." Cf. *Serm.* 252.12 [PL 38:1179]; *Ennar. in Ps.* 21.2.1 [CCSL 38:121]. Most telling is his discussion of the subject in *De Civ. Dei* 12.14 [Loeb 414:64-65]. He refutes the pagan concept that time repeats itself in endless cycles with the statement, "*Semel enim Christus mortuus est pro peccatis nostris*" ["For Christ died once for our sins"] (trans. P. Levine).

²⁵ E.g., Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* 27.108ff [PL 61:651], claimed that feasts were established by God as periodic reminders of joy in the midst of a life which demanded strict obedience. Cf. *Carm.* 27.35ff [PL 61:649]. For Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 75.14 [CCSL 39:849]; *De Civ. Dei* 10.3 [Loeb 413:260-1], feasts remind us we are sinners. Maximus, *Serm.* 100.1 [CCSL 23:398]; festivals are numerous to keep people thinking about Christ. *Serm.* 101.1 [CCSL 23:402], expands on this as a jibe against pagan festivities: "*Nam sicut eas ueritate religionis uincimus, ita uotorum numero superamus*" ["For just as we have conquered them by the truth of religion, so we have overcome them by the number of festivals"].

²⁶ C. Vogel, *Introduction aux sources de l'histoire du culte chrétien au moyen âge* (Spoleto, 1966), p. 264, n. 77 noted that the surprise should not lay in the fact that the Christian year developed so slowly, but rather that it developed at all. Vogel's comment is based upon the fact that early Christians saw in the weekly eucharist a celebration of the salutary events of Christ's life, but the comment is relevant here, as well.

ii. The Feast of the Nativity and Epiphany

We shall begin our examination of the liturgical year as it began at Rome, with the Feast of the Nativity.²⁷ Christmas has been the subject of voluminous scholarship, most of which centres on the debate about the origins of the feast. The "history of religions" hypothesis postulates that Christmas originated as a replacement for the pagan feast of *Sol Invictus*, instituted by Aurelian in 274.²⁸ The calculation hypothesis holds that Christians (e.g., Hippolytus) arrived at the date 25 December independent of pagan associations of that day with solstice and *Sol Invictus*.²⁹ The first hypothesis is the current favourite, although neither side has been able to definitively prove their arguments.

While notice has been given by both sides to origins of Christmas, less attention has been paid to the rapid spread of the Feast of the Nativity in the West, and the continued stress placed on the juxtaposition of solstice and feast. It is generally agreed that Christmas originated at Rome: the earliest written evidence for Christmas is found in the *Depositiones Martyrum* in the *Codex-Calendar of*

²⁷ The Feast of the Nativity as one beginning of the ecclesiastical year is discussed above, pp. 97ff.

²⁸ Proponents of this view include, O. Cullmann, "The Origin of Christmas." In his *The Early Church* (Philadelphia, 1956): 21-36; L. Fendt, "Der heutige Stand der Forschung über das Geburtsfest Jesu am 25. XII und über Epiphania," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 78.1 (1953): 1-10; and B. Botte, *Les origines de la Noël et de l'Épiphanie*. (Louvain 1932), p. 24.

²⁹ As argued, for example, by Duchesne, *Origines du culte chrétien*, p. 250f, and K. W. Stevenson, *The First Rites; Worship in the Early Church*. (Collegeville, 1989), p. 106.

354. The list itself was compiled in 336 or before, which allows us confidently to date the institution of the Feast of the Nativity to sometime before that date.³⁰

Christmas may also have been present early in Africa. Augustine claimed that the Donatists did not keep the feast of Epiphany with the rest of the Catholic Church. As the Donatists restricted themselves to the calendar which they had followed before the schism occurred (312), this suggests that Epiphany was a post-Constantinian introduction into Africa.³¹ It also implies that the Donatists *did* keep the Feast of the Nativity which, if true, would date the introduction of Christmas to before 312.³² Unfortunately, the argument is tenuous at best.

More important evidence comes from a tract entitled *De Solstitiis et Aequinoctiis*.³³ Originally attributed to John Chrysostom,³⁴ it is believed to have an African origin and is dated to the beginning of the fourth century.³⁵ It attests to the early existence of Christmas conceived, not as an alternate for the feast of *Sol Invictus*, but as a biblical feast resulting from computations based on Christ's

³⁰ Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, p. 259. See ch. 3, n.42.

³¹ Augustine, *Serm.* 202.2 [PL 38:1033].

³² Cullmann, "Origins of Christmas," p. 29; T. Talley, "Liturgical Time in the Ancient Church: The State of Research." *Studia Liturgica* 14 (1982): 39.

³³ PLS 1:557-67.

³⁴ PLS 4:649.

³⁵ As B. Botte, *Les origines de la Noel et de l'Epiphanie* (Louvain, 1932), p. 93 argues. Botte has printed his edition of *De Solstitiis* in an appendix to this work (pp. 88-105). Although *De Solstitiis* survives only in the Latin, the existence of a few technical words in Syriac has muddied the waters as to its place of origin. See Talley, "Liturgical Time," p. 39.

conception, death, and birth in relation to John the Baptist.³⁶ This connection between the birth of Christ and the birth of John the Baptist, and their relation to both solstice and equinox, was to become one of the favourite images of the late antique Church, as we shall see below.

The evidence is supplemented by a homily of Optatus of Milevis, dated to c. 360. Optatus depicts the Christmas Cycle in a unitive form, as it may originally have been conceived in Africa, by combining three celebrations into one festival: the birth of Christ; the massacre of the Innocents; and the visit of the Magi. Later in African tradition, these three events were expanded into three separate feasts: Christmas (25 December); Feast of the Holy Innocents (28 December); and Epiphany (6 January).³⁷ Optatus does not indicate that the day on which the "*sacramentum Christi nativitatis*" was celebrated was, in fact, 25 December. It is equally as possible that he kept the feast on 6 January.³⁸

Little else is known about the content and meaning of the Feast of the Nativity until its appearance in the homilies and literature at the end of the fourth

³⁶ The anonymous author of *De Solstitiis* mentions *Sol Invictus* only once, and then only in passing. "*Sed et invicti natalem appellant*" ["But they call it the birthday of Invictus"]. His answer is simple: "*Quis utique tam invictus nisi dominus noster qui mortem subactam devicit*" ["Who could be more unconquered than our Lord who completely conquered death?"]. PLS 1:567.

³⁷ The first certain testimony for a separate feast for the infants of Bethlehem in Africa comes from the *Calendar of Carthage* [PL 13:1228]. Thus it was probably instituted at some point in the fifth century. There is some disagreement as to whether Augustine included such a feast in his own calendar. Willis, *Augustine's Lectionary*, p. 59, denies it. Augustine does refer to the Holy Innocents (*Serm.* 199.2 [PL 38:1027]; *Serm.* 373.2 [PL 39:1664]). But it is difficult to assert that the separation of feasts took place during his day, except, that is, for the separation of Christmas and Epiphany, which is evident in his sermons.

³⁸ Optatus of Milevis, *Serm. in Nat. Sanct. Inn.* [PLS 1:288-294]. See A. Wilmart, "Un sermon de saint Optat pur la fete de Noel," *RevSR* 2 (1922): 282. The history of the diffusion of Epiphany in the West, as with the diffusion of Christmas, is unclear. It may be that Optatus honoured all three events on 6 January. See below, pp. 223ff.

century signal the sudden explosion in its popularity. The process by which it moved from local feast in Rome, and perhaps Africa, to widespread acceptance remains a mystery. It is likely that the expansion of the feast was first directed towards North Italy. It is there that we can detect some of the earliest sermons on the Feast of the Nativity. Zeno of Verona³⁹ and Philastrius of Brescia⁴⁰ may have played some small part in its spread, but it is likely that credit should once again be given to Ambrose of Milan.⁴¹ From Milan, under the influence of Ambrose,

³⁹ Zeno of Verona (362-c.372). His extant sermons suggest that the people of Verona kept the Feast of the Nativity during his episcopacy. Cf. *Tr.* 1.54; 2.12; 2.8 [CCSL 22:128-9; 185-6; 176-9]. There is some controversy over Zeno's dates (see ch. 1, n. 70). Ambrose, *Ep.* 5.1 [PL 16:891], refers to Zeno of Verona in 386, but Zeno is already dead. If Zeno was alive until c. 380 (e.g., Litzzi, "Ambrose's Contemporaries," p. 159, dates his death to c. 380), then the six-year overlap with Ambrose's makes it possible that Christmas at Verona was influenced by Ambrose's example. On the other hand, the influence may have come from Africa. There is a sermon on the festival of an African martyr, Arcadius, and Zeno demonstrates an acquaintance with Tertullian and Cyprian. *Tr.* 1.39 [CCSL 22:107-8]. On his use of Tertullian and Cyprian, see G. Jeanes, "Early Latin Parallels to the Roman Canon? Possible References to a Eucharistic Prayer in Zeno of Verona," *JThS.* 37 (1986): 429. F.E. Vokes, "Zeno of Verona, Apuleius, and Africa," *Studia Patristica* 8:130-136, feels this hardly proves Zeno was an African, but it certainly suggests he had some African connections. If he was an African, he may have brought the African version of Christmas, as seen in his contemporary, Opatius of Milevis, with him to Italy. Zeno, *Tr.* 1.54 [CCSL 22:128-9] refers to Christ as being in Mary's womb for ten months. As he placed the beginning of the year in March (see ch. 3, n. 19), this would place the birth of Christ in January, rather than December. Zeno is a Greek name, so it may be that he commemorated the Nativity on 6 January, as in the East. Possibly his parents had immigrated to Africa from the East (which would explain the African connections in his sermons), and he later moved on to Italy and the episcopacy of Verona. In any case, the evidence supports the conclusion that Zeno commemorated the birth of Christ on 6 January in Verona, not 25 December. In light of the subsequent (and near contemporary) shift to 25 December, it is doubtful that Zeno's understanding of the Feast of the Nativity had much influence. It does suggest, however, that the spread of 25 December from Rome did not move swiftly before the last quarter of the fourth century.

⁴⁰ Philastrius, like Zeno, is enigmatic, but there are several facts about his life of which we can have no doubt: he visited Milan both before and during the episcopacy of Ambrose; he lived in Rome; and he considered the Feast of the Nativity, located on 25 December, as one of the four great Christological feasts of the year. Philastrius, *Div. Her.* 140.2 [CCSL 9:304] (along with Epiphany, the Ascension and Easter). Augustine, *Ep.* 222 [PL 33:999] mentions that he saw Philastrius in Milan, c. 387. The dates of Philastrius' episcopacy are uncertain. His *Diversarum Hereseon*, which provides the evidence for his celebration of Christmas, was written between 385-391. He probably died shortly thereafter as his successor, Gaudentius, was ordained by Ambrose, who died in 397. Gaudentius, *Tr.* 21.7 [PL 20:999-1000], places him in Milan before Ambrose (pre-374), harassing Auxentius. Afterwards he lived in Rome for "non exiguo tempore" ["not a little time"], before undertaking a period of missionary work, "per vicus et castella diversarum praeteriens regionum" ["travelling through the villages and towns of various regions.,"] preaching the word of God, before settling in Brescia and becoming its bishop. Philastrius was a strong advocate of the Feast of the Nativity. At a time when Augustine, *Ep.* 55.2 [PL 33:205], could claim it did not possess a sacramental character, Philastrius wrote that it was first among feasts instituted "pro nostrae salute".

⁴¹ Ambrose and his family moved to Rome in 353. Dudden, *Life and Times of St. Ambrose*, p. 3. Paulinus, *V.Amb.* 1-4 discusses his early life. Ambrose was thus in Rome during the episcopacy of Liberius and, coincidentally, at the time of the publication of the *Codex-Calendar* of 354, which contains our first firm reference to Christmas. As a member of a Christian family (his mother was a widow and his sister, Marcellina, a practising virgin) Ambrose would certainly have been exposed to the Christmas festivity during his tenure in Rome. When Ambrose was made bishop of Milan and metropolitan of North Italy in 374, it was in a city that had been ruled by an Arian bishop for almost twenty years. As an Arian, it is highly unlikely that Auxentius would have instituted a feast in honour of the birth of Christ, or allowed one established by his predecessor, Dionysius (346-355), to have continued. Thus it is possible that Ambrose was the first to celebrate the Feast of the Nativity at Milan, most likely based on the Roman model which he had experienced in his youth.

Christmas would have spread throughout North Italy⁴² eventually entering Gaul and the rest of the West.⁴³

Along with the Feast of the Nativity there spread another natal feast, that of John the Baptist. The correlation between these two feasts was exemplified by the course of the sun; its connection to Christ had already become a stock metaphor in the ante-Nicene Church.⁴⁴ In the course of the year, the sun achieves four turning

⁴²We cannot dismiss the potential role of Philastrius of Brescia, however; especially in light of his lengthy stay in Rome and subsequent wandering evangelism. But it is likely that Ambrose was installed in Milan before Philastrius settled in Brescia, and that it is Ambrose's influence that we detect in the spread of Christmas through North Italy, rather than Philastrius'. The close proximity of Milan and Brescia, and the presence of Philastrius in Milan on a number of occasions, might suggest an interchange of ideas on the Feast of the Nativity. When Gaudentius returned to Brescia in the 390s, he would have found the Feast of the Nativity already established by his predecessor. Gaudentius, *Tr.* 13 [PL 20:933-945] demonstrates that Gaudentius continued to celebrate the Feast of the Nativity, although with considerably less zeal than his predecessor. Gaudentius barely mentions the purpose of the feast, preferring to pass on to an attack on avarice. But by the turn of the fourth century, the feast had also spread to Aquileia (Cf. Chromatius, *Serm.* 32.4 [CCSL 9A:147]) and Turin (Maximus, *Serm.* 60.3-4 [CCSL 23:241-2]), sees where the influence of Milan, and particularly, of Ambrose, was quite strong.

⁴³The spread of the Christmas beyond Italy is even more difficult to narrate. Assuming Ambrose was the focal point, there are a number of possibilities. Victricius of Rouen was acquainted with Ambrose (*De Laud. Sanct.* 2 [PL 20:444-5] praises Ambrose for his gift of relics). However, R. Herval, *Origines Chrétiennes de la Ile Lyonnaise gallo-romaine à la Normandie ducale (IVe-XIe siècles)*, (Rouen, n.d.), pp. 30-1 theorized that both Victricius and Martin were present at the Council of Rome in January 386. They were thus likely exposed to the Roman version of Christmas which ended shortly before the council. On the other hand, both men were afterwards present in Milan before returning to Gaul. It was at this point that they would have received some relics from Ambrose, the first package of relics to which Victricius refers. Herval, *Origines Chrétiennes*, p. 55; Victricius, *De Laud. Sanct.* 2 [PL 20:444-5]. Gregory of Tours, *HF* 10.31 [PL 71:566], refers to Martin bringing the relics of Protasius and Gervasius with him from Italy. We do not know for certain if either man celebrated Christmas but, if they did, the influence could have come from either Rome or Ambrose (or both). Upon returning to Gaul, they stayed briefly in Vienne (Easter 386) at which time Martin healed Paulinus of Nola of an eye ailment. Herval, *Origines Chrétiennes*, p. 39; Severus, *V. Mart.* 19 [PL 20:170]. Paulinus, *Ep.* 18.9 [PL 61:242]. claims he saw Victricius once in Vienne at the time he met Martin there. Another web of connections springs up here. Paulinus was also quite familiar with Ambrose. In *Ep.* 3.4 [PL 61:163], Paulinus calls Ambrose his Father, and Ambrose, *Ep.* 58 [PL 16:1228-32], praises Paulinus enthusiastically. Paulinus also visited Rome, but not during Christmas—probably because it fell too close to the 14 January festival of his beloved Felix. His trips to Rome were in the form of an annual pilgrimage to venerate Peter and Paul on 29 June. See, for example, *Epp.* 17.1; 20.2 [PL 61:254-255; 247-248]. He changed this habit early in the first decade of the fifth century, probably in response to the presence of barbarian raiders, such as Alaric and Radagasius, during the campaigning season. Although he had been to Rome, it is doubtful that he witnessed the Christmas festivities there. Possibly, then, Paulinus' celebration of Christmas (See *Carm.* 27:406-439 [PL 61:657-658]) is also due to the influence of Ambrose. It is interesting that Paulinus' reference to Christmas on 25 December in *Carm.* 27 coincides with Severus' reference to Christ's birth on 25 December in his *His. Sacr.* 2.27 [PL 20:144], (i.e. both were published c. 403). Did Severus get the date from Martin who had picked it up from Rome or Ambrose? Or was the connection between Paulinus and Severus? Obviously, there are a number of possible permutations.

The feast did spread rapidly in Gaul. Aside from Severus' use of 25 December, we find the feast specifically listed in the *Laterculus* of Polemius Silvius in 448 [PL 13:688]; it was the beginning of the ecclesiastical year for Perpetuus of Tours in the mid-fifth century (see Gregory of Tours, *HF* 10.31), and for Eusebius "Gallicanus." Its dissemination into Spain was slower. The time of its entry into Britain is unknown. Victricius of Rouen was called to Britain in 395 to help fight Arianism. *De Laud. Sanct.* 1 [PL 20:443-4]. As the Christology accompanying the Feast of the Nativity is antithetical to Arianism, Victricius might have instituted the feast in Britain in much the same way as Ambrose may have used it in Milan. With the entry of 25 December as the date for Christ's birth into the consular lists at the end of the fifth century (eg. *Con. Const.* 752 [Mommsen, *CM* 1:218]; *F.V.Pr* 74 [CM 1:278]) we witness the extent of the popularization of the feast by the end of late antiquity.

⁴⁴The link between Christ and sun was encountered in chapters one and three. It derives from Scripture (e.g., *Mat.* 17:2; 24:7; *John* 8:12, Christ as the Light of the World; *Mal.* 4:2, Christ as the Sun of Justice). Cf. Cyprian *De Dom. Orat.* 35 [CSEL 3:293]: "*Nam quia Christus sol uerus est et dies uerus, sole ac die saeculi recedente quando oramus et petimus ut super nos lux denuo ueniat, Christi precamur aduentum lucis aeternae gratiam praebiturum*" ["For since Christ is the true Sun and Day, as the sun and day of the world recede, when we pray and petition that the light come upon us again, we pray for the coming of Christ to provide us with the grace of eternal light"].

points, as defined by its perception from the earth: two equinoxes, spring and autumn; and two solstices, winter and summer.⁴⁵ These solar events defined the seasons, as they still do: "*id est verno et aestate et autumnno et hieme per quae annus vertens cognoscitur.*"⁴⁶ Non-Christians also deemed them worthy of festivity in late antiquity.⁴⁷ In this context, these celestial events played an active role in promoting festivals, as suggested above.⁴⁸ In Christian worship their role was passive, there to demonstrate that elements of time were subservient to Christ, rather than vice versa.

In the fourth century, all four of these turning points in the year were connected to Christ-events. Three of them were directly linked to pertinent feasts. The spring equinox was relevant to the Passion, but it was also linked to Christ's

⁴⁵ An equinox, as the name suggests, represents the point in the sun's travels where night and day are of equal duration. According to the Polemius Silvius, these occurred on 25 March and 24 September in 448 [PL 13:678, 684]. The summer solstice occurs on the longest day of the year; the winter solstice, on the shortest (in 448, 24 June and 25 December [PL 13:682, 688]).

⁴⁶ *De Solst.* [PLS 1:559]: "That is, in the spring, summer, autumn and winter through which the changings of the year are recognized." Polemius Silvius places the beginning of spring on the same day in March as the equinox, also noting it was the day Christ suffered [PL 13:678]. He also combines the winter solstice with the beginning of winter on 25 December, noting it was the birthday of Christ [PL 13:688]. The other two major celestial events of the year, summer solstice and autumn equinox, stand by themselves—in both cases the seasons are noted as beginning a few days later. This suggests that Polemius Silvius was aware of the calendar's inadequacies: by his day the Julian calendar was about four days off in relation to the solar year. He assigns solstices and equinoxes to their traditional dates but twice places the beginning of seasons more correctly. But for the March equinox and winter solstice the traditional dates are used for the beginning of the seasons as well. The only possible explanation for this is that both dates—25 March and 25 December—were important to the context of Christ's life—he was conceived and died on the former, and he was born on the latter. In effect, Polemius allows the reader a glimpse into his own Christo-centric vision of the year, and of time. It is the Christ-events which are important. Start of season and celestial event are placed together to give the Christ-event added emphasis.

⁴⁷ Religious groups that keep festivals on account of such celestial events still exist, but they are considerably more rare than they were in antiquity. In the *Calendar of 354* we find only one note directly acknowledging a celestial event of this sort. See PL 13:681, the summer solstice. Only the pertinent religious events are noted on the other days. Eg, Hilaria on 25 March, and *Sol Invictus* on 25 December (nothing for the autumn equinox). See PL 13:677, 687, 683. Polemius Silvius has removed pagan connections from these celestial events. They are either part of Christ's birth and death or simple astronomical events. See also Pliny *NH* 18.256-7 [Loeb 371:350-1] and Columella, *De Re Rus.* 2.4.9-11 [Loeb 361:132-5] who link solstices and equinoxes to the agricultural year.

⁴⁸ See Ambrosiaster, *Comm. in Ep. ad Galat.* 4.10 [PL 17:361-2].

conception.⁴⁹ This fit in well with the rather rigid view of time and the universe that was held by Christians in this period. All beginnings--time, Christianity, the human Christ--had evolved from the same point in time: "*Conceptus est ergo dominus noster octavo kalendas aprilis mense martio qui est dies paschae passionis domini et conceptionis eius*".⁵⁰ In effect, the whole course of Christian time, present in a single day.

Christ's conception on 25 March meant he was born nine months later at the winter solstice, 25 December. To this Christo-centric view of these celestial events was added the conception and birth of John the Baptist: conceived at the autumn equinox, born nine months later at the summer solstice.⁵¹ It is this conjunction of Biblical event and celestial phenomena that was to become the hallmark of the perception of the Feast of the Nativity in the fourth and fifth century.

The rapid spread of the feast of John the Baptist is evidence of the importance attached to this conjunction. Aside from being one of the most popular festivals of late antiquity, the feast of John the Baptist was also the only other natal feast celebrated.⁵² As the volume of evidence excludes the possibility of a complete

⁴⁹The importance of the spring equinox was encountered in chapters one and three. E.g., the beginning of the ecclesiastical year and the point at which time itself began.

⁵⁰*De Solst.* [PLS 1:562-3]: "Therefore our Lord was conceived on the eighth day before the kalends of April (25 March), in the month of March, which is the day of the Pasch, of the passion of the Lord, and of his conception."

⁵¹For example, see *De Solst.* [PLS 1:563-3]. The six months which separate Christ and John is based on *Luke* 1:36.

⁵²Some bishops also celebrated the martyrdom of John the Baptist, but it is his natal feast, and its conjunction with the summer solstice which concerns us here. Cf., Victricius, *De Laud. Sanct.* 6 [PL 20:447-8]; Gaudentius, *Tr.* 17.3-4 [PL 20:960-61]; Chromatius, *Serm.* 26.2-4 [CCSL 9A:119-21]; Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* 27.411ff [PL 61:657]; Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 127.1 [CCSL 24B:782]; Augustine

survey, we shall restrict our observations to one see.

a) The Feast of the Nativity at Turin

The Christmas Cycle was established rapidly at Turin. Both Christmas and Epiphany were celebrated during the episcopacy of Maximus. A primitive Advent season existed, although it was not yet defined chronologically.⁵³ In the three surviving Advent sermons, Maximus concentrates on the theme of preparing for the coming solemnity by cleansing the soul. He equates this to the secular custom of dressing in one's finest attire on the Emperor's birthday: "*...qua nos accuratione aeterni regis nostri Iesu Christi natalem suscipere debemus, qui pro deuotione nostra non nobis temporalem largietur gloriam sed aeternam.*"⁵⁴ The Feast of the Nativity was a spiritual entity, not just a temporal reality. Thus, adorning the soul required more effort than preparing to meet the emperor. To this task of preparation, Maximus applies three of his favourite Christian remedies--tears, fasting and almsgiving: "*si tam graue peccatum fuerit, ut id minime solis fletibus*

Serm. 287 [PL 38:1301-2]; and Maximus of Turin, *Serm.* 5 [CCSL 23:17-19].

⁵³ Three of Maximus' surviving sermons deal with Advent. Internal evidence indicates that two of these sermons followed each other on consecutive Sundays. Maximus, *Serm.* 60.2 [CCSL 23:241], deals with preparing the soul for the approaching Nativity. Maximus draws on the analogy of dressing in one's finest to greet the emperor: "*Ambiamus ergo inueniri ante ipsum probati fide compta misericordia moribus*" ["Let us seek, therefore, to be found proven in faith before him, decked in mercy and arrayed in virtues"]. The same theme is picked up again in *Serm.* 61.1 [CCSL 23:244], which refers to the sermon, "*superiore dominica*" ["last Sunday"], suggesting the two sermons were delivered on consecutive Sundays. The third sermon, *Serm.* 61A [CCSL 23:249-251], contains similar themes but no references to previous sermons. It may have followed on the previous two, or it may be evidence that such themes were regular in Maximus of Turin's Advent sermons. But we can conclude that the season of Advent was at least two weeks long at Turin.

⁵⁴ Maximus, *Serm.* 60.2 [CCSL 23:240]: "...how much more so ought we to celebrate the birthday of our eternal King, Jesus Christ, who for our devotion will give to us not temporal glory, but eternal."

abluatur, addamus misericordiae oleum acrimoniamque ieiunii."⁵⁵

Maximus' Advent has obvious parallels with Quadragesima. Both are times of preparation where fasting is prescribed to make the Christian worthy to celebrate the coming festivity. There is a sense in both that what is approaching is a focal point in the Christian year. And both seasons are depicted as being accompanied by changes in the physical universe which point to the coming festival.⁵⁶

Several of the extant sermons deal with the Nativity of Christ, and it is in these that the relevance of John the Baptist and celestial phenomena becomes apparent. These sermons abound with solar symbolism. Christ is repeatedly referred to as the "*Iustitiae Sol*,"⁵⁷ who illuminates the world. But equating Christ with the sun is insufficient. Maximus stresses the sun's subservience, showing his flock that the sun's actions are dictated by Christ-events. Jews and Pagans may agree with the Christians in calling 25 December the "*solem nouum*", Maximus notes, but they are ignorant of the significance of such a statement. This new, solstitial sun is the same sun that darkened when Christ suffered, and stood still for

⁵⁵ Maximus, *Serm.* 61.1 [CCSL 23:244]: "If the sin is so grave that it cannot be washed away by tears alone, add the oil of mercy and the severity of fasting." Maximus, *Serm.* 76.2 [CCSL 23:318], places great emphasis on tears: "*Lacrimae, inquam, tacitae quodammodo preces sunt, ueniam non postulant et merentur; causam non dicunt et misericordiam consequuntur, nisi quod utiliores lacrimarum preces sunt quam sermonum, quia sermo in precando forte fallit, lacrima omnino non fallit*" ["Tears, I say, are a kind of silent prayer. They do not demand forgiveness, but it is merited; they give no cause, but they result in mercy. In fact, prayers of tears are more useful than words, because in praying, the word can fail; but tears never fail"]. There is in Maximus a stress on deeds over words—the ability to enhance one's chance for salvation by concentrating one's essence on Christ. Thus, almsgiving, prayer, fasting, and even tears play a crucial role, as they demonstrate a lack of concern for this world and a fixation on the next.

⁵⁶ See above, pp. 207ff.

⁵⁷ Maximus, *Serm.* 62.2 [CCSL 23:262], twice; *Serm.* 99.1 [CCSL 23:394], once. See also Ambrose, *Hex.* 4.2.5 [PL 14:203]; *De Hel.* 15.55 [PL 14:752].

Joshua while he fought. It is evidently subject to the whim of its master, which is reflected in the changes forced upon it during feasts.⁵⁸

Thus the winter solstice occurred for a predetermined reason--it demonstrated the advent of Christ, just as the summer solstice indicated the advent of the precursor, John the Baptist, who had once claimed: "[Christ] must increase, and I must decrease" (*John* 3:30). John's message was simple, and so fundamental to Christianity that the late antique mind found it imbedded in the annual course of the sun:

*Ecce enim in natiuitate Christi dies crescit, et in Iohannis natiuitate decrescit....Ipsa enim quodammodo tempora famulantia partibus suis detrimentum patiuntur cum seruius gignitur, cum autem dominus nascitur consequuntur augmentum.*⁵⁹

Maximus plays on the fact that non-Christians also called Christmas the "*solem nouum*," although he never openly admits to the existence of any sun cult in Turin.⁶⁰ But from his flock's attitude towards the eclipse of the moon it is apparent that a general belief in the deity of the celestial bodies existed. Thus, Christmas was the perfect time to negate the importance of the sun by pointing out

⁵⁸ Maximus, *Serm.* 62.1 [CCSL 23:261].

⁵⁹ Maximus, *Serm.* 99.1 [CCSL 23:394]: "For behold, at the birth of Christ the day increases, and at the birth of John it decreases....For in a certain way the ministering seasons themselves suffer a loss in their parts when the servant is born, but when the Lord is born they make a gain." This is the key Christmas image in late antiquity. See Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 89.2 [CCSL 24A:549]; Augustine, *Serm.* 194.1-2; 196.4; 186 [PL 38:1015-16; 1020-21; 999-1000]; Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* 14:15ff [PL 61:465]; Prudentius, *Cath. Lib.* 11.1-12 [CCSL 126:60]; Ambrose, *Exp. Ev. Sec. Luc.* 1.38 [PL 15:1629]; Eusebius Gallicanus, *Hom.* 2.1 [CCSL 101:23], etc.

⁶⁰ Maximus, *Serm.* 62.1 [CCSL 23:261]. For Ambrose's use of the imagery of the Sun applied to Christ, see *Expos. Ps. CXVIII* 2.9 (PL 15:1212): "*Sed lucet sol super justos et injustos: super justos per gratiam, super injustos per misericordiam*" ["But the sun shines above the just and the unjust: above the just through grace, above the unjust through mercy"].

its imperfections: "*Solem igitur nouum hanc diem uulgus appellat...Veterem autem dixerim huius mundi solem, qui defectionem patitur qui parietibus excluditur qui nubibus obscuratur.*"⁶¹

There can be no doubt that unacceptable attitudes as to the divinity of the sun were prevalent throughout the West.⁶² Connecting Christ to the sun, and especially to the solstices by means of the Christ-John the Baptist combination was, in part, a refutation of such tendencies. But it is erroneous to see this as only anti-pagan polemic. The association was a natural one, traditional to the Church by the fourth century. The growth and decrease of light that accompanied solstices was not mere symbolism; nor something worthy of worship in its own right. It was perceived as a signpost of the Creator, proof of the care with which he had designed the universe; proof of the salvation that accompanied his entry into time:

*In aeternum mortuus, esses, nisi in tempore natus esset....Celebremus festum diem, quo magnus et aeternus dies ex magno et aeterno die venit in hunc nostrum tam breuem temporalem diem.*⁶³

⁶¹ Maximus, *Serm.* 62.2 [CCSL 23.262]: "Therefore the vulgar call this day 'the new sun'....I would call the sun of this world, which suffers eclipses, is shut out by walls, and is obscured by clouds, old."

⁶² We saw this in chapter one. E.g., Leo, *Serm.* 27.3-4 chastizes his flock for bowing towards the sun as they entered the church on Christmas day.

⁶³ Augustine, *Serm.* 185.1-2 [PL 38:997-8]: "You would have been dead for eternity, if He had not been born in time....Let us celebrate the festal day, on which the Great and Eternal Day came from the great and eternal day into this our brief temporal day." Leo, *Serm.* 30.1 [PL 54:230] makes a similar comment concerning the timelessness and centrality of the Feast of the Nativity: "*Magnitudo igitur sacramenti, in salutem humani generis ante saecula aeterna dispositi, in saeculorum fine reserat*" ["The magnitude of the sacrament, therefore, was set down in eternity before the world and unravels to the end of the world"]. In another Christmas sermon, Leo, *Serm.* 27.2 [PL 54:218] taught that the Feast of the Nativity is central in the movement of the participant beyond the temporal plane: "*de terrenis incipiunt coelestes*" ["from terrestrial they begin to be celestial"].

b) Epiphany

The origins of the Feast of the Epiphany are also a matter of considerable debate. It is generally agreed that Epiphany was the Eastern equivalent of Christmas, possibly predating its Western counterpart. The most popular hypothesis is that, like Christmas, Epiphany was the Christian replacement of a non-Christian, solstitial feast. But like the argument for Christmas, the "history of religions" interpretation remains conjecture, and it does not appear that definitive proof is forthcoming.⁶⁴

6 January may have had solstitial associations in some areas of the East, but in the West, where the winter solstice had been traditionally dated to 25 December for centuries, it lacked such connections. Epiphany did, however, maintain the connections with the Feast of the Nativity that its very chronological proximity suggested.⁶⁵ Like Christmas, it was understood to signify the revelation of Christ to the world; but whereas Christ was revealed to the Jews in his Nativity, the Epiphany was often seen as Christ's manifestation to the gentiles, in the form of the Magi.⁶⁶ It was also, like Christmas, a celebration of beginnings,⁶⁷ commemorating

⁶⁴ For the relation of the Feast of the Epiphany to the solstice, see B. Botte, *Les origines de la Noël et de l'Épiphanie* (Louvain, 1932), p. 85; Talley, "Liturgical Time," pp. 41ff, has shown that the pagan celebration of Dionysius on 6 January was, in fact, *not* universal in the East. Talley has also demonstrated that 6 January was not the old, Eastern date for the winter solstice.

⁶⁵ The proximity of the two feasts inspired some bishops to see yet another demonstration of God's plan for the universe. Leo, *Serm.* 34.1 [PL 54:245]: "*vocante nos ad hanc devotionem ipsa recurrentium temporum lege, quae nobis post diem in quo coaeternus Patri (sic) Filius Dei natus ex Virgine est, brevi intervallo Epiphaniae intulit festum, ex apparitione Domini consecratum.*" ["By the law of recurring time itself we are called to this devotion. For after the day on which the Son of God, coeternal with the Father, is born from the Virgin, in a brief interval we come to the feast of Epiphany, consecrated by the apparition of the Lord"]. Cf. Maximus, *Serm.* 13A.1 [CCSL 23:44].

⁶⁶ As understood by Augustine, *Serm.* 199.1 [PL 38:1026]. At *Serm.* 204.1 [PL 38:1037], he claims, "*Ambo itaque dies ad manifestationem pertinent Christi!*" ["both feasts pertain to the manifestation of Christ"].

those events which marked the start of Christ's career. The visit of the Magi; his baptism in the river Jordan; changing water into wine at the wedding feast--all became subject to celebration under the rubric, Epiphany. In such a celebration the Christian witnessed Christ's manifestation of his divinity to the world; the first signs that God had indeed, entered time.

Epiphany's origins in the East were evident even in late antiquity. Augustine noted that Epiphany was a Greek word, providing the translation *manifestatio* for his flock.⁶⁸ His comment that the Donatists did not celebrate Epiphany suggests that Epiphany had not come to the West before the Donatist schism began in 312.⁶⁹ But like Christmas, the origins of Epiphany had been forgotten by the end of the fourth century.

What is of real interest in the Feast of the Epiphany is that it did not have the universal meaning in the West which the complementary Feast of the Nativity did. The following chart lists the different events celebrated at Epiphany, and their dispersal through an assortment of sees across the West:

⁶⁷ Maximus, *Serm.* 100.1 [CCSL 23:398], saw both Christmas and Epiphany as birthdays: "*Ratio enim exigit, ut post diem natalis dominici--licet inter positus annis eodem autem tempore--haec festiuitas sequeretur, quam et ipsam festiuitatem natalem appellandam puto. Tunc enim natus hominibus, hodie renatus est sacramentis*" ["For reason demands that after the day of the Lord's birth--at the same time, despite the intervening years--this feast should follow, which feast should itself also, I think, be called a birthday. For then he was born to human beings, today He was reborn in the sacraments"].

⁶⁸ Augustine, *Serm.* 200.1 [PL 38:1029]: "...*quod latine manifestatio dici potest*" ["...which in Latin can be called 'manifestation'"].

⁶⁹ Augustine, *Serm.* 202.2 [PL 38:1033]. R.H. Bainton, "The Origins of Epiphany," in his *Early and Medieval Xity* (Boston, 1962): 23, reaches the same conclusion.

TABLE 4
Christ-Events Commemorated at Epiphany

| <u>SOURCE</u> | <u>MAGI</u> | <u>BAPTISM</u> | <u>WEDDING FEAST</u> |
|------------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Ambrose of Milan | - | X | - |
| Chromatius of Aquileia | - | X | - |
| Maximus of Turin | - | X | X |
| Prudentius | X | - | - |
| Paulinus of Nola | - | X | X |
| Augustine of Hippo | X | - | - |
| Leo of Rome | X | - | - |
| Peter of Ravenna | X | X | X |
| Polemius Silvius | X | X | X |
| Eusebius "Gallicanus" | X | X | X ⁷⁰ |

Botte's contention that it was North Italy which witnessed the amalgamation of all three of these events into the Feast of the Epiphany appears correct. Optatus of Milevis demonstrates that, in the mid-fourth century, the veneration of the Magi was still attached to the Christmas festivities in Africa. By the episcopacy of Augustine, however, this had been attached to Epiphany instead. It was its only meaning for Augustine. The same was probably true of Spain, if Prudentius is any indication.⁷¹

Leo of Rome was very specific on the reasons for Epiphany. As in the

⁷⁰ Ambrose, *Exp. Evang. Sec. Luc.* 2.83; 2.92-94; 4.76 [PL 15:1665; 1669-70; 1719]; Chromatius, *Serm.* 34.1 [CCSL 9A:156]; Maximus, *Serm.* 13A.1; 65.1-2 [CCSL 23:44; 273-4]; Prudentius, *Cath.* 12.1-64 [CCSL 126:65-7]; Paulinus, *Cerm.* 27.43-63 [PL 61.649]; Augustine, *Serm.* 199.1 [PL 38:1026]; Leo, *Serm.* 31; 32; 33 [PL 54:234-37; 237-40; 240-44]; Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 157 [CCSL 24B:976-979]; Polemius Silvius, *Laterculus* [PL 13:373]; Eusebius "Gallicanus", *Hom.* 4.1 [CCSL 101:43].

⁷¹ With the possible addition of the massacre of the Holy Innocents. See Prudentius, *Cath.* 12.93-140 [CCSL 126:68].

African tradition, Leo saw it only as a celebration of the Magi.⁷² He was aware of a second tradition at work in Italy, but he was adamantly against venerating Christ's baptism at Epiphany. He accuses the bishops of Sicily of confusing Epiphany and Easter by holding baptisms on the former feast as well as the latter. To use Christ's baptism as a justification for baptism at Epiphany is erroneous, because the reason for Christ's baptism was different from our own (i.e., symbol vs. necessity). He keeps Epiphany as only a commemoration of the Magi and forbids the Sicilians to baptize on that day.⁷³

Leo was writing against a tradition that was already popular in his own day. More accurately, he was writing in favour of a much older tradition: the restriction of baptism to Easter. It was natural gradually to attach baptism to a festival that celebrated Christ's own baptism in the river Jordan. It is in North Italy that this particular interpretation of Epiphany found favour. Ambrose and Chromatius both understood Epiphany in this way. By the beginning of the fifth century Epiphany was gaining other meanings. Maximus of Turin added Christ's first miracle at the Wedding of Cana to the meaning of Epiphany which was current in North Italy. He knew the combination was controversial: "...*licet a diuersis alterutrum factum esse*

⁷² Like Prudentius, he also mentions the massacre of the Innocents in an Epiphany context. See *Serm.* 38.1 [PL 54:260] Cf. Eusebius Gallicanus, *Hom.* 4 [CCSL 101:45], which also raises the theme of the Innocents.

⁷³ Leo, *Ep.* 16 [PL 54:695-706].

credatur, ego tamen utrumque factum esse confirmo."⁷⁴

Maximus' complete removal of the visit of the Magi runs counter to much of Western tradition.⁷⁵ He represents a trend in the understanding of Epiphany which was attempting to loosen that feast's ties with the Feast of the Nativity. For Maximus, Epiphany no longer looked backward to Christmas, but forward to Easter. Maximus taught that Christ's baptism was a symbol of the change of the human race, both physically and in its time frame: from impure water into an eternal substance. The miracle at Cana represented the same thing: water into wine; change into something better.⁷⁶

Neither Leo's restriction nor Maximus' exclusion was to dictate the final form of the Feast of the Epiphany. Epiphany was gradually to inherit all three events, as seen in its mid-fifth century form. Peter of Ravenna and Polemius Silvius stand as representatives of this final combination. And it is in this form that Epiphany comes into alignment with the late antique understanding of time. Epiphany looked back to Christ's birth, and forward to his resurrection. It encompassed both beginnings and endings in one feast.

⁷⁴ Maximus, *Serm.* 65.1 [CCSL 23:273]: "Although it is believed by different people that only one of these happened, I, nevertheless, confirm that both happened."

⁷⁵ See Botte, *Noel et de l'Epiphanie*, p. 72.

⁷⁶ Maximus, *Serm.* 65.2 [CCSL 23:273].

iii. Via Quadragesimae and Seasonal Fasts

Quadragesima, the fast of forty days, had a twofold significance in the fourth and fifth centuries. On the one hand, it was a season of preparation for Easter, especially for those who intended to be baptized.⁷⁷ It did not exist before the fourth century, when the pre-Easter fast was restricted to not more than six days.⁷⁸ With the establishment of peace for the Church, this fast rapidly expanded. Preparation for baptism became more intense; it required more of the catechumen's time, more devotion on his part. It is likely that this longer Quadragesima was thought necessary as a period of trial in a time when freedom to join the Church brought less devoted people into the fold. Quadragesima, as a lengthy period of indoctrination and self-deprivation, was a way of separating the wheat from the chaff.

On the other hand, Quadragesima had a perceptible symbolic intensity in its relation to time. Quadragesima was a microcosm of time in the way that time was meant to be spent. It was a chance for the laity to taste the ascetic life--forty days of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. Such activities, as we have seen, were believed to allow the participant to earn merit towards eternal life and to experience God's

⁷⁷ Leo, *Serm.* 43.3 [PL 54:283], told his flock that while Quadragesima was necessary for those about to undergo the "regeneration of baptism" ["*baptismo sunt regenerante venturi*"], it was also necessary for those already regenerated, in order that they might conserve what they already had.

⁷⁸ See Carroll, *Liturgical Practice*, pp. 210ff.

power on earth.⁷⁹ Participation in Quadragesima was also perceived as a way to touch eternity from the temporal plane: to experience the *Via Quadragesimae* was to live as the angels.⁸⁰ In this sense, the growth of Quadragesima and the expansion of its precepts outside the forty days belongs to the same realm as episcopal attempts to promote daily church attendance, prayer, and Eucharist. It was the expression of an ideal: *tempus vitae nostrae temporum auctori*.⁸¹

Quadragesima was in a state of flux in late antiquity, an attestation to its recent development. The length of the fast and the days upon which one fasted varied from see to see. Peter of Ravenna speaks of forty periods of fasting without telling us if those forty days were consecutive (i.e., including Sunday which was typically not a fast day).⁸² Ambrose of Milan prescribed a forty-day fast which excluded fasting on Saturday and Sunday, which suggests that Quadragesima was

⁷⁹ In chapter six we saw that these "tools" were perceived as means to effect physical and spiritual changes. Ambrose, *Hex.* 6.4.28 [PL 14:252] contends that the spit from a fasting man can kill a snake: "*Jejuni hominis sputum si serpens gustaverit, moritur*". A rather humorous example of the power attributed to such actions as fasting.

⁸⁰ The idea was stated particularly well by Ambrose, *De Hel.*, 3.4 [PL 14.733]: "*Quid est enim jejunium, nisi substantia et imago caelestis? Jejunium refectio animae, cibus mentis est jejunium, vita est angelorum jejunium...*" ["For what is fasting unless the substance and image of heaven? Fasting is the restoration of the soul, the food of the mind: fasting is the life of the angels...". The belief that a true Christian—i.e., someone who lived the "Christian Life"—lived like an angel is fairly widespread in the sermons. Cf., Augustine, *Serm.* 132.3 [PL 38.736]; Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 120.7 [CCSL 24A:723]; Leo of Rome, *Serm.* 22.5 [PL 54:197-8]. The intentional juxtaposition of the Christian and angels within this time frame was a message to the congregations that they now lived a life apart from the world. It is another indication of the new time-frame—part time, part eternity—within which the Christian was believed to live. Leo, *Serm.* 71.1 [PL 54:388-9], saw Quadragesima as a way to experience the pain of the cross.

⁸¹ Maximus, *Serm.* 36.2-4 [CCSL 23:141-3], expresses this ideal, at least in the context of Quadragesima. One is to rise at dawn and go to the church and the shrines of martyrs. A true fast requires the body to abstain from food and the soul to abstain from wickedness. To do this, one must spend the day in begging pardon for sins past and future. There must be constant prayer and reading of Scripture. Anything you do not eat is to be given to the poor, along with alms. A quadragesimal day must be totally devoted to God. For Leo, *Serm.* 49.1 [PL 54:301], Quadragesima was "*maximum sacratissimumque jejunium*" ["the most great and most holy of the fasts"], just as Easter was the greatest festival of the year.

⁸² Peter, *Serm.* 166.4 [CCSL 24B:1021]. Although his comments later in the same sermon, where he chastizes members of his flock for introducing the novelty of fasting on some weeks and not on others, suggests that he did prescribe a fast of forty consecutive days.

approximately eight weeks long at Milan,⁸³ while Maximus of Turin promoted daily fasting, including Saturday and Sunday, for a total of forty-two days.⁸⁴ Yet, despite the differences, the period continued to be called *Quadragesima*.

It was the number that was significant, rather than the reality of chronological differences. The number forty had rich Scriptural associations which late antique bishops called upon in the promotion of quadragesimal fasting. Eucherius of Lyons, the fifth-century Gallic bishop whose training manual for bishops delves into the allegorical use of numbers, provides the standard explanation of the number forty:

*Ad quadragesimae sacramentum. In Evangelio: 'Et agebatur a spiritu in deserto diebus quadraginta.' Et virtus Decalogi, per quatuor libros Evangelii impletur; Decalogi autem mandata perficimus, si quatuor sancti Evangelii libros perfecte custodimus: sic per continentiam, vigilas, et orationes, et caetera, quae Apostulus commemorat, 'arma iustitiae' ad immortalis vitae praemia pervenimus.*⁸⁵

Reference to Christ's forty-day fast was widely used to explain *Quadragesima*, although other Scriptural references to forty also came into play. The purpose was to prove the divine origin of the fast: "*Videtis, fratres, quia quod Quadragesimae ieiunamus non est humana inuentio, auctoritas est diuina; et est mysticum, non est*

⁸³ Ambrose, *De Hel.* 10.34 [PL 14:743].

⁸⁴ Maximus, *Serm.* 67.1-2 [CCSL 23:280-1]. *Quadragesima* at Turin would have been about six weeks long.

⁸⁵ Eucherius of Lyons, *Form. Spir. Int.* 11.40 [PL 50:721]: "[Refers] to the sacrament of the 40. In the Gospel: 'And he was led by the spirit into the desert for 40 days (Luke 4:1). And the virtue of the Decalogue, through the 4 books of the Gospels is filled up; moreover we accomplish by the mandate of the Decalogue, if we guard perfectly the 4 books of the holy Gospels: so through continence, vigils, prayers, and the rest, which the Apostle calls, 'the arm of justice (2 Cor. 6:7), we come through to immortal life.'"

praesumptum.⁸⁶

Quadragesima was restricted to forty days, more or less. Its content was not. Peter of Ravenna called the activities of fasting, almsgiving and prayer the "*viam Quadragesimae*"--the "way of Quadragesima".⁸⁷ It was the "*tempus bellorum spiritalium*," a period when men were to cease living for this world, and live for heaven instead.⁸⁸ This was in itself an ideal, an attempt to squeeze Christian perfection into forty days. The life that a Christian led during Quadragesima was one of continual fasting and constant prayer. But, as we have seen, the ideal of daily devotion to God was widely prescribed by bishops. This point is made even more clearly by the promotion of quadragesimal activities outside the forty days. Augustine described temporal existence as a *Quadragesima abstinentiae* and the *tempus quadragenari*.⁸⁹ This image fits well with the belief that life was a period of trial and tribulation. Life, in effect, was just like Quadragesima, just as the joy and festivity of Pentecost was the image of heaven.

⁸⁶ Peter, *Serm.* 11.4 [CCSL 24:74]: "You see, brothers, that our fasting in Quadragesima is not a human invention; it is divine authority; it is mystic, not something arbitrarily set." Here Peter traces Quadragesima to the example of Christ's fast. Quodvultdeus, *Lib. Prom.* 1.7.13 [CCSL 60:22-3], equates it to the forty days of Moses, Elijah, and of Christ. Peter, *Serm.* 166.5 [CCSL 24b:1021], notes that the forty days corresponded to the forty years which the Israelites spent in the desert before entering the promised Land. This suggests a comparison between earth and heaven, time and eternity, which was quite popular in quadragesimal imagery. It was especially prevalent in the comparison of the forty days of Quadragesima with the fifty days after Easter. According to Augustine, *Serm.* 243.7 [PL 38:1146-7], the prior is our present burden, the latter is the object of our hope: one symbolizes life on earth, the other, life in heaven. Cf. *Serm.* 125.9 [PL 38.695-6]; *Serm.* 254.1 [PL 38.1182], etc. For Chromatius of Aquileia, *Serm.* 25 [CCSL 9A:113-17], Elijah and Christ were the examples, as they were for Ambrose, *De Hel.* 2.3 [PL 14:733].

⁸⁷ Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 8.1 [CCSL 24:59].

⁸⁸ Peter, *Serm.* 12.4; 10.1 [CCSL 24:81 and 68]. Peter was fond of seeing Quadragesima as a special period of spiritual battle, as demonstrated by his persistent use of military imagery. Cf. *Serm.* 13.1-2 [CCSL 24:87]. It was a popular image in late antiquity. Cf. Ambrose, *De Hel.* 1.1 [PL 14:731-2]; Leo, *Serm.* 39.3 [PL 54:264-5].

⁸⁹ Aug., *Hom. in Ioh* 17.4 [PL 35:1529], "a Quadragesima of abstinence;" *Serm.* 125.9 [PL 38.696], "the time of the forty."

It is no wonder that bishops attempted to extend the quadragesimal ideal outside of the forty days. If Quadragesima was like life, like existing in time, then it was logical to spend all one's time as if it were Quadragesima. "*In hac quidem cruce, per totam istam vitam...perpetuo debet pendere christianus,*" Augustine taught. A cross, "*non quadraginta dierum est, sed totius hujus vitae.*"⁹⁰

The image was a popular one,⁹¹ but the increase in the number of periods set aside for fasting in the fourth and fifth century suggests that it was more than a simple image. Exceptional periods of fasting could still be called at the discretion of the bishop. At Turin, when the danger from barbarians was most pressing, Maximus could call for an extra week of quadragesimal-type activity: prayers, fasts, and vigils to ensure the protection of God's power.⁹²

It was just such an arbitrary decision on the part of Mamertus of Vienne that saw the institution of the annual Rogation Days in Gaul. Mamertus instituted the Rogations c. 470 in response to earthquakes. He was also responding to a theory prevalent in late antique Christianity, the belief that Christian activities such as prayer and fasting had the ability to influence temporal events: "*Siquidem exercendis ad sanctimoniam mentibus atque corporibus, ipsa quoque mundi*

⁹⁰ Augustine, *Serm.* 205.1 [PL 38:1039]: "A Christian ought to be perpetually suspended on this cross, in fact, for his entire life...not for forty days, but for the whole of this life."

⁹¹ E.g., Valerian, *Hom.* 19.1 [PL 52:749]: "*non tantum dierum illorum observatione contenti, quos annuatim jejuniorum cura commendat*" ["We should not be content with observing only those days which the care of the annual fast commends"]; Maximus, *Serm.* 50.1 [CCSL 23:197-8]; Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 111.1; 148.1 [CCSL 40:1620-1; 2138].

⁹² Maximus, *Serm.* 85.3 [CCSL 23:349-50].

elementa famulantur."⁹³ Mamertus organized public processional prayers and a week of fasting, believing that the earthquakes could be ended by "*fidei stabilitate.*"⁹⁴ When such supplications had proved successful, Mamertus sent notice of the Rogations throughout Gaul. We find Sidonius Apollinaris instituting them at Clermont a few years later in the face of barbarian pressures.⁹⁵

The Rogations were an extension of quadragesimal activity resulting from immediate necessity. Their success ensured that they would become annual events. But aside from such fasts from necessity, each of the seasons was crowned with its own period of fasting. Philastrius of Brescia demonstrates that these Ember Seasons⁹⁶ were becoming a fixture by the end of the fourth century. He lists them as a necessity in his work on heresies: "*Nam per annum quattuor ieiunia in ecclesia celebrantur, in natale primum, deinde in pascha, tertio in ascensione,*

⁹³ Leo, *Serm.* 91.1 [PL 54:450]: "In fact, when the soul and the body apply themselves to sanctity, even the elements of the world themselves are enslaved." The same idea recurs time and time again in the sermons of late antique bishops. E.g. Gaudentius, *Tr.* 13.21 [PL 20:938-9]: "*ita inter pericula imminantium barbarorum, auxilio protegi divino merebimus; scriptum est enim, bonum esse jejunium cum elemosyna. Utrumque fieri oportebat ad indignationem Domini mitigandum*" ["so we will merit to be protected by divine assistance in the perils of threatening barbarians. For it is written, 'Fasting with almsgiving is a good thing. Each ought to be done for the purpose of mitigating the indignation of the Lord']; Cf. Leo, *Serm.* 39.1 [PL 54:263]; Maximus, *Serm.* 69.4; 81.3; 83.1 [CCSL 23:290-1; 333; 339]. Ambrose, *De Hel.* 8.22 [PL 14:739-40].

⁹⁴ Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.* 7.1.5 [Loeb, 420:290]: "firmness of faith".

⁹⁵ Sidonius, *Ep.* 7.1.6 [Loeb 420:290-1], notes that Mamertus had sent copies of the Rogations to a number of bishops, and that the calamities that had beset Vienne had not returned after the institution of Rogations. This suggests that Mamertus was actively attempting to spread the Rogations, in light of their apparent success in appeasing God. We find Sidonius, *Ep.* 5.14.1-3 [Loeb 420:216-219], in a letter to Aper of Autun, attempting to spread them as well. He even claims that the lukewarm Christianity of his congregation had been heated up by the Rogations. Cf. Gregory of Tours, *HF* 2.34; Caesarius of Arles, *Hom.* 30 [CCSL 103:129-133]. The Rogations initially lacked the agricultural associations which we find in the extension of quadragesimal fasting to the seasons of the year. But their position, just before Ascension Day, meant that they would eventually acquire such connections. A. Chupungco, "Liturgical Feasts and the Seasons of the Year," in D. Power, ed., *The Times of Celebration*, p. 36ff. See *Conc. Aurel. A. 511* 27 [CCSL 148A:11-12] which dictates the Rogations are to be celebrated by all churches; it places them just before Ascension with three days of fasts.

⁹⁶ Ember Days or Ember Seasons is the English equivalent. In antiquity they were called the *Quattuor tempora*. See Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy*, pp. 271ff.; P. Journel, "Sunday and the Week," in D. Power, *The Times of Celebration*, p. 28ff.

quarto in pentecosten."⁹⁷ Maximus suggests this process was underway at Turin at the beginning of the fifth century when he reminds those who complain about fasting in the heat of summer and the cold of winter that in Hell they will be forced to endure the cold of darkness and the heat of fire.⁹⁸

For Rome the evidence is more extensive. Quadragesima was depicted as a special time, requiring more perfection of its adherents than normal. According to Leo, Satan and his minions are more active at this time. But Leo also taught that quadragesimal activities should be practiced at all times. For a Christian, caught as he was between heaven and hell, it was the only way to ensure that he achieved the former and not the latter.⁹⁹

That was the ideal, the same ideal which we encountered in the promotion of daily Christian activities. But the reality of his congregation did not escape Leo. He knew that they were inadequate in their ability to meet the demands of endless fasting, continual almsgiving, and uninterrupted prayer.¹⁰⁰ His answer was to promote quadragesimal type periods outside of Quadragesima, and thus ring the circle of the year with seasonal fasts: "*Siquidem jejunium verum in*

⁹⁷ Philastrius, *De Her.* 149.3 [CCSL 9:312]: "In the course of the year four fasts are celebrated in the Church: the first at Christmas, the second at Easter, the third at Ascension, and the fourth at Pentecost."

⁹⁸ Maximus, *Serm.* 71.2 [CCSL 23:297-8].

⁹⁹ Leo, *Serm.* 40.2; 41.3 [PL 54:268-9; 274].

¹⁰⁰ Leo, *Serm.* 86.1 [PL 54:437-8], praises those whose zeal leaves them discontented with the prescribed fasts and who undertake voluntary fasts as well.

Quadragesima, aestivum in Pentecoste, autumnule in mense septimo, hiemale autem in hoc qui est decimus celebramus."¹⁰¹ By promoting such liturgical fasts, Leo was forcing extra periods of quadragesimal activity upon his congregation, increasing the amount of time that each congregant spent in the contemplation of God.

iv. Easter: Chronological Problems and the Search for Unity

Easter was the jewel of the Christian festival year, ranked first among feasts in antiquity.¹⁰² Its relation to the vernal equinox was marked. Easter was often noted as occurring on 25 March, the traditional date of the equinox, regardless of the fact that it normally occurred on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the equinox.¹⁰³ This was a reflection of the tendency to see 25 March as the beginning both of time itself and the course of the ecclesiastical year.¹⁰⁴ During the fourth century, 25 March became even more crucial as it was believed in the West

¹⁰¹ Leo, *Serm.* 19.2 [PL 54:186]: "For we celebrate a fast of spring during Quadragesima, a fast of summer in Pentecost, a fast of autumn at the seventh month and a fast of winter in this month which is the tenth." A number of Leo's extant sermons are dedicated to these seasonal fasts. Leo's fast of the tenth month, December, was in no way perceived as Advent. Instead, he concentrates on the agricultural imagery, befitting a time marking the end of the harvest: "*ad agriculturam nos mysticam vocat*" ["it calls us to the mystical agriculture"]. *Serm.* 18.3 [PL 54:185]. Maximus of Turin was promoting fasting at the same time of year, but his fasts did not have agricultural connections. For Maximus, they were part of the coming Feast of the Nativity. See above, pp. 219-20. The development of Advent was probably a reinterpretation of the December harvest fasts. As Christmas became increasingly important, it was given a season of preparation, just as existed for Easter.

¹⁰² Leo, *Serm.* 47.1 [PL 54:294-5]: "*In omnibus, dilectissimi, solemnitatibus Christianis non ignoramus paschale sacramentum esse praecipuum*" ["Of all the Christian solemnities, most beloved, we do not ignore that the first place goes to the paschal mystery"]. Cf. Leo, *Serm.* 48.1 [PL 54:298]. Chromatius, *Serm.* 16.1 [CCSL 9A:72]: "*Omnes quidem uigiliae quae in honore Domini celebrantur gratae et acceptae sunt Deo, sed haec uigilia super omnes uigilias est*" ["Certainly all the Vigils that are celebrated in honour of the Lord are agreeable to God, but this Vigil is above all vigils." For Augustine, *Serm.* 219.1 [PL 38:1089], the Easter Vigil was the mother "*omnium sanctorum uigiliarum*" ["of all holy vigils"].

¹⁰³ As we see it noted by Polemius Silvius, *Laterculus* [PL 13:678]. But see below, pp. 240ff.

¹⁰⁴ As discussed in chapters one and three.

to be the date of Mary's conception, translated into the annual Feast of the Annunciation during the Middle Ages. Thus Easter, like the Feast of the Nativity, was a celebration of beginnings: the beginning of time, of the year, and of salvation.¹⁰⁵ Easter was also a celebration of the end. Within its festivity was perceived an image of eternity, its joy was a reflection of the joy of heaven.

Easter's situation in spring had an historical basis in Scripture. While the coincidence of solstice and Christmas has allowed some scholars to argue the latter's dependence on the former, the coincidence of Easter and equinox cannot be subject to the same kind of conclusions. But both spring and equinox triggered images similar to those activated by the solstice for the Feast of the Nativity, allowing the scriptural association of Christ with the sun an impressive flowering in late antique homiletic literature.¹⁰⁶

But the most important aspect of Easter to the late antique mind was the sense of unity it imposed, based on Christ's saving actions of death and resurrection, the one, fundamental doctrine upon which the whole Christian theology was

¹⁰⁵ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 3.6-7 [PL 20:862], called Easter the "*natalem reformationis mundi*" ["birthday of the world's restoration"], and the birthday of those who are "*renati...in Christo*" ["reborn in Christ"]. Easter as a birthday, as the beginning of Christian life, was stressed by Zeno of Verona as well. See, for example, his Christian astrology of the year delivered to neophytes at Easter (above, chapter one).

¹⁰⁶ E.g., Chromatius, *Serm.* 18.1 [CCSL 9A:83], where Christ is the "*sol iustitiae*". Zeno, *Tr.* 1.57 [CCSL 22:132]: "*nam occasu passionem resurrectionemque ortu rediituo concelebrat.*" ["For by its setting and its renewed rising it celebrates the Passion and Resurrection"]. Gaudentius, *Tr.* 1.1 [PL 20:844-5]: "*Solem Iustitiae Christum, et Judaeorum caliginem, et rigorem Gentilium, ante ardorem futuri iudicii, placido Resurrectionis suae lumine dimovere*" ["Christ, the Sun of Justice, before the heat of the future judgement, removes both the darkness of the Jews and the coldness of the Gentiles by the gentle light of His resurrection"]. Cf. Maximus, *Serm.* 53.3 [CCSL 23:215-6]. Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 74.2 [CCSL 24A:451] notes a difference between Scripture (i.e., "Late in the evening of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week.") and the Roman understanding of the day to show the sun's subjugation to Christ at Easter. Peter reminded his flock that, according to their understanding of time, evening ends the day, it does not begin it. But, because of Christ's resurrection, the sun changed its normal habit and evening does lead to dawn: "*mutat ordinem, dum agnoscit auctorem...anhelat creatori servire, non tempori*" ["it changes the order while it acknowledges the Creator....It is eager to serve the Creator, not time"].

founded. This unity was extended into the Christian perception of time as well. Because of Christ, the first "Easter" had become the hub about which all time and eternity revolved. Each successive Easter renewed this idea, so that the annual repetition of Easter not only made the feast the hub of the year, but the centre for the conjunction of time and eternity as well: "*Annus domini perficitur temporibus, non senescit, qui tamdiu suo recurrit in circulo, quamdiu nos ad diem retributionis adducat.*"¹⁰⁷

Within this single feast lay the unity of the Christian people, and the unity of all time, from beginning to *diem retributionis*.¹⁰⁸ It was, therefore, essential to the very idea of Easter that all Christians everywhere celebrated on the same day. But this unity of time, people, and feast did not exist in late antiquity.¹⁰⁹ Easter was a movable feast, just like the Jewish Passover from which it had evolved. The Christian Pasch depended on both the sun and the moon for its chronological position in the year. But Easter also needed to take place on a Sunday. The inexactness which plagued the date for Easter was a result of attempts to

¹⁰⁷ Peter, *Serm.* 73.1 [CCSL 24A:447]: "The year of the Lord is completed by time, which for so long recurs in a circle, not drawing to a close until it leads us to the day of retribution."

¹⁰⁸ Ambrose, *De Sacr.* 1.4.12 [PL 16:439], saw in the Easter baptism a passing over from "*terrenis ad coelstia*" ["earthly to heavenly things"]. Maximus, *Serm.* 53.1 [CCSL 23:214]: "*Nam in hac die per resurrectionem Christi aperitur tartarum, per neophytos ecclesiae innouatur terra, caelum per sanctum spiritum reseratur*" ["For on this day Hell is opened by Christ's resurrection, the earth is renewed by the Church's neophytes, and Heaven is unlocked by the Holy Spirit"]. This unity of time and eternity, earth and heaven, was expressed particularly well by Chromatius, *Serm.* 16.2 [CCSL 9A:73] (see above, n. 18). Cf. Gaudentius, *Tr.* 3.1-2 [PL 20:861]; Augustine, *Serm.* 259.6 [PL 38.1201].

¹⁰⁹ Many attempts were made to legislate this unity. E.g., *Conc. Arel. A.* 314 1 [CCSL 148:5]; *Stat. Eccl. Antiq.* 78 [CCSL 148:178] (c.a. 475): "*Paschae sollempnitas uno die et tempore celebranda*" ["The Paschal solemnity ought to be celebrated on one day and at one time"].

synchronize three very different time cycles: the year, the month, and the week. Different methods of calculating the date of that first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox simply aggravated the problem.

This search for unity marks the development of the Easter festival from its inception through to the end of the period of this study. The Quartodeciman controversy resulted from Western attempts to impose a universal, annual date for Easter (always on a Sunday versus always on 14 Nisan).¹¹⁰ Recent investigations have tended to see the Quartodeciman practice as the original, apostolic one, at least in those areas of Asia Minor where the influence of the apostle John was strongest.¹¹¹ Sunday Easter was probably a more recent development, not appearing in Rome until the second century when Eusebius notes the discussions between Anicetus and Polycarp, and the full-blown controversy between Victor of Rome and the bishops of Asia Minor forty years later.¹¹²

While the Quartodeciman controversy continued into the fourth century, another controversy, one which was to continue through to the sixth century, was already beginning to grow in the ante-Nicene period. Both Quartodecimans and their opponents based their dates on the Jewish Passover. The Jews relied on

¹¹⁰ Standard treatments include: G. La Piana, "The Roman Church at the End of the Second Century," *Harvard Theological Review* 18 (1925): 201-277; C.C. Richardson, "The Quartodecimans and the synoptic Chronology," *Harvard Theological Review* 33 (1940): 177-190; and F.E. Brightman, "The Quartodeciman Question," *JThS* 25 (1924): 254-270.

¹¹¹ T. Talley, "A Christian Heortology," p. 16.

¹¹² Cf. P. Jounel, "The Easter Cycle," in Martimort, et al, *The Liturgy and Time*, p. 33.

sighting the full moon to establish the date of the Passover. This left the date of the Passover inexact, and placed Christians in the rather embarrassing position of having to depend on Jewish observations to establish the date of their most important feast. Christianity responded by replacing the method of holding Easter on the first Sunday after the Passover with a date that depended on more precise astronomical calculations. Thus we see, for example, the development of Easter Cycles in the third century: the sixteen-year cycle of Hippolytus at Rome; and the nineteen-year cycle of Anatolius at Alexandria.¹¹³

Councils at the beginning of the fourth century tried to end the disagreements and achieve the unity that the very ideal of Easter demanded. The Council of Arles in 314, decreed that Easter was to be held on a Sunday. The Council of Nicaea, in 325, took the same position, expelling Quartodecimans from the Church.¹¹⁴ Nicaea also attempted to legalize the more scientific method of establishing the proper date for Easter by giving conciliar approval to astronomical calculations. As such calculations depended on fixing a date for the vernal equinox, Nicaea considered both the traditional Roman date (25 March), and the Alexandrian date (21 March). It ruled in favour of 21 March and urged the Church to follow the Alexandrian

¹¹³R. T. Beckwith, "The Origin of the Festivals Easter and Whitsun," *Studia Liturgica* 33 (1979): 1-20, discusses this whole problem. Beckwith traces the change to Jewish taunts that Christians were unable to fix the date of Easter without their help. Cf. R.T. Beckwith, "Cautionary Notes on the Use of Calendars and Astronomy to Determine the Chronology of the Passion," in J. Vardaman and E.M. Yamauchi, eds., *Chronos, Kairos, Christos. Nativity and Chronological Studies Presented to Jack Finegan* (Winona Lake, 1989), pp. 187ff.

¹¹⁴K. Baus, *From the Apostolic Community to Constantine* (London, 1980), p. 271.

method.

Like much of the unity established by the Council of Nicaea, the resolution of the Easter problems was short-lived. The victory of Sunday over 14 Nisan, of astronomy over tradition, brought a new group of problems to the surface. Once Sunday was accepted universally as the appropriate day to celebrate the resurrection, it became necessary to amalgamate the solar and lunar years with the cycle of the weeks. Ante-Nicene attempts to do this had resulted in a number of different Easter Cycles. Nicaea's settlement proved inadequate. It had established the correct date of the equinox without sufficiently emphasizing the need for a standard Easter Cycle.

Nicaea also failed to grasp the immense popularity of 25 March in the West. The conjunction of so many events on a single day--the equinox, the death of Christ, his conception, the beginning of the ecclesiastical year, and the beginning of time--gave a special, otherworldly quality to 25 March. In spite of the astronomical correctness of 21 March, 25 March maintained these associations. The true date of the equinox was not the point of Easter. What was of primary importance was the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, and tradition had firmly implanted 25 March in the popular mind as the date for this event. Notices to this effect continued to find their way into the consular lists of the fifth and sixth

century.¹¹⁵

Epiphanius' *Panarium* provides evidence that the popular sentiment attached to 25 March quickly blossomed into a full-fledged disagreement. Another group, which he erroneously identifies with the Quartodecimans, had begun to celebrate the Passion annually on a fixed date--25 March.¹¹⁶ This particular understanding of Easter seems to have gained its greatest support in Gaul. The *Laterculus* of Polemius Silvius shows that its author favoured 25 March for an annual commemoration of Easter. "*Christus passus hoc die*" on 25 March is not simply a reference to the traditional date for Christ's passion. Polemius supplements this note with a reference to the Resurrection on 27 March and the "*Natalis calices*" (the Birthday of the Cup) on 24 March, demonstrating that he perceived each of these events as taking place on those days in 448.¹¹⁷ According to later sources, such as Bede, this unorthodox practice continued in Gaul for some time.¹¹⁸

The similarity of this group with the Quartodecimans is obvious. The Quartodecimans had celebrated Easter on the same date every year as well. But whereas the Quartodecimans had based their date on the Jewish lunar calendar, this

¹¹⁵ E.g., *F.V.Pr* 114 and *F.V.Post* 114 [CM 1:281] which place the passion of Christ on 8 kalends April (25 March).

¹¹⁶ Epiphanius, *Panarium* 2.50.1 [PG 41:881-6]; Cf. F.E. Brightman, "The Quartodeciman Question," *JTS* 25 (1924): 263.

¹¹⁷ Polemius Silvius, *Laterculus* [PL 13:678].

¹¹⁸ Bede, *De Temp. Rat.* 47 [PL 90:495]; Martin Dumiensis [PL 72:50] (c. 572) verified the presence of this group in Gaul: "*Sicuti a plerisque Gallicanis episcopis usque ante non multum tempus custoditum est, ut semper VIII Kal. April diem Paschae celebrarent, in quo facta Christi resurrectio traditur*" [Until recently many of the Gallican bishops have observed the custom of celebrating the day of the Pasch on 25 March, when, according to the tradition, the resurrection took place." Cf. Bainton, "The Origins of Epiphany," p. 33; Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, p. 263.

new group seemed to be basing its date on the solar calendar. Yet the solar calendar had nothing to do with establishing Easter for this group (aside from providing a calendrical framework in which to situate the feast). All that was really necessary was the knowledge that Christ had died on 25 March; in their minds it was the date that was important.

At a technical level, choosing one annual date was an obvious attempt to simplify the chronological problems attached to Easter. In fixing the date of Easter to 25 March, the necessity of bringing Easter into alignment with the lunar calendar and the cycle of weeks was resolved. At a deeper, theological level, the choice of 25 March tells us something about the ideal that was being celebrated. The death of Christ was central for this group, as it was to all celebrants of Easter. The difference lay in their attitude towards time and feasts. Other feasts, such as those of martyrs, were not affected by attempts to correlate solar, lunar and weekly calendars: they simply occurred on the same day every year; a remembrance of the event that had occurred on that calendar date. For the orthodox, only Easter and the feasts which depended on it were treated differently. The ante-Nicene vision of Sunday as a weekly celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ, and as the temporal image of eternity, imposed that day on the annual celebration of these Christ-events as well. But in celebrating Easter annually on a Sunday, the orthodox were tacitly acknowledging that a theological interpretation of Easter was more

important than remembering Christ's sacrifice on the day it traditionally occurred. It is the greatest irony that, although the orthodox depended on three separate time cycles to establish the date for celebrating Easter, Easter was more a reminder of eternity than of time.

This is not to say that Easter did not remain a historical commemoration for the orthodox. In spite of recent scholarship which sees the historicization of feasts as a product of the fourth and fifth centuries,¹¹⁹ it is plain that even in the second century, any annual celebration of Christ's death and resurrection was by its very definition a historical commemoration.¹²⁰ But it is equally obvious that the historical aspects of Easter were more important for those who held 25 March as the only day worth celebrating. For them, the correlation of time and eternity contained in Christ's salutary actions required a strict historical setting. An annual commemoration could only be an annual commemoration if it was fixed to the same day each year, just like the majority of Christian feasts.¹²¹

In the meantime, other disagreements over the date of Easter developed out of the Nicene settlement. The failure of Nicaea to establish the nineteen-year cycle

¹¹⁹ Dix, *Shape of the Liturgy*, p. 350 is a good example. He sees the historical interpretation of Easter as the "outstanding mark left by the fourth century on the history of Christian worship."

¹²⁰ As noted by T.J. Talley, "History and Eschatology in the Primitive Pascha," *Worship* 47, no. 4 (1973): 212.

¹²¹ Augustine, *Ep.* 55.2 [PL 33:204], contains Augustine's response to a query from a layman who wanted to know why Easter was not celebrated on the same day every year like other feasts. "*Quaeris quae causa sit, cur anniversarius dies celebrandae dominicae passionis, non ad eundem redent anni diem, sicut dies qua traditur natus*" ["You ask why it is that the anniversary day of the Passion of the Lord is not celebrated on the same day of the year, as is the day on which He is said to have been born"]. Januarius' question is symptomatic of the mystification which the complicated problem of finding the annual date for Easter produced in the layman.

as definitive left the whole problem of Easter Cycles unresolved. In the East, the nineteen-year cycle remained the basis for Easter calculations. It was re-established by Theophilus of Alexandria who published an Easter Cycle which provided the dates for Easter beginning in 380 and continuing for the next one hundred years.¹²² In the West, however, there is evidence of a growing confusion as to the proper date for Easter. Ambrose of Milan wrote a letter to the Bishops of Aemilia attempting to explain why 25 April was to be the date for Easter in 387,¹²³ a date which fell outside the traditional understanding of the first month of the year, 21 March to 21 April (if you followed the Eastern date for the equinox, which Ambrose did). This required some artful reinterpretation by Ambrose.¹²⁴ Gaudentius of Brescia faced similar problems in attempting to explain Easter to his neophytes. His warning to them not to be disturbed because they sometimes celebrated Easter in the second month, April, demonstrates how difficult it was for most to grasp that months could begin at different times, depending on whether one followed a solar or lunar

¹²² Hydatius, *Chron.* 5 [SC 218:106]. Cf. Jerome, *Epp.* 98, 100 [PL 22:792-812; 813-29]; Gennadius, *De Vir.* III. 33 [PL 58:1112].

¹²³ Ambrose, *Ep.* 23.1 [PL 16:1070]. Evidently the intricacies of calculating Easter mystified bishops, not just laymen. The confusion is further stressed by comparing Ambrose's date for Easter in 387 (25 April), with that given in the Easter Cycle found in Section 9 of the *Codex-Calendar of 354* [CM 1:64], which places Easter of 387 on 15 kalends May (17 April). Victor of Aquitaine, *Cursus Paschalis* [PLS 3:414], written in the mid-fifth century, recorded the date of Easter for AD 387 as 18 April.

¹²⁴ Ambrose attempts to overcome this discrepancy by using a secular reckoning to reinterpret Scripture. The Jewish passover must occur on the fourteenth day of the first month, according to Exod. 12:18. Ambrose argues that if you remember that the old Roman calendar saw the nones as the first day of the moon, then it could be the first day of the month, too. Thus the nones of April can also be seen as the beginning of the first month, within the first month! This allows the first month to extend to the nones of May. Ambrose's argument is unconvincing, but it demonstrates the kind of difficulties that the attempt to achieve a unified date for Easter entailed. In fact, Ambrose could have saved himself a lot of trouble if he had simply accepted the traditional date for the equinox, 25 March—then 25 April would have fallen within the first month. Gennadius, *De Eccl. Dog.* 87 [PL 58:1000], provides the rule which caused Ambrose (and others) so much discomfort: "*Pascha, id est, dominicae Resurrectionis solemnitas, ante transgressum vernalis aequinoctii, et quartae decimae lunae perfectionem, non potest celebrari*" [The Pasch, that is, the solemnity of the resurrection of the Lord, cannot be celebrated before the vernal equinox and the fullness of the fourteenth moon have passed].

calculation.¹²⁵

The confusion in the West was both exemplified and amplified by attempts to produce a viable Easter Cycle, resulting from the failure of Hippolytus' sixteen-year cycle, and the apparent reluctance of Westerners to accept the Eastern nineteen-year cycle. An eighty-four year cycle came into vogue in the fourth and fifth centuries. Its appearance in the *Codex-Calendar of 354* suggests that the nineteen-year cycle was never used at Rome.¹²⁶ Such discrepancies came to a head during the episcopacy of Leo of Rome. The most serious outbreak appears to have occurred over the date for Easter in 455. In 451, Leo was already beginning to work towards a unified date for Easter 455. He notes in a letter to Paschasinus of Lilybaeum that the date given by Theophilus of Alexandria was at odds with the date in Western Easter Cycles. (24 April vs. 17 April). Leo began to campaign in earnest in 454. He sent letters to the emperor Marcian asking him to look into the matter. Marcian eventually settled in favour of the Eastern date (24 April). In a letter to the bishops of Gaul, a thoroughly unconvinced Leo announces the date of Easter for 455 as 24 April:

Quia ergo studio unitatis et pacis malui Orientalium definitioni acquiescere...fraternitas vestra die octavo kalendas Maias ab omnibus

¹²⁵ Gaudentius, *Tr.* 1.4 [PL 20:846].

¹²⁶ *F. V. Post* [CM 1:285ff] shows the outline of an eighty-four year Easter cycle. It contains six cycles of eighty-four years from Christ's passion until 532. For the Easter Cycle in the *Codex-Calendar of 354*, see CM 1:62. Salzmann, *On Roman Time*, pp. 39ff.

*resurrectionem Dominicam celebrandam.*¹²⁷

The unity which Leo sought was not to be achieved in the fifth century. In 457 Victor of Aquitaine was commissioned to produce a more thorough Easter Cycle.¹²⁸ This, too, proved to be unsuccessful. It was not until after the work of Dionysius Exiguus (526), and the acceptance of the nineteen-year cycle, that the problems of unity were finally worked out.¹²⁹

v. Pentecost and Ascension

Pentecost had strong links with Easter. When it first appears in the West it is perceived as a fifty-day continuation of the joy of Easter.¹³⁰ Like Sunday, it was a time when people prayed standing, rather than kneeling; and fasting during Pentecost was strictly prohibited.¹³¹ And like both Sunday and Easter, Pentecost was highly charged with eschatological significance.

This view of Pentecost predominated for most of the fourth and fifth centuries. Prohibitions against fasting during the fifty days abound in the homilies

¹²⁷ Leo, *Ep.* 138.1 [PL 54:1102]: "Since, therefore, I have preferred, in the cause of unity and peace, to acquiesce to this decision made in the East...your fraternities should know that the Lord's Resurrection is to be celebrated by all on 24 April." Prosper of Aquitaine, *Chron.* 1376 [cm 1:484-5], presents the controversy in black and white terms. Leo was right in his calculations; the Easterners were wrong. Prosper, like Leo, stresses the importance of Leo's acquiescence as a desire for unity, necessary for the feast of Easter.

¹²⁸ Victor of Aquitaine, *Cur. Pasch.* [PLS 3:381-426]; praised by Gennadius, *De Vir.* III. 88 [PL 58:1112].

¹²⁹ Carroll, *Liturgical Practice*, pp. 104-5; Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, p. 238.

¹³⁰ Baus, *Apostolic Community to Constantine*, p. 273; Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy*, p. 27.

¹³¹ Tertullian, *De Ieiun.* 14.2 [CCSL 2:1273]. Easter was so closely linked with Pentecost that the latter was also viewed as appropriate for baptism. Tertullian, *De Bapt.* 19.2 [CCSL 1:294]; Augustine, *Serm.* 210.1 [PL 38:1047]; Leo, *Ep.* 16.4 [PL 54:699].

and literature of the period.¹³² It was more important that this period be kept as one of continual joy, because Pentecost was an image of eternity. Easter was the great day, an annual example of what a day should be for Christians. Pentecost bestowed a similar eschatological significance on the week. Hilary of Poitiers saw Pentecost as a week of weeks because it was comprised of an octave of Sundays.¹³³ Ambrose of Milan saw Pentecost as the realization of the Hebrew Jubilee, "*quo debita vacuantur, confirmantur...libertates.*"¹³⁴

This eschatological understanding of Pentecost was the most popular view of Pentecost in late antiquity. Augustine was particularly fond of comparing the fifty days of Pentecost with the forty days of Quadragesima:

*Vita quae significatur Quadragesima ante Pascha, modo habetur: vita quae significatur quinquaginta diebus post resurrectionem Domini non habetur, sed speratur, et sperando amatur.*¹³⁵

The one unifying factor in the various eschatological expressions attached to the season and day of Pentecost was that of joy. This was particularly emphasized by the lack of fasting. But during the fourth and fifth century, this emphasis began to

¹³²Chromatius, *Tr. in Matt.* 46.2 [CCSL 9A:423]; Augustine, *Serm.* 210.1 [PL 38:1047]; Ambrose, *Apol. Pro. Dav.* 42 [PL 14:907]; Leo, *Serm.* 75.2 [PL 54:401], prescribes a fast immediately after Pentecost, but not during the season; Maximus, *Serm.* 44.2 [CCSL 23:178-9]; John Cassian, *Coll.* 20 [PL 49:1194].

¹³³Hilary of Poitiers, *Tr. Sup. Ps., Instr. Ps.* 12 [CSEL 22:11]. Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 139.7 [CCSL 24B:841], has the same view.

¹³⁴Ambrose, *Apol. Pro Dav.* 42 [PL 14:907]: "by which debts are abolished, liberties are confirmed."

¹³⁵Augustine, *Serm.* 243.8 [PL 38:1147]: "The life which is signified by the forty days before Easter, we have now; the life which is symbolized by the fifty days after the resurrection of the Lord, we do not have now, but is hoped for, and it is loved while it is hoped for." Cf. Augustine, *Serm.* 125.9 [PL 38:695-6]; *Hom. in Ioh.* 17.4 [PL 35:1529]; *Ep.* 54.23 [PL 33:215]. Cf. Eucherius of Lyons, *Lib. Form. Spir. Int.* 11:50 [PL 50:722]. This eschatological image is similar to that presented by Ambrose when he depicts Pentecost as the realization of the Hebrew Jubilee. See above, n. 134, i.e., a period of joy which symbolizes the joy of eternity.

shift. In part, it was the introduction of the Feast of the Ascension which was responsible. Occuring on the fortieth day after Easter, Ascension Day created a visible break in the fifty days of joy, and attempts to begin fasting during this period began to appear.

While fasting could be perceived as antithetical to the concept of eschatological joy, it was not antithetical to eschatology. Not eating was seen by some as mankind's natural state. Humanity's trouble began when Adam and Eve ate; God never ate, and man would do likewise when he achieved eternity.¹³⁶ More significantly, the imposition of fasting into the period of joy was partly the result of a darker eschatology that was growing in late antiquity. Fasting was often a response to dangers that were very real: earthquakes, famines, and the incursions of barbarians; the omens and portents that the end was near. It would not be stressing the point too much to conclude that, without the expanding presence of barbarians in the fifth century, the liturgical year would have evolved markedly differently from the way it did.

Ascension Day could not help but hold some eschatological significance. It celebrated the Ascension of Christ into heaven, and, as such, it signified the final ascension of all Christians into eternity.¹³⁷ Initially, the Ascension had been

¹³⁶ As noted above, ch. 1, n. 36.

¹³⁷ Augustine, *Serm.* 261.1 [*PL* 38:1202-3]; Chromatius, *Serm.* 8.2 [*CCSL* 9A:33-4].

commemorated on the fiftieth day, along with Pentecost.¹³⁸ This explains the early reluctance to detach the Ascension event from Pentecost and transfer it to the fortieth day, despite Scriptural assurances that the Ascension actually occurred on that day.¹³⁹

Ascension Day became a popular feast very quickly in the West, however. Augustine claimed that the feast was universal in his day, and Ascension Day sermons are extant from a number of sees.¹⁴⁰ Philastrius of Brescia listed Ascension Day as one of the four principle feasts of the year, but he also provides notice of the incursion of fasts into the fifty days. Philastrius calls for a fast just before Ascension Day, and again during the ten days between Ascension and Pentecost.¹⁴¹ A similar shift to fasting within the season of Pentecost appeared at Turin at the beginning of the fifth century. Initially, Maximus celebrated the Ascension and Pentecost together on the fiftieth day. Keeping in line with the tradition of eschatological joy, he allowed no fasting during this period: "*Non igitur ieiunamus*

¹³⁸ On the origins of Ascension Day, see J.G. Davies, *He Ascended into Heaven* (London, 1958); P. Toon, *The Ascension of Our Lord* (New York, 1984). A good account is provided by B. Bobrinskoy, "Worship and the Ascension of Christ," *Studia Liturgica* (1963): 108ff. Cf. Egeria, *It. Eg.* 43.5 [CCSL 175:85].

¹³⁹ Council of Elvira, Can. 43 [*Mansi* 2:13], c. 300, was concerned with a tendency to celebrate Pentecost on the fortieth day after the Pasch, rather than the fiftieth: "*ut cuncti diem Pentecostes post Pascha celebremus, non quadragesimam, nisi quinquagesimam.*" ["So that we may celebrate all together the day of Pentecost, not forty days after the Pasch, but fifty days"]. Although there is no specific reference to the Ascension, the fact that some were trying to close the season of Pentecost on the fortieth day suggests that this was the feast intended. See R. Cabie, *La Pentecôte* (Tournai, 1965), p. 181f.

¹⁴⁰ Augustine, *Ep.* 54.1 [PL 33:200]. Augustine himself preached some fourteen sermons on the Ascension. Cf. W.H. Marvee, *The Ascension of Christ in the Works of St. Augustine* (Ottawa, 1967), p. 22 for a list of these sermons. Other bishops who celebrated Ascension Day on the fortieth day after Easter include Chromatius, *Serm.* 8 [CCSL 9A:33-7]; Philastrius of Brescia, *Div. Haer.* [CCSL 9:304, 312]; Leo, *Serm.* 73 [PL 54:394-396]; Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 85.2 [CCSL 24A:524-5]. John Cassian, *Coll.* 20 [PL 49:1194], demonstrates it in Gaul.

¹⁴¹ Philastrius, *Div. Haer.* [CCSL 9:304, 312]. Talley, "Liturgical Time," p. 38, feels Philastrius seems to be familiar with the older tradition which forbade fasting until after Pentecost.

in quinquagesima, quia in his diebus nobiscum dominus conmoratur...Cum autem post hos dies ascendit ad caelum, iterum ieiunamus."¹⁴² Yet in another sermon, it is evident that Maximus does hold a fast within the season of Pentecost: "*Tunc enim, sicut modo facimus, ieiunauimus sabbato.*"¹⁴³

What is of interest here, however, is the dichotomy of emotion that such fasting produced. On the one hand, Maximus stresses the joy of the season, a joy not diluted by fasting, but enhanced.¹⁴⁴ On the other hand, there is a darker sense of expectation which sees both Easter and Pentecost as images of the end times: "*tunc anxii uel solliciti Christi precabamur aduentum; modo trepidi uel ieiuni paracliti desideramus aduentum.*"¹⁴⁵

This tendency to fast within the boundaries of the fifty days of joy only increased. John Cassian's warning against fasting at this time, "*Et idcirco hi quoque decem dies cum superioribus quadraginta pari solemnitate sunt ac laetitia celebrandi,*" was a plea on behalf of the unity that the season of Pentecost was

¹⁴² Maximus, *Serm.* 44.2 [CCSL 23:178-9]: "Therefore we do not fast for fifty days because the Lord remains with us in these days....But when he ascends to heaven after these days we fast again." *Serm.* 56.1 [CCSL 23:224-5], speaks of Christ's ascension on the fortieth day. It is possible that the division of Pentecost into two feasts occurred under Maximus.

¹⁴³ Maximus, *Serm.* 40.1 [CCSL 23:160]: "For then, just as we have done now, we fasted on the Sabbath."

¹⁴⁴ Maximus, *Serm.* 40.1 [CCSL 23:160]: "*necesse est similem obseruantium similiis laetitia subsequatur. Est laetitia plane consimilis: tunc enim ab inferis resurgentem suscepimus saluatorem, modo autem spiritum sanctum expectamus de caelis*" ["It is necessary that a similar observance be followed by a similar joy. The joy is plainly similar, for then we received the Saviour rising up from Hell, while now we await the Holy Spirit from the heavens"].

¹⁴⁵ Maximus, *Serm.* 40.1 [CCSL 23:160]: "Then, anxious and concerned, we were praying for the coming of Christ; now, fearful and fasting, we desire the coming of the Paraclete."

meant to represent.¹⁴⁶ But the eschatological joy of Pentecost was hardpressed to continue in the face of the troubles which the fifth century witnessed. By the end of the fifth century, Gaul, to which Cassian had issued his warning, was the site for the rapid spread of the Rogations. This period of penitential discipline inserted immediately before Ascension Day represents the final disintegration of the concept of eschatological joy which had characterized the season of Pentecost for over two centuries.¹⁴⁷

vi. Conclusions

In what ways did the celebrants of Christological feasts reflect their understanding of the world and time? Beginnings and endings were evidently of primary importance. At a literal level, the half-year dominated by Christological feasts reflected a cyclical view of time. Christmas and Epiphany are to the beginning of Christ's life and career what Easter, Ascension Day and Pentecost are to its end: a historical reconsideration of Christ-events which followed a logical chronological order on an annual basis.

But the meaning of Christological feasts went beyond the idea of eternal return. The feast contained all time, from Creation to Judgement Day; and with Christ as the centrepiece, these feasts contained eternity as well. Leo reminded his

¹⁴⁶ John Cassian, *Coll.* 20 [PL 49:1194]: "The ten days between the Ascension and Pentecost must be celebrated with the same solemnity and joy as the forty days before them."

¹⁴⁷ P. Jounel, "The Easter Cycle," p. 61. Attempts were still being made in the sixth century to keep Pentecost as fifty days of joy, without fasting. See *Ferrandi Brev. Can. A.* 523-546 214-215 [CCSL 259:305].

flock that Christ had performed many miracles, but not each miracle had become a feast. Only those events which the Fathers had deemed important were to become festivals in the fourth and fifth centuries.¹⁴⁸ These were the events that separated Christ from the majority of pagan miracle workers. It was in such festivities that the participant could be taught that Christ truly was God, and that God had come into the world, and into time.

For late antique Christianity, time had been sanctified by Christ. His entry into the temporal world had revealed the ultimate purpose and course of time, both in its origins and in its end. But sanctified time was a difficult concept to grasp for the average Christian. Feasts helped the celebrant to go beyond temporality by lending extra sanctification to certain days. In the joy of the celebration, in its effects on nature and the celestial bodies, the Christian could grasp more easily the role that Christ had played in time, continued to play in the celebrant's life, and would play in the end times yet to come.

Fasts had a similar power. They demonstrated God's continued presence in time by their perceived effects on the temporal world. They also allowed the faster to recreate the soul, to prepare it for the *dies retributionis*. And in the fourth and fifth centuries, when the proximity of Judgement Day sometimes seemed exceptionally close, the growth in the number of periods of fasting was a reflection

¹⁴⁸ See above, p. 206.

of an eschatological urgency which was still quite strong, as we saw in chapter two.

Christ was seen as the eternal friend who had entered time to bring salvation to the world. In remembering the events of his life, the Christian acknowledged His centrality to the time line in which he lived. Yet the Christological feast was also a reminder of the end of time. Christ was there, too: friend, saviour, and advocate. But Christ was also the eternal judge, and the dichotomy between advocate and judge was hard to reconcile, even for God! Thus Christians turned their hopes for Judgement Day to a representative closer to home. Their hopes fixed on the martyr and holy man, human being and *amicus Dei* in one. It is to a study of these friends of God which we shall next turn our attention.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Heaven, Earth, and Time, II: Saints and Sinners in Late Antiquity

*Purpurata est uniuersa terra sanguine martyrum; floret caelum coronis martyrum, ornatae sunt ecclesiae memoriis martyrum, insignita sunt tempora natalibus martyrum, crebres sunt sanitates meritis martyrum.*¹

No investigation of Christian views of time in late antiquity could be complete without some reference to the cult of martyrs. The veneration of martyrs was an immensely popular form of Christian devotion which appealed to all strata of society.² For some bishops it is even possible to acquire some sense as to the shape which the festivals of martyrs gave to the liturgical year. Partial calendars can be reconstructed from the sermons of Chromatius of Aquileia, Ambrose of Milan, Gaudentius of Brescia, Victricius of Rouen, Maximus of Turin, Augustine of Hippo, and Peter of Ravenna. Through his *Epistolae* and *Carmina*, Paulinus of Nola provides insight into the calendars of several sees, including those martyrs venerated at Nola during his own episcopacy and that of his predecessor, whom he served as priest from 395. Prudentius, especially in his *Peristephanon*, does the same for Spain. Here and there, too, scattered throughout the fragmentary homiletic records of bishops such as Zeno of Verona and Valerian of Cimiez, we catch a

¹Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 118.30.5 [CCSL 40:1768-9]: "The whole earth has been crimsoned by the blood of the martyrs; heaven is flowering with the crowns of martyrs, the Churches are decorated with the memorials of martyrs, time is distinguished by the birthdays of martyrs, healings are numerous by the merits of martyrs."

²P. Brown, *The Cult of Saints. Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981), p. 21.

fleeting glimpse of the martyrs, and what they meant to the individual.

In dealing with the festivals of martyrs in late antiquity, we are once again faced with some divergence between episcopal theory and popular practice. The vision of the martyr as model, advocate, and patron, expressed so eloquently in the sermons, was sometimes misunderstood by the listener. The fine line between veneration and worship was difficult to grasp. It was far too easy to cross in a milieu where gods were available to watch over even the most mundane aspects of human existence. People who had once brought their troubles to the temples could now bring them to the shrine and expect new and improved results: that, in essence, was the message of Christian propaganda concerning the cult of saints. To the popular mind, however, the supernatural power evident when the saints cured a headache, returned a lost cow, or saved a city, fell firmly under the cultural rubric, "Things to be Worshipped."

Bishops sometimes reacted to this tendency by explaining the true significance of martyrs and saints. In the quest to instill the ideals of living the perfect Christian life, the martyr was the prime example. Often the local boy or girl who "made good," they provided an easily accessible reminder of their example in the remains buried in "their" community. They demonstrated the heights which could be achieved, and the power which could be attained, if only the congregant would follow his bishop's prescriptions and focus daily on Christ. Chromatius of

Aquileia tried to make his flock understand this by comparing the holy men of Christian history with mountains: "*Montes sunt patriarchae, montes sunt prophetae, montes et apostoli, montes martyres.*"³ God, Chromatius reminded them, was the God of high places, not of valleys.

Most Christians lived in the valleys, however. In times when martyrdom was, for the most part, no longer possible, other modes of ascension were necessary. Bishops urged a different kind of martyrdom, a voluntary martyrdom of the body, to show one's faith by one's deeds (i.e., prayer, fasting and almsgiving). To follow the bishop's prescriptions was to be joined to the martyrs. To follow the example of the martyr was to forge another link with Christ and eternity. The role of such exemplars in episcopal theory was crucial. Historically, human beings had demonstrated time and time again that they were notoriously incapable of believing, left to their own devices. But the martyrs gave credence to faith: "*Nam ideo dominus per totum mundum diuersis in locis pati martyres uoluit ut tamquam idonei testes nos praesentia quadam fidei exemplo suae confessionis urgerent.*"⁴ Bishops used their examples of faith to suggest that normal Christians, through acts

³Chromatius, *Serm.* 5.2 [CCSL 9A:23]: "Mountains are the patriarchs, mountains are the prophets, and mountains are the apostles and the martyrs." The martyr was the perfect Christian for Chromatius. Martyrdom was the proof of the Church; martyrs were the vanquishers of death ["*mortem vicerunt*"] (*Serm.* 28.4 [CCSL 9A:130]). *Serm.* 14.2 [CCSL 9A:62], where martyrs and Apostles are the "*oculos ecclesiae*" ["eyes of the Church"]. Eyes are precious to the body, just as martyrs and Apostles are precious to the body of the Church.

⁴Maximus, *Serm.* 12.1 [CCSL 23:41]: "Thus the Lord wished that martyrs should suffer in different places throughout the whole world, so that they might urge us, like apt witnesses, to a sort of presence by the example of their confession of faith." Harries, *Bishops, Senators and Their Cities*, pp. 209ff, discusses the relevance of the cult of saints for the bishop. The promotion of local cults helped bishops establish stronger ties between Church and city. But on a more religious level, the relationship was also a personal one between the individual and the local saint. The cult of saints served as a method to increase the time which the individual spent in contemplating God.

of Christian devotion, had the opportunity to leave the valleys of temporal mediocrity and join their heroes on the mountains.

The martyr and saint as model and example was a feature of homiletic teaching throughout this period. Ambrose of Milan held up the Old Testament Patriarchs in such a manner: "*in Abraham didiceritis impigram fidei devotionem, in Isaac sinceræ mentis puritatem, in Jacob singularem animi laborumque patientiam.*"⁵ They were special: imitators of Christ, as all Christians should be, they had nevertheless gone further than most Christians ever could. They were the nobility of the Christian spiritual hierarchy, the yearly and daily *exemplum virtutum* that stood between the near-impossible example of Christ and the average layman:⁶ "*Ecce ante oculos nostros est, qui quotidie exemplis salutaribus provocat, et paterna affectione ad consortium sanctitatis invitat.*"⁷

As the imitators of Christ who had come closest to the ideal, the link between humanity and Christ forged by the martyr was like a mirror: they reflected Christ

⁵ Ambrose, *De Jos.* 1.1 [PL 14:673]: "In Abraham you have learned the diligent devotion of faith, in Isaac the purity of a sincere mind, in Jacob the remarkable endurance of the soul and of labours." Even the negative examples provided by the Old Testament saints could be instructive. When Patriarchs such as David sinned, they did so for us: "*peccatum possumus comprehendere*" ["we can understand sin"]. David thus provides a model for repentance. *Apol. Pro. Dav.* 2.7 [PL 14:895].

⁶ Valerian, *Hom.* 15.5 [PL 52:741].

⁷ Valerian, *Hom.* 16.1 [PL 52:741]: "Behold, before our eyes there is one who daily provokes by salutary examples, and with fatherly affection invites us to share of his sanctity." Cf. *Hom.* 10.5 [PL 52:724-5]. See Leo, *Serm.* 37.4 [PL 54:259], on the martyrdom of the Innocents: "*ut imitatoribus suis quid gloriæ pararet ostenderet*" ["so that [Christ] might show what glory He prepares for His imitators"]. Cf. Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 135.3 [CCSL 24B:823]: "*sed ut non sit inanis qui celebrat, imitetur*" ["but so that our celebration is not inane, let him be imitated"]. Maximus of Turin, *Serm.* 4.1 [CCSL 23:13], held up the Lawrence as an example for all Christians to follow. By his martyrdom, we are "*accendimur ad fidem incalescimus ad deuotionem*" ["inflamed with faith and we glow with devotion"].

to Christians.⁸ But the link was much more than an example to be imitated. The relevance of the saints to the Christian concept of time lies in their role as *amici Christi*. They were inextricably linked to Christ by their suffering, and thus, deserved whole-hearted veneration: "*Quisque ergo honorat martyres, honorat et Christum; et qui spernit sanctos, spernit et deum.*"⁹ As *amici Christi* they were friends of the heavenly "emperor;" and just as friendship with the Roman emperor conferred status on earth, so friendship with Christ was understood to confer status. For martyrs, however, this status was twofold, both in heaven *and* on earth. The link to Christ placed the martyr outside time; but they also had links with mortals and the temporal plane. They occupied a state similar to living Christians. They were in between time and eternity. But whereas the living occupied this state from the earth, martyrs and saints did so from eternity. The living were reaching up; the holy heroes were reaching down.

By their deaths, martyrs were believed to have gained special access to Christ. Like the friends of the emperor, they had the ruler's ear. This made them

⁸ In chapter seven we encountered the depiction of living a truly Christian life as angelic. This was especially true of the martyrs. Good Christians could live *like* angels, but martyrs *were* angels: "*quia omnes sancti, angeli; quia annuntiatores Dei*" ["For all saints are angels, because they are the messengers of God"]. Augustine, *Hom. in Ioh.* 1.4 [PL 35:1381].

⁹ Maximus, *Serm.* 3.3 [CCSL 23:11]: "Therefore, whoever honours the martyrs honours Christ as well. And he who spurns the saints, spurns God too." Their special relationship with Christ places the saints in proximity to the culmination of time which is Christ. As such, they are an intricate part of God's plan for history. Thus, Maximus found evidence in the Old Testament for the coming of the saints. E.g., Psalm 19.4 refers to Peter and Paul: "*In omnem terram exiit sonus eorum, et in fines orbis terrae uerba eorum*" ["Through all the world their sound has gone forth, and their words unto the end of the world"] (*Serm.* 9.1 [CCSL 23:31]). Similar examples are demonstrated in the case of John the Baptist, *Serm.* 6 [CCSL 23:22], and especially Lawrence, the Roman martyr whose martyrdom is linked to (and superior to) Nebuchadnessar's casting of the three youths into the furnace. *Serm.* 4 [CCSL 23:14]. Cf. Ambrose, *Ep.* 22.4 [PL 16:1020].

the perfect advocate for the sinner's cause:¹⁰ "*Peculiari itaque veneratione excolenda nobis est memoria sanctorum, ut januam salutis aperiant, et in notitiam Domini desideria nostrae pervenire faciant servitutis.*"¹¹

The concept of martyr as advocate was eschatological. It was believed that the martyr would stand next to his devotee on the *dies retributionis* and plead his case. Thus the martyr was the ultimate patron, standing at the end of time as a figure of hope. But the martyr also played an important role within the course of time. The martyr was a patron who could bestow boons now, in the present. Even the moment at which martyrs "allowed" their remains to be discovered could be significant, as the career of Ambrose of Milan demonstrates.¹² At the darkest point of the Basilica Controversy in 386, Ambrose conveniently discovered the remains of the martyrs Protasius and Gervasius. In the light of such apparent supernatural support for orthodoxy (not to mention Ambrose's control of the Milanese mob!), the empress Justina and her Arian courtiers backed off and the near-disaster became an orthodox victory. Years later, when Ambrose was forced to flee Milan during the attempted usurpation of Eugenius, he made a similar, opportune discovery of relics

¹⁰ Prudentius, *Po.* 2.560 [CCSL 126:276], calls the martyr Lawrence the "*perennis consul*" ["eternal consul"]. This was a particularly apt image for Lawrence, as he had been martyred at Rome.

¹¹ Valerian, *Hom.* 15.4 [PL 52:740]: "Therefore the memory of the saints should be cultivated by us with unusual veneration, so that they may open the door of salvation and make the desires of our servitude come to the notice of the Lord." For martyrs as advocates, see Augustine, *Serm.* 138.1 [PL 38:763], where the martyrs, like Christ, are "*pastores boni*" ["good shepherds"]. *Hom. in Ioh.* 84.1 [PL 35:1846-7]; Chromatius, *Serm.* 21.4 [CCSL 9A:99].

¹² The story of Ambrose's discovery of the bodies of Gervasius and Protasius is told in *Ep.* 22 [PL 16:1062-69]. Ambrose insisted that these patrons of Milan were helping their co-citizens in the fight against Arianism even before they were discovered, however. *Ep.* 22.11 [PL 16:1065-6].

at Bologna. On his return to Milan, after the defeat of Eugenius by Theodosius, Ambrose miraculously discovered the remains of Nazarius and Celsus, adding two more saints to his growing calendar of festivals. By fleeing Milan at the approach of Eugenius, Ambrose had separated himself from the usurper and demonstrated his support for Theodosius. But it was his ability to discover relics which showed that what he had done politically was correct. The sudden appearance of martyrs was used as proof to demonstrate that God approved and supported Ambrose's actions.¹³

All martyrs were believed to be capable of such gifts, but not all martyrs provided them. There were *memoria* of legitimate martyrs which were silent, others where miracles were an almost daily occurrence. Paulinus of Nola saw this as evidence that evil existed throughout the world in varying degrees. Martyrs were still strong in places where they did nothing: it was just that those areas needed them less.¹⁴ In fact, late antique Christians did not believe that all martyrs were equal. Local heroes were infinitely more powerful and thus, better patrons than saints from further afield. Paulinus could say of his patron saint, Felix, that he was the *Nolanis medicus*, just as other martyrs became physicians for their own

¹³ Martyrs played an important role in supporting orthodoxy. Augustine, *Serm.* 138.2 [PL 38:764], goes so far as to deny that heretics can even have martyrs. It took more than being killed for one's faith to become a martyr. *Charitas* was also essential. Heretics, in strife with their fellow Christians, could not have *charitas*. Gregory of Tours, *HF.* 9.15 [PL 71:493-4], tells the story of Recared, a barbarian king in Spain, who was an Arian. According to Gregory, Recared began to have doubts because of the miracles performed in the name of orthodoxy which the Arians could not match. In an attempt to reconcile this difficulty Recared called a Church council, which resulted in his conversion to orthodoxy.

¹⁴ Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* 19.45-46 [PL 61:511-12].

locales.¹⁵ Felix, saved from the obscurity of Nola by the extreme devotion of Paulinus, was also rated by his poet as the most powerful martyr on earth, second only to the fathers of all martyrs, Peter and Paul.¹⁶ Paulinus' friend Sulpicius Severus promoted the holy man, Martin of Tours, in much the same way, although for Severus, there was no one more powerful than Martin.¹⁷

Promoting the cult of a martyr or saint for personal reasons was common in late antiquity. Sidonius Apollinaris, bishop of Clermont in the second half of the fifth century, felt strong gratitude to Saturninus of Toulouse. In the late 470s, when Sidonius considered writing poetry in praise of the martyrs, Saturninus was to be his first subject. In view of his contention with the Arian king Euric, whose court was located at Toulouse, it is not surprising that Saturninus had a special place in Sidonius' heart. Who better to turn to than the orthodox saint that watched over a former enemy's city, and who might be responsible for returning Sidonius from exile?¹⁸

The most popular saint in late antiquity was always the local one. People

¹⁵ Paulinus, *Carm.* 19.195 [PL 61:196-7].

¹⁶ Paulinus, *Carm.* 13.26-28 [PL 61:464]. Cf. *Carm.* 21.6-8 [PL 61:571]. Augustine, *Serm.* 241.8 [PL 38:1138]: "*Videtis quia promissa est sanctorum corporibus claritas, et diversa species claritatis, quia diversa sunt merita charitatis*" ["For you see, splendour was promised to the bodies of the saints and different degrees of splendour because the merits of charity are different"].

¹⁷ Severus, *Dial.* 1.24 [PL 20:198]. Martin is compared to the Eastern holy men. They each do one type of miracle, but Martin does them all. Martin was not a martyr, but late antiquity enlarged the cult to include men who had proven their worth by living holy lives. H. Delehaye, *Sanctus. Essai sur le culte des saints dans l'antiquité* (Brussels, 1927), pp. 109-21, saw this development as the erosion of the cult of martyrs. The cult of saints began as a celebration of martyrs; it grew to include ascetics and bishops by the fifth century.

¹⁸ Sidonius, *Ep.* 9.16.3, ll. 77ff [Loeb 420:604-5]. Concerning Saturninus and other holy patrons, Sidonius admits they have helped him, "*duros...per labores*" ["through hard struggles"] (trans. W.B. Anderson). The best example of promoting saints is provided by Ambrose. The cult of Gervasius and Protasius, unknown before 386, was by the end of the fifth century one of the most popular cults in the West, thanks to the work of Ambrose of Milan.

traditionally had strong ties to their homes and the local martyr was the spiritual patron of his co-citizens, a source of pride and hope. At times this resulted in the attribution of international importance to little-known local martyrs. If we may believe Valerian, for example, the martyr of Cimiez was honoured by the world: "*cum videatis huc etiam extraneas nationes devotae mentis amore concurre, et, prout causa exigit, sancti martyris solatia postulare.*" Yet the unnamed martyr of Cimiez has left virtually no mark as to who he was.¹⁹

Prudentius promotes Spanish saints with an even greater patriotic zeal. He often makes use of techniques not uncommon in traditional rhetorical addresses in praise of cities.²⁰ Some of the saints he chose to praise, however, were virtual unknowns. The songs to Chelidonius, Emeterius, and the eighteen of Caesaraugusta represent the first written evidence for the martyrs discussed. Prudentius knew little more than their names and some scant oral traditions, and yet, he promotes them as being internationally significant.²¹

His scheme for showing the international fame of the eighteen of Caesaraugusta is elaborate. In a lengthy eschatological image, he lists a number of cities from across the world, and the saints that they will bring forth with pride on

¹⁹ Valerian, *Hom.* 16.1 [PL 52:741]: "since you see the external nations coming together here through the love of devout minds and, as the case requires, seeking solace from the holy martyr." Cf. Valerian, *Hom.* 15.2 [PL 52:739].

²⁰ R.L. Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (Markham: Penguin Books of Canada Ltd., 1988), pp. 519-520. See, for example, Prudentius, *Po.* 1.1-6. [CCSL 126:251].

²¹ For a useful study of the sources for each of the *Peristephanon* poems, see A-M Palmer, *Prudentius on the Martyrs* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 227-279.

judgement day.²² Prudentius employs a numerical comparison to show the superiority of the saints of Caesaraugusta. The number of saints representing Caesaraugusta corresponds to the exact number of saints used to represent the *entire* world--nineteen. That this was an intentional comparison is shown by the addition of Encratis, a confessor who survived to tell the story of the eighteen of Caesaraugusta.²³ Thus Caesaraugusta will also bring forth nineteen on the *dies iudicii*. However, Prudentius then adds the martyr Vincent to the representatives of Caesaraugusta. Vincent had been born there, and had once suffered a nose bleed there as well!²⁴ This brings Caesaraugusta's tally to twenty, one more than the saints which represent the rest of the world. The implication is that the saints of Caesaraugusta are worthy of international acclaim, despite the embarrassing lack of any substantial knowledge about the saints themselves.

The technique which Prudentius uses to enhance the status of the saints of Caesaraugusta was not simply poetic "filler." If Prudentius had intended that, he could just as easily have provided a description of the shrine itself, as he does for the shrines of Hippolytus and Peter and Paul.²⁵ Prudentius' intention was to create a poetic advertisement for his local shrine. Spanish loyalties were a significant

²² Prudentius, *Pe.* 4.17-48 [CCSL 126:286-7].

²³ Prudentius, *Pe.* 4.129ff [CCSL 126:290-1].

²⁴ Prudentius, *Pe.* 4.89-92 [CCSL 126:289].

²⁵ Prudentius, *Pe.* 11.151-230; 12.28-65 [CCSL 126:375-77; 380-1].

motivating element in his poems.

The focus of this religious patriotism was the relic. When a martyr died, he did so not only for his own salvation and for Christ, but also for his fellow citizens. His remains belonged naturally to the place of his death, and the holy power within them was perceived to work especially for the Christians who still lived in the same locale: *specialiter tamen illi pro nobis interueniunt, qui et supplicia pertulere pro nobis. Martyr enim cum patitur, non sibi tantum patitur sed et ciuibus.*²⁶ Certain martyrs, however, had a higher profile. Lawrence of Rome, Cyprian of Carthage, Peter and Paul, and a handful of others were the international celebrities of the late antique cult of martyrs. Prudentius considered Lawrence a useful martyr, even without the presence of relics. One could still make requests of him and expect satisfactory results. But there was a subtle difference between the belief in the universal efficacy of all saints, and the reality of the blessing provided by actually having relics, which guaranteed the *praesentia* of the saint.²⁷

Relics came in all shapes and sizes. Prudentius provides the reader with a rather gruesome example of one way in which relics could be created. After Vincent is tortured, Christians flock about him, kissing his wounds, licking the

²⁶ Maximus of Turin, *Serm.* 12.1 [CCSL 23:41]: "nonetheless those intervene specially for us who have put up with suffering for us. For when a martyr suffers, he suffers not for himself only, but also for his co-citizens." Paulinus, *Carm.* 19.14ff [PL 61:509]: "*Omnis enim, quacumque manet mandatus in ora / Martyr, stella loci simul, et medicina colentum est*" ["For every martyr, in whatever region he remains committed is both star of the place and its source of healing"]. Cf. Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 121.2 [CCSL 40:1802].

²⁷ Prudentius, *Pe.* 2.529ff [CCSL 126:275]. The same held true for Cyprian who is "*proprius patriae martyr, sed amore et ore noster*" ["especially the martyr of his fatherland, but is ours by love and by prayer"]. *Pe.* 13.3 [CCSL 126:382].

"purpurantem...cruorem" from his body: "*Plerique uestem linteam / stillante tingunt sanguine, / tutamen ut sacrum suis / domi reseruent posteris.*"²⁸ As Prudentius tells the story, such relics were not destined for public cult, but for private use. The private use of relics as sources of power and healing was commonplace in late antiquity, and demonstrates well the popularity of the cult of the martyrs. The Donatist schism in Africa had begun when Caecilianus of Carthage chastised a lay woman, Lucilla, for her attachment to the bone of a martyr.²⁹ Even clumps of earth taken from the holy land were believed to contain a mystical power. Sulpicius Severus noted that pilgrims flocked to the site of the ascension to take earth from the footprints of Christ as a potent *medicina*.³⁰

Augustine, too, was convinced of the power inherent in these clumps of earth. In the *De Civitate Dei* he tells the story of a layman, Hesperius, who had been given some earth brought from Jerusalem. Hesperius used the earth to rid his estate of demons, even hanging it in his bedroom to ensure that the demons were kept at bay. When the danger had passed, Hesperius, with the blessing of Augustine and Maximinus of Sinita, had the earth buried and a shrine built over it,

²⁸ Prudentius, *Po.* 5.337-344 [CCSL 126:305]: "Many soak a linen cloth with drops of blood; a holy safeguard that they may reserve in their homes for posterity."

²⁹ Optatus, *De Schism. Donat.* 1.16 [CSEL 26:18-9]. Cf., Chadwick, *The Early Church*, pp. 123-4.

³⁰ Severus, *Sac. His.* 2.33 [PL 20:148].

thus transferring private reverence into public cult.³¹ Nor was such a practice restricted to laymen. Paulinus of Nola sent Sulpicius Severus a sliver of the holy cross, leaving it up to Severus whether he placed it in the altar as part of the public cult, or wore it in a reliquary around his neck for private veneration.³² Germanus of Auxerre wore a reliquary about his neck always. At his death, in Ravenna, both bishop and empress divided the reliquary relics and Germanus' clothes, which, due to Germanus' holy life, had themselves become a source of holiness.³³ It is a poignant reminder that relics were much sought after, by ecclesiastic and laity alike.

The tendency was for private relics to eventually transfer into public cult, especially those relics which had proved their worth by performing miracles. Relics changed hands quite frequently towards the end of the fourth century when individual bishops were attempting to fill the days of their calendar with holy festivals.³⁴ The local martyr always remained the most revered, but other festivals

³¹ Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*. 22.8 [CCSL 48:819-20]. Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 545, notes that soil from the Holy Land was a much prized relic in Africa, as the number of inscriptions attest. Cf. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage*, p. 129. But anything that came into contact with the holy could be considered powerful. Ambrose, *De Exc. Saty.* 1.43 [PL 16:1380], says that his brother, Satyrus, took a piece of the Eucharist on a dangerous voyage, bound in a napkin around his neck. Others put their faith in touching the gospel, or neophytes fresh from the font.

³² Paulinus, *Epp.* 31.1; 32.7-8. Paulinus sends inscriptions for Severus' new church at Primuliacum. He includes an inscription mentioning the cross in case Severus decides to enclose it in the altar for public veneration. A second inscription does not mention the cross, in case Severus decides to keep the relic for private use.

³³ Constantius of Lyons, *V.Germ.* 1.4 and 8.43 [SC 112:128 and 200]. Cf. Prudentius, *Pe.* 4.89ff [CCSL 126:289]. The nosebleed which Vincent had at Caesaraugusta was very likely the source of his cult there, and ensured his *praesentia* (he was martyred and buried elsewhere). Eugenius of Toledo in the mid-seventh century refers to Vincent's nosebleed in verses he wrote on the basilica of Vincent at Caesaraugusta. Cf. Harries, *Bishops, Senators and their Cities*, p. 271.

³⁴ The necessity of relics for new churches is difficult to establish. Veneration could be given to a martyr where there were no relics, as Prudentius, *Pe.* 2.545-6 [CCSL 126:276], clearly demonstrates was the case for Lawrence. The sermons indicate that relics played a role in most church dedications. Chromatius, *Serm.* 26.1 [CCSL 9A:119], commented that the Basilica at Concordia had been built very quickly *because* relics were already available, indicating that the possession of relics could certainly be a prime factor in instigating such projects. Gaudentius, *Tr.* 17 [PL 20:959-71], gathered together a similar group of relics for the dedication of his church at Brescia. Victricius also built a church in response to relics he had brought with him into Gaul. *De Laud. Sanct.* 1 [PL 20:443-4]. Ambrose of Milan, *Ep.* 22.1 [PL 16:1062], demonstrates the popularity of dedicating a church with relics. He was about to consecrate a new church when

could be added by obtaining relics from other martyrs. On rare occasions the complete remains could be translated and thus become the focus of a new cult.³⁵ Such remains could not be divided to create new relics, however, because, at least in the West, the division of corpses was taboo.³⁶ Instead, objects such as oil and cloth (*brandea*) which had come into proximity with the holy remains and thus, had soaked up some of the martyr's power, were used: "*Vidimus enim per diversas et longe positas regiones scissi corporis plagas passim dividi.*"³⁷

The power of the martyrs was understood to be not unlike the power of Christ. As Christ's power was believed to effuse everything, everywhere, so the power of the martyrs could saturate whatever it came into contact with, without diminution. But Christ's power was diffused through time from eternity. The potency of the martyrs had its limits. It rested in their physical presence through

the people cried, "*Sicut Romanam basilicam dedices*" ["Dedicate this like you did the Roman basilica"]. He answered, "*Faciam, si martyrum reliquias invenero*" ["I will, if I find relics of Martyrs"]. This suggests that relics may *not* have been considered necessary by bishops to dedicate a church, but that the laity preferred their use.

³⁵ Sidonius, *Ep.* 7.1.7 [Loeb 420:290-3], mentions the translation of the martyr Ferreolus to Vienne. The most famous examples of translations were those instigated by Constantius II in 356-7 (Timothy, Andrew, and Luke). See Jerome, *Con. Vig.* 5 [PL 23:358]; *De Vir. Ill.* 7 [PL 23:651]. This series of translations was long considered a pivotal event in the spread of the cult of martyrs in the fourth and fifth century. Timothy, Andrew, and Luke were among the earliest biblical persons whose remains suddenly surfaced. Constantius II may have been attempting to legitimize his Arian stance by demonstrating supernatural support, much as Ambrose did with the discovery of Gervasius and Protasius. The effect of the translation of these relics on the layman is demonstrated by notices in the consular annals. *Con. Const.* 356-357 [CM 1:238] records the entry of their remains into Constantinople. The *Consularia Italica*, 447 [CM 1:293], backdate the event to the reign of Constantine (335), probably to remove such an important discovery from the auspices of the Arian Constantius II.

³⁶ Early churches were built outside the walls of a city, because age old laws forbade corpses within city limits. See Brown, *Cult of Saints*, p. 4; Jungmann, *Early Liturgy*, pp. 186-7. There were Christian reasons to keep relics intact as well. E.g., Prudentius, *Pe.* 6.130-141 [CCSL 126:319]. After the martyrdom of Fructuosus people divided up their bones and ashes. Fructuosus and his co-martyrs appeared to these devotees, demanding that the relics be reunited and buried in a single place, "*ne reliquias resuscitandas / et mox cum domino simul futuras / discretis loca dividant sepulchris*" ["Lest remains which must one day be resurrected when the Lord comes again be divided in separate sepulchres"]. The early refusal to divide up the actual remains rested in fears that such division would cause problems at the Resurrection.

³⁷ Valerian, *Hom.* 17.3 [PL 52:745]: "For we have seen pieces of cloth from his mangled body distributed here and there through diverse and far away regions." Cf. Ambrose, *Ep.* 22.9 [PL 16:1065]: "*Quanta oraria jactantur? quanta indumenta super reliquias sacratissimas et tactu ipso medicabilia reposcuntur!*" ["How many napkins are shown off? How many garments are placed on these most holy relics, and by touching the healing power are reclaimed"].

relics, both temporally and spatially. It was always necessary to approach the martyrs to receive the most substantial benefit. Yet although the level of power which a martyr yielded was less than that of Christ, a martyr's power was consistent in its parts. Each place which possessed a relic of a martyr, according to late antique theory, contained exactly the same amount of power as the original remains. The efficacy of the relics of Gervasius and Protasius at Rouen, for example, was equal to the efficacy of the full remains at Milan: "*ita ut non minor sit illis sanctorum cura, quibus sola martyrii creduntur indicia.*"³⁸ Each relic, no matter how small, which became the source of a public cult, became also a new centre for the emanation of the power of the martyr which the relic represented.

The extreme popularity of the cult of martyrs for the layman is evident at a number of levels. Prudentius' *Peristephanon* demonstrates the devotion which the martyrs could invoke. The production of *Vitae* which came into vogue in the fourth century reflects the hunger for knowledge about the lives of holy men.³⁹ The *laetitia* experienced at the festival itself, the depictions of crowds rushing from shrine to shrine, of pilgrims seeking the aid of this or that local saint: all are telling

³⁸ Valerian, *Hom.* 17.3 [PL 52:745]: "Consequently, the care of the saints is not less for them to whom only a token of the martyr is entrusted." That secondary relics such as *brandea* contained power equal to the original was widely believed in late antiquity. Cf. Gaudentius, *Tr.* 17.36, [PL 20:970-1], discussing the relics of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, believed that all forty were present in his handful of ashes: "*Itaque pars ipsa quam meruimus, plenitudo est; dividi enim quadraginta isti martyres ab invicem nullo modo possunt*" ["Therefore, the part which we merited is itself the whole. For those forty martyrs can in no way be divided from each other"]. Relics of Christ (i.e., the cross, soil from the Holy Land) could be divided (they were not actually parts of bodies), but they were believed to replenish themselves in much the same way that Christ had fed five thousand with five fishes and a few loaves of bread. Cf. Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* 31.6 [PL 61:329-30]; Sulpicius Severus, *Sacr. His.* 2.33 [PL 20:148].

³⁹ Sulpicius Severus draws a portrait of the intense interest in the saints in his *Dial.* 3.1 [2.1] [PL 20:112]. When news that Severus and his friends are spending the day telling stories about Martin leaks out, monks and important laymen alike scramble to Primuliacum to listen to the miracles of their patron saint. The laymen are accused of coming to listen out of *curiositas*, rather than proper religious interest.

signs of how firmly and how quickly the devotion to saints gripped the common mind.⁴⁰

Behind this widespread devotion to the cult of saints was the miracle. Miracles were primarily understood to be supernatural proofs of the vitality and truth of the Christian religion. The fact that people were granted some divine favour was actually of secondary importance, especially to those bishops who used stories of the miraculous to bolster faith. But even at the popular level, those who did not receive a miracle were still fascinated by miracles which occurred to others. They still wanted to see, to hear, to touch, because, in so doing, they were able to witness the divine power working on earth. In effect, they were able to gain for themselves a small taste of heaven.

This stress on the sensual aspect is a common theme in the sermons of late antique bishops. It is on account of the "*consuetudo cernendi*", according to Augustine, that, "*facit Deus miracula*."⁴¹ For Leo of Rome, speaking to his congregation in the 450s, miracles were so intricately involved in promoting faith that he is amazed at the conversion of the thief on the cross: how he wonders, had

⁴⁰ Prudentius describes the bustling crowds which attended the festivals of Hippolytus and Peter and Paul at Rome. *Pe.* 11.151-230; 12.28-65 [CCSL 128:375-77; 380-1]. That this was not mere poetic exaggeration is demonstrated by the references to such crowds in other sources. Eg. Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps.* 121,2 [CCSL 40:1802]; Valerian, *Hom.* 15.1-2 [PL 52:738-9].

⁴¹ Augustine, *Serm.* 242.1 [PL 38:1139]: "*Quod solent videre, credunt, quod non solent, non credunt. Praeter consuetudinem facit Deus miracula*" ["What they are used to seeing, they believe, what they are not accustomed to, they do not believe. On account of this habit, God does miracles"]. Cf. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage*, pp. 86-7, who stresses the importance of seeing as an impetus for pilgrimage. R.L. Wilken, *The Land Called Holy. Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven, 1992), pp.115-6, sees this "tactile piety" as representative of Christian devotion in late antiquity.

this man come by this faith when, "*non viderat prius acta miracula?*"⁴²

Harnack believed that, "Miracles in the Churches [became] more numerous, more external, and more coarse," in late antiquity.⁴³ Harnack was incorrect. It was the focus on miracles that changed, not the miracles themselves. People paid more attention to the recording of miracles as their utility became more apparent. Augustine's explanation of his early reluctance to believe in miracles lay along these lines. The problem, he believed, rested in the inadequacy of late antique communications. Scriptural miracles had the advantage of a widely-read text. Only under exceptional circumstances, however, did a current miracle gain widespread publicity. Augustine cites the miracles which accompanied Ambrose's discovery of Protasius and Gervasius as an example. They had occurred in a large city, the seat of the emperor, and had been witnessed by an immense throng. Because Milan was a city of great importance and so densely populated, news of such miracles could spread more quickly, more efficiently. But most miracles were local events, dependent on a few eye-witnesses and oral reports--inadequate even to ensure full local knowledge. Augustine concluded it was important that his people--all people--

⁴²Leo, *Serm.* 53.1 [PL 54:317]: "He had not first seen miracles performed?" Cf Valerian, *Hom.* 16.3 [PL 52:742-3]; *Hom.* 17.2 [PL 52:744]: "*non solum auribus, sed etiam oculis quotidie sub praesentia tanti martyris fides religionis inseritur*" ["Through the presence of so great a martyr, the faith of our religion is daily proved, not only to our ears, but also to our eyes"]. Cf Ambrose, *Ep.* 22.9 [PL 16:1064-5]. Ambrose, *Hex.* 6.9.55-69, provides his flock with a lengthy excursus on the importance of the senses. This stress on the sensual aspect of miracles and the cult of martyrs was aptly stated by Maximus, *Serm.* 105.1 [CCSL 23:414]: "*Nam cum auditu aliquanta mihi impossibilia viderentur, coepi ea credere potuisse fieri, dum similia facta esse conspexi*" ["For although some things seemed impossible to me when I heard about them, I began to believe that they were possible when I saw similar things done."]

⁴³Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity*, 1:395.

be kept informed of modern miracles. Otherwise, they might never hear about them, or remain sceptical about the few reports that filtered through, as he himself had been. His response was to record authentic miracles (i.e., the *Libelli Miraculorum*); his hope, to inspire his congregation to a firmer faith in God. A similar desire would have been at the base of the other miracle records of late antiquity.⁴⁴

Nor did miracles need to be spectacular to achieve their goals. Germanus of Auxerre was revered by his biographer for being able to cure a cock which could no longer crow.⁴⁵ Miracles attributed to St. Martin ran the gamut from three times raising people from the dead, to something as mundane as not being hit by a falling tree when it was cut down by pagans.⁴⁶ Paulinus of Nola was predictably amazed by everything that occurred at the shrine of his beloved Felix. A peasant whose oxen go missing prays to Felix and they turn up again. Another peasant, who had promised a pig to Felix which turned out to be too fat to make the trip, finds his pig magically transported to the shrine when he arrives.⁴⁷ The power of the saints and, thus, the power of God, was perceived to be working at every moment of temporal existence, at every level of society--for every Christian. A miracle was a miracle--

⁴⁴ Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 22.8 [CCSL 48:816]

⁴⁵ Constantius, *V. Germ.* 2.11 [SC 112:142].

⁴⁶ Severus, *V. Mart.* 7, 8; *Dial.* 2.4; *V. Mart.* 13 [PL 20:164-5; 204; 167-8].

⁴⁷ Paulinus, *Carm.* 18.219ff [PL 61:488]; *Carm.* 20.301ff [PL 61:562].

peasants and aristocrats alike could benefit from them. Thus, anything that was the slightest bit out of the ordinary, whether it happened to peasant or aristocrat, was seen as a worthy proof that God's power still manifested itself on the temporal plane.⁴⁸

The miracles worked by martyrs were the key to the popularity of the cult of saints, and ecclesiastics were quick to take advantage. Miracle stories began to be "canned" for popular consumption, as we see in the *Peristephanon*, some of the *Vitae*,⁴⁹ and in Augustine's *Libelli Miraculorum*, in which he recorded the miracles which occurred in and around Hippo. As of 425, Augustine proudly notes that he has some seventy miracles listed in his *Libelli Miraculorum*. Other North African bishops were keeping their own tallies, and, like Augustine, were reading their records publicly, as an aid to faith, and as an inducement to conversion.⁵⁰

In fact, the recording of miracles is one of the salient features of late antique

⁴⁸ W.H.C. Frend, "The Two Worlds of Paulinus of Nola," in J.W. Binns, ed., *Latin Literature of the Fourth Century* (London, 1974), p. 123, argued that peasants were the audience of his poems because many of the miracles Paulinus records deal with peasants. Very few of the poems internally suggest that they were actually read to a real audience. In fact, Paulinus uses agricultural imagery extensively, without regard to the social status of the recipient; as he reminds one great landholder (*Ep.* 39.2 [PL 61:364]: "*Dominus in Evangelio, quam multa de rusticis docuit exemplis*" ["The Lord in the Gospel, how much he taught by rustic examples"]. Cf., *Epp.* 1.4; 9.3; 10.2 [PL 61:155-6; 186; 189]. Paulinus' use of miracles involving peasants does not necessitate a peasant audience. What it does do is suggest that miracles were worth recording, worth hearing about, no matter what one's social level. Peasant miracles were still miracles. They still provided proof of God's power and of the efficacy of the saints. Paulinus' pleasure in the miracles which peasants received was expressed well at *Carm.* 18.199ff [PL 61:495]: "...videas etiam de rure colonos / Non solum gremio sua pignora ferre paterno, / Sed pecora aegra manu saepe introducere secum" ["...you can also see that farmers from the fields not only bring their children in fatherly arms, but often lead sick cattle with them by hand"].

⁴⁹ The *Vita Ambrosii*, *Vita Martini*, and *Vita Germani* are the best examples. The popularity of *Vitae* was such that booksellers had a difficult time keeping up with the demand. Severus, *Diab.* 1.23 [PL 20.198].

⁵⁰ Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 22.8 [CCSL 48:823-824].

Christianity.⁵¹ The movement culminated in the work of Gregory of Tours. When he sat down to write his *Historia Francorum* at the end of the sixth century, it was as a man who was firmly convinced that miracles--any miracle--were an important addition to the faith. Gregory devoted his life to the collection of miracle stories. His comment on the death of any bishop or abbot whom he considered holy became almost formulaic: "*Ad cuius nunc sepulcrum multae virtutes creberrime ostenduntur.*"⁵²

The recording of miracles reflects popular enthusiasm for the cult of saints. But such popular enthusiasm was not always expressed in a sufficiently Christian manner. In the non-Christian milieu of the fourth and fifth centuries, miracles performed by local heroes and gods were perceived as proof that the miracle worker should be worshipped. It was natural for such traditional views to accompany the novitiate into Christianity. The result was a tendency to worship rather than

⁵¹ Representatives of this fixation on miracles survive from throughout the West: for Spain, Prudentius and Hydatius; for Italy, Paulinus of Nola; for Africa, Augustine; for Gaul Sulpicius Severus, Paulinus of Perigeux, and Gregory of Tours. The popularity of martyrs, and the miracles they performed, is also evident by the inclusion of references to martyrdoms and the translation of relics found in the consular annals. E.g., *Con. Const.* 58, 268, 415 [*CM* 1:220, 228, 246], the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul, Cyprian, and the discovery of the remains of Stephen, the protomartyr. The martyrdoms of Perpetua and Felicitas, Sixtus and Lawrence, and a number of others are noted in the *Consularia Italica* (*F.V.Pr* and *F.V.Post* [*CM* 1:287, 289]). Cf. Chadwick, *The Early Church*, p. 215.

⁵² Gregory, *H.F.* 2.3 [*PL* 71:196]: "To the present many miracles are frequently shown at his tomb." See also 1.45; 7.10, etc [*PL* 71:182; 422]. Gregory's obsession with the miraculous completes the process which we saw beginning in the *Libelli Miraculorum* of Augustine. Like Augustine, he recorded miracles for posterity, as a reminder that the holy which is seen and heard is to be believed. Unlike Augustine, his interest was less geographically fixed. In his History he records miracles that occurred in North Africa, in Spain, in the East, not just those in the vicinity of Tours or simply in Gaul. Gregory was a propagandist of the miracle. His goal, like Augustine's, was to publicize authentic miracles, as an aid to faith, to show that God's power still worked in the world. Aside from his History, he claims to have written seven books of Miracles. Several of these have survived, all demonstrating time and time again the manifestation of God's power, especially in Gaul.

venerate the martyr, which became a source of grave concern to bishops.⁵³

Despite the similarities between Christ and the martyrs, flocks had to be shown that there were differences: "*martyr Christi longe impar est Christo*," Augustine warned. No martyr had ever shed their blood to remit sins, as Christ had.⁵⁴ It was the "*gentilis...error, et vanitas impiorum*" to actually worship a relic, or even what the relic represented. Instead, one was to go behind the cult to the very source of the power--Christ.⁵⁵ In fact, this improper approach to the cult of saints was an embarrassing problem which most bishops had to face. Pagans snickered at the Christians, accusing them of hypocrisy in failing to see that the Christian cult of saints was not unlike their own religion. Augustine was forced to address such charges in his *De Civitate Dei*: "*Nec tamen nos eisdem martyribus templa, sacerdotia, sacra et sacrificia constituimus, quoniam non ipsi, sed Deus eorum nobis est Deus.*"⁵⁶

One of the most troublesome outlets for popular devotion was the

⁵³ Brown, *Cult of Saints*, pp. 5-6, notes the differences between the classical cult of heroes and the cult of martyrs. Martyrs were friends of God (*amici Dei*) because they had died for God; a stress which was absent from the cult of heroes. Thus martyrs were intercessors "in a way which the hero could never have been." Cf. L. Gernet, *Le génie grec dans la religion* (Paris, 1932), p. 264.

⁵⁴ Augustine, *Hom. in Ioh.* 84.2 [PL 35:1847]: "The martyr of Christ is far inferior to Christ." Cf. Leo, *Serm.* 64.3 [PL 54:359-60]. Cf. "Leo the Great," *DCB* 2:670-1, for a useful discussion on Leo's attitude to the saints.

⁵⁵ Ambrose, *De Ob. Theod.* 46 [PL 16:1464]: "error of the Gentiles and a vanity of the impious".

⁵⁶ Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 8.27 [CCSL 47:248]: "Nevertheless we do not instigate temples, priesthods, rites and sacrifices to these same martyrs, because they themselves are not gods, but their God is God to us."

refrigerium.⁵⁷ The traditional banquet for the dead, in which offerings of food and drink were brought to a grave or shrine to be sacrificed to its occupant, was easily translated into the cult of saints. Augustine claimed it was an anomaly in explaining the custom to the pagans. It was something not done by "*Christianis melioribus...et in plerisque terrarum nulla talis est consuetudo*." When Christians came to the *memoria* the offerings they brought were decorative, not sacred. When they presented food and drink to the martyr, it was to gain a blessing, not to offer sacrifice.⁵⁸

But the reality of the *refrigerium* was much different. Augustine described what Christians were *supposed* to believe, but, as we have already seen on a number of occasions, what bishops prescribed or taught, and what congregants accepted, was not always the same thing. He was well aware that many honoured the martyrs in more traditional, non-Christian ways.⁵⁹ The severity of his attitude against this custom can be traced to Ambrose of Milan, who once forbade Monica, Augustine's mother, to enter the church to undertake such a meal.⁶⁰ In the *De Helia et Ieiunio*,

⁵⁷ J. Quaesten, "*Vetus superstitio et nova religio: The Problem of Refrigerium in the Ancient Church of North Africa*," *Harvard Theological Review* 33 (1940): 253-66, presents the difficulties encountered in North Africa, but it is a good, overall look into this custom. Cf. Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy*, p. 183. Popular desire to be buried near the martyrs was another problem. Many believed that such a location would be advantageous on the *dies retributionis*. Augustine addressed this custom in response to questions from Paulinus of Nola (who was in favour of the custom). Augustine, *De Cura Gerenda Pro Mortuis* [PL 40:591-610]. Cf. Brown, *Cult of Saints*, pp.34ff.

⁵⁸ Augustine, *De Civ. Dei* 8.27 [CCSL 47:248]: "better Christians...and there is no such custom in the greater part of the world."

⁵⁹ Augustine, *Hom. in 1 Ep. Ioh.* 1.2 [PL 35:1979], reminds his flock, "*ut passiones martyrum imitemur, non eos calcibus persequamur*" ["so that we may imitate the passions of martyrs, not persecute them with our cups"].

⁶⁰ Augustine, *Conf.* 6.2 [CCSL 27:74-5].

Ambrose expresses exasperation at those who seek to honour the martyrs in this traditional manner:

*Et haec vota ad Deum pervenire judicant, sicut illi qui calices ad sepulcra martyrum deferunt, atque illic in vesperam bibunt...O stultitiam hominum, qui ebrietatem sacrificium putant: qui aestimant illis ebrietatem placere, qui jejunio passionem sustinere didicerunt!*⁶¹

Others were less adamant. Maximus of Turin was aware of the feasting that often accompanied the festivals of martyrs. He taught that preparing such banquets was unnecessary because the martyr provides food for the soul.⁶² Paulinus of Nola chose a different approach, attempting to curb such excesses by adorning his churches with pictures and inscriptions, hoping that the presence of such beauty would help take their minds off drinking.⁶³ Evidently, the *refrigerium* was much more widespread, more pervasive, than Augustine would admit to non-Christians.

Popular enthusiasm for the cult of saints was also expressed in the creation of new cults, which led to more problems. Shrines were erected at the instigation of slight, supernatural provocation. The hierarchy itself was partially responsible for this--they had promoted even inconsequential "miracles" as important proofs of the faith. When things got out of hand, attempts were made to limit the cult of

⁶¹ Ambrose, *De Helia* 17:62 [PL 14:719]: "And they judge that these vows come to God, just as those who bring their cups to the tombs of the martyrs and drink there to the evening....O the stupidity of men, who think that drunkenness is a sacrifice, who consider that drunkenness is pleasing to those who learned to endure suffering by fasting." Cf., Zeno, *Tr.* 1.25.11 [CCSL 22:75]. J. Doignon, "La survivance de certaines représentations du *Refrigerium* dans une catéchèse baptismale de Vérone du IV^e siècle," *Revue des Études Latines* 40 (1962): 30-1.

⁶² Maximus, *Serm.* 2.1 [CCSL 23:6].

⁶³ Paulinus, *Carm.* 27.585-7 [PL 61:661-2]. Paulinus did believe the custom was a sin; but it was an unconscious one, and thus, not mortal.

martyrs in certain quarters. In 403, Vigilantius wrote a tract which, among other things, criticized the emphasis which Christianity was placing upon the cult of saints and the quest for the miraculous.⁶⁴ In the works of Sulpicius Severus an undercurrent of tension is evident between some bishops of Gaul and the miracle-working Martin. Severus notes that many bishops hated him because they were so envious of his spiritual powers.⁶⁵ Even St. Martin, who is depicted performing over sixty miracles (and Severus assures us he does not report anywhere near the true number),⁶⁶ was aware of false cults and false miracles. On one occasion we find him using prayer to discover that an accepted cult was, in fact, based upon the remains of a common thief.⁶⁷ Similar attempts to control the quest for the miraculous by limiting the cult of saints were made in Africa. Two councils at Carthage in 401 and 438 ruled that it was a bishop's duty to put a stop to the practice of erecting altars on the strength of visions and dreams of simple people.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Only Jerome's scathing reply survives. See *Con. Vig.* [PL 23:353-363].

⁶⁵ Sulpicius Severus, *V. Mart.* 27 [PL 20:176]. C. Stancliffe, *St. Martin and His Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (Oxford, 1984), p. 219.

⁶⁶ Severus, *V. Mart.* 1 [PL 20:161].

⁶⁷ Severus, *V. Mart.* 11 [PL 20:165-166].

⁶⁸ Cf. *Conc. Carthag. V*, can. 15 [CCSL 149:359]. Any *memoria* which cannot be proved to contain the body or relics of a legitimate martyr is to be destroyed by the bishop of the area. However, if "*tumultus populares*" ["popular unrest"] makes this impossible, "*plebes tamen admoneantur, ne illa loca frequentent*" ["the people should be admonished not to visit such places"]. Bishops are to stop the present practice of erecting altars on the strength of "*somnia et...quasi reuelationes*" ["dreams and alleged revelations"]. Cf., E.W. Kemp, *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* (Oxford, 1948), p. 14; and Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, p. 483. The government also became involved. Theodosius I (*CTh.* 9.17.7) passed a law in 386 forbidding traffic in relics. Augustine, *De Op. Mon.* 36 [PL 40:575-6], warns the reader against false monks who dealt in relics.

Reactions against this tendency to dwell excessively on the miraculous can be detected even in some of the *Vitae* written in the fifth century. Hilary of Arles specifically states that St. Honoratus' virtues, "*Non indiguit...signis probari.*"⁶⁹ In Augustine's *Vita*, written by his friend Possidius of Calama, there is a notable lack of miracles, especially when compared to the *Vitae* of holy men like Martin of Tours and Germanus of Auxerre, where the miraculous is the rule, rather than the exception.

Possidius, like Honoratus, was more interested in the quality of a good life than in miracle working. Possidius reports only two miracles performed by Augustine, and those on his deathbed. Like the neophyte, those near death were deemed to be closer to God and, thus, more likely to produce miracles. It was such a belief that brought one man to Augustine's bedside, claiming he had had a vision that Augustine would heal him. That Augustine remained somewhat sceptical is evident in his response: he could not resist telling the man that, if he had the power to perform such miracles, he would have healed himself.⁷⁰ No one was probably more surprised than Augustine when the man was actually healed.

In spite of such attempts, the cult of saints and the love of miracles were the ultimate victors. Augustine, who initially believed that miracles were a thing of the

⁶⁹ Hilary of Arles, *V.Hon.* 8.37 [PL 50:1270]: "did not need to be demonstrated by miracles."

⁷⁰ Possidius of Calama, *V.Aug.* 29 [PL 32:59].

past, was, by the time of his death, a firm believer in the efficacy of saints, as his *Libelli Miraculorum* attest.⁷¹ The misconceptions which accompanied the cult of saints are further evidence that late antiquity was an important, transitional period for Christianity. Coming to grips with the subtle differences between veneration and worship was a difficult task in a milieu where worship was an acceptable response to miraculous displays. Bishops attempted to change such ingrained responses by demonstrating how the martyr was linked to Christ and yet subservient to Him.

Such explanations fell within the wider teaching of the Church on time and eternity. Christ had spent thirty-three years in time, as a man. He had brought His divinity into time, and taken His humanity into eternity. The martyrs occupied a similar position. They took their humanity into eternity, and brought back a kind of divinity to the temporal realm.

Martyrdom was a replay of Christ's own death, if only to a lesser degree. Listening to the *passiones* of martyrs, hearing about their miracles, the layman was provided with an example of God's glory that was much closer to home. Man attaining a certain degree of divinity was much easier to grasp than God becoming

⁷¹The theme of Augustine's changing attitude towards miracles has been well explored by Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, pp. 414ff, and Van der Meer, *Augustine*, pp. 527-557. For his early teaching that miracles were no longer performed, see *Serm.* 88.3 [PL 38:540], and his warning, *Serm.* 90.5 [PL 38:562], that evil men could perform miracles as well. For his change of attitude, see *De Civ. Dei* 22.8 [CCSL 48:815-8]: "*Nam etiam nunc fiunt miracula in eius nomine, siue per sacramenta eius siue per orationes uel memorias sanctorum eius*" ["For even now there are miracles performed in his name, either through his sacraments, or through prayers, or through the memorials of his saints"]. A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1964), 2:963, accuses Augustine of losing his intellectual edge and succumbing to popular religion. But see Brown, *Cult of Saints*, pp. 28-30.

man. In the martyr's act of self sacrifice rested a vision of unity--the unity of God and man, and of time and eternity: "[The martyr's] personal decision thus draws together Christ past, present, and future in the continuum of time and history."⁷² But their holy power came from Christ, and was proof of his power, not their own. To honour them *properly* was to honour God.

⁷²Simon, *The End is Not Yet*, p. 35.

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusions

The commonality of time made it a rich source for rhetorical exploitation in late antiquity, by Christians and non-Christians alike. Yet rhetoric was rarely, if ever, the reason for the Christian preoccupation with time that we have encountered in this thesis. Theories on the Christian's place in time were not the intellectual fixation of an isolated episcopal elite. They were an intrinsic part of the Christian experience in late antiquity because time itself was an integral part of being human. And for a religion which sees all aspects of the physical world as in some way connected to a divine plan, time could not help but be enveloped within the Christian understanding of the universe.

Time therefore effected all levels of late antique society, from peasant to aristocrat, from catechumen to bishop. The sermons, which have been the prime focus of this study, were skillfully adapted to popular concepts and the daily experience of the average Christian. The themes of time and eternity were reworked and repeated in an attempt to re-focus the Christian's devotion into more acceptable, or more orthodox, avenues of expression. In an environment which was itself rapidly changing, new Christian structures increasingly influenced how Christians spent--or were expected to spend--their time. It is therefore no exaggeration to assert that the replacement of traditional or pagan ideas of time by

Christian time was a major element in the formation of early mediaeval Christianity.

It should not be forgotten, however, that concepts of time were also inherently traditional to Christianity. This meant that indoctrinating Christians involved not just reinterpreting time in a Christian manner, but also demonstrating the role which time had *always* played in the Christian religion.¹ Bishops attempted to do both by linking time to God and eternity. This is particularly evident in the literal and symbolic uses to which they put individual time-units. The *dies* is a good example, although much of what we saw in our study of the *dies* was applicable to other time-units. They connected the day to Creation from which it proceeded: another model of time set down by God. They connected the day to the end of time, too. As the *dies iudicii*, as the *dies aeternus*, it was the eschatological fulfilment--the very purpose of time--both feared and hoped for by Christians.

Paradoxically, the day contained elements of both time and eternity. It was, literally, the constant cycle of dark and light; thus it was used as the most visible proof of time's unerring movement from Creation to Judgement Day. But it was also used as a sign of Christ's intervention in time, the mingling of the eternal and the temporal, the divine and the mundane. It brought salvation, even holiness, when spent wisely, which meant, as far as bishops were concerned, spending the time one was given in Christian devotion. When spent in worldliness or non-Christian

¹ In other words, time was part doctrine, part polemic.

pursuits, time-units were felt to be little more than markers, ticking off the distance between life and eternal death.

Time was usually perceived as a waiting for the late antique Christian, a chance to make ready. Bishop's urged their flocks to use their time wisely, explaining that a Christian's duty was to learn enough by being in time, and learn enough *from* time, to be able to transcend time: "*In procinctu belli semper uigiliae sunt militum distributae*," Peter of Ravenna once reminded his flock, "*ut insidiis nil liceat, nil pateat dolis*."² Ideally, the Christian, like the soldier on the watch, must be in a constant state of readiness, "*per totam saeculi noctem*."³

The watch was an apt symbol for the late antique Christian. For the Roman soldier there were three watches at night, each made up of four hours.⁴ For the Christian, however, the watch was infinitely more significant: *Nec solum media nocte Dominus, sed omnibus prope docet vigilandum esse momentis; venit enim et vespertina, et secunda, et tertia vigilia, et pulsare consuevit*.⁵

Ambrose, like Peter of Ravenna a half-century later, prescribed a never-ending watch for the Christian. Unlike the soldier, the Christian is not just watching for

²Peter, *Serm. 27.1* [CCSL 24:154]: "In readiness for war soldiers are always appointed to watches so that there may be no chance for either trickery or ambush."

³Peter, *Serm. 27.1* [CCSL 24:154]: "through the whole night of the world."

⁴Ausonius, *Griph. Ter. Num. 15.25-26* [Loeb 96:360].

⁵Ambrose, *Exp. Ev. Sec. Luc. 7.89* [PL 15:1721]: "The Lord teaches that we ought to watch, not only in the middle of the night, but nearly all the time; for he comes in the evening, and at the second and at the third watch, and it is his custom to strike."

the enemy (i.e., the Devil, his angels, and their tricks)--he is also watching for Christ's return. He is using the time he has to wait for time's end.⁶

Time's end remained an omnipresent fixation for late antique Christianity. Eschatology was particularly heightened in the fourth and fifth centuries. This reflects a rather human trait: turning to divine succour during difficult times. The West was under siege for much of this period, and the expectationism we encountered in the sermons is symptomatic of this. The episcopal message, "He will come again: get ready," invoked different responses. Congregations might reply, "how should we get ready?" The bishop's answer was, "*tempus vitae nostrae temporum auctori.*" Prescriptions for daily commitment to Christianity, in the form of prayers, psalms, services, fasting, almsgiving, and the like, all had behind them a pressing, eschatological question: where will you be on the *dies iudicii*?

Sometimes the congregation's response to eschatological warnings was to ask, "when will this happen?" Chiliasm still gripped many Christians with its 6,000-year chronology. The list of fourth- and fifth-century Christians who subscribed to such a belief is lengthy, as we saw in chapter two. The Jerome-Augustinian reaction to chiliasm is louder, but not necessarily the majority opinion. Jerome and Augustine are the two greatest lights of late antique Christianity: it is easy to believe them, and to overlook lesser lights when they tell us something different. But Augustine and

⁶Cf. Augustine, *Ennar. in Ps. 89.5* [CCSL 39:1247], where Christ's resurrection during the morning watch is taken as a symbol of the Christian's ultimate resurrection.

Jerome speak so vehemently on the subject out of necessity. Chiliasm was still strong as the Roman Empire crumbled. It remained so at least until the crucial last decade of the fifth century, to which most chiliast calculations pointed, had passed.

These aspects of Christian philosophy and theology by themselves required that a Christian have some understanding of time. Yet late antique Christianity did not exist in a vacuum--external pressures also demanded time's constant presence in the sermons. Aspects of time which were part of the non-Christian world required Christianization. We have seen bishops using time to refute improper ideas, especially where astrology and sun-worship were concerned. Paganism was far from a dead force in the Roman world of the fourth and fifth centuries. Its presence in the homiletic complaints of late antique bishops is ample proof of its tenacity. Explanations of time and time-units were one of the tools that bishops consistently used in their attempts to dissuade their flocks from such Non-Christian considerations.

Scripture provided another basis for discussing time in the sermons. The Bible is replete with time-words and is the source of a good deal of time-symbolism. Cullmann stressed the frequency of such usage. He concluded that time words were significant because of this frequency--so much so that they place "this very time aspect into a notably theological light."⁷ The importance of time in Scripture did not

⁷Cullman, *Christ and Time*, p. 38. See also Barr, *Biblical Words For Time*, which gives one the sense of just how frequent time-words truly are in scripture.

escape the attention of late antique bishops. Scripture contained the key to salvation. Making sense of it for one's flock represented one of the major duties of a bishop.

Take the attempts to make sense of the three days of Christ in the tomb as an example. This event was recognized for its significance--it was undeniably central to the Christian understanding of salvation. Obscurities could not be allowed to go unexplained, therefore; everything which concerned the individual's salvation had to be understood as well as humanly possible. Scripture reports Christ was to be crucified towards evening. How, then, to synchronize this with the fact that he was crucified at midday? Gaudentius addressed this question for his neophytes by explaining both the symbolic and literal significance of evening. On the one hand, evening may mean the "*vesperum...huius mundi*," for Christ suffered in the "*novissimis temporibus saeculi*." On the other hand, evening may also refer to the setting of the sun, "*quoniam crucifixo domino occidit sol meridie*."⁸

For Gaudentius, the whole question was academic. On the day of Christ's crucifixion, the sun was extinguished between the sixth and the ninth hours. He has provided his flock with a technical definition of *vesperinus*. It is obvious to him--and he expects it to be obvious to his flock--that these three hours of darkness are

⁸Gaudentius, *Tr.* 3.12 [CSEL 68:35]: "since the sun set at midday at the Lord's crucifixion."

equivalent to the evening: "*Quid potuit esse tam vesperum?*"⁹

His flock knew, of course, what evening was before Gaudentius told them. It was something they saw every day of their life, something they took for granted because it was so familiar. But it was such familiarity which made the evening such a useful image for Gaudentius to draw upon. The evening they understood; Christ's three days amongst the dead was not so clear. But by combining the familiarity of a time-unit with an important article of Christian doctrine, Gaudentius sought to clarify the latter as well.

Time also played an important role in the development of the festival year. At its most basic level the calendar is a means of keeping track of time, whether that time be measured in Christ-feasts and martyr's festivals, or weekends and civic holidays (as it is now used). Yet calendars were more than time markers for the late antique Christian. Festivals were a chance to remember the events of Christ's life and the deeds of the martyrs in an annual, historical recreation. Many Christians went beyond this: we have seen bishops teaching that the events commemorated, especially in the Christ-feast, were not simply being remembered, but were recurring in the festival.

It is at this point that the similarities between Christian and non-Christian perceptions of the feast and time become most apparent. Many bishops evidently

⁹Gaudentius, *Tr.* 3.12 [CSEL 68:35]: "For what could be more like evening than that?"

applied to Christian feasts the traditional ideas about the eternal return. Whether the majority did so from conviction or because the cyclical nature of the festival was an ingrained part of the average convert's understanding of time, is a question that cannot be answered. It was difficult for most late antique Christians to see time in strictly linear terms. Even Augustine, the great proponent of linear time, could not resist seeing time as the cyclical movement of time-units. In his sermons days, weeks, months, years, and ages all roll in circles, although they do so from beginning time to end time. The best analogy would be to imagine a wheel rolling forward along a straight line: the whole course of linear time consisted of smaller, cyclical time-units.¹⁰

In the traditional, Roman world, time was very much a human institution, under state control. Caesar and Augustus modified the calendar to synchronize it with the solar year. Various weeks were experimented with, the market week of eight days eventually giving way to a planetary week of seven. The theological aspect of time keeping, although still present, was much diluted. For the late antique Christian, however, the understanding of time was more entrenched in the divine. Roman months and weeks had changed in length under the Republic and the Empire. But for the Christian, all time-units could be traced back to a single point: Creation. The events at the beginning of time were more than mythology,

¹⁰ We have also seen indications that some bishops continued to see time as more thoroughly cyclical. Time was straddled on both sides by eternity; mankind had fallen at the beginning, would return at the end. With such beliefs prevalent, it would have been very easy to perceive time as one cycle.

open to acceptance or rejection as one thought best. They were perceived as fact. More than that, they were an indispensable part of the doctrine of the Christian religion. To be a Christian meant believing that time and all time-units had the same moment of origin, and one, divine originator. Not to accept that was simply heresy.

The sermons have afforded us a vision of episcopal expectations and their teachings on time, but rarely more than a frustrating glimpse of how the congregants themselves reacted to them. The sermons are a good source for social history, but, like all ancient sources, the lower classes are silent and ignored for the most part. Yet, in the frustrations expressed by bishops, and in their attempts to chastise their flocks for error, we glimpse congregations who were sometimes as likely to adapt Christianity to their old lifestyle as they were to change their old lifestyle for the sake of Christianity.

Late antique flocks were anything but sheep. The sermons depict congregations who were often still involved in traditional superstitions and festivities. The continuation of the *refrigerium*, tolerated by some but more often detested by bishops, is one such example. Maximus of Turin, Ambrose of Milan, and Leo of Rome all caught members of their congregations in blatant expressions of devotion to the sun and moon.¹¹ "*Quotidie invenio ista*," claimed an angry

¹¹ Members of Maximus' congregation howling at the moon during an eclipse. *Serm.* 30, 31 [CCSL 23:117-9; 121-3]; One of Ambrose's people remarking that the new moon would bring rain, *Hex.* 4.7.30 [PL 14:216]; Leo's shock at discovering members of his flock bowing towards the rising sun on the steps of the church on Christmas Day, *Serm.* 27.4-5 [PL 54:219-220].

Augustine. "*Sufferamus ergo eruditionem Patris,*" rather than run to pagan magicians in search of a cure for a headache.¹²

Warnings had to be issued time and time again. When Augustine tells his flock not to partake of pagan festivities on the kalends of January, his flock grumbles.¹³ Peter of Ravenna's flock thought that their bishop was taking the whole matter too seriously: "*non sunt haec sacrilegiorum studia, uota sunt haec iocorum; et hoc esse nouitatis laetitiam, non uetustatis errorem.*"¹⁴ Lack of dedication was a problem that most bishops encountered. Congregants could come up with a number of reasons not to partake of a fast: stomach problems, personal weakness, and lack of time became standard excuses.¹⁵ At times when the bishop was absent members of the flock would quietly slip away from church attendance, only to return when the bishop came back.¹⁶ Others were more open about their lack of dedication. There were "Christmas Christians" in the congregation--those who only showed up for major feasts.¹⁷ Some, when faced with a choice between church and

¹²Augustine, *Hom. in Ioh.* 7.7 [PL 35:1441]: "Daily I find these things.... Let us endure, therefore, the training of the Father."

¹³Augustine, *Serm.* 196.4 [PL 38:1021].

¹⁴Peter, *Serm.* 155.5 [CCSL 24B:964]: "There things are not the practice of sacrilegious rites, they are the desire for fun. It is happiness over the new era, not the error of the old."

¹⁵See Chromatius, *Serm.* 3.2 [CCSL 9A:13]; Augustine, *Serm.* 210.12 [PL 38:1053-4]; Peter of Ravenna, *Serm.* 166.9 [CCSL 24B:1023-4]; Gaudentius, *Tr.* 13.22-23 [PL 20:939-40].

¹⁶Maximus, *Serm.* 79.1 [CCSL 23:327]; Augustine, *Serm.* 196.4 [PL 38:1021].

¹⁷Augustine, *Serm.* 51.1; 264.1 [PL 38:332-3; 1202-3]; Leo of Rome, *Serm.* 84.1 [PL 54:433-4]; Maximus of Turin, *Serm.* 3.2 [CCSL 23:10-11].

the games, quickly decided in favour of secular entertainments.¹⁸

This brings us once more to the late antique perception of Christ's relation to time: Christ as the creator of time; Christ at time's end; Christ at the middle of time in the Incarnation; Christ ever present in time in the form of the feast, the martyrs, and His day to day relationship with His people. This was the vision of the world which bishops taught in their sermons. The intermingling of time and eternity, personified by Christ, was, for the late antique Christian, the place where he existed. It was believed to be a place of power, as long as the Christian was worthy and God's grace was amenable. It was a place where the miraculous was common, where men believed they could have concourse with angels and martyrs, or save their city by means of fasting.

It was not an easy place to live. Bishops expected a great deal of commitment from their flocks, much more than the average Christian was able to give. Even the brief look at episcopal prescriptions that this thesis has afforded can lead to only one conclusion: bishops by and large sought to create a world of near-ascetics.

That was the ideal. The reality was something very different. Even as bishops made such demands of their congregations' time, we sense that they knew that outcome and ideal would never be synonymous. If we distil the episcopal message to its lowest, common denominator, many homiletic themes become a plea:

¹⁸ Leo of Rome, *Serm.* 84.1-2 [PL 54:433-4]; Salvian of Marseilles, *De Gub. Dei.* 6.7 [PL 53:116-6].

"you should do this; but *at least* do that." The relationship between bishop and flock in late antiquity was not unlike that between management and union in our own day. Bishops were teachers, but, in the final analysis, they were bargainers and conciliators as well.

The sermon was, in a sense, a contract between bishop and flock, put forward and explained by the bishop, accepted or ignored by the congregation. Bishops taught their flocks what time was, how it related to God, and how it should be spent. Time was the great arbitrator, the proving ground; the field of action where the individual would win or lose salvation. But it remained a matter of individual choice, despite episcopal attempts to cajole and shame their flocks into a greater commitment.

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