

IN SEARCH OF A MODEL OF THE BISHOP IN THE WEST AT THE END OF THE IV CENTURY

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Hubert Jedin's essay on the *Bischofsideal* (the ideal type of bishop) in the context of the Catholic Reformation enjoyed quite good favor in the central years of the last century¹. The theme was extremely interesting because, following the Council of Trent, the Catholic communion had to redefine the episcopate profile in order to reaffirm its full ecclesial connotation, which had been strongly undermined by historical sedimentation in favor of concerns of a decidedly secular order.

An exemplary instance of such regeneration of the episcopal ministry was offered by Carlo Borromeo, who fully devoted himself to his mission of pastor of the Milanese Church and to the function of archbishop of its ecclesiastical province, renouncing the wealthy resources attached to the numerous ecclesiastical benefices he had enjoyed as Cardinal-nephew.

In Borromeo's personal religious experience, the complete awareness of his episcopal duty established itself also thanks to the contribution of notable personalities of the period such as the Lusitanian Bartolomeu dos Mártires²; this

1 H. JEDIN, *Das Bischofsideal der Katholischen Reformation*, in *Sacramentum ordinis. Festschrift zum 60. Priesterjubiläum des Kard. Bertram*, Prisik-Kriss, Breslau 1942; an Italian translation came out in 1950, published by Morcelliana, and in 1953 an enlarged edition appeared in French: *L'évêque dans la tradition pastorale du XVI^e siècle. Adaptation française de «Das Bischofsideal der Katholischen Reformation»*, Desclée de Brouwer - L'édition universelle, Bruges-Bruxelles 1953. A significant sign of the text's fortune is the new, enriched Italian publication, which appeared in 1985, edited by Giuseppe Alberigo: H. JEDIN - G. ALBERIGO, *Il tipo ideale di vescovo secondo la riforma cattolica*, Morcelliana, Brescia 1985.

2 He was in Rome at the end of September 1563. At the beginning of that same month, on September 4, Carlo had decided to receive his presbyterial ordination, as if to drastically preclude even the hypothesis of his abandoning the ecclesiastical status (as perhaps his uncle, Pope Pius IV, would have wished in order to guarantee the continuity of the family dynasty after the death of Carlo's older brother, Federico). However, at that time Carlo's spiritual orientation was not yet looking at the episcopate as a desirable choice, rather inclining toward an ascetic life. See E. CATTANEO, *Nel IV centenario dell'ordinazione sacerdotale ed episcopale di san Carlo Borromeo*,

awareness, moreover, shows distinctly singular characteristics, which deserve a specific mention.

The mysteric-sacramental perception of the episcopate that animated Carlo Borromeo during his whole ministry is, in fact, surprising. It is already quite relevant that he considered the beginning of his bond with the Milanese Church the episcopal ordination, which – without any appointing act – he had received on December 7, 1563, the celebration day of St. Ambrose's Ordination. Starting from that moment, he considered himself at the head of the Milanese Church (and not only from an administrative point of view: in 1560 he became *administrator perpetuus* of that Church). This is clearly shown by the immediate request to obtain from Milan the liturgical books belonging to the Ambrosian Church³. Following the ordination, furthermore, on January 25, 1564, he, as archbishop, filed the required application to obtain the *pallium*, an application that – in the absence of an appointment decree – created not a few doubts in the Papal Court of the time, but was finally accepted notwithstanding⁴. The canonical designation as archbishop of Milan would be granted only on May 12, 1564.

Carlo Borromeo's behavior in this situation was neither casual nor the result of clumsy improvisation. His juridical education (he had received a degree *in utroque iure* in Pavia in 1559)⁵ and the delicate institutional functions conducted beside Pius IV exclude the possibility of his ignorance of procedural norms.

As a matter of fact, the mysteric-sacramental perception of the episcopate revealed itself in Carlo Borromeo as a deep connotation, which accompanied him throughout his pastoral ministry. At the beginning of the Second Provincial Council (1569), he addressed the prelates by reminding them that “*in epis-*

«La Scuola Cattolica», 91 (1963), pp. 305-315. Dos Mártires, Dominican, Archbishop of Braga, had reached specific beliefs as regards the characteristics and sanctity of the episcopal ministry, which Borromeo decided to have collected and published (see H. JEDIN, *Carlo Borromeo*, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, Rome 1971, pp. 12-13): Bartholomaeus DE MARTYRIBUS, *Stimulus pastorum ex sententiis Patrum concinnatus* ..., apud haeredes J. Accolti, Romae 1572.

3 The letter from Milan informing Cardinal Borromeo that what he had requested had actually been sent, that is, the Ambrosian missal, breviaries and psalter, has the date of December 30: E. CATTANEO, *San Carlo Borromeo e la liturgia*, «Quaderni di Ambrosius» [= Supplement to «Ambrosius», 42 (3) (1966)], p. 13.

4 P. PASCHINI, *Il primo soggiorno di s. Carlo a Roma*, Società Editrice Internazionale, Turin 1935, pp. 84-85.

5 See C. G. MOR, *La cultura giuridica di san Carlo*, «Echi di san Carlo Borromeo», fasc.18 (September 1938), pp. 641-646.

*copalis dignitatis excelsa sede collocati sumus*⁶; and in the *Sylva Pastoralis* – addressed to the clergy and elaborated in the final years of his episcopate, a text of which Carlo did not see the publication – he wrote: “*Celebrantur spirituales nuptiae Episcopi sponsi cum Ecclesia sponsa tunc, cum Episcopi consecrantur; ex quibus omnis spiritualis propago oritur; pronubi autem, seu paranympsi, sunt omnes provinciae Episcopi ...*”⁷.

This nature of indissoluble loyalty – considered by Carlo Borromeo intrinsic to the marriage bond ratified by episcopal ordination – was concretely corroborated by the statement with which he declared himself ready to renounce the cardinal biretta rather than leave his Church⁸.

To Carlo Borromeo’s perception of the episcopate is tightly linked another aspect of his ecclesial sensitivity: a systematic reference to the example of the Church Fathers. In the occasion of the First Provincial Council, he exhorted everyone to their imitation⁹; to them he appealed for a justification of his austere lifestyle¹⁰; and it is not by chance that many of his biographers – in this sense Valier is exemplary – who had been educated in the shadow of his personality, filled their works with comparisons with the Fathers’ model¹¹.

Understandably, in his case such reference would primarily actualize itself in his looking up to Ambrose, of whom he had an image put in his room¹². And *alter Ambrosius* he was defined by his contemporaries¹³.

6 *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis*, II, A. RATTI, ed., ex typographia pontificia Sancti Iosephi, Mediolani 1890, p. 207.

7 *La «Sylva Pastoralis» di S. Carlo Borromeo*, C. MARCORA, ed., «Memorie Storiche della Diocesi di Milano», 12 (1965), pp. 90-91.

8 Carlo BASCAPÈ (Carolus a BASILICAPETRI), *De vita et rebus gestis Caroli Borromaei ...*, ex officina typographica D. Sartorii, Ingolstadii 1592, l. VIII, c. 23; Giovan Pietro GIUSSANO, *Vita di s. Carlo Borromeo*, Stamperia della Camera Apostolica, Roma 1610, p. 364.

9 *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis*, II, cc. 159-162.

10 *La «Sylva Pastoralis» di S. Carlo Borromeo*, p. 18; see GIUSSANO, *Vita di s. Carlo Borromeo*, pp. 611-612; Josephus RIPAMONTI, *Historiarum Ecclesiae Mediolanensis decas prima*, III, ex Collegii Ambrosiani Typographia, Mediolani 1628, p. 364.

11 Agostino VALIER (Augustinus VALERIUS), *Vita Caroli Borromei ...*, apud Hieronymum Discipulum, Verona 1586, pp. 47, 57-58, 85, 90, 98.

12 See Giovan Battista POSSEVINO, *Discorsi della vita et attioni di Carlo Borromeo ...*, appresso Iacomo Tornieri, in Roma 1591, p. 121; GIUSSANO, *Vita di s. Carlo Borromeo*, pp. 52, 529.

13 Besides the biographers who were witnesses to his life (VALIER, *Vita Caroli Borromei*, pp. 57, 91-99; POSSEVINO, *Discorsi della vita et attioni di Carlo Borromeo*, pp. 121, 124, 140; GIUSSANO, *Vita di s. Carlo Borromeo*, pp. 52-53), see the numerous testi-

It is quite significant to see this search for the ideal type of bishop that Carlo Borromeo conducted on the wake of the Council of Trent, looking up to his predecessor as a model, and – more generally – to the bishops of that Patristic era who, as well as their successors of the epoch immediately following the Council of Trent, were busying themselves with a redefinition of the episcopal ministry within a new and different context.

In that faraway epoch – characterized by the reception of the Church into the structure of the Empire – free expression of faith, public worship (though with the discretion required by mystery discipline)¹⁴, the *episcopalis audientia*¹⁵, the definition of the territorial organization¹⁶, and the regulation of synodal and metropolitan responsibilities¹⁷ had opened new scenarios to the episcopate, to which the bishops were trying to answer, with a progressive adjustment that

monies collected by Giuseppe Antonio SASSI, in the Appendix to *S. Caroli ... Homiliae*, V, apud Joseph Marellum, Mediolani 1747, pp. 304 and following. On these aspects of the personality of Carlo Borromeo see C. ALZATI, Carlo Borromeo e la tradizione liturgica della Chiesa milanese, in *Carlo Borromeo e l'opera della "grande riforma". Cultura, religione e arti del governo nella Milano del pieno Cinquecento*, F. BUZZI - D. ZARDIN, eds., Credito Artigiano, s. l. 1997, pp. 37a-46b.

- 14 "... *Promptissimam in his quoque indulgentiam nostram credidimus porrigendam, ut denuo sint Christiani et conuenticula sua componant*": thus the edict decided by Galerius in Serdica and enacted by caesar Licinius in Nicomedia on April 30, 311 (LACTANTIUS, *De mortibus persecutorum*, XXXIII, 11 - XXXV, 1, J. MOREAU, ed., Éd. du Cerf, Paris 1954 [Sch, 39/1], pp. 117-118; see EUSEBIUS, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, VIII, 17. 3-11, E. SCHWARTZ, ed., F. WINKELMANN, cur., *Eusebius Werke*, II, 2, [Hinrichs, Leipzig 1903¹ (GCS, 9/2)] Akademie Verlag, Berlin 1999² [GCS, n. F., 6/2], pp. 790-794 [retranslation by RUFINUS: pp. 791-795]); followed by a directive established in the rescriptum issued, again in Nicomedia, by augustus Licinius on June 13, 313: "*In colendo quod quisque delegerit, habeat liberam facultatem*": LACTANTIUS, *De mortibus persecutorum*, XLVIII, 6, Sch, 39/1, p. 133; see EUSEBIUS, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, X, V, 4, GCS, [IX/2] n. F., 6/2, p. 884: «Πᾶσιν ἐλευθέρων αἴρεσιν τοῦ ἀκολουθεῖν τῇ θρησκείᾳ ἢ δ' ἄν βουλευθῶσιν».
- 15 See G. VISMARA, *Episcopalis audientia: l'attività giurisdizionale del vescovo per la risoluzione delle controversie*, Vita e Pensiero, Milan 1937; M. R. CIMMA, *L'Episcopalis audientia nelle costituzioni imperiali da Costantino a Giustiniano*, Giappichelli, Turin 1989. As for the equation of church ministers to imperial officials in the utilization of the *cursus publicus*: L. DI PAOLA, *Viaggi, trasporti e istituzioni. Studi sul cursus publicus*, Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità dell'Università degli Studi di Messina, Messina 1999 (Pelorias, 5), pp. 35-40.
- 16 On the specific case of the Northern Italian area, see C. ALZATI, *Gli ordinamenti territoriali ecclesiastici nell'Italia Annonaria*, «Brixia Sacra», s. III, 22 (2017), pp. 69-118.
- 17 Starting from the Nicaea Canons 4 and 5 (325): *Discipline Générale Antique (IV^e-IX^e s.)*, I, 1: *Les Canons des Conciles Oecuméniques (= CCO)*, P. P. JOANNOU, ed.,

at the end of the IV century in many areas of the West had not yet come to a conclusion. Let us think, for instance, about the issue of episcopal elections, in regard to which the Council of Turin of 398 (or 399) still documented in the imperial diocese of the Seven Provinces a lack of compliance to the procedures established by the canons of Nicaea¹⁸.

There was also the delicate problem of the episcopate's relations with the imperial authority: with unbaptized Christian emperors, but also – and here the problem was even more thorny – with Christian and baptized emperors (as Magnus Maximus and Theodosius). In addition, linked to the imperial figure, there was the inescapable issue of the specific function and tasks belonging to the bishop of the city where the emperor resided. This theme was not to be circumscribed only to the *pars Orientis*, in particular after the conclusive stabilization of the imperial presence in Constantinople with Theodosius¹⁹. It is no coincidence that the first canonical legislation in this regard had been established in the West, during the Council of Serdica in 343²⁰. And precisely in

Tipografia Italo-Orientale «S.Nilo», Grottaferrata 1962 (Pontificia Commissione per la redazione del Codice di Diritto Canonico Orientale. Fonti, 9), pp. 26-28.

- 18 Can 3: “*Gestorum quoque seriem conscribi placuit ad perpetem disciplinam quod circa Octauium, Vrsionem, Remigium atque Triferium episcopos synodus sancta decreuit, qui in usurpatione quadam de ordinatione sacerdotum <in> inuidiam uocabantur; quod eatenus his uidetur indultum, ut de cetero hac auctoritate commoniti, nihil tale usurpare conentur; siquidem ea se ab hac causa excusatione defenderint qua dicerent prius se non esse conuentos. Proinde iudicauit synodus ut si ex hoc fecerit contra statuta maiorum, sciat is qui ordinatus fuerit sacerdotii se honore priuandum et ille qui ordinauerit auctoritatem se in ordinationibus uel in conciliis minime retenturum...*”: *Concilia Galliae. A. 314 - A. 506*, Ch. MUNIER, ed., Turnholti 1963 (CCL, 148), p. 56. As regards the debate around the dating of the synod see R. SAVARINO, *Il concilio di Torino*, in *Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi su Massimo di Torino nel XVI Centenario del Concilio di Torino (398). Torino 13-14 marzo 1998*, LDC, Leumann (Turin) 1999 (= «Archivio Teologico Torinese», 4 [2] [1998]), pp. 208-216; as for the extensibility of this dating to 399: Ch. PIETRI, *Roma Christiana. Recherches sur l'Église de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie de Miltiade à Sixte III (311-440)*, II, École Française de Rome, Rome 1976 (Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 224), p. 973.
- 19 See G. DAGRON, *Naissance d'une capitale. Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451*, Paris 1974, pp. 48-49, 84-85.
- 20 Can. 9b (9a in the Greek drafting): “*Et hoc consequens esse uidetur, ut de qualibet provincia episcopi ad eum fratrem et coepiscopum nostrum preces mittant, qui in metropolim consistit, ut ille et diaconum eius et supplicationes destinet, tribuens commendaticias epistulas ratione ad fratres et coepiscopos nostros, qui in illo tempore in his regionibus et urbibus morantur, in quibus felix et laetus Augustus rem publicam gubernat / Ὅσιος ἐπίσκοπος εἶπεν· Καὶ τοῦτο ἀκόλουθον εἶναι νομίζω, ἵνα ἐν οἰαδήποτε*

ἐπαρχία ἐπίσκοποι πρὸς ἀδελφὸν καὶ συνεπίσκοπον ἑαυτῶν ἀποστέλλοιεν δεήσεις, ὁ ἐν τῇ μείζονι τυγχάνων πόλει, τούτεστιν τῇ μητροπόλει, αὐτὸς καὶ τὸν διάκονον αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰς δεήσεις ἀποστέλλοι, παρέχων αὐτῷ καὶ συστατικὰς ἐπιστολάς, γράφων δηλονότι κατὰ ἀκολουθίαν καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ συνεπικόπους ἡμῶν, οἵτινες ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ ἐν τοῖς τόποις ἢ ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι διάγουσιν, ἐν αἷς ὁ εὐσεβέστατος ἡμῶν βασιλεὺς τὰ δημόσια διακυβερνᾷ πράγματα”. *Discipline Générale Antique (IV^e-V^e s.)*, I, 2: *Les Canons des Synodes Particuliers* (= CSP), P. P. JOANNOU, ed., Tipografia Italo-Orientale «S.Nilo», Grottaferrata 1962 (Pontificia Commissione per la redazione del Codice di Diritto Canonico Orientale. Fonti, 9), p. 171; Latin text of the first Dionysian drafting from A. STREWE, *Die Canonessammlung des Dionysius exiguus in der ersten Redaktion*, Berlin 1931 (Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte, 16); Greek text from V. N. BENEŠEVIČ, *Joannis Scholastici Synagoga L. titulorum*, München 1937 (Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch- historische Abteilung, n. F., 1).

As for the similar function that in the same council was given to the Roman bishop: Can. 10a (9b): “*Qui vero Romam venerint ... sanctissimo fratri et coepiscopo nostro Romanae ecclesiae preces quas habent tradant, et ut ipse prius examinet, si honestae et iustae sunt, et praestet diligentiam atque sollicitudinem, ut ad comitatum perferantur / Οἱ δὲ εἰς Ῥώμην παραγένομενοι ... τῷ ἀγαπητῷ ἀδελφῷ ἡμῶν καὶ συνεπισκόπῳ Τουλίῳ τὰς δεήσεις, ἃς ἔχουσιν, διδόναι ὀφείλουσιν, ἵνα πρότερον αὐτὸς δοκιμάζῃ, εἰ μὴ τινες ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀναίσχυντοι εἶεν, καὶ οὕτως τὴν ἑαυτοῦ προστασίαν καὶ φροντίδα παρέχων εἰς τὸ στρατόπεδον αὐτοῦ ἀποστέλλοι*”. CSP, p. 172.

For that matter, the bishops of an Antiochian council of 327 – or whose date, in any case, was only slightly subsequent to the synod of Nicaea (see M. SIMONETTI, *La crisi ariana del IV secolo*, Roma 1975 [Studia Ephemeridis «Augustinianum», 11], p. 28) – in order to avoid that brazen priests “would keep pestering the ears of the emperor beloved of God”, had to proceed to a regulation of the clergy’s pleas to the augustus. Can. 11: “*Εἴ τις ἐπίσκοπος ἢ πρεσβύτερος ἢ ὄλιος τοῦ κανόνος ἄνευ γνώμης καὶ γραμμάτων τῶν ἐν τῇ ἐπαρχίᾳ Ἐπισκόπων καὶ μάλιστα τοῦ κατὰ τὴν μητρόπολιν, ὀρμήσει πρὸς βασιλέα, τοῦτον ἀποκηρύττεσθαι καὶ ἀπόβλητον γίνεσθαι, οὐ μόνον τῆς κοινωνίας, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἀξίας, ἧς μετέχων τυγχάνει, ὡς παρενοχλεῖν τολμῶντα τὰς τοῦ θεοφιλεστάτου βασιλέως ἡμῶν ἀκοὰς παρὰ τὸν θεσμόν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας· εἰ δὲ ἀναγκαῖα καλοῖη χρεια πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα ὀρμᾶν, τοῦτο πράττειν μετὰ σκέψεως καὶ γνώμης τοῦ κατὰ τὴν μητρόπολιν τῆς ἐπαρχίας ἐπισκόπου καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτῇ, τοῖς τε τούτων ἐφοδιάζεσθαι γράμμασιν / Si quis episcopus aut presbiter aut quilibet regulae subiectus ecclesiae praeter consilium et litteras episcoporum provinciae et praecipue metropolitani adierit imperatorem, hunc reprobari et abici oportere non solum a communione, verum et ab honore cuius particeps videtur existere, quia venerandi principis auribus molestiam temptavit inferre contra leges ecclesiae. Si igitur adire principem necessaria causa deposcit, ut agatur cum tractatu et consilio metropolitani et ceterorum episcoporum qui in eadem provincia commorantur, qui etiam proficiscentem suis prosequantur epistulis*”.

Can. 12: “*Εἴ τις ὑπὸ τοῦ ἰδίου ἐπισκόπου καθαιρεθεὶς πρεσβύτερος ἢ διάκονος, ἢ καὶ ἐπίσκοπος ὑπὸ συνόδου, ἐνοχλήσῃ τολμήσει βασιλέως ἀκοὰς, δεόν ἐπὶ μείζονα συνο-*

the West, in the years of Ambrose and of his immediate successors until 402, a ruling diarchy was in effect in the Church communion, as clearly shown by the African councils (and not only those), whose deliberations were transmitted both to the bishop of Rome and to the bishop of Milan, prelate of the Court's residential city²¹.

As regards the definition of the bishop's figure and tasks in that complex situation, drawing inspiration from the experiences of previous generations proved to be rather difficult. This can also be grasped simply from the analysis of the hagiographic literature.

In the most ancient phase, starting from the *Acts* of Polycarp and those of Cyprian, the episcopal function seems to have been reabsorbed into martyrdom testimony, which had come to envision itself as the apex of the bishop's teachings²². When the persecutions ceased permanently, the revered veneration toward such (impossible to be repeated) martyrdom magisterium showed no sign of decreasing. However, looking at that testimony as a direct model on which the bishops could mold the concrete, daily practice of their ministry became less immediate.

δὸν ἐπισκόπων τρέπεσθαι, καὶ ἃ νομίζει δίκαια ἔχειν, προσαναφέρειν πλείοσιν ἐπισκόποις καὶ τὴν παρ' αὐτῶν ἐξετάσιν τε καὶ ἐπικρίσιν ἐκδέχεσθαι· εἰ δὲ τούτων ὀλιγορήσας ἐνοχλοῖη τῷ βασιλεῖ, καὶ τοῦτον μηδεμιᾶς συγγνώμης ἀξιοῦσθαι, μηδὲ χώραν ἀπολογίας ἔχειν μηδὲ ἐλπίδα μελλούσης προσδοκᾶν ἀποκαταστάσεως / Si quis a proprio episcopo presbiter aut diaconus, aut a synodo fuerit episcopus forte damnatus, et imperatoris auribus molestus extiterit, oportet ad maius episcoporum converti concilium, et, quae putaverint habere iusta, plurimis episcopis suggerant eorumque discussionem ac iudicium praestolentur, si vero haec parvipendentes molesti fuerint imperatori, hos nulla venia dignos esse nec locum satisfactionis habere nec spem futurae restitutionis omnimodis operiri^o. In CSP, pp. 113-114.

21 As regards the relevant sources see the Appendix.

22 *Martyrium Polycarpi*: B. DEHANDSCHUTTER, ed., *Martyrium Polycarpi. Een literair-kritische studie*, Leuven 1979 (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, 52); an extensive critical commentary regarding this text has been proposed by DEHANDSCHUTTER himself: *Polycarpiana. Studies on Martyrdom and Persecutions in Early Christianity. Collected Essays*, Leuven University Press - Peeters, Leuven-Paris-Dudley (MA) 2007. As for the *Acta Proconsularia sancti Cypriani* see: R. REITZENSTEIN, ed., *Die Nachrichten über den Tod Cyprians*, «Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften», 14 (1913), pp. 12-17; taken up again by H. MUSURILLO, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1972, pp. 168-174. See R. GRÉGOIRE, *Manuale di agiologia. Introduzione alla letteratura agiografica*, Monastero San Silvestro Abate, Fabriano 1996² (Bibliotheca Montisfani), pp. 276 and foll.

As is well known, in such a changed situation a growing instance of asceticism began to spread, and – at the same time – the great ecclesial debates, linked to the contraposition of the various theological schools and of their respective doctrinal orientations, flared up.

The documentation regarding the episcopate clearly shows variegated reflections of such a new context. This can be verified simply by browsing the interesting papers presented in 1996 at the conference on *Vescovi e pastori in epoca teodosiana* organized in Rome by the Augustinianum²³.

The relevance acquired by the intense debate on the Trinitarian doctrine in the central decades of the IV century is evident in the experience of Hilarius of Poitiers. An intellectual, husband and father, he was initiated to Christianity around the middle of the century, and shortly after that he was called to the episcopate. From that moment on, his whole existence was focused on the defense of the orthodoxy, of which he felt – as bishop – the depositary and custodian. The years in which he lived are those of the frequent councils associated with Emperor Constantius II. Hilarius's contrast to the formulations supported by the august, of homoean orientation (the Son is similar [*ὁμοιος*] to the Father), caused him to be exiled to the East. However, this did not weaken

23 *Vescovi e pastori in epoca teodosiana. XXV Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana. Roma, 8-11 maggio 1996, in occasione del XVI centenario della consacrazione episcopale di s. Agostino (396-1996)*, Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, Roma 1997 (Studia ephemeridis «Augustinianum», 58); see for instance works such as A. TUILIER (*La politique de Theodose le grand et les évêques de la fin du IV^{ème} siècle*, I, pp. 75-81); R. TEJA (*Auctoritas versus potestas: el liderazgo social de los obispos en la sociedad tardoantigua*, I, pp. 73-82); E. DOVERE (*Il vescovo 'teodosiano' quale riferimento per la normazione 'de fide'*, I, pp. 161-184); J. GAUDEMET (*Les regards du pouvoir sur l'épiscopat à l'époque théodosienne*, I, pp. 185-192); C. SOTINEL (*Le recrutement des évêques en Italie aux IV^e et V^e siècles. Essai d'enquête prosopographique*, I, pp. 193-204); R. CHERUBINI (*Ammonas di Sketis [+ 375 c.a.]. Un esempio di influsso monastico in un vescovo egiziano del IV secolo*, II, pp. 327-345); J. R. POUCHET (*Athanase d'Alexandrie, modèle de l'évêque, selon Grégoire de Nazianze, Discours 21*, II, pp. 347-357); N. GOMEZ VILLEGAS (*La Corte de Constantinopla y su obispo. A propósito de la Or. 36 de Gregorio de Nacianzo*, II, pp. 359-370); J. N. GUINOT (*L'apport des panégyriques de Jean Chrysostome à une définition de l'évêque modèle*, II, pp. 395-421); E. ZOCCA (*La figura del santo vescovo in Africa da Ponzio a Possidio*, II, pp. 469-492); P. MAIMÓ I CAPODEVILA (*El obispo como autoridad ciudadana y las irrupciones germánicas en el Occidente latino durante el siglo V*, II, pp. 551-558); M. ZELZER (*Vescovi e pastori alla luce delle lettere ambrosiane*, II, pp. 559-568); C. HARRISON (*Augustine, monk and bishop*, II, pp. 659-665); R. BARCELLONA (*Fausto di Riez: defensor ciuitatis et defensor orthodoxiae. Sul ruolo del vescovo in Gallia nel V secolo*, II, pp. 777-802).

his commitment, which also continued after he had gone back to his country²⁴. Precisely the contacts developed during his exile rendered him especially careful to perceive the doctrinal intent of his interlocutors, thus leading him to bear witness to the non-heterodoxy of the homoiousian bishops (the Son is of similar *οὐσία* [ὁμοιούσιος] to the Father), and to the consequent necessity of preserving communion with them²⁵. The deaths of his daughter and wife²⁶ preceded his own in 367 or 368²⁷.

His episcopal profile, therefore, is first and foremost that of an authoritative doctrine teacher, a determined (but also enlightened) defender of his orthodoxy, ready to challenge even the imperial authority for it, and to pay for his testimony.

The same context forms the background to the sequence of events regarding Pope Athanasius of Alexandria, which were in some respects similar. He too had to leave his seat and face exile, in his case to the West, for the same reasons. On the other hand, unlike Hilarius, he was not trained to practice a civil profession like the forensic activity, and was close to the Egyptian ascetics, sharing their experience of the desert. It is not by chance that in his exile he was accompanied by monk Isidore, whose figure left a deep impression in the environments with which he had come into contact.

Beside a defense of orthodoxy, asceticism is another aspect of the times to which Athanasius gave conscious testimony: soon after the death of Anthony in 356, in fact, it was this pope of Alexandria that outlined his biography, a biography that was rapidly known also in the Latin ambit through an early translation (conserved in a single manuscript of the Vatican Chapter, dating to

24 His participation in the council of Paris is not attested (HILARIUS Pictaviensis, *Fragmenta Historica*, A, I, A. FEDER, ed., Tempsky-Freytag, Vindobonae-Lipsiae 1916 (Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum [= CSEL], 65), pp. 43-46). However, there is documentary evidence of his intervention in Milan between 364 and 365 against the eminent homoean prelate of the city, the Cappadocian Auxentius (HILARIUS Pictaviensis, *Contra Auxentium*, 6 ss., Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Latina [= PL], 10, Vrayet, Parisiis 1845, cc. 612 ss.).

25 HILARIUS Pictaviensis, *De Synodis*, 71-76, PL, 10, cc. 527-530. As regards the relevance acquired by the concept of communion in Hilarius's reflection: D. DUPONT-FAUVILLE, *Saint Hilaire de Poitiers, théologien de la communion*, Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Rome 2008 (Analecta Gregoriana, 305).

26 VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS, *Vita sancti Hilarii*: VI, 18-20; XIII, 46-49, B. KRUSCH ed., Weidmann, Berlin 1885 (Monumenta Germaniae Historica [= MGH], Auctores Antiquissimi, 4/2), pp. 3, 6.

27 See C. F. A. BORCHARDT, *Hilary of Poitiers' Role in the Arian Struggle*, Nijhoff, The Hague 1966 (Kerkhistorische Studiën, 12), p. 183.

the X or XI century). The work also had a new popular version, around 375, due to Evagrius of Antioch²⁸.

It was also thanks to the direct testimony of Athanasius and to his widespread work *Vita Antonii*, that the ascetic ideal gradually established itself in the West too, albeit with diversified outcomes. While also in this case there are experiences of a hermitic type and of popular extraction, as in Egypt, considerable import acquired the numerous variations that – in Rome as in Gaul – this aspiration to asceticism had among the high ranks of society.

There were noteworthy figures, even illustrious aristocrats, who decided to abandon society life, withdrawing in their *villae*, to carry out – sometimes with a group of friends – a life of prayer and intellectual pursuit, in a context of sober simplicity.

A very eloquent example of this comes from Aquitania, where Pontius Meropius Anicius Paulinus was born soon after the middle of the IV century. He came from a consul family, grew up at the school of Ausonius, and became a senator and subsequently *consularis* (governor) of Campania, until he was led to baptism by his wife Therasia; baptism which he received in the Church of Bordeaux before 389²⁹. Around 393, following the loss of his newborn child Celso, after selling most of his substantial properties he devoted himself, together with his wife, to an ascetic life, characterized by continence and dedicated to *humilitas* and *paupertas*. Later on he was ordained priest by the bishop of Barcelona, and in 395 he moved to Nola, where with a group of friends and disciples (among whom there was another couple: Turcius Apronianus and Avita) he realized – around the sanctuary of the martyr Felix³⁰ – a community life characterized by prayer, study, fraternal charity, and giving shelter to the poor and the pilgrims³¹.

Between 408 and 412/413 he was acclaimed as bishop of Nola. Keen on friendship, Paulinus maintained epistolary contact with the persons he espe-

28 See Ch. MOHRMANN, *Introduzione generale. La «Vita Antonii» di sant'Atanasio*, in *Vita Antonii*, G. J. M. BARTELINK ed., Fondazione Lorenzo Valla - Mondadori Editore, Rome-Milan 1974 (Scrittori Greci e Latini, Vite dei santi, 1), pp. V-LXXXIII.

29 D. E. TROUT, *Paulinus of Nola. Life, Letters, and Poems*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1999, pp. 23 and foll.

30 T. LEHMANN, *Paulinus Nolanus und die Basilica Nova in Cimitile/Nola. Studien zu einem zentralen Denkmal der spätantik-frühchristlichen Architektur*, Reichert, Wiesbaden 2004.

31 J. T. LIENHARD, *Paulinus of Nola and early western monasticism: with a study of the chronology of his works and an annotated bibliography, 1879-1976*, Hanstein, Köln-Bonn 1977 (Theophaneia, 28), pp. 28 and foll.

cially cared for (among whom the former fellow disciple Sulpicius Severus) and with some of the most notable personalities of the time (from emperor Honorius to Augustine)³². He survived his wife for more than twenty years, dying in 431.

He was urged to offer his contribution to the ecclesial questions debated in his time, but it seems that he never questioned his choice of a simple and secluded life. The ascetic dimension, therefore, seems to have constantly shaped his ministry in the Church and, finally, for several years, his episcopate.

As mentioned above, Paulinus was close to Sulpicius Severus, who also belonged to a notable family. After becoming a widower, he abandoned the many relations that had characterized his existence and withdrew to his *villa* in *Primuliacum* (perhaps Prémillac) with some relatives and friends to lead an ascetic life. He is mentioned here because he was the author of the *Vita Martini*. That is the work of an ascetic (even though *sui generis*) who outlined the biography of an authentic ascetic that he venerated, and whom the people had called to the episcopal ministry³³.

Sulpicius could avail himself of the hagiographic precedent of the *Vita Antonii*, which he used easily³⁴, given his sensitivity and since his intention was not to inaugurate an episcopal hagiography, but rather to offer a writing at the center of which could be placed the ascetic testimony of monk Martinus, thus reabsorbing in it his episcopal ministry³⁵.

Such a perspective delineates a situation that is quite different from the community life led ascetically by the bishop and his ministers – which combined “*clericorum officia et monachorum instituta*” in the light of an a proper exer-

32 P. FABRE, *Saint Paulin de Nole et l'amitié chrétienne*, De Boccard, Paris 1949 (Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 167).

33 See Ch. MOHRMANN, *Introduzione. La «Vita Martini» di Sulpicio Severo*, in *Vita Martini*, J. W. SMIT ed., Fondazione Lorenzo Valla - Mondadori Editore, Rome-Milan 1975 (Scrittori Greci e Latini, Vite dei santi, 4), pp. VII-XXX.

34 Hence the corrosive criticism by E. Ch. BABUT, *Saint Martin de Tours*, Champion, Paris s. d. (1912).

35 Fundamental, on Martinus and the interpretation given by Sulpicius Severus, are the studies of Jacques FONTAINE, which merged with the commentaries and the ample introductions to the *Vita Martini* (Éd. du Cerf, Paris 1967-1969 [Sources Chrésiennes (= SCh), 133-135]) and to the *Gallus* (N. DUPRÉ, co-ed., Éd. du Cerf, Paris 2006 [Sources Chrésiennes (= SCh), 510], pp. 11-73).

cise of the pastoral tasks³⁶ – that Eusebius realized in Vercelli after the half of the IV century³⁷ and that was later re-proposed by Augustine in Hippo³⁸.

The *Vita Martini* was already in existence and amply circulating, when in Africa, perhaps in 422 (but the date of 412-413 is also possible)³⁹, deacon Paulinus, accepting Augustine's exhortation, wrote his *Vita Ambrosii*. In that case it was a real example of episcopal hagiography, and the profile that his words outlined was essentially that of the *Magnus Praesul* (to use an expression taken from the *versum de Mediolano civitate* of the first half of the VIII century)⁴⁰, that is, of a bishop figure – coming from a noble family, and appointed to the Church of the city which was the imperial residency – to whom had been previously bestowed prominent public functions, and who, also thanks to such administrative experience, showed himself capable of superintending very well the ecclesiastic institution, and of successfully debating not only with the other highest authorities of the Christian communion, but with the emperors as well.

When we consider as a whole the episcopal figures just mentioned, whom can be assumed as examples – if not representative, certainly significant – of the episcopal situation in the West in the second half of the IV century and of the

36 AMBROSIUS Mediolanensis, *Epistula e. c. XIV ad Vercellensem ecclesiam* (Maur.: *LXIII*), 66, M. ZELZER, ed., Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, Vindobonae 1982 (CSEL, 82/3), p. 269.

37 See the contributions collected in the volume *Eusebio di Vercelli e il suo tempo*, E. DAL COVOLO - R. UGLIONE - G. M. VIAN, eds., Rome 1997, and in particular the study by L. DATRINO, *Il cenobio clericale di Eusebio*, pp. 339-345. As regards the importance Ambrose attributed to that experience and about its bearing on the education of some episcopal figures in the Italician Church in the second half of the IV century: G. VISONÀ, *San Gaudenzio e le origini della Chiesa di Novara*, in *Il Cristianesimo a Novara e sul territorio: le origini. Atti del Convegno, Novara 10 Ottobre 1998*, Diocesi di Novara - Interlinea Edizioni, Novara 1999, pp. 143-153.

38 See POSSIDIUS, *Vita Augustini*, A. A. R. BASTIAENSEN, ed.: 5; 8; 11; Fondazione Lorenzo Valla - Mondadori Editore, Rome-Milan 1975 (Scrittori Greci e Latini, Vite dei santi, 3), pp. 140-142, 148-150, 154-156.

39 As for the dating, connected with the figure of the Prefect of Praetorium Iohannes, specifically mentioned, see M. NAVONI, in PAOLINO di Milano, *Vita di sant' Ambrogio*, San Paolo, Cinisello 2016² (*Vetera sed nova*, 6), pp. 50-51. On Paulinus's rank as a deacon and his activity in Africa as anti-Pelagian polemicist: *Ibid.* pp. 24-29

40 *Versum de Mediolano ciuitate*, v. 34, in *Versus de Verona etc.*, G. B. PIGHI, ed., Bologna 1960 (Università degli Studi di Bologna. Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia. Studi pubblicati dall'Istituto di Filologia Classica, 7), pp. 90, 146 (formerly E. DÜMMLER, ed., Weidmann, Berolini 1881 [MGH, *Poetae Latini*, I: *Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini*], p. 25).

beginning of the V, it is important to note that the rules and modes according to which the episcopal function was by them lived and interpreted, and by others perceived (it is the case of the hagiographers), present themselves as exceedingly varied.

In the wake of the Council of Trent, the Catholic episcopate looked to the Fathers to outline a new *idealtypus* of bishop. The Fathers were not specifically inspired by any episcopal model, but – in the frame of the canonical customs current at that time – they answered with extremely personal modes to the personal call that had been addressed to them, and which they had assumed.

If in the case of Ambrose, in 1994 Neil McLynn – with a hypercriticism that almost touches arbitrariness – decided to consider the Epistolary an instrument of self-representation⁴¹, the biography written by deacon Paulinus (and urged – it deserves mentioning – by Augustine, another direct witness) undoubtedly reflects the perception of Ambrose's episcopate in his own time, which hagiographers sought to transmit as everlasting memory (and also as opposition to the voices of the critics of the prelate)⁴². Therefore, the drafting of a model seems to be inseparable from its hagiographic transmission, which offers a model that is primarily perceived. In the case of Sulpicius's *Vita Martini*, it can be said that, in the image of the bishop of Tours outlined in the text, the specific idealism of the hagiographer is markedly condensed.

41 N. B. MCLYNN, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1994.

42 In this sense, see PAULINUS, *Vita Ambrosii*, A. A. R. BASTIAENSEN, ed., 53-55, Fondazione Lorenzo Valla - Mondadori Editore, Rome-Milan 1975 (*Scrittori Greci e Latini, Vite dei santi*, 3), pp. 120-122. But, regarding these detractors, we cannot avoid thinking of Sulpicius Severus's words too, when he was describing the non-utilization of the episcopal chair *in secretario* by Martinus, and contrasting it with the custom of other bishops, who made use of a *sublime solium, quasi regium tribunal* (*Illud non praeteribo quod, in secretario sedens, numquam illum sedere conspexit sicut quendam nuper, testor Deum non sine pudore uidi sibli mi solio et, quasi regio tribunali, celsa sede residentem, sedentem uero Martinum in sellula rusticana, ut sunt istae in usibus seruulorum quas nos, rustici Galli, tripeccias, uos scholastici – aut certe tu, qui de Graecia uenis – , tripodas nuncupatis*: SULPICIUS SEVERUS, *Gallus*, II, 1. 3-4, SCh, 510, pp. 216-218). A fragment of the Apology of the 'Arian' convicts in the council of Aquileia of September 3, 381, expressly mentions that Valerianus of Aquileia was sitting, *in secretario*, with Ambrose next to him, on a seat that "*pro uestro speciali fastu altissimo pulpita extat singularis, et uicinae sedis testatur propriaetas*": R. GRYSO, ed., *Éd du Cerf*, Paris 1980 (SCh, 267), pp. 274-276; on the reading of this difficult text, see also MCLYNN, *Ambrose of Milan*, p. 127.

Both the *Vita Ambrosii* and the *Vita Martini*, therefore, propose two models of the episcopate that in their literary form can be compared, and that make it possible to formulate a few considerations that go beyond the philological datum.

Opposed to spiritual Martinus there is the figure of Ambrose, who was deeply rooted in history and its complex events. The current stereotypes of a certain ecclesial ideology would immediately regard in a suspicious light the involvement in worldly matters. And perhaps it happened at that time, too.

However, it should be mentioned here that both these episcopal figures had to confront a very serious issue that had severe historical consequences, and that constituted a dramatic precedent in history. It is the question of Priscillian, the bishop of Avila executed in Trier by Magnus Maximus's court ruling after a judicial procedure conducted by the episcopate of the imperial diocese of Gaul⁴³.

Priscillian and his disciples were openly considered "*devios a fide*"⁴⁴ by Ambrose, but faced with what was brewing in Trier, and being on the banks of the Moselle with a legation, the Milanese prelate – in a dramatic confrontation with the emperor – did not hesitate to refuse communion to the whole episcopate of Gaul⁴⁵. And he maintained the same attitude all his life.

Martinus, for his part, summoned to Trier⁴⁶, tried as best he could to convince bishop Ithacius from Ossanova to withdraw the charge before the imperial court⁴⁷; in his *Chronica* Sulpicius Severus claims that the bishop of Tours

43 In the rich bibliography on the complex figure of Priscillian an interesting presentation can be found in H. CHADWICK, *Priscillian of Avila. The Occult and the Charismatic in the Early Church*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1976; a systematic analysis of this figure, his thought, and the characteristics subsequently highlighted by the Priscillianist movement has been also carried out by S. J. G. SANCHEZ, *Priscillien, un chrétien non conformiste: doctrine et pratique du priscillianisme du IV^e au VI^e siècle*, Beauchesne, Paris 2009.

44 SULPICIOUS SEVERUS, *Chronica*, II, 48. 4, P. PARRONI, ed., Brepols, Turnholti 2017 (Corpus Scriptorum. Series Latina [= CCL], 63), p. 105, talks of Ambrose's aversion, that had already been manifested on the occasion of Priscillian's passage through the Milanese court during his return from Rome.

45 AMBROSIIUS, *Epistula XXX ad Valentinianum imperatorem* (Maur.: XXIV), 12, O. FALLER, ed., Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, Vindobonae 1968 (CSEL, 82/1), pp. 214-215: "*Cum videret [Maximus, proclaimed emperor in Gaul] me abstinere ab episcopis, qui communicabant ei, vel qui aliquos, devios licet a fide, ad necem petebant*".

46 SULPICIOUS SEVERUS, *Gallus*, III, 11. 3, Sch, 510, p. 330.

47 Ithacius on his part, according to Sulpicius Severus, extended the accusation of heresy to Martinus himself: SULPICIOUS SEVERUS, *Chronica*, II, 50. 4-5, CCL, 63, p. 107.

managed to obtain the emperor's assurance that no gruesome punishment would be inflicted on the accused⁴⁸. In *Gallus* Sulpicius Severus himself presents Martinus's dramatic intervention at the Court during the night, in which the bishop promised to enter into communion with the bishops gathered in Trier – from whom he had been keeping himself aloof until that moment – if the imperial court ceased persecuting the heretics⁴⁹, and the troops already destined to persecuting the Priscillianists in Spain were called back⁵⁰. Sulpicius Severus insists on the fact that only under these conditions and for this aim Martinus entered into communion with the other bishops of the imperial diocese of Gaul, and that after the convicts were sentenced to death he suspended any relations with that part of the episcopate which was responsible for the event, and did not participate in synods and meetings ever again⁵¹. His behavior was certainly clear, without reticence and designed to avoid what in the history of the Christian world appeared to be a *saeuum et inauditum nefas*⁵² and as such it was immediately perceived in the communion of Churches⁵³. However, also within the *dioecesis Galliarum* there were figures, like bishop Theognostus, who openly condemned the colleagues, who had been responsible for what had happened, and resoundingly broke the communion with them⁵⁴. Also Theodore, Bishop of Octodurum, in subsequent years seems, as regards the aspects of synodal life, to have communed with the Milanese ecclesiastical province⁵⁵.

Ambrose and Martinus clearly offer two different episcopal models, which also from an institutional point of view appear to have expressed different modes. In any case, the subsequent ecclesial tradition perceived their testi-

48 *Ibid.*, II, 50. 6, p. 107.

49 The appeal to the emperor seems to have come, for that matter, by Priscillian himself, *Ibid.*, II, 49. 9, p. 106.

50 SULPICIOUS SEVERUS, *Gallus*, III, 13. 1, SCh, 510, p. 340.

51 *Ibid.*, III, 13. 6, p. 342.

52 SULPICIOUS SEVERUS, *Chronica*, II, 50. 5, CCL, 63, p. 107.

53 The break of communion toward the ecclesiastic group headed by Felix of Trier protracted itself in the West until the latter's resignation in 398: see N. GAUTHIER, *L'évangélisation des Pays de la Moselle. La province romaine de Première Belgique entre Antiquité et Moyen Âge (III^e-VIII^e siècles)*, de Boccard, Paris 1980, pp. 66-81.

54 SULPICIOUS SEVERUS, *Gallus*, III, 12. 1, SCh, 510, p. 336.

55 Already present at the council of Aquileia of 381 with the Gallican delegates (*Gesta episcoporum Aquileiae adversum haereticos Arrianos*. <*Acta concilii*>, 62, M. ZELZER, ed., CSEL, 82/3, p. 363), he was also among the subscribers at the council of provincial bishops that Ambrose, responding to a request from Rome, summoned in the winter of 392/393 to condemn the anti-ascetical and Mariological doctrines of Jovinian (AMBROSIUS, *Epistula e. c. XV: Domino dilectissimo fratri Siricio Ambrosius, Sabinus, Bassiano et ceteri* (Maur.: XLII), CSEL, 82/3, pp. 302-311).

monies as profoundly complementary. In the VI century Gregory of Tours, in the *De virtutibus sancti Martini episcopi*, reported the tradition – existing in the Frankish ambit – that Martinus's funeral had been officiated by Ambrose, who, rapt in ecstasy during the Eucharist celebration in Milan, prodigiously appeared in Tours⁵⁶. As a matter of fact, when the *depositio* of Martinus, who died on November 8, was celebrated, Ambrose had already been dead for several months: his *transitus* dated to April 4.

We might see in that hagiographic legend the reflection of a new, later perception of the episcopate consolidated within the Merovingian kingdom, a perception in which the image of the bishop had taken on well-defined and consolidated features, of which a close and homogeneous unity was an essential aspect.

This, in any case, was the message which, in the middle of the Frankish-Carolingian epoch, the commissioner of the apse mosaic of the Basilica of St. Ambrose wanted to convey in Milan; a mosaic in which the pious fraud of the hagiographic story by Gregory of Tours is immortalized, again re-proposing in our time its pressing exhortation to ecclesial communion⁵⁷.

56 GREGORIUS Turonensis, *De virtutibus sancti Martini episcopi*, I, 5, B. KRUSCH, ed., Hahn, Hannoverae 1885 (MGH, *Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum*, 1/2), p. 591.

57 C. BERTELLI: *Mosaici a Milano*, in *Atti del 10° Congresso Internazionale di studi sull'Alto Medioevo: Milano e i Milanesi prima del Mille [VIII-X centuries]*. Milan, 26-30 Settembre 1983, Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, Spoleto 1986, pp. 344-346; *La decorazione musiva a Milano dall'età paleocristiana alla carolingia*, in *Pittura a Milano dall'Alto Medioevo al Tardogotico*, M. GREGORI, ed., Cariplo, Milan 1997, pp. 15-19; *Opere d'arte per la Chiesa Ambrosiana*, in *Il mosaico di Sant'Ambrogio: storia del mosaico e dei suoi restauri [1843-1997]*, C. CAPPONI, ed., Sinai, Milano 1997, in particolare pp. 8, 12-13. See also the panels of the Vulvino altar with its significant inscriptions: M. FERRARI, *Le iscrizioni*, in *L'altare d'oro di Sant'Ambrogio*, C. CAPPONI, ed., Banca Agricola Milanese, Milan 1996, pp. 147-154.

Appendix

The diarchy at the head of the ecclesiastic communion in the West in the last quarter of the IV century and until 402

The institutional function performed in the West by the bishop of the “imperial city” in the last part of the IV century is attested by a wealth of documents.

The reference to this bishop from the Churches of Africa is clearly attested by the 393 synod of Hippo, with Ambrose still alive (*Sed hanc rem placuit non confirmari, priusquam inde transmarina ecclesia consulatur*), by the subsequent council of Carthage of August 397, with Simplician as bishop of Milan [*De Donatistis placuit ut consulamus fratres et consacerdotes nostros Siricium et Simplicianum*]; and also by the 401 council of Carthage which, like the previous one, specifically designated the colleagues of the *transmarinae Italiae partes*, to whom it meant to make reference: Anastasius of Rome and Venerius of Milan (... *eligendum esse unum de nostro numero consacerdotem qui ... perrecturus ad transmarinas Italiae partes, ut tam sanctis fratribus et consacerdotibus nostris, uenerabili sancto fratri Anastasio sedis apostolicae episcopo, quam etiam sancto fratri Venerio sacerdoti Mediolanensis ecclesiae, ... inopiam nostram ualeat intimare*)⁵⁸.

As regards **Spain**, in response to the 380 council of Saragossa, it was Ambrose who established with a personal letter the conditions for the readmission of the repentant Priscillianists to communion; and with reference to such provisions and according to his authority acted the bishops of the council of Toledo – which probably met in the year 400, and in any case after the death of Priscillian (... *litteris tamen sanctae memoriae Ambrosii, quas post illud concilium [Caesaraugustanum] ad nos miserat, ut si ... [implying the Priscillianist bishops] implesent condiciones, quas praescriptas litterae continebant, reverterentur ad pacem [adde quae sanctae memoriae Syricius papa suasisset] ... / ... Dictinum episcopum, quem sanctus Ambrosius decrevisset, bonae pacis tenere presbyterii, non accipere honoris augmentum / Paternus Bracarensis ecclesiae episcopus ... sectam Priscilliani se scisse, sed, factum episcopum, liberatum se ab ea, lectione librorum sancti Ambrosii esse iuraret*). The prelates of the synod of Toledo, in their turn, submitted their deliberations to the ratification of the *papa* and the *sanctus Simplicianus*, that is, the Milanese prelate who had succeeded Ambrose (... *expectantes pari exemplo quid papa, qui nunc est, quid sanctus Simplicianus Mediolanensis episcopus reliquique*

58 *Concilia Africae*, MUNIER, ed., CCL, 149, pp. 44, 186, 194. As for this reference of the African bishops to the *transmarina ecclesia*, see W. MARSCHALL, *Karthago und Rom*, Hiersemann, Stuttgart 1971 (Päpste und Papsttum, 1), pp. 113 and foll.; PIETRI, *Roma Christiana*, 2, pp. 1157 and foll.

*ecclesiarum rescribant sacerdotes ... Constituimus autem, priusquam illis [the bishops received by the synod] per papam vel per sanctum Simplicianum communitio reddatur, non episcopos, non presbyteros, non diaconos ab illis ordinandos)*⁵⁹.

In particular, as for Eastern Illyricum and with reference to the question of Bonosus, Ambrose appears to have been considered, by the bishops gathered around the seat of Thessalonica and by Bonosus himself, an appeal judge after the judgment issued in Capua by the *plenaria synodus* of the suburbicarian episcopate (*de Bonoso direxistis episcopo quibus vel pro veritate vel pro modestia nostram sententiam sciscitari voluistis... Denique cum Bonosus episcopus post iudicium vestrum misisset ad fratrem nostrum Ambrosium, qui eius sententiam consularet ... resposnum est ei ...*)⁶⁰.

With regard to Western Illyricum, it should be mentioned here that it had been Ambrose, between the end of 375 and the summer of 378, who had ordained Anemius as bishop of the capital city of Sirmium⁶¹. Perhaps at the same time, and in the summer of 378, a synod had taken place in the same city, from which the deposition of some of the anti-Nicene bishops of the region had come⁶².

However, also the bishops of the *diocesis Galliarum* sent legates and addressed pleas to Ambrose – which were, for that matter, unheeded – in order to recompose the break caused by the executions of Priscillian and some of his disciples in Trier (between 385 and 386)⁶³. The break had started with bishop

59 *Exemplar sententiae*, ed. J. VIVES (T. M. MARÍN MARTÍNEZ, G. MARTÍNEZ DÍEZ), *Concilios Visigóticos e Hispano-Romanos*, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas. Instituto Enrique Flórez, Barcelona-Madrid 1963, pp. 30-33.

60 AMBROSIUS, *Epistula LXXI* (Maur.: *LVI a*), CSEL, 82/3, pp. 7-8; for the definition of “*plenaria synodus*” attributed to the council of Capua in the session of August 28, 397, of the council of Carthage: *Concilia Africae*, MUNIER, ed., CCL, 149, p. 187; for the dating of the council to 391/392 see PIETRI, *Roma Christiana*, 2, pp. 900-901. As for the habitual ties of the Milanese prelate with the Illyrian seat of Thessalonica: AMBROSIUS, *Epistulae: LI* (Maur.: *XV*) (*Ambrosius Anatolio, Munerio, Severo, Philippo, Macedonio, Ammiano, Theodosio, Eutropio, Claro, Eusebio et Timotheo, Domini sacerdotibus, et omni clero et plebi Thessalonicensium dilectis salutem*), *LII* (Maur.: *XVI*) (*Ambrosius episcopus Anyisio fratri*), after O. FALLER, M. ZELZER, ed., Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, Vindobonae 1990 (CSEL, 82/2), pp. 60-70.

61 PAULINUS, *Vita Ambrosii*, XI, 12. 1, BASTIAENSEN, ed., pp. 66, 68.

62 THEODORETUS Cyrensis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, IV: 7. 6; 9. 1-9, after L. PARMENTIER, G. Ch. HANSEN, ed., Akademie Verlag, Berlin 1998³ (GCS, n. F., 5), pp. 219, 224-227.

63 AMBROSIUS, *Epistula e.c. XI ad augustissimum imperatorem Theodosium* (Maur.: *LI*), 6, CSEL, 82/3, p. 214 (*Quando primum auditum est [the news about the Thessalonica bloodshed, year 390], propter adventum Gallorum episcoporum synodus convenerat*);

Britto from Trier, and had continued with his successor, Felix, then extending to all those who, involved in the trial to Priscillian or otherwise, shared Felix' communion⁶⁴.

In June 404, when, after the abandonment of Milan by Emperor Honorius, there was still some uncertainty about the site of the Court, a new Carthaginian synod, having to send first of all *ad gloriosissimos imperatores* their deliberations, had stated that: "*Litterae etiam ad episcopum Romanae ecclesiae de commendatione legatorum mittendae sunt, uel ad alios ubi fuerit imperator*"⁶⁵.

The echo that such a situation had in the East should be mentioned. In 680 the Milanese metropolitan province, headed by Mansuetus, had carried out a direct synodal dialogue with Emperor Constantine IV⁶⁶. Soon after that event,

and two years later: AMBROSIUS, *De obitu Valentiniani*, XXV, O. FALLER, ed., Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, Vindobonae 1955 (CSEL, 73), p. 342 (*Additur eo ut properarem ocius, nec arbitrarer causam itineris mei synodum Gallorum esse episcoporum, propter quorum frequentes dissensiones crebro me excusaveram; sed ut ipse [Valentiniano II] baptizaretur*).

64 AMBROSIUS, *Epistula XXX ad Valentinianum imperatorem* (Maur.: XXIV), 12, CSEL, 82/1, pp. 214-215 (*Cum videret [Maximus, proclaimed emperor of Gaul] me abstinere ab episcopis, qui communicabant ei, vel qui aliquos, devios licet a fide, ad necem petebant ...*).

65 *Concilia Africae*, MUNIER, ed., CCL, 149, p. 213. As regards these aspects of the late-Antiquity institutional life of the Church, permit me to refer to C. ALZATI, "*Ubi fuerit imperator*". *Chiesa della residenza imperiale e comunione cristiana tra IV e V secolo in Occidente*, in *Ambrosiana Ecclesia. Studi su la Chiesa milanese e l'ecumene cristiana fra tarda antichità e medioevo*, Introduction by C. VIOLANTE, NED-Nuove Edizioni Duomo, Milan 1993 (Archivio Ambrosiano, 65), pp. 3-21; as for the echoes of these institutional experiences in the Milanese Medieval Age see C. ALZATI, *Residenza imperiale e preminenza ecclesiastica in Occidente. La prassi tardo antica e i suoi echi alto medioevali*, in *Diritto e religione. Da Roma a Costantinopoli a Mosca. Rendiconti dell'XI Seminario "Da Roma alla Terza Roma"*. Campidoglio, 21 Aprile 1991, M. P. BACCARI, ed., Herder, Roma 1994 (Da Roma alla Terza Roma. Rendiconti), pp. 95-106.

66 *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima Collectio*, ed. J.[G.] D. MANSI (= Mansi), 11, Zatta, Florentiae 1765 (new anastatic edition: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, Graz 1961), cc. 203-208; the uninterrupted chain of manuscripts that transmitted the texts (*Suggestio* and *Expositio fidei*) from the IX to the XVI century, and the related critical edition have been provided by Fabio FURCINITI in *Mansuetus, Damiano e il basileus. La Suggestio e l'Expositio fidei della sinodo Milanese a Costantino IV*, Doctoral thesis defended at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano on April 20, 2011 (and whose publication is forthcoming); see also by FURCINITI, *La presenza greca in area latina e i rapporti tra Oriente e Occidente nell'ultima fase del tardo*

between 691 and 692, the Trullan council took place in Constantinople, in its Can. 39 ratifying the uprooting of the local archbishop's seat from Cyprus and its transfer to Hellespont⁶⁷, while in Can. 2 it sanctioned the acceptance of the African synodal texts⁶⁸. Within the latter, there is a Carthaginian synodal document dating to the beginning of the V century, in which the Roman pope (Anastasius) and the Milanese prelate (Venerius) were declared heads of the Christian communion in the West: therefore, the Churches of Africa addressed them both jointly⁶⁹. The continuity of attention devoted to this text by the canonists of Constantinople is clearly indicated in the XII century by Iōánnēs Zōnarās and Theódōros Balsamôn⁷⁰. In that way the image of Milan as "first city of the West after Rome" was corroborated; an image that in the IV century Procopius had spread in the Greek area⁷¹.

An eloquent reflection of this state of affairs is available at the hagiographic level: precisely in that period of a few years (at the end of the VII century or, better, at the beginning of the VIII, according to František Dvorník⁷²), the *Catalog of the 70 Apostles* (attributed to the prestigious name of Epiphanius) decided to weaken the bond between the Cypriot autocephalous archbishopric and the apostle Barnabas, in order to render the latter the first bishop of the

Antico, «Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Moyen Âge», 124/1 (2012); and *La voce greca della Chiesa latina nell'ultima fase del Tardoantico. La sinodica di Mansueto e la sua fortuna dall'Italia longobarda fino all'Inghilterra della Riforma enriciana*, in *Transmission et réception des Pères grecs dans l'Occident, de l'Antiquité tardive à la Renaissance: entre philologie, herméneutique et théologie. Actes du colloque international organisé du 26 au 28 novembre 2014 à l'Université de Strasbourg*, E. PRINZIVALLI - M. CUTINO - F. VINEL, eds., Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, Paris 2016 (Collection des Études Augustiniennes: Série Moyen Âge et Temps Modernes, 53).

67 *CCO*, pp. 173-174; see J. HACKETT, *A History of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus*, Methuen, London 1901, pp. 46 and foll.; Greek transl. ed. by Ch. I. PAPAIOANNOU, 1, Τύποις Π. Δ. Σακελλαρίου, en Athénais 1923, pp. 57 and foll.

68 *CCO*, p. 122.

69 *CSP*, pp. 288-289; cfr. *Registri Ecclesiae Carthaginensis excerpta*, in *Concilia Africae*, MUNIER, ed., CCL, 149, p. 194 (Carthaginian council of June 16, 401).

70 In *PG*, 138, cc. 236-237.

71 PROCOPIUS Caesariensis, *De bello Gothico*, II, 7. 36-38, H. HAURY, ed., G. WIRTH, rev., Teubner, Leipzig 1963 (Bibliotheca Teubneriana [= BT]), p. 185; see also II, 21. 6, p. 241.

72 F. DVORNÍK, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Mass. 1958 [Dumbarton Oaks Studies, 4], p. 178.

Church of Milan⁷³. This statement did not have any echoes in the Milanese ambit at the time, but was more successful in the Greek area, entering the new *Catalog of the Seventy Disciples* that was probably written after 811 (Teophánēs seems to have had no knowledge of it) and has come to us under the name of Dorotheus⁷⁴.

For a resumption of that theme in the Milanese ambit it would be necessary to wait, in the first part of the XI century, for the *De adventu Barnabae*, included in the *Libellus de situ civitatis Mediolani*⁷⁵, connected by Paolo Tomea, with convincing documentation, to the person and the work of archbishop Arnulf II⁷⁶.

With the year 404, the imperial residence in the West was fixed in Ravenna, and from then on the already mentioned dual polarization present in the communion of the Western Churches de facto ceased, as Ravenna had always been an episcopal seat belonging to the suburbicarian ecclesiastic province, and therefore subordinate in direct and immediate form to the Roman pontiff. The seat managed to obtain the right to ordain the nearby bishops and, later, the metropolitan rank also regarding the bishops of the whole Emilia, but it was never able to free itself from its subordination to Rome⁷⁷.

73 Th. SCHERMANN, ed., *Prophetarum vitae fabulosae. Indices apostolorum discipulorumque Domini Dorotheo, Epiphanio, Hippolyto aliisque vindicata*, Teubner, Lipsiae 1907 (BT), p. 118

74 *Ibid.*, pp. 132 ss.; see DVORNÍK, *The Idea of Apostolicity*, pp. 178-179.

75 *Libellus de situ civitatis Mediolani* (= *De situ*), A. COLOMBO - G. COLOMBO, eds., Zanichelli, Bologna 1942 (*Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, nova editio, 1/2).

76 P. TOMEA, *Tradizione apostolica e coscienza cittadina a Milano nel medioevo. La leggenda di san Barnaba*, Vita e Pensiero, Milan 1993 (*Bibliotheca erudita*, 2), pp. 418 and foll. But, as regards the ecclesiological meaning of the changes in the Milanese ambit introduced in the hagiographical note by the Pseudo Epiphanius: C. ALZATI, *The Holy Apostle Barnabas and the Ambrosian Church. Ecclesiological Meanings of the Revival of a Greek Hagiographic Tradition in Milan*, in *Κυπριακή Αρχιολογία. Πρακτικά Α' Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου. Παραλίμνι, 9-12 Φεβρουαρίου 2012*, Th. ΓΙΛΓΚΟΥ - Chr. NÁSSĒ, curs., Ἱερὰ Μητρόπολις Κωνσταντίας-Ἀμμοκόστου / Πολιτιστικὴ Ἀκαδημία «Ἅγιος Ἐπιφάνιος», Hagía Nára - Paralímni 2015, pp. 87-123; Italian preview of the contribution: *San Barnaba apostolo e la Chiesa ambrosiana. Significati ecclesiologicali della ripresa a Milano di una tradizione agiografica greca*, «Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa», 48 (1) (2012), pp. 3-32.

77 See A. SIMONINI, *La Chiesa ravennate. Splendore e tramonto di una metropoli*, Monte di Ravenna, Ravenna, 1964, pp. 27 and foll.; M. MAZZOTTI, *La provincia ecclesiastica ravennate attraverso i secoli*, in *Atti dei Convegni di Cesena e Ravenna (1966-1967)*, Badia di S. Maria del Monte (Cesena), Centro studi e ricerche sull'antica provincia ecclesiastica ravennate, 1969 (*Ravennatensia*, 1), pp. 15-26; A. M.

When the imperial presence in the West ceased in 476, the conditions too dissolved that could have determined, if not the ancient diarchy (the institutional configuration of the West was by now profoundly different), at least a further elevation of the ecclesiastic rank of the Court city. In the middle of the Three Chapter Controversy, in the context of the renewed attention paid to Italy by Justinian who was busy with the Gothic war, it seems that the Ravenna prelate Maximian started to use the title of “archbishop”. However, though directly chosen by the emperor and ordained in Patras, he too received the laying on of hands – in accordance with the traditional order – from the Roman pope, Vigilius¹.

Only the intervention of an imperial authority directly located in the Western territory could have modified the ecclesiastic system that had crystallized around the Church of Rome. And such a situation occurred again when, in 663, Constans II decided to leave Constantinople and reach Italy²: in that unforeseen situation the Ravenna prelate Mauro came to conceive the idea of making his own seat autocephalous. The plan was accomplished through the

ORSELLI, *Organizzazione ecclesiastica e momenti di vita religiosa alle origini del Cristianesimo emiliano-romagnolo*, in *Storia della Emilia-Romagna*, I, A. I. BERSELLI, cur., University Press, Bologna 1975, pp. 323-328. Therefore, the Church system that was actually subverted as a consequence of the constitution of the metropolitan authority of the Ravenna prelate was not the Roman ecclesiastic province, but the one headed by Milan. The bishops of Emilia, in fact, who belonged to the Italician imperial diocese, since the time of Ambrose had been active in the same province as the Milanese prelate, and now, through the ecclesiastic dependence from Ravenna, were taken from the Italician institutional ambit and integrated into a new ecclesiastic horizon of suburbicarian gravitation: G. TROVABENE, *Le diocesi dell’Emilia occidentale nei rapporti con la Chiesa di Milano*, in *Atti del 10° Congresso Internazionale di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo: Milano e i Milanesi prima del Mille (VIII-X secolo)*. Milan, 26-30 September 1983, Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo, Spoleto 1986, pp. 511-523.

- 1 AGNELLI *Liber Pontificalis Ecclesiae Ravennatis*, 70 [ordained October 14, 546], 80 [archbishop’s title], O. HOLDER EGGER, ed., Hahn, Hannoverae 1878 (MGH, *Scriptores Rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum*), pp. 326, 331; *Codex pontificalis ecclesiae Ravenensis*, A. TESTI RASPONI, ed., Bologna, Zanichelli, 1924 (RRISS, n. ed., II, 3, pp. 187, 207). As for the context of that event see F. CARCIONE, *Vigilio nelle controversie cristologiche del suo tempo*, in «Studi e Ricerche sull’Oriente Cristiano», 10 (1987), pp. 45 and foll. As a matter of fact, the archbishop’s title was recognized by Rome only later, with Pope Vitalian (657-672), concomitantly with the conferment of the autocephalous rank to archbishop Mauro: A. SIMONINI, *Autocefalia ed Esarcato in Italia*, Longo, Ravenna 1969, pp. 79-81.
- 2 See P. CORSI, *La spedizione italiana di Costante II*, Pàtron, Bologna 1983 (Il mondo medievale. Sezione di storia bizantina, 5).

typus issued by Constans in the year 666; in it the ecclesiastic independence from the see of Rome and the ordination by the bishops of the ecclesiastical province of Ravenna were ratified³. However, two years later Constans was murdered in Siracusa; from then on there was no longer an imperial presence in the West and already in March 680 the archbishop of Ravenna (at that time Theodore) had to accept the fact of being again subordinate to the Roman pope and was forced to receive his ordination from him⁴.

- 3 The competence of the emperor as for the determination of the institutional rank of cities, and consequently of the episcopal seats, had been enunciated by the can. 17c of Chalcedon (CCO, p. 83). However, in that same council the can. 12 had declared illegitimate an appeal to the imperial authority in order to simply indulge ecclesiastic ambitions (CCO, pp. 79-80). As for the imperial *typus* for autocephaly granted to the Ravenna Church: O. HOLDER EGGER, ed., in AGNELLI *Liber Pontificalis Ecclesiae Ravennatis*, MGH, *Scriptores Rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum*, pp. 350-351; see F. DOELGER, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches (565-1453)*, I, Oldenbourg, München-Berlin 1924, nn. 232-233, p. 27, who puts the text among the dubious documents. As regards the problems of the *typus* see: P. CONTE, *Chiesa e Primato nelle lettere dei papi del secolo VII*, Vita e Pensiero, Milan 1971, p. 332; G. ORIOLI, *L'autocefalia della Chiesa ravennate*, «Bollettino della Badia greca di Grottaferrata», n. s., 30 (1976), pp. 11-12; with specific connotations: A. GUILLOU, *Régionalisme et indépendance dans l'Empire byzantin au VII^e siècle*, Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, Rome 1969 (*Studi Storici*, 75-76), pp. 163-172. It should be noted that the independence from a patriarchal authority (*non subiacere pro quolibet modo patriarche antiquae urbis Rome*) and the free ordination by the co-provincial bishops (*sicut reliqui metropolitae per diversas rei publice manentes provincias, qui et a propriis consecrantur episcopis*) constituted the fundamental elements for an autocephalous regime, as highlighted by the Cyprian model (see the council of Ephesus, can. 8: CCO, pp. 61-62).
- 4 The renunciation of the autocephalous prerogatives, imposed by Agatho on the occasion of the Roman council of March 680, two years later was accurately fixed in detail by Pope Leo II (682-683): *Liber Pontificalis*, L. DUCHESNE, ed., 1, de Boccard, Paris 1955 (Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome), p. 360; AGNELLI *Liber Pontificalis Ecclesiae Ravennatis*, 124, MGH, *Scriptores Rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum*, pp. 359-360. With regard to this, see the observations of A. M. ORSELLI, *La Chiesa di Ravenna tra coscienza dell'istituzione e tradizione cittadina*, in *Storia di Ravenna*, 2/1: *Dall'età bizantina all'età ottoniana. Ecclesiologia, cultura e arte*, A. CARILE, ed., Comune di Ravenna - Marsilio, Ravenna-Venice 1992, pp. 414-416. On the signatures, by archbishop Theodore and by the bishops linked to him, to the Roman synodal *suggestio Omnium bonorum spes / Πάντων τῶν ἀγαθῶν*, of March 27, 680, see: *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum (= ACO)*, ser. II, vol. II: *Concilium Vniuersale Constantinopolitanum Tertium*, I, R. RIEDINGER, ed., de Gruyter, Berolini 1990, pp. 159 / 158. As for the accreditation to the emperor of the Ravenna priest Theodore, as representative to the council of the archbishop of the same name, accreditation borne by Agatho of Rome in the tomos *Consideranti mihi / Κατανοούντί μοι*, similarly dated March 27, 680, see *Ibid.*, pp. 57. 9-10 / 56. 10-11.