

# *Translating Faith from Greek to Latin: Romanitas and Christianitas in Late Fourth-Century Rome and Milan*<sup>1</sup>

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In the late fourth-century churches of Rome and Milan, the prayers of the liturgy of the faithful, the core of what would become the eucharistic canon, were set down in written form, establishing Latin as *the* liturgical language. In each case, this step was a response to complex local circumstances. The adoption of a Latin liturgy allowed Damasus to identify his church with traditional Roman culture, to appropriate its values and prestige, and to claim a share in the aristocratic life of the city for the rulers of the Roman church. For Ambrose, the Latin liturgy excluded the barbarian Arians and identified Christianity with Roman civilization and culture. Although locally motivated, however, the decisive move to the use of Latin in the fixed portions of the liturgy in Rome and Milan was an important step towards the formation of the concept of *Latinitas* as a unifying characteristic of western Europe.

The Western church was not irrevocably destined to become a Latin church: it had a rich Greek past. Moreover, Latin was far from the only language used in the West, and some ethnic groups, like the Ostrogoths in

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Italy, used their own language for religious purposes. A Western church using many languages, as did Eastern Christians, whose liturgies varied in accordance with local languages (Coptic and Syriac, as well as Greek), is easy to imagine. In the last third of the fourth century, the two leading churches of Italy made an important move toward Latin. In this period the prayers of the liturgy of the eucharistic service, the core of what would become the eucharistic canon, were set down in written form, establishing Latin as *the* language of the liturgy. In both Milan and in Rome, the earliest sees of western Europe for which we have evidence for the use of a Latin liturgy, the adoption of Latin as the language of the eucharistic prayers was a response to complex local circumstances.<sup>2</sup> Although locally motivated, however, the decisive move to the use of Latin in the fixed portions of the liturgy in the two major cities of Italy was an important step towards the formation of the concept of *Latinitas* as a unifying characteristic of western Europe.<sup>3</sup>

The precise circumstances under which the Latin eucharistic prayers were created are unknown, and the state of the evidence does not allow firm conclusions to be drawn. It suggests that the church of Rome moved

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of the paper, as well as to my colleagues at Villanova, especially Felix Asiedu, David Craig, Kevin Hughes, and Andrew Murphy. Their generosity is beyond compare. Any errors that remain are, of course, my own. Finally, I would like to dedicate this paper to Jack Doody, Dean of Core Humanities at Villanova, who created the warm (and Augustinian) environment without which I could not have written it.

2. Cyrille Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy: An Introduction to the Sources*, rev. and tr. W. G. Storey and N. K. Rasmussen (Washington: Pastoral Press, 1986), 31–37, has a concise summary of the history of Latin liturgies in the first four centuries C.E. The only other early liturgical text is a *benedictio super fideles*, which survives from fourth-century Spain (Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 36–37).

3. In writing this paper, I have struggled to find a terminology to refer to parts of the early Latin liturgy that are still in flux in the period under discussion but will correspond to the later Roman *canon missae*. References to the canon, or *prex canonica*, as it is first called, are not found before the time of Pope Vigilius (*Ep. ad Profuturum* 5, PL 69:18; see Allan Bouley, *From Freedom to Formula: The Evolution of the Eucharistic Prayer from Oral Improvisation to Written Texts*, Studies in Christian Antiquity 21 [Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1981], 208–9). I will refer to the relatively fixed portions of the liturgy of the Eucharist as the “eucharistic prayers” throughout to distinguish between the prayers surrounding the Eucharist (at first themselves somewhat variable, allowing for verbal extemporizing by the priest) from the parts of the liturgy varying greatly from service to service, occasion to occasion (prefaces, prayers of the faithful, readings, psalms, and so forth). I will use the term “eucharistic service” to refer to the service as a whole, that is, the combination of the liturgy of the word (sometimes referred to as the *missa catechumenorum*) and the liturgy of the Eucharist (sometimes referred to as the *sacramentum fidelium*).

from a relatively flexible liturgy, fluid both in terms of the language used and the exact wording, towards a fixed, official “canon” of prescribed prayers in Latin after 360 c.e. but before 382, probably during the time of Damasus I, bishop of Rome between 366 and 384.<sup>4</sup> While the situation in

4. As Massey H. Shepherd, “The Liturgical Reform of Damasus I,” in *Kyriakon: Festschrift Johannes Quasten*, ed. Patrick Granfield and Josef A. Jungmann, 2 vols. (Münster: Aschendorff, 1970), 2:847, points out, “the Latin rite of Rome, as it came to be shaped in the fifth and sixth centuries, cannot be traced prior to [Damasus’] time.” The crucial texts are Marius Victorinus, c. 360, who refers to Greek phrases from the *oratio oblationis* at *Adversus Arium* 2.8 (CSEL 83:182–83); Ambrosiaster, *Quaestiones veteris ac novi testamenti* 109.21 (CSEL 50:268); and Ambrose in the *De sacramentis* (c. 390), in *Des sacrements; Des mystères*, ed. Bernard Botte, 2nd ed., SC 25 (Paris: Cerf, 1961). Charles Pietri, *Roma Christiana: Recherches sur l’Église de Rome, son organisation, sa politique, son idéologie de Miltiade à Sixte III (311–440)*, 2 vols. (Rome: École française de Rome, 1976), 1:103–4, summarizes both the evidence and the scholarly debate. The major bibliography includes Theodor Klauser, “Der Übergang der römischen Kirche von der griechischen zur lateinischen Liturgiesprache,” in *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati*, ST 121, 6 vols. (Vatican: Biblioteca apostolica, 1946), 1:467–69; Gustave Bardy, *La question des langues dans l’Église ancienne* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1948), 161–64; Christine Mohrmann, “Les origines de la latinité chrétienne à Rome,” *VC* 3 (1949): 70; “Quelques observations sur l’évolution stylistique du canon de la messe romaine,” *VC* 4 (1950): 1–19; and *Liturgical Latin: Its Origins and Character* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1957), 50–59; Josef A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development (Missarum Sollemnia)*, tr. Francis A. Brunner, 2 vols. (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1951–55), 1:50–58; Shepherd, “Liturgical Reform,” 2:847–48; J. Beumer, “Die ältesten Zeugnisse für die römische Eucharistiefeier bei Ambrosius von Mailand,” *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 95 (1973): 311–24; and Bouley, *From Freedom to Formula*, 200–215. To summarize the main arguments, the Greek phrase cited by Marius Victorinus shows that there were still Greek elements in the eucharistic prayers which are then quite distant from the later Roman canon, while the eucharistic prayers cited by Ambrose are clearly an early version of that canon. Sometime between 360 and 390, then, a decisive step was taken towards the later official Roman canon, certainly in Milan and probably in Rome. For a counterposition, see Bernard Botte, “Histoire des prières de l’ordinaire de la messe,” in *L’ordinaire de la messe*, ed. B. Botte and C. Mohrmann, *Études liturgiques* 2 (Paris: Cerf, 1953), 17. Charles Pietri, “Damase évêque de Rome,” in *Saecularia Damasiana: Atti del convegno internazionale per il XVI centenario della morte di Papa Damaso I (11-12-384-10/12-12-1984)*, Studi di Antichità Cristiana 39 (Vatican: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1986), 32. Most scholars now believe that the movement of the Roman liturgy from Greek to Latin proceeded both gradually and piecemeal, and followed, if slowly, the demographic shift of Christian Rome linguistically from Greek to Latin, and that the eucharistic prayers achieved a relatively fixed and official form around the time of Damasus (see esp. Mohrmann, *Liturgical Latin*, 50–53; Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, 1:51–52; Bouley, *From Freedom to Formula*, 203–7). Some scholars, such as Pietri (*Roma Christiana*, 1:103–4, and n. 1) and Botte (“Histoire des prières,” 17), prefer not to associate the transition with any particular church or person.

Rome is unclear, we can be quite certain that the Milanese church was using a fixed Latin liturgy by c. 390.<sup>5</sup> Ambrose's *De sacramentis*, which cites and explicates the liturgy of the Eucharist for those about to be baptized, is our earliest clear evidence for the use of a fixed set of eucharistic prayers clearly anticipating the later Roman eucharistic canon.<sup>6</sup>

The purpose here is neither to establish the priority of either Rome or Milan nor to determine the authorship of the first extant Latin eucharistic prayers. Rather this paper aims to set the new emphasis on *Latinitas* in the liturgy, as manifested in the official adoption of Latin eucharistic prayers, in its historical, social, and cultural contexts. As social historians of language, particularly Peter Burke, have argued, the choice of one language over another is never a neutral or transparent one.<sup>7</sup> This must be particularly true in as charged circumstances as the prayers of the high point of the eucharistic service, the central mystery in which the bread and wine become Christ's body and blood.<sup>8</sup>

#### LATIN, GREEK, AND SOCIETY IN THE FOURTH CENTURY

The Romans were highly conscious of the social and cultural significance of language, equating Latin, at least since the age of Augustus, with imperial dominion, and translation with the act of conquest. Greece, in contrast, was regularly figured (for example, in *Aeneid* 6.847–53) as the locus of literature, learning, and the arts.<sup>9</sup> The association of Latin with

5. The key text for Milan is *De sacramentis* 4.5–6, which has strong parallels to the later Roman canon. On the authenticity of *De sacramentis*, a series of sermons by Ambrose, probably written down by a secretary, see Botte's introduction to *Des sacrements*, 8–21; Christine Mohrmann, "Le style oral du *De sacramentis* de Saint Ambroise," *VC* 6 (1952): 168–77; Botte, "Histoire des prières," 19–22; Mohrmann, *Liturgical Latin*, 26–63; and Bouley, *From Freedom to Formula*, 204. Mohrmann ("Quelques observations," 6–19), examines the relationship between the ritual quoted in the *De sacramentis* and the canon of the mass in the Gelasian sacramentary.

6. Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, 1:47, 52–55.

7. See Peter Burke, *The Art of Conversation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), esp. 26, "speaking is a form of doing, . . . language is an active force in society, a means for individuals and groups to control others or resist such control, for changing society or for blocking change, for affirming or suppressing cultural identities."

8. Burke (*Art of Conversation*, 18) cites an interesting parallel in which Huguenots of Languedoc used Occitan for their ordinary language, but French for the language of liturgy and of prophecy: "For them, French was a linguistic symbol of the sacred."

9. See Joseph Farrell, *Latin Language and Latin Culture from Ancient to Modern Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1–5; G. Dagron, "Aux origines de la civilisation byzantine: langue de culture et langue d'état," *Revue historique* 241 (1969): 24–26.

empire and power continues well into late antiquity. Augustine, for example, sees language as a major tool of Roman imperialism, which leads to increased communications between human beings, but only at the price of bloody conquest:

The diversity of languages separates man from man. For if two men meet, and are forced by some compelling reason not to pass on but to stay in company, then if neither knows the other's language, it is easier for dumb animals, even of different kinds, to associate together than these men, although both are human beings. For when men cannot communicate their thoughts to each other, simply because of difference of language, all the similarity of their common human nature is of no avail to unite them in fellowship. So true is this that a man would be more cheerful with his dog than with a foreigner. I shall be told that the Imperial City has been at pains to impose on conquered persons not only her yoke but her language also, as a bond of peace and fellowship, so that there should be no lack of interpreters but even a profusion of them. True; but think of the cost of this achievement! Consider the scale of those wars, with all that slaughter of human beings, all the human blood that was shed!<sup>10</sup>

Jerome, perhaps the greatest translator in an age of translation, describes the act of translation from Greek into Latin as a form of conquest in a letter explaining his method of translation according to sense and criticizing overly literal translation (*Ep.* 57.6). He praises Hilary's translations from Origen:

10. Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 19.7 (CCL 48): *in quo [orbe] primum linguarum diuersitas hominem alienat ab homine. nam si duo sibimet inuicem fiant obuiam, neque praeterire, sed simul esse aliqua necessitate cogantur, quorum neuter nouit linguam alterius: facilius sibi muta animalia, etiam diuersi generis, quam illi, cum sint homines ambo, sociantur. quando enim quae sentiunt inter se communicare non possunt, propter solam diuersitatem linguae, nihil prodest ad consociandos homines tanta similitudo naturae, ita ut libentius homo sit cum cane suo quam cum homine alieno. at enim opera data est, ut imperiosa ciuitas non solum iugum, uerum etiam linguam suam domitis gentibus per pacem societatis imponeret, per quam non deesset, immo et abundaret etiam interpretum copia. uerum est sed hoc quam multis et quam grandibus bellis, quanta strage hominum, quanta effusione humani sanguinis comparatum est? quibus transactis, non est tamen eorumdem malorum finita miseria. quamuis enim non defuerint neque desint hostes exterae nationes, contra quas semper bella gesta sunt et geruntur: tamen etiam ipsa imperii latitudo peperit peioris generis bella, socialia scilicet et ciuilia, quibus miserabilius quatitur humanum genus, siue cum belligeratur, ut aliquando conquiescant, siue cum timetur, ne rursus exsurgant. quorum malorum multas et multiplices clades, duras et diras necessitates si ut dignum est eloqui uelim, quanquam nequaquam sicut res postulat possim: quis erit prolixae disputationis modus?* The translation is that of Henry Bettenson, *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972).

It is enough to name, for now, Hilary the Confessor, who translated the Homilies on Job and very many treatises on the Psalms from Greek into Latin. Nor did he stick sluggishly to a literal translation [literally, “to the sleeping letter”], and he wrenched himself away from the foul method of translation of rustics: rather, just as if by the right of victor, he translated the sense, having captured it, into his own language.<sup>11</sup>

Neither Jerome nor Augustine sees translation into Latin as a neutral act. For both, it is a positive step. For Augustine, the spread of Latin is a move toward universal communication, if at great cost; for Jerome, translation into good Latin is a move from provincialism towards urbane civilization. For both, the act of translation into Latin is closely connected with Roman conquest and imperialism. As Walter Berschin puts it, “translation was viewed as a ‘patriotic deed’ in antiquity—the subjugation of a foreign subject to the rules of one’s own language and its rhetoric.”<sup>12</sup>

In the fourth century, the balance between the two languages shifted perceptibly. Greek continued to be the major language of learning, particularly in the realms of philosophical and theological debate. While the study of Greek in the West, at least among the elite classes, certainly does not disappear, the demand for and number of translations into Latin of major religious, theological, and philosophical works (Christian and non-Christian) in Greek grew rapidly. Many Latin-speakers were either unwilling or unable to tackle these works in the original.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, the association between Latin and empire was strengthened under Diocletian, Constantine, and the later emperors of the fourth century.

In his reorganization of the empire and its administrative structures, Diocletian emphasized the connection of imperial administration and law to *Romanitas* and, with it, to *Latinitas*.<sup>14</sup> Even as he removed power from Rome, he consciously reaffirmed its fundamental *Romanitas*, particularly in law. He began to issue rescripts solely in Latin, and in them strove to reinforce the *mos maiorum* inherited from the ancient Romans, especially in regard to family law and religion. In consequence, new law schools,

11. Jerome, *Ep.* 57.6 (CSEL 54): *sufficit in praesenti nominasse Hilarium confesorem, qui homilias in Iob et in psalmos tractatus plurimos in Latinum uertit e Graeco nec adsedit litterae dormitanti et putida rusticorum interpretatione se torsit, sed quasi captiuos sensus in suam linguam uictoris iure transposuit.*

12. See esp. Walter Berschin, *Greek Letters and the Latin Middle Ages from Jerome to Nicholas of Cusa*, rev. ed., tr. Jerold C. Frakes (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 48; Franz Blatt, “Remarques sur l’histoire des traductions latins,” *CM* 1 (1938): 217–42, esp. 217–18.

13. Berschin, *Greek Letters*, 41–55.

14. Dagron, “Aux origines de la civilisation byzantine,” 23–56.

such as the one at Beirut, grew up even in the East where Greek was used as the primary language.<sup>15</sup> The result of these changes was a renewed emphasis on the association of imperial power and Latin.

Constantine continued this new emphasis: despite removing his capital from Rome, at Constantinople, he took great care to replicate Rome's ancient institutions, including a senate composed of *virī clari*, a *populus Romanus*, an imperial palace and forum. He also celebrated *Romanitas* in a coinage with Latin legends. According to his biographer, Constantine composed official documents in Latin.<sup>16</sup> Eusebius mentions specifically a letter to the Persian emperor (VC 4.8) and his speeches, customarily "produced" in Latin, and "translated into Greek by professional interpreters" (VC 4.32). Eusebius gives us a portrait of Constantine's use of Latin for the ceremonial opening of the Council of Nicaea. According to Eusebius, Constantine's speech at the opening ceremony was made in Latin, "with someone interpreting" (VC 3.13.1). During the proceedings, however, "[h]e addressed each person gently, and by speaking Greek—for he was not ignorant of that language either—he made himself pleasant and agreeable, persuading some and shaming others with his words" (VC 3.13.2).<sup>17</sup> That is, Constantine's choice of language was a deliberately assumed rhetorical stance. For ceremonial moments, he used the imperial language, despite the inability of many participants to understand. During the actual proceedings, he emphasized his accessibility by participating in the debate in the dominant language. The emperors of the fourth century all maintained this emphasis on *Latinitas*.<sup>18</sup>

Teachers of Greek grammar and rhetoric began to complain increasingly about losing students who went to Beirut or Rome to study Latin and Roman law. Libanius, for example, asserts that

15. Stephen Williams, *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery* (New York: Methuen, 1985), 143–44.

16. Andreas Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome*, tr. Harold Mattingly (Oxford: Clarendon, 1948), 110–23.

17. The translation used is that of Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall, *Life of Constantine* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999).

18. Dagron, "Aux origines de la civilisation byzantine," 38–39, and John Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court, A.D. 364–425* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 106. Even the philhellene Julian published his laws in Latin (Dagron, "Aux origines de la civilisation byzantine," 39). For Julian, see E. A. Thompson, "Julian's Knowledge of Latin," *CR* 64 (1950): 51–53, and J. Boufartigue, "Julien ou l'hellénisme décomposé," in *Hellenismos: Quelques jalons pour une histoire de l'identité grecque: Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 25–27 octobre 1987*, ed. Suzanne Said (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 251–66. For Julian as an exception, see C. R. Trahman, "The Attitude of the Roman Administration toward Latin and Greek," *Classical Bulletin* 27 (1951): 52.

[a]nother trouble arose which was a great shock to my profession. This was the flight from Greek and the migration to Italy of those whose object it was to learn to speak Latin. It was common belief that Latin was of increasing importance and brought power and wealth but that Greek had no prospects. I refused to heed the advice that I should desert my post, but I was well aware how critical the situation was. I thought it but proper to remain loyal to my profession.<sup>19</sup> (*Autobiog.* 214; cf. 234)

Egyptian papyri echo this change in emphasis; trial proceedings, previously recorded largely in Greek, increasingly use Latin.<sup>20</sup>

From a literary perspective, also, Latin was at a high point, even, according to some authors, in a renaissance, including both a resurgence in new Latin works, among both Christians and pagans, as well as a renewed interest in the “classics” of the Republic and the early empire.<sup>21</sup> In this period, there is a new interest in Latin literature even among eastern Romans. For example, Egyptian papyri reveal a new interest in classical Latin authors (Sallust, Cicero, Vergil, and Juvenal) and in Latin composition.<sup>22</sup> We should not be surprised that two of the great Latin authors of eastern origin, the Antiochene Ammianus Marcellinus and the Alexandrian Claudian, wrote in this period. It is against this changing linguistic background that we must consider the languages of the liturgies of the West.

## FROM GREEK TO LATIN IN THE CHURCHES OF THE WEST

The *Latinitas* of the Roman church, let alone the Western church as a whole, was far from inevitable. Indeed, the language of the early church, including that in Rome, as is clear from Paul’s letter to the Romans, was Greek, the *koine* of the Eastern empire. Greek was the language spoken

19. Libanius, *Libanius’ Autobiography*, ed. and tr. A. F. Norman (London: Oxford University Press, 1965). On Libanius and other objectors to the new importance of Latin in the eastern empire, see Dagon, “Aux origines de la civilisation byzantine,” 27–29.

20. Speeches made in Greek are still recorded in Greek, but the rest of the proceedings are increasingly recorded in Latin. See Trahman, “Attitude of the Roman Administration,” 52.

21. See Alan Cameron’s “Latin Revival of the Fourth Century,” in *Renaissances before the Renaissance: Cultural Revivals of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. W. Treadgold (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), 42–58. Charles W. Hedrick, *History and Silence: Purge and Rehabilitation of Memory in Late Antiquity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), discusses the revival of interest in the “classics.”

22. Alan Cameron, *Claudian: Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 19–21.



by the Jewish population of Rome, as well as by numerous other immigrants, to whom Paul's message was first directed.<sup>23</sup> It continued to be the major language of Christian Rome into the third century.<sup>24</sup> Christian theological works written in Rome were at first composed in Greek. This includes Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition*, our most important source for the early Greek liturgy of Rome.<sup>25</sup> During this period, too, the popes had Greek names, and Christian tomb inscriptions were written in Greek. The evidence of the inscriptions suggests that sometime in the third century the linguistic balance of Christians in Rome shifted from Greek to Latin. Nevertheless, even as the popes began to have Roman names, their epitaphs, written in Greek, showed a linguistic conservatism.<sup>26</sup> While the language of most Christians in Rome shifted from Greek to Latin in the third century, all of our sources for the eucharistic prayers in Rome up until 360 quote them in Greek. This is long after the African church began to use Latin, and, indeed, long after Rome itself began to use Latin for other parts of the liturgy of the mass, most notably the readings, and the sermons.<sup>27</sup> The retention of Greek in certain portions of the Roman liturgy may well have been due to the difference perceived between "purely prayer texts," still in Greek, and portions intended, at least in part, to inform. Mohrmann explains that "[i]n the purely prayer texts we are concerned with expressional forms; in others, primarily with forms of communication."<sup>28</sup>

This is not the place to rehearse the vast literature on ritual language produced after Mohrmann's statement, but it has emphasized repeatedly the functions of ritual language beyond the purely communicative or

23. Bardy, *Question*, 81–85; Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 37.

24. Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1:405; Bardy, *Question*, 86–115; Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, 1:50–60.

25. Evidence for the Greek liturgy in the second century at Rome can be found in Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 3, and Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition*, in the early third century. The majority of scholars agree that the *Apostolic Tradition* is an "authentic work" of Hippolytus of Rome. Most of those who disagree nevertheless generally concur that it is a Roman work. See Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 31–32, and n. 41.

26. See *ILCV* 953–56, 958, 960–61. Urbanus, Pontianus, Fabianus, and Lucius, despite their Roman names, have Greek epitaphs. The only exception is Cornelius (d. 253).

27. For Latin in the church of Africa, where the earliest known converts were Latin-speaking natives of the province rather than Greek-speaking immigrants, see James Rives, *Religion and Authority in Roman Carthage from Augustus to Constantine* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 223–26. For the use of Latin in other parts of the liturgy, see Mohrmann, *Liturgical Latin*, 52–53. For the African liturgy, see note 41 below.

28. Mohrmann, *Liturgical Latin*, 85.

informational.<sup>29</sup> Mohrmann's insight, here, that different languages used in the liturgy reflect different functions is particularly suggestive for understanding the linguistic development of the Roman liturgy. I would refine it further, drawing on more recent scholarship on speech-act and ritual. All speech within a ritual setting carries more weight than the literal meaning of the words (although what that weight or meaning may be is strongly debated). Within the Christian liturgy, some sections, the sermon being the best example, are intended, nevertheless, to instruct the congregation, the unbaptized as well as the *fideles*, and so intelligibility is highly desirable. Late antique sermons are regularly composed in a more popularizing language than literary forms intended to be read by a learned audience.<sup>30</sup>

Other portions of the liturgy, particularly those performed for and by a restricted group, catechumens on the verge of baptism (*competentes*) or the *fideles*, and withheld from the non-initiates, have different functions. Among these would be included the creed, which was "handed over" to the catechumens shortly before their baptism to be memorized, kept secret, and recited by them in the liturgy on the day of their baptism.<sup>31</sup> The functions of the creed were several: "For those who listened to them, creeds supplied instruction and edification; for those who pronounced them, they signified the establishment of a bond with the deity."<sup>32</sup> Their recitation also, to use Searle's terminology, "commit[ted] the speaker to something's being the case, to the truth of the expressed proposition." The proliferation of and debate over creeds, from the Council of Nicaea on, shows their importance in establishing their speakers' membership, not only in the Christian community, but also within a particular "orthodoxy" (of which there were several in this period).<sup>33</sup> The *Explanatio*

29. Catherine Bell's *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) provides an excellent introduction to the rich scholarship on ritual, performance, and liturgical language.

30. See, for example, Christine Mohrmann, *Die altchristliche Sondersprache in den Sermones des hl. Augustin* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1965), on the difference between Augustine's sermons and his works intended for a highly educated audience.

31. On the *traditio symboli*, the *redditio symboli*, and their liturgical setting, see William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995), 274–75, 286.

32. DMA, "creed."

33. See John R. Searle, "A Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts," in *Language, Mind, and Knowledge*, Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science 7 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975), 354–55; see also Wade T. Wheelock, "The Problem of Ritual Language from Information to Situation," *JAAR* 50 (1982): 59, and his application of Searle's speech-act theory to Christian ritual. For the creed as bearer of orthodoxy, see Harmless, *Augustine*, 285.

*symboli* 2 (cf. 3–4) attributed to Ambrose, for example, emphasizes that the catechumens to whom it is addressed should memorize its creed as a protection against false additions by heretics.<sup>34</sup>

The prayers surrounding the eucharistic rites dramatically reenact the central “mystery” of the sharing of Christ’s body and blood. The Eucharist, like baptism itself, was reserved for the *fideles*, the baptized. Together these were sometimes called the *sacramenta fidelium*. Catechumens, who attended the liturgy of the word (the first part of the eucharistic service), were dismissed before the eucharistic prayers, and some bishops, including Ambrose, only explicated these mysteries after baptism.<sup>35</sup> Augustine explains that the reason for the secrecy surrounding these sacraments was so that the catechumens might desire them more urgently (*Quia etsi non eis fidelium sacramenta produntur, non ideo fit quod ea ferre non possunt; sed ut ab eis tanto ardentius concupiscantur, quanto eis honorabilius occultantur* [*Tractatus in Ioannis evangelium* 96.3; CCL 36:571]). Before this portion of the eucharistic service was recited, the catechumens were dismissed. In one of his sermons addressed to his congregation in Africa (where the eucharistic prayers had been in Latin since the second century), Augustine explicates the crossing of the Red Sea with reference to the two central Christian mysteries, baptism and the Eucharist. Realizing that the unbaptized in his congregation have not understood his references, he urges them to seek understanding of these mysteries through baptism:

The crossing of the sea signifies the sacrament of the baptized; the Egyptians in pursuit the abundance of past sins. You see the sacraments very clearly: the Egyptians press on, they hem in; therefore they urge on sins, but only as far as the water. Why do you fear, then, you who have not yet come, to come to the baptism of Christ, to cross through the Red Sea? Why is it red? It is consecrated with the blood of the Lord. Why do you fear to come? Perhaps your awareness of some enormous sins goads you, and crucifies your mind, and tells you that what you have done was so great that you despair of being forgiven; fear rather lest any sins remain, if any of the Egyptians has lived. But when you cross the Red Sea, when you have been led out from your sins with a powerful hand and strong arm, you are about to receive the mysteries which you did not know; because Joseph himself,

34. See the edition of Bernard Botte, in *Des sacrements; Des mystères*.

35. Harmless, *Augustine*, 69; for Ambrose, 189–90. Augustine explicated the creed and baptism as part of the final preparation of catechumens for baptism; the Eucharist, however, he explicated to neophytes after their baptism (Harmless, *Augustine*, 315–18). Compare Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* 19, ed. Bernard Botte, 2nd ed. (SC 11:76), on the dismissal of catechumens (here before the ritual of baptism), and see Harmless, *Augustine*, 42–43.

also, “when he went out from the land of Egypt, heard a tongue which he did not know.” You will hear a tongue that you did not know, one which those who know it now hear, and recognize, bearing witness to it and understanding it. You will hear where you ought to have your heart: when I was speaking this just now, many understood and applauded; others remained silent, because they hear a language which they do not know. Therefore, let them hurry, let them cross, let them learn: “he has heard a language that he did not know.”<sup>36</sup>

Here Augustine uses the metaphor of hearing an unknown language to illustrate the gap between the baptized and those not yet baptized in their relationship to the sacred mysteries.<sup>37</sup> As we have seen, our evidence suggests that what was a metaphor at Hippo was a reality in Rome itself in the third and fourth centuries. As the Roman Christian community became less and less familiar with Greek, the use of Greek for the eucharistic prayers would serve to emphasize the secrecy of mystery, and the communion shared by the initiates, with one another and with Christ.

The Roman Ambrosiaster’s commentary on speaking in tongues in 1 Cor 14.14 confirms the aesthetic response Latin-speakers might enjoy to prayers in a language increasingly removed from the everyday experience of ordinary Romans, despite, or perhaps, because of, their inability to understand them:

It is obvious that our mind is ignorant if it speaks in a tongue that it does not know, just as Latin people are accustomed to chant in Greek, delighted by the sound of the words but nevertheless not knowing what they are saying. Therefore, the spirit, which is bestowed in baptism, knows what the mind [*animus*] prays, while it speaks or prays in a language unknown to it;

36. Augustine, *Ennarrationes in psalmum* 80.8 (CCL 39:1124): *Nihil ergo aliud significabat transitus per mare, nisi sacramentum baptizatorum; nihil aliud insequentes Aegyptii, nisi abundantiam praeteritorum delictorum. Videtis evidentissima sacramenta: premunt Aegyptii, urgent; instant ergo peccata, sed usque ad aquam. Quid ergo times, qui nondum uenisti, uenire ad baptismum Christi, transire per mare Rubrum? Quid est rubrum? Sanguine Domini consecratum. Quid times uenire? Conscientia forte aliquorum immanium delictorum stimulat, et excruciat in te animum, et dicit tibi tam magnum esse illud quod commisisti, ut desperes tibi dimitti; time ne remaneat aliquid peccatorum, si uixit aliquis Aegyptiorum. Cum autem transieris rubrum mare, cum eductus fueris a delictis tuis in manu potenti et brachio forti, percepturus es mysteria quae non noueras; quia et ipse Ioseph, cum exiret de terra Aegypti, linguam quam non nouerat, audiuit. Audies linguam quam non noueras, quam modo audiunt et recognoscunt, testantes et scientes qui norunt. Audies ubi debeas habere cor; quod modo cum dicerem, multi intellexerunt, et acclamauerunt; reliqui muti steterunt, quia nondum linguam quam non nouerant, audierunt. Accelerent ergo, transeant, discant: Linguam quam non nouerat, audiuit.*

37. On this passage, see Harmless, *Augustine*, 171.

but the mind [*mens*], which is the *animus*, has no profit. For what profit can it gain if it does not know what it is saying?<sup>38</sup>

Here Ambrosiaster assumes that it is a common occurrence for Latin-speakers to pray in Greek, even when they cannot understand it. At the same time, however, the passage suggests the possibility, indeed the desirability, of praying in one's native tongue. This passage fits well with a picture of a linguistically complex liturgical situation in Rome. Several scholars have argued that the Roman church went through a gradual period of transition from Greek to Latin, each community within the city using in its liturgy the language or balance of languages most suited to the demography, taste, or expectations of its members.<sup>39</sup>

Ambrosiaster's disapproval of this sensual pleasure in an incomprehensible liturgy reflects the most common practice of Christians throughout the Roman empire of making their religion as accessible as possible. As we have already seen, the Romans themselves commonly used Latin for the liturgical readings, and a multiplicity of Latin translations of the scriptures circulated throughout the western Empire.<sup>40</sup> At Carthage, for example, where there was never a large Greek-speaking population like Rome's, a Latin liturgy was established by the second century.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, in the mid-fourth century, Ulfila, the Cappadocian missionary to the

38. Ambrosiaster, *Commentarium in Epistulas ad Corinthios* 14.14 (CSEL 81.2:153), *manifestum est ignorare animum nostrum, si lingua loquatur quam nescit, sicut adolent Latini homines Graece cantare oblectati sono verborum, nescientes tamen quid dicant. spiritus ergo, qui datur in baptismo, scit quid oret animus, dum loquitur aut perorat lingua sibi ignota; mens autem, qui est animus, sine fructu est. quem enim potest habere profectum, qui ignorat quae loquatur?*

39. See, for example, Mohrmann, *Liturgical Latin*, 50; Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, 1:51; and K. Gamber, "Ein kleines Fragment aus der Liturgie Roms des 4. Jahrhunderts," *RB* 77 (1967): 148–55, who believes that Marius Victorinus belonged to a Roman congregation using a Greek liturgy. For the mysteries of the *mensa dominica*, see esp. Augustine, *Serm.* 272 (PL 38:1246–47).

40. For the *Latina vetus*, see P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963–70), 1:345–46, 370–74; 2:112, 113. On the multiplicity of readings of the *Vetus*, see Jerome, *Pref. in quattuor Evangelia* (PL 29:526), and Augustine, *Ep.* 71 (CSEL 34:254).

41. For the African liturgy, see Bardy, *Question*, 60–63; Mohrmann, *Liturgical Latin*, 30–33; and Bouley, *From Freedom to Formula*, 161–68. See Augustine's *Serm.* 132.1 (PL 38:734–35) in which he emphasizes the ignorance of the catechumens when they hear readings referring to Christ's body and blood, in contrast to the true understanding of the *fideles*: *Tu autem Catechumenus diceris, diceris Audiens, et surdus es. Aures enim corporis patentes habes, quia uerba quae dicta sunt audis: sed aures cordis adhuc clausas habes, quia quod dictum est non intelligis.*

Goths, translated the scriptures into Gothic, a task that required the creation of a written language. The Goths also used a liturgy in their own language.<sup>42</sup>

Given the general trend among Christians toward using the vernacular, the surprising thing is not so much that the Roman church moved toward a Latin rite, but that it waited so long and then moved so quickly to an unparalleled fixity in its eucharistic prayers.<sup>43</sup> Scholars have offered a variety of explanations for this delay: Klausner, for example, attributes it to the general religious conservatism of Romans, while Mohrmann argues that a Roman rite could appear only after a sacral Christian Latin idiom appropriate to such ceremonial had been developed.<sup>44</sup> Bouley, by contrast, emphasizes the increasing need for a carefully orthodox language during the doctrinal struggles of the fourth century and connects the Latinization of the eucharistic prayers to the movement toward their fixing into an official canonical form.<sup>45</sup>

While these factors all probably played some role, I will argue in addition that particular social and cultural needs determined the circumstances under which fixed Latin eucharistic prayers became desirable in both Rome and Milan. Greek had long had the weight of tradition and authority. The apostle Paul himself used Greek, even to the Romans, as did the early Roman bishops and martyrs. In addition, Greek was the language that the inspired authors of the New Testament used, as well as being the language of the Septuagint, which they quoted. Augustine, for

42. Auxentius Mercurinus, cited in Maximinus, *Dissertatio* 33; Philostorgius, *Church History* 2.5; Jordanes, *Get.* 267. See Peter Heather and John Matthews, eds., *The Goths in the Fourth Century*, Translated Texts for Historians 11 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1991), 145–46. For the use of the vernacular in the liturgy of the Goths and other barbarians in the West, see Klaus Gamber, *Liturgie und Kirchenbau: Studien zur Geschichte der Messfeier und des Gotteshauses in der Frühzeit*, *Studia Patristica et Liturgica* 6 (Regensburg: Pustet, 1976), esp. 76–79, 87–89.

43. See P. M. Gy, “History of the Liturgy in the West to the Council of Trent,” in *The Church at Prayer: An Introduction to the Liturgy*, ed. A. G. Martimort, 2nd ed., 4 vols. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1986–87), 1:49, for the unusual fixity in the Roman eucharistic canon, which varied “only in the Preface and in certain paragraphs used on particular days,” in contrast with the far greater variability of the Eastern, Gallican, and Mozarabic liturgies. See also Bouley, *From Freedom to Formula*, 213–15, and Botte, “Histoire des prières,” 18.

44. See Klauser, “Übergang,” 471–73, where he also mentions the desire for church unity as a contributing cause; compare Bardy, *Question*, 164; Mohrmann, *Liturgical Latin*, 52–53, 83–84.

45. Bouley, *From Freedom to Formula*, 212–13.

example, argued against Jerome's use of the Hebrew text alone as the basis for his translation, since the Septuagint had *grauissima auctoritas*.<sup>46</sup> Moreover Greek was the language of the major ecumenical councils of the fourth century and the language of the theological debates of the period. The most heated theological controversy of the fourth century, Arianism, was focused on determining the precise wording, first in Greek and only afterwards in Latin, to be used in the creeds. The struggle to define orthodox faith was first Greek, and only secondly Latin. Why, under these circumstances, then, should the churches of Rome and Milan move decisively towards a Latin eucharistic canon in the last third of the fourth century?

#### DAMASUS AND THE ROMAN ARISTOCRACY: THE LATIN LITURGY AT ROME

The introduction of officially fixed Latin eucharistic prayers into the liturgy of Rome should be placed in the context of the powerful and tenacious pagan presence in the Roman aristocracy in the last half of the fourth century, a continuation of pagan practices, even by nominal Christians, and Damasus' own aristocratic ambitions for himself and his religion.<sup>47</sup> Rome, the oldest city of the empire and long its capital, was still at the center of Roman self-perception. Although Rome was no longer an imperial residence, it retained its position as the cultural leader of the empire. Stripped of real power, Rome nevertheless symbolized power. Moreover, Roman culture, *Romanitas*, had long been understood as the possession of Latin literary culture and the practice of ancient Roman traditions. As pagan aristocrats saw real power slipping from

46. Augustine, *Ep.* 28.2.2 (CSEL 34:106). For the apostolic authority of the Septuagint, see *Ep.* 71.4.6 (CSEL 34.2:254–55). Augustine also believed that a Latin Bible based on the Hebrew would increase the distance between the western churches and the eastern ones, which used the Septuagint (*Ep.* 71.2.4, CSEL 34.2:252).

47. For the debate, see Herbert Bloch, "The Pagan Revival in the West at the End of the Fourth Century," in *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, ed. Arnaldo Momigliano (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 193–218, and Alan Cameron, "The Date and Identity of Macrobius," *JRS* 56 (1966): 25–38; "Paganism and Literature in the Late Fourth Century," in *Christianisme et formes littéraires de l'antiquité tardive en occident*, Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique 23 (Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1977), 1–30; and "Latin Revival of the Fourth Century," 42–58. Recent scholarship has argued for more complexity. See esp. Michele Renee Salzman, *On Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 194–95, 205–23, 332–35; and Hedrick, *History and Silence*, 37–88, esp. 47–54.

their grasp and felt increasingly pressured by a more and more militant, antipagan Christianity, they increasingly emphasized their claim to represent true Roman culture, as signified by traditional Roman literary culture and religion.<sup>48</sup> Where Ambrose launched a frontal assault on paganism in the affair of the altar of Victory, Damasus took a more subtle approach. Rather than removing the traditional symbols of *Romanitas* outright, he appropriated them for Christians.<sup>49</sup>

As Robert Kaster and others have amply demonstrated, in Roman society of late antiquity, education of a particular kind “made the man.”<sup>50</sup> That education, so vividly described by Augustine in the *Confessions*, remained fundamentally as it had been since the days of Quintilian, with its focus on the “classics” of the late republic and early empire. It was Augustine’s study of rhetoric, his knowledge of Vergil, Terence, and Cicero, his elegant Latin prose, and his “correct” pronunciation that brought him to the attention of Symmachus and led to his appointment as *orator* of Milan.

Moreover, if Christians were a “people of the Book,” so were Romans. Where Christians had their Bible, pagans had their Vergil and Livy. It may even have been in this period that the pagan classics began to appear in elegant codices imitating the religious books of the Christians.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, both pagans and Christians in the late fourth and early fifth centuries emphasize the vital connection between classical Roman historiography and traditional Roman religion, between *Romanitas* and the Roman classics. Among pagans, this interest manifested itself in the production of carefully emended historical texts, a genre that had its roots, as Macrobius

48. R. A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 28–30.

49. See Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1:427–31, and “Damase,” 41–42.

50. Robert A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Language in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992); Hedrick, *History and Silence*, esp. 131–213; Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). See Hedrick, *History and Silence*, 69–71, on the connections between Latin historiography, an interest in the manuscripts of Livy, and paganism in the late fourth century.

51. Jaś Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph: The Art of the Roman Empire A.D. 100–450* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 112–13; Sabine MacCormack, *Shadows of Poetry: Vergil in the Mind of Augustine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 87–88. See also Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, 15–16, on the sacral quality of the grammarian’s instruction and of Vergil’s *Aeneid* from the first through the fifth centuries C.E.



tells us, in the records of the *pontifices maximi* (*Sat.* 3.2.17). These antiquarians focused particularly on Livy, whose works are especially rich in prodigies. The orator Symmachus, for example, promised as a gift to Valerianus a corrected copy of all of Livy's works (*munus totius Liviani operis quod sponendi etiam nunc diligentia emendationis moratur* [*Ep.* 9.13]).<sup>52</sup> Christians such as Augustine and Orosius, on the other hand, focused their attacks on Roman historiography and on the religious assumptions underpinning it.<sup>53</sup>

While Christians sought the polish a first-rate classical education could supply, the polytheist elite of Rome staunchly guarded their own claim to the possession of true learning and *Romanitas*. As recently as the reign of Julian the Apostate in the 360s, Christians had been forbidden to teach in the schools (Julian was particularly concerned with the Greek classics). In the 390s, after Julian's reign, Augustine looks back to the conversion in the 350s of Marius Victorinus, who, like Augustine, was an African who had gone to Rome to teach rhetoric. Augustine attributes to Victorinus a hesitation to profess his conversion to Christianity publicly at Rome, describing an atmosphere more like that of Rome in Augustine's day, polarized between Christian and pagan, than the atmosphere of Victorinus' day. Augustine describes how Victorinus had won such renown as a teacher and translator of Plotinus that he had been awarded the honor of a statue in the forum of Trajan, the center of elite learning in Rome in this period.<sup>54</sup> When he became a Christian, he feared he would lose his pagan sponsors and the honor that his philosophy would gain him. Even more, Augustine tells us, he was embarrassed by the uneducated style of the scriptures (*humilitas verbi tui*).<sup>55</sup> Here, Augustine attributes to Victorinus his own early anxieties which he expresses elsewhere in the *Confessions*: that profession of Christian faith and adherence to Christian scriptures was an admission of one's bad taste and lack of culture.<sup>56</sup>

52. *Ep.* 9.13, ed. Otto Seeck, MGH.AA 6.1: 239. On Symmachus, Livy, and aristocratic literary culture in the late fourth century, see Hedrick, *History and Silence*, 70–71, 178–81, 204–5, and Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 1–12.

53. Hedrick, *History and Silence*, 69–71.

54. Hedrick, *History and Silence*, 232.

55. Augustine, *Conf.* 8.2.3–5; esp. 8.2.4.

56. On Julian the Apostate, see Hedrick, *History and Silence*, 58; on Marius Victorinus, Markus, *End of Ancient Christianity*, 27–30; Hedrick, *History and Silence*, 58–59, and Salzman, *On Roman Time*, 224–25. Victorinus seems to have suffered nothing worse than embarrassment. Augustine's report of his own horrified reaction to the style of the scriptures suggests, however, that this embarrassment was one with which any literary man would sympathize.

The prestige of the Roman aristocracy, now that it was no longer at the center of real power, depended on the prestige of Rome. Rome's prestige, in turn, depended on her history and traditions. Thus the pagan Ammianus Marcellinus describes Constantius' journey to Rome as a return to the center of the empire's traditions (*imperii uirtutumque omnium lar*, 16.10.13).<sup>57</sup> Here, Ammianus' use of the term *lar* evokes traditional Roman religion, focused on the familial hearth. The description of Rome that follows is striking because of the absence of any Christian landmarks and its emphasis on the ancient political and religious landmarks of Rome's center: Ammianus describes the forum, the *curia*, and the *rostra*. The high point of the forum is the temple of Jupiter, which, "[Constantius] thought, stood out among all the other things as much as divine things excel among things of the earth" (*quicquid uiderat primum, id eminere inter alia cuncta sperabat: Iouis Tarpeia delubra, quantum terrenis divina praececellunt*, 16.10.14). His description of the rest of the city (16.10.14–15) mentions the Pantheon, the temple of Venus and Rome, and culminates in the Forum of Trajan, "a structure singular under heaven, as I believe, indeed, all divinities agree in their admiration" (*singularem sub omni caelo structuram, ut opinamur, etiam numinum assensione mirabilem*, 16.10.15). For Ammianus, Rome's identity has nothing to do with the new basilicas of the Lateran, of St. Peter's, or any of the other Christian monuments that had recently become prominent parts of Rome's landscape.

Symmachus' plea for the restoration of the altar of Victory to the senate house, where Augustus had placed it, depends on a similar understanding of Rome as the center and religious heart of the empire:

Let us now imagine that Rome is standing here and pleading with you in these words: "Best of princes, fathers of your fatherland, have reverence for my age, to which pious ritual has brought me. Let me enjoy the ancestral ceremonies, for this does not cause me to repent. Let me live in accordance with my custom, since I am free. This manner of worship reduced the world to my laws, these sacred rites drove Hannibal from my walls, the Gauls from the Capitol."<sup>58</sup>

57. Ammianus Marcellinus, *Histoire*, ed. E. Galletier and J. Fontaine, 6 vols., Budé (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les belles lettres," 1968–99).

58. Symmachus, *Relationes* 3.9, ed. R. H. Barrow, in *Prefect and Emperor: The Relationes of Symmachus*, A.D. 384 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973): *Romam nunc putemus adsistere atque his vobiscum agere sermonibus: optimi principum, patres patriae, reveremini annos meos, in quos me pius ritus adduxit! utar caerimoniis auitis, neque enim paenitet! vivam meo more, quia libera sum! hic cultus in leges meas orbem redegit, haec sacra Hannibalem a moenibus, a Capitolio Senonas reppulerunt.*

According to Symmachus, only the preservation of her ancient religious practices will protect Rome from her enemies. Those rites made Rome what she became; only they continue to preserve her from the barbarians:

What could benefit more the glory of our times than that we have defended the institutions of our ancestors, the laws and destiny of our fatherland? That glory is greater then, when you understand that nothing which goes against the custom of our ancestors is permitted you. We seek once more therefore the same standing for the cults which has benefited the republic for so long. Who is so comfortable with the barbarians that he would not desire an altar of Victory? Your Eternity owes much to Victory and will owe still more. Let those who have gained nothing from it turn away from this source of power. Don't you desert the patronage that has been so friendly to triumphs.<sup>59</sup>

For Symmachus, true Romans are clearly those who follow the religious practices of the *maiores*: "Now if a long life should give authority to religious practices, then the faith of so many centuries must be preserved, and we must follow our ancestors who with such blessedness followed their own."<sup>60</sup> Through their adherence to their ancient Latin culture and their ancestral rites, the aristocratic pagans like Symmachus claimed real *Romanitas* as their own.

Damasus, a well-educated member of one of Rome's leading Christian families, was not willing to accept this definition of *Romanitas*.<sup>61</sup> He seems to have been the first bishop of Rome with an active ambition to take his place among the Roman aristocracy and to establish Christianity as a cultured religion, fit for aristocratic consumption. Both Damasus' friends and enemies saw him as aristocratic in taste and habits. The pro-Ursinian pamphleteer, for example, describes Damasus as using the methods

59. *Relationes* 3.2–3: *cui enim magis commodat, quod instituta maiorum, quod patriae iura et fata defendimus, quam temporum gloriae? quae tunc maior est, cum vobis contra morem parentum intellegitis nil licere. repetimus igitur religionum statum, qui reipublicae diu profuit . . . quis ita familiaris est barbaris, ut aram Victoriae non requirat! multa Victoriae debet aeternitas vestra et adhuc plura debet: aversentur hanc potestatem, quibus nihil profuit; vos amicis triumphis patrocinium nolite deserere.*

60. *Relationes* 3.8: *iam si longa aetas auctoritatem religionibus faciat, servanda est tot saeculis fides et sequendi sunt nobis parentes, qui secuti sunt feliciter suos.*

61. For the ecclesiastical aristocracy, see Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1:150–56, 609–718; for Damasus' family background, see *Roma Christiana*, 1:153, 701–2, and Damasus' own *Epigr.* 10, a funerary epitaph for his sister, and 57, on his father. In *Epigr.* 57.1, Damasus lists his father's church offices: *exceptor, lector, leuita, sacerdos*. Damasus was sufficiently well-off to turn his father's house into a *titulus* and build a funerary basilica.

long favored by the Roman aristocracy and emperors in their pursuit of power and prestige. Not only did Damasus seek to associate himself with powerful families, ingratiating himself with their women, but he even used bribes to mobilize thugs from the circus and the arena to support his cause with violence.<sup>62</sup> According to this pamphleteer, against the will of the Roman people and right-thinking clergy, it was only with the secular support of the emperor that Damasus consolidated his episcopacy (*Coll. avell.* 1.11). The pamphleteer's allegation that Damasus captivated matrons is perhaps confirmed by an edict promulgated by Valentinian at Rome in 370, accusing the clergy of seizing the inheritances of widows and orphans, and forbidding them to accept inheritances from those most vulnerable members of the elite.<sup>63</sup> Neither ascetically-minded Christians nor pagans were happy with Damasus' lavish lifestyle.<sup>64</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus (27.3.14), after describing the rivalry between Damasus and Ursinus and Damasus' victory, goes on to rebuke such bishops for ostentation, ambition, and accepting gifts from matrons. He asserts that the banquets of Roman bishops were more extravagant than those of kings, and recommends that they imitate the ascetic lifestyle of provincial [bishops].<sup>65</sup> Although these witnesses are clearly hostile, his friends portray Damasus in a similar manner. Jerome, for example, compares Damasus' court to the senate, and reports that the wealthy pagan Praetextatus joked to Damasus that he would become a Christian if only he could be the bishop of Rome. Pagels is right to characterize Damasus as "princely."<sup>66</sup> Damasus behaved more like an aristocrat than like any of the former bishops of Rome.

62. The anonymous pamphleteer of *Collectio avellana* 1 (CSEL 35:1–5), describes Damasus as *ambitione corruptus* (1.2), and reports how with bribery he corrupts *quadregarii*, *arenarii*, and the poorest echelon of church workers, the *fossores*, and so achieves his ambition by violence (1.5–8). For his relationship with the *matronae*, see 1.9. On Damasus' accession, see Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1:408–14; on this pamphlet, see 1:413–14. See Salzman, *On Roman Time*, 214–18, on the presentation of games, circuses, and gifts at these events as a characteristic way for aristocrats at Rome in this period to gain prestige.

63. *CTh* 16.2.20 (ed. Mommsen and Meyer); Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1:419, 570.

64. Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1:567–68.

65. Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1:703–4.

66. On Damasus' court, see Jerome, *Commentarii in Isaiam* 2.3.3 (CCL 73), and Richard Krautheimer, *Rome: Profile of a City, 312–1308* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 39–40. On Praetextatus, see Jerome, *Contra Johannem Hierosolymitanum* 8 (PL 23:377). On this comment, see Pietri, *Roma Christiana* 1:567; Elaine Pagels, *Adam, Eve and the Serpent* (New York: Random House, 1988), 89–90; see also Salzman, *On Roman Time*, 202–3.

Certainly, for Damasus, as for Symmachus, Rome was the greatest city of the empire and would continue to be so. Her claim to greatness, however, was not her shameful pagan past but the apostolic foundation of her church. Where pagan Rome was founded by the fratricidal twins, Romulus and Remus, the true Rome was founded on the fraternal concord of the apostles Peter and Paul.<sup>67</sup> When the Council of Constantinople in 381 declared that Constantinople's bishop was second only to the bishop of Rome, because of the city's status as the "New Rome," Damasus and the Council of Rome of 382 were quick to object. Rome's importance, unlike that of Constantinople, did not depend on her political position. Rather the martyrdom of Peter and Paul consecrated Rome, the city they preferred over all other cities of the world as the place for their martyrdom.<sup>68</sup> In his building program, Damasus strove to increase the glory of the two apostles. He improved the Vatican by draining the marshland around it and adding a baptistery. He also seems to have persuaded the emperors to fund the construction of a basilica on the site of Paul's martyrdom on the Via Ostiensis outside of Rome on a scale matching that of the basilica built by Constantine for Peter at the Vatican.<sup>69</sup> The founders of Christian Rome were worthy of basilicas on an imperial scale.

At the place traditionally believed to have been the first burial site of the apostles, the *Memoria ad catacumbas*, Damasus erected a monumental inscription:

*Hic habitasse prius sanctos cognoscere debes  
nomina quisque Petri pariter Paulique requiris.  
Discipulos Oriens misit, quod sponte fatemur;  
sanguinis ob meritum Christumque per astra secuti*

67. See J. M. Huskinson, *Concordia apostolorum: Christian Propaganda in Rome in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries* (Oxford: B.A.R., 1982), 90–91, for Damasus' key role in developing the idea of the *concordia apostolorum*. See Mary Beard, John North and Simon Price, eds., *Religions of Rome*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1:377, on the contrast of Peter and Paul with Romulus and Remus.

68. Council of Constantinople, 381, 3rd canon (PL 67:77–78). Rome's reply is edited by C. H. Turner in *Ecclesiae occidentalis monumenta iuris antiquissima*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1899–1930), 1:156. See Huskinson, *Concordia apostolorum*, 92; Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1:866–72, and "Damase," 58; Berschin, *Greek Letters*, 68.

69. Krautheimer, *Rome*, 42–43, and *Three Christian Capitals* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 104; Price, North, and Beard, *Religions of Rome*, 1:376–77. For Damasus' energetic euergetism, see Pietri, "Damase," 47–49.

*aetherios petiere sinus regnaque piorum:  
Roma suos potius meruit defendere cives.  
Haec Damasus vestras referat nova sidera laudes.  
(Epigr. 20 = Ihm 26)<sup>70</sup>*

You, who seek the names of Peter and Paul, should know that the saints once lived here. The East sent the disciples; we willingly admit it. But, because of the merit of their blood and because they followed Christ through the stars, they sought the heavenly havens and the realms of the pious. Rome rather has earned the right to defend them as her own citizens. Let Damasus relate these things to your praise, o new stars.

This inscription is interesting for several reasons. First, it emphasizes the presence of the two apostles in Rome, as well as their importance and unity (*concordia*, 20.1–2).<sup>71</sup> Second, although Damasus allows that Peter and Paul were both born elsewhere, he nevertheless asserts that their new birth in martyrdom turned them into citizens of Rome herself (20.3–6). His inscription honors them like the funerary *elogia* set up to celebrate the great citizens of Rome's past.<sup>72</sup> Third, like the many other inscriptions that Damasus erected around the city of Rome to celebrate her heroic martyrs, it redeploys the language and imagery of traditional Latin literature. Not only does Damasus use Vergilian hexameters, but he also borrows a commonplace of classical literature, the emperor's apotheosis or ascent to heaven in the form of a star or constellation, to describe Christian resurrection. Thus Peter and Paul, like the Roman emperors before them, ascend to heaven and become new constellations.<sup>73</sup>

70. The edition used throughout is that of A. Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, Sussidi allo Studio delle Antiquità Cristiane 2 (Vatican: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1942).

71. See Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1:370–71, for this reading of the phrase *hic habitasse prius sanctos*. Huskinson, *Concordia apostolorum*, 36; Daniel W. O'Connor, *Peter in Rome: The Literary, Liturgical and Archeological Evidence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 103–10.

72. On Damasus' adaptation of the form of the Roman epigraphic tradition, see Jacques Fontaine, *Naissance de la poésie dans l'occident chrétien: Esquisse d'une histoire de la poésie latine chrétienne du iii<sup>e</sup> au vi<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1981), 113–16. See Ausonius' *Parentalia* for the continuing practice of elegies for a family's dead in the fourth century (ed. R. P. H. Green, in *The Works of Ausonius* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1991], 25–30. Damasus himself wrote elegies for his own relatives.

73. For Damasus' Vergilian style, see Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1:706. For the image of the emperor as a star, particularly in the context of the imperial *adventus*, see Sabine MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 45–50, 153; for the use of a star as an image of imperial

This interest in the *Romanitas* of the martyrs can also be seen in Damasus' epigram for the Carthaginian martyr Saturninus:

*Incola nunc Christi fuerat Carthaginis ante . . .  
sanguine mutavit patriam nomenque genusque.  
Romanum civem sanctorum fecit origo.*  
(*Epigr.* 46 [=Ihm 46].1, 3–4)

Now a dweller in Christ, he was of Carthage before, . . . he changed his country, his name and his family with his blood. The birth that creates saints made him a Roman citizen.

That is, Saturninus' baptism in blood is not only the point of his rebirth as a saint, but also the moment of his naturalization as a Roman citizen.<sup>74</sup> In this poem, moreover, the enemy is not a foreign enemy, but Gratian, prefect of Rome in 200. Damasus' account of the torture describes Gratian in bestial terms. He, not his soldiers, tears apart their limbs as he roars like a lion (*lacerat pia membra fremit Gratianus ut hostis*, *Epigr.* 46.7). Where Saturninus is Romanized, however, the Roman has become the enemy, dehumanized and, so, de-Romanized.

In these poems, then, Damasus strove to redefine real *Romanitas*: not the birth of the body, but the rebirth of the soul decides the martyrs' citizenship. Roman victory no longer means victory over external enemies through military might, but victory over pagan officials of the state through suffering and death. What was defeat traditionally, for Damasus is now heroism.

In addition, Damasus' careful research into the lives of Christian martyrs, unusual in the hagiography of the period for their restraint and their adherence to the historically verifiable, can be seen as parallel to the aristocratic pursuits of history and the emendation of classical texts.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, using a classicizing style redolent of Vergil's *Aeneid*, Damasus appropriates and subverts the language that marked its users as members of the educated aristocracy of Rome and the genre that defined heroism as traditionally understood at Rome.<sup>76</sup>

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apotheosis, see 138–39. For the apostles as stars, see Fontaine, *Naissance*, 121–22, who compares Damasus' lines to Vergil's apostrophe to Octavian at *Georgics* 1.32. I owe thanks to James Rives for this point.

74. For this interpretation, see Ferrua's note on *Epigr.* 46.4–5; see also Pietri, "Damase," 57–58.

75. Shepherd, "Liturgical Reform," 848; Hedrick, *History and Silence*, 145–47, 171–213.

76. Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, 11–14.

We can see this Christian heroism illustrated in the epitaph for Saints Nereus and Achilleus. In this epitaph, Damasus takes advantage of the similarity of Achilleus' name to that of Achilles (in Greek, Akhilleus) to contrast Christian heroism with that of classical epic:

*Nereus et Achilleus martyres.  
Militiae nomen dederant saevumque gerebant  
officium, pariter spectantes iussa tyranni,  
praeceptis pulsante metu servire parati.  
Mira fides rerum: subito posuere furorem,  
Conversi fugiunt, ducis impia castra relinquunt,  
proiciunt clipeos, faleras telaque cruenta,  
confessi gaudent Christi portare triumphos.  
Credite per Damasum possit quid gloria Christi.  
(Epigr. 8 = Ihm 8)*

Nereus and Achilleus are martyrs. They had enrolled in military service, and they were performing their savage duty, looking alike to the commands of the tyrant, prepared to obey his commands, for fear drove them. Their deeds are a matter for amazing faith: suddenly, they set aside their *furor*; they fled converted; they left the impious camps of their leader; they cast down their shields, their quivers and bloody javelins; having confessed [their new belief], they rejoice to bear the triumphs of Christ. Through Damasus have faith in what the glory of Christ can accomplish.

This passage, with its echoes of Vergil's language and themes, condemns classical heroism. The *militia* of the two soldiers is no longer a source for them of glory but of fear (4). Their service (*officium*) is defined as *saevum*. *Saeuus* is the adjective associated most often in Vergil's *Aeneid* with the savage Achilles.<sup>77</sup> The most amazing thing, Damasus says in an echo of Vergil, is that they set aside their *furor*. The phrase *mira fides rerum* recalls the speech in *Aeneid* 9 by Ascanius when he gives permission to Nisus and Euryalus to undertake their disastrous expedition in pursuit of glory (*Aeneid* 9.278–79). The word *furor* not only evokes Achilles' wrath in the opening of the *Iliad*, but the relationship between *furor* and *pietas*, and their role within the Roman state, is one of the central themes of the *Aeneid*. *Furor* characterizes the victims of the destructive anger of *saeva* Juno and the forces that resist efforts of both Aeneas and the foundation of Rome. In the great prophecy of Jupiter in *Aeneid* 1, *Furor* is personified:

77. Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.453, 2.272



*Furor impius intus  
saeva sedens super arma et centum vinctus aënis  
post tergum nodis fremet horridus ore cruento.  
(Aeneid 1. 293–96)*

Impious *Furor*, sitting inside on a pile of cruel weapons, bound with his hands behind his back with one hundred bronze chains, roars horribly with bloody mouth.

Damasus has included three of the most emotive and damning words from this passage in his short epitaph (*impia castra* and *telaque cruenta*, 6–7; *saeuumque . . . officium*, 2–3). *Furor*, of course, is also the force that compels Aeneas to kill Turnus in their final battle, the battle that concludes the war between the Latins and the Trojans and leads the way to the founding of Rome (*furiis incensus*, 12.946). In Vergil *furor*, for good or bad, is at the heart of Rome's glory. In contrast, for Damasus, setting aside *furor*, fleeing and throwing away their arms (perhaps *the* most unheroic acts possible in classical terms) bring Nereus and Achilleus *triumphi* and *gloria*, not the triumph and glory of earthly Rome, but those of Christ. This final point is emphasized by the repetition of *Christi* (8, 9). In this brief epitaph, Damasus has converted the heroic and the epic to Christianity.

Finally, the form in which Damasus had his epigrams displayed itself links aristocratic and imperial grandeur with a new Christian idiom.<sup>78</sup> As we have seen, the elegant presentation of texts had become an aristocratic pursuit. Other wealthy Romans of the period, most notably the emperor Theodosius (nicknamed “Calligraphos”), took up calligraphy as a hobby, and books, carefully corrected, were common presents from one aristocrat to another.<sup>79</sup> In their monumental size and elegance, Damasus' inscriptions recall those on imperial monuments, honoring the deeds of the great, rather than the unevenly lettered and carelessly laid out inscriptions familiar from most early Christian graves. The capital script, designed by Furius Dionysius Filocalus, recalls in its proportions the square capitals found on imperial monuments like the *elogia* erected in praise of the *summi viri* in the Forum of Augustus. The delicate finials at the heads and feet of the new script, however, mark it as something new and distinctive.

78. See Fontaine, *Naissance*, 116–17.

79. Salzman, *On Roman Time*, 204; Hedrick, *History and Silence*, 179, 205–6. On Theodosius, see Hedrick, 192; Georgios Monachos 604.8; Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, 7.22.

Although appropriately monumental and heroic in scale, like imperial inscriptions, at closer glance these inscriptions are clearly different.<sup>80</sup>

Our knowledge of the name of the designer of this script is unparalleled. We know little about Filocalus, except what he tells us in his addition to his inscription of Damasus' epigram for Eusebius (*Epigr.* 18 = *Ihm* 18): *Damasi papae cultor adque amator Furius Dionysius Filocalus scripsit* ("The follower and great friend of pope Damasus, Furius Dionysius Filocalus wrote this"). Both the signature and the claim to be a close friend of the pope suggest that Filocalus was no ordinary stone carver. Moreover, the similarity between this script and that of the Codex-Calendar of 354 has led scholars to attribute the Codex-Calendar to Filocalus as well. The contents of the Codex-Calendar attest to an interest in official and venerable institutions of power in the city of Rome, both pagan and Christian. Filocalus seems to have been a comfortably well off Christian whose hobby was calligraphy.<sup>81</sup> In their joint endeavor to adorn the martyrs' tombs with monumental epitaphs, Damasus and Filocalus seem to have consciously taken up the prestigious literary and antiquarian pastimes of the Roman aristocracy.

We should set the fixing of the Latin eucharistic prayers against this backdrop.<sup>82</sup> Given that *Romanitas* was integrally bound up in Latin and Latin literary culture, Damasus would have found it difficult to press his claim to define real *Romanitas* while celebrating his God in Greek. We must note, however, that the language of the Latin eucharistic prayers is considerably different from the Vergilian hexameters of Damasus, and we must ask ourselves why, if they too are intended to convey a sense of *Romanitas*? It is possible to argue that the hexameters are aimed at an elite educated audience, while the eucharistic prayers would be performed before a broader spectrum of Christians. This argument, however, is hard to sustain. On the one hand, the epigrams were originally set up at the cult sites of the martyrs. That is, like the epitaphs on tombs of the elite, the audience of these inscriptions would be whoever happened by. This would include pilgrims, pious local Christians, the crowds and clergy who came to celebrate the martyr's *dies natalis*, and as today, no doubt,

80. Ferrua's edition includes photographs and analyses of the surviving inscriptions.

81. On Furius Dionysius Filocalus, see Salzman, *On Roman Time*, 202–5; Antonio Ferrua, "Filocalo: L'amante delle belle lettere," *La civiltà cattolica* 90.1 (1939): 35–47; and Alan Cameron, "Filocalus and Melania," *CP* 87 (1992): 140–44. On the Codex-Calendar, see Salzman, *On Roman Time*, 59–60.

82. Fontaine, *Naissance*, 114–15, argues that, erected in cult sites, Damasus' inscriptions participated in the liturgical commemoration of the saints.

curious tourists who might or might not have been Christians. Moreover, even to the illiterate viewer, the monumental form of the inscriptions would convey meaning. For those who could read, but did not have the benefit of an elite education, the forms of the letters themselves, Filocalus' elegant script, would both recall and declare its difference from its pagan antecedents.

The eucharistic prayers, on the other hand, were part of the mass of the faithful. Certainly, they would be more accessible to much of the congregation than a Greek rite, but they are far from being in the ordinary language of the people. Moreover, we must also remember that the congregation, which participated in this portion of the service, was not (literally) the unwashed masses. Those who had not yet been baptized were dismissed before this part of the service began. Those who remained had been baptized and, as part of their preparation, had received special instruction in the beliefs of the Christian faith. Ambrose's *De sacramentis* demonstrates the religious training of those preparing for baptism. Moreover, the evidence suggests that Christians of all classes were extremely familiar with the text of their scriptures. Augustine describes a riot that arose *in plebe* at Oea when they heard in church an unfamiliar version of Jonah, Jerome's new translation, different from the version long held in their memory and chanted for so many years (*omnium sensibus memoriaeque inueteratum et tot aetatum successionibus decantatum*).<sup>83</sup> Even the unbaptized and the illiterate seem to have had a considerable knowledge of the scriptures. While those attending the mass of the faithful, then, might be drawn from the full spectrum of the Roman social classes, they were not completely unsophisticated. Indeed, the priest could assume a more even level of sophistication and education, at least in Christian doctrine and scripture, in the mass of the faithful, than Damasus could assume in chance passersby who might encounter his inscriptions.

Rather than seeking the reason for difference in style in the audience, we should look, instead, to the differing functions of epitaphs and liturgical prayers. Damasus' epitaphs celebrate the heroes of the Christian faith, and the use of the *metrum heroicum*, a common ancient name for hexameter, and the evocation of Vergil's epic were appropriate for those *militis Christi*. The eucharistic prayers in the mass of the faithful served a very different function from the epitaphs, and their language reflects that function.

Although we have only a small sample of the eucharistic prayers from

83. *Ep.* 104.5 (CSEL 55:241).

this period in the form of citations in Ambrose's *De sacramentis*, we nevertheless can make some deductions about their language and style. On the one hand, the diction and syntax of the liturgy draws on the Bible and the Christian "Sondersprache," the special form of Latin used by Christians, strongly influenced by the *Latina vetus*, itself heavily influenced both by the Hebraicized *koine* of the Septuagint and of the New Testament and by the language of ordinary people.<sup>84</sup> But, as Christine Mohrmann has shown, the liturgy also draws on the juridical style of pagan prayer. Thus, the portion of the liturgy cited by Ambrose in the *De sacramentis* has a tendency to supply a number of terms, where one might do, which serves in some cases to make the meaning abundantly clear and in others to cover all possible bases. For example, the priest says, "we both ask and pray" (*et petimus et precamur*, *De sacramentis* 4.27), where one verb might do. This doubling of the verb and the use of alliteration is very common in pagan prayer formulae such as *do dedicoque* ("I give and devote"). At the same time, it avoids exact repetition of the common pagan formula *precor quaesoque*. In the passage describing the offering an abundance of adjectives is supplied: "Make this our offering approved, spiritual, acceptable . . ." (*Fac nobis hanc oblationem scriptam, rationabilem, acceptabilem . . .*, *De sacramentis* 4.21). We can see this same tendency in the chain of adjectives applied to the bread and wine: "We offer to you this sacrifice without a flaw, a spiritual sacrifice, a bloodless sacrifice, this holy bread and cup of eternal life" (*offerimus tibi hanc immaculatum hostiam, rationabilem hostiam, incruentam hostiam, hunc panem sanctum et calicem uitae aeternae*, 4.27). These chains of adjectives and the use of asyndeton recall the language of the prayer attributed by Livy to Scipio as he sets out to invade Africa: "make them come back home with me healthy and safe victors, having conquered the enemy, decorated with spoils, laden with booty, and making their triumph; give them the opportunity of taking vengeance on their enemies and foes"

84. Josef Schrijnen, *Charakteristik des altchristlichen Latein*, *Latinitas Christianorum Primaeva* 1 (Nijmegen: Dekker & van de Vegt, 1932), and "Le latin chrétien devenu langue commune," *Collectanea Schrijnen* (Nijmegen: Dekker & van de Vegt, 1939), 335–56. On Christian consciousness of the difference between the Latin spoken by Christians and that by non-Christians, see the example of Augustine in Schrijnen, "Latin chrétien," 341; on the change in Augustine's Latin before and after his conversion, 340–41. Christine Mohrmann, "Le style oral du *De sacramentis* de saint Ambroise," 168–77, has explicated Ambrose's style in the *De sacramentis* as an example of oral but educated speech. The *De sacramentis* is directed at a very similar audience as the eucharistic prayers, in this case, to Christians just before their baptism, but its style is markedly different.

(*saluos incolumesque uictis perduellibus uictores, spoliis decoratos, praeda onustos triumphantesque mecum domum reduces sistatis; inimicorum hostiumque ulciscendorum copiam faxitis . . .*, 29.27.2–4). Both texts, Scipio's prayer and the eucharistic prayer, share what Mohrmann calls a *verboſité ſcrupuleuſe* and a *précision juridique* in ſtyle, while avoiding diction and formulae that were clearly pagan. This is far from the “everyday” language of Rome. Rather, the new liturgy uſed Chriſtian Latin but in a ſtyle that evoked the *gravitas* and ſolemnity of ceremonial language uſed in the prayers of the traditional Roman cults.<sup>85</sup> Like Filocalus' elegant ſcript, it would both recall and declare its difference from its pagan antecedents.

Though written a generation later, Macrobius' picture in the *Saturnalia* of an elite class intently interested in its ancestral traditions, both religious and literary, has ſome baſis in fact. It was from this class that the major prieſts and prieſteſſes had long been drawn, and, as we have ſeen, the literary activities of the elite class were ſtrongly connected to their interest in the traditional religion of Rome. Many members of the ſenatorial class made ancient ritual and prayer their central interest. In his commentary on the *Aeneid*, for example, Servius comments on Vergil's prayer, making comparisons to the formulae of actual prayer.<sup>86</sup> A religious language that was both orthodox Chriſtian in diction and yet traditionally Roman in ſtyle would appeal greatly to the new Chriſtians of this class, and go a long way towards eſtablishing the acceptability of the new faith to them.

## ROMANS AND BARBARIANS IN MILAN

Even though we cannot be certain of the exact context of the adoption of an official Latin liturgy in Milan, Auguſtine does tell us the context of

85. Mohrman, “Quelques observations,” 1–19, eſp. 12–15, 16; Mohrmann, *Liturgical Latin*, 65–70, eſp. 69. On *precor quaesoque*, ſee alſo Francis Hickſon, *Roman Prayer Language: Livy and the Aeneid of Virgil* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1993), 49; on Livy's uſe of traditional prayer language in this prayer, ſee Hickſon, *Prayer Language*, 77. In “Quelques observations,” Mohrmann argues that theſe elements of pagan prayer ſtyle are already preſent in the eucharistic prayers cited by Ambroſe in the *De sacramentis* and then developed further in the Gelasian ſacramentary, which ſhe ſees as “un ſpécimen admirable de cette alliance de *Romanitas* et de *Christianitas* qui reſtera . . . un des traits caractéristiques de la liturgie de Rome.”

86. On Servius' interest in the language of prayer and his antiquarian ſources, ſee Hickſon, *Language of Prayer*, 15. His ſeventh-century continuator alſo purſues this interest.

Ambrose's other liturgical innovations, the introduction of hymns and the antiphonal singing of psalms:

Not long before the church of Milan had begun to celebrate this kind of consolation and exhortation in which the brothers, with great zeal, sang harmoniously in voice and heart. It was certainly a year, or not much more, since Justina, the mother of the boy-emperor Valentinian, was persecuting your man Ambrose for the sake of her heresy, by which she had been seduced by the Arians. The pious multitude was keeping vigil in the church, prepared to die along with their bishop, your servant. There my mother, your handmaid, among the first in her concern and at the vigils, was living on prayers. We, though still out in the cold [that is, unbaptized], were nevertheless stirred by the warmth of your spirit, while the city was astonished and in tumult. Then, Ambrose decided that hymns and psalms would be sung according to the practice of the east, lest the people grow faint through the exhaustion of their grief. From that time until today, that custom is now retained by many, indeed by nearly all, by your people and those imitating them throughout the rest of the world.<sup>87</sup>

Augustine, as is his wont in the *Confessions*, stresses the emotional content of this event and its impact on his own spiritual condition, alluding only briefly to its political and theological causes. He omits any mention of the Arians' leader, Auxentius Mercurinus, and the Gothic soldiers, who figure so prominently in Ambrose's own account of the events culminating in the sit-in in the basilica. The following section of this paper will examine the historical, social, and theological backdrop to Ambrose's introduction of song into the liturgy of Milan.

Although Neil McLynn prefers to play down the aristocratic origins of his subject, Ambrose came from a loftier social class than did most of the bishops who were his contemporaries.<sup>88</sup> His father was the praetorian

87. Augustine, *Confessions* 9.7.15, ed. J. J. O'Donnell, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992): *Non longe coeperat Mediolanensis ecclesia genus hoc consolationis et exhortationis celebrare magno studio fratrum concinentium vocibus et cordibus. nimirum annus erat aut non multo amplius, cum Iustina, Valentiniani regis pueri mater, hominem tuum Ambrosium persequeretur haeresis suae causa, qua fuerat seducta ab arrianis. excubabat pia plebs in ecclesia, mori parata cum episcopo suo, servo tuo. ibi mea mater, ancilla tua, sollicitudinis et vigiliarum primas tenens, orationibus vivebat. nos adhuc frigidi a calore spiritus tui excitabamur tamen civitate attonita atque turbata. tunc hymni et psalmi ut canerentur secundum morem orientalium partium, ne populus maeroris taedio contabesceret, institutum est, ex illo in hodiernum retentum multis iam ac paene omnibus gregibus tuis et per cetera orbis imitantibus.*

88. My account of Ambrose's life and career is heavily indebted to Neil B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

prefect of Gaul. After his father's death, Ambrose was brought up in Rome, where he received a first-rate liberal education. He followed in his father's footsteps, pursuing a career in the civil service. This career path led him eventually to the position of governor (*consularis*) of Aemilia and Liguria. In this position, he represented the Roman empire and the emperor himself. His peers saw him as preeminently Roman, sometimes even mistakenly giving Rome as the place of his birth.<sup>89</sup> Not surprisingly, then, Ambrose shared many of the political, social, and cultural assumptions of the Roman Christian elite.<sup>90</sup>

Even his family life increased Ambrose's awareness of the importance of power and its hierarchies, not only in the secular realm, but also in the ecclesiastical. From his childhood, he was exposed to the increasingly stratified circles of the Roman church. According to Paulinus, Ambrose's household received regular visits from members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and Ambrose, in imitation, would play the bishop, offering his hands to serving women of the household to be kissed.<sup>91</sup> In both his secular life and in his religious life, then, Ambrose had learned the forms of respect and honor due a man in a position of power.

When he became the bishop of Milan in 374, then, Ambrose was very closely attached to the institutions of power in Rome, both secular and ecclesiastical. Although Milan would not become an imperial seat until 381, it had been a major center of imperial administration since the time of Diocletian. As the bishop of Milan, Ambrose aligned himself with the bishop of Rome. His efforts against the pagan Symmachus' efforts to restore the altar of Victory to the senate house of Rome show that he was concerned for Rome's public image as a Christian city.

In the realm of theology, Ambrose adhered to Rome. Thus, in the major theological debates of the fourth century, Ambrose adopted the Nicene

89. Paulinus of Milan, *Vita Ambrosii* 9; Palladius, *Apol.* 139, ed. Roger Gryson under the title "Fragments de Palladius," in *Scolies ariennes sur le concile d'Aquilée*, SC 267 (Paris: Cerf, 1980), 322; Basil of Caesarea, *Ep.* 197. On the strong association of Ambrose with Rome, see McLynn, *Ambrose*, 31–32.

90. Paulinus, *Vita Ambrosii* 3, 5; McLynn, *Ambrose*, 32; and Hervé Inglebert, *Les Romains chrétiens face à l'histoire de Rome: Histoire, christianisme et romanités en Occident dans l'Antiquité tardive (iii<sup>e</sup>–v<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes 145 (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1996), 297–304.

91. Paulinus, *Vita Ambrosii* 4; McLynn, *Ambrose*, 35, and Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 39. For the stratification of the Roman church, see Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, 1:696–724.

position of Damasus and Rome.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, according to his Arian opponent Palladius, at the council of Aquileia, Ambrose acted as Damasus' servant (*officio . . . ministri* [*Apol.* 122]).<sup>93</sup> Similarly, at the council of Aquileia of 393, for example, he and the other bishops supported the position of Rome against the Jovinianists, and affirmed the authority of Rome's creed as apostolic: "let us believe the creed of the apostles, which the Roman church always guards and preserves inviolate" (*credatur symbolo apostolorum, quod ecclesia Romana intemeratum semper custodit et servat* [*Ep. ex coll.* 15.5; CSEL 82.3:305]).<sup>94</sup>

While Ambrose does not feel obliged to adhere in particulars to the liturgical practice of Rome, he does find it necessary to justify the differences in the practice of his own church. While catechizing those to be baptized, for example, Ambrose declares his allegiance to Rome even as he justifies his own church's rites. When describing how the bishop washes the feet of the newly baptized, Ambrose tells us:

We are not unaware that the Roman church, which we make our pattern and model in all things, does not follow this custom. She does not have this custom of washing the feet. . . . I desire to follow the Roman church in all things, but we nevertheless have common sense. On that account, we more correctly maintain that custom which is more correctly preserved elsewhere [than at Rome]. We follow the apostle Peter himself, to his devotion we adhere.<sup>95</sup>

Thus, although rejecting current Roman practice, Ambrose maintains that Milanese practice is still based on Roman precedent, indeed, the highest possible precedent of Peter the founder (*auctor*) and first bishop of the Roman church (*qui sacerdos fuit ecclesiae Romanae, ipse Petrus*

92. For the tumultuous struggle against Arianism in Rome, which focused on Athanasius, from the time of Felix to that of Damasus, see Pietri, "Damase," 32–40. For Ambrose's support of the Roman church, see McLynn, *Ambrose*, 277–81. For McLynn, "Ambrose's special relationship with Rome is also a key to his authority over his Italian colleagues." On the complexities of Ambrose's relationship to Rome and the scholarship on it, see Roger Gryson, *Le prêtre selon saint Ambroise* (Louvain: Édition Orientaliste, 1968), 164–209.

93. Palladius, *Apol.*, ed. R. Gryson, in *Scolies Ariennes sur le council d'Aquilee*, SC 267:304–5. On this passage, see McLynn, *Ambrose*, 280.

94. On this passage, see McLynn, *Ambrose*, 280.

95. Ambrose, *Sacram.* 3.1.5–6 (CSEL 73): *Non ignoramus, quod ecclesia Romana hanc consuetudinem non habeat, cuius typum in omnibus sequimur et formam. Hanc tamen consuetudinem non habet, ut pedes lauet. . . . In omnibus cupio sequi ecclesiam Romanam, sed tamen et nos hominis sensum habemus; ideo quod alibi rectius servatur et nos rectius custodimus. Ipsum sequimur apostolum Petrum, ipsius inhaeremus devotioni.*



[*Sacram.* 3.1.6; CSEL 73]). That is, Ambrose claims that his church is even more Roman than Rome. Indeed, Gy suggests that Ambrose's insistence on his customary adherence to Roman practice is in part to distinguish himself from the less Roman practice of his predecessor, an Arian from Cappadocia.<sup>96</sup>

This struggle against Arianism was particularly heated in Milan where the imperial court and the bishop came into open conflict over the issue.<sup>97</sup> During the time of Constantius and Valentinian I, the Arians had gained considerable ground against the Nicenes in northern Italy and elsewhere.<sup>98</sup> During this period major bishoprics went to adherents of the Arian position. Thus Auxentius, the bishop of Milan before Ambrose, was an Arian. Neil McLynn argues convincingly that we should see Ambrose's appointment as *consularis* of Aemilia and Liguria as a move by his patron, the powerful and pro-Nicene aristocrat Probus, to strengthen the position of the Nicenes against the Arians in northern Italy.<sup>99</sup>

96. See Gy, "History of the Liturgy," 1:47, and McLynn, *Ambrose*, 280–81, on Ambrose's similar justification of celebrating Easter on a different date than Rome. As Gy points out, Ambrose in fact was less bound to Roman practice than he maintains here, since he introduced several liturgical innovations, including the antiphonal singing of psalms and the creation of a new kind of hymn. Compare also Ambrose's use of the creed in *Explicatio symboli* 4–5 to distinguish his own Nicene theology from the Arian theology of his predecessor Auxentius (Botte, ed., *Des sacrements*, 23).

97. The complexities of the various positions need not concern us here. Heather and Matthews, eds., *Goths in the Fourth Century*, 137–38, have a clear and concise account of the various positions taken in the fourth century. Since I am writing about the point of view of a rigorous adherent of Nicaea, for convenience I will use the terms "Arians" and "Nicenes" in the summary of the essentials that follows.

98. The council of Antioch of 345, supported by Constantius, arrived at a compromise position, seen by strict Nicenes still as Arianism, and often called by modern scholars "semi-Arianism." See Pietri, "Damase," 33, for the strength the Arians gained in this period in Milan and Sirmium.

99. McLynn, *Ambrose*, 183–84. In this paper I will refer to two Auxentii. One was Ambrose's predecessor, bishop of Milan (355–74), who was born in Cappadocia (McLynn, *Ambrose*, 20–27; John Moorhead, *Ambrose: Church and Society in the Late Roman World* [London: Longman, 1999], 16), and died, of course, before Ambrose became bishop. The second, Auxentius Mercurinus, a pupil of Ulfila and bishop of Durostorum, came to Italy during Ambrose's episcopacy, where he was seen as a possible rival to Ambrose who would support the Arian cause. On Auxentius Mercurinus, see McLynn, *Ambrose*, 183–85; Moorhead, *Ambrose*, 132–33; Heather and Matthews, eds., *Goths in the Fourth Century*, 135–36, 145–46. According to Ambrose, the confusing similarity of names was not coincidental. He asserts that Auxentius Mercurinus took the name of the former bishop of Milan for its propaganda value (*Ep.* 75a.22; Moorhead, *Ambrose*, 32).

The Arians also gained ground among new converts. In the 340s, for example, Ulfila launched a mission to the Goths.<sup>100</sup> His converts followed Ulfila's Arian faith, the version of Christianity currently receiving the emperor's favor.<sup>101</sup> His pupil Auxentius Mercurinus, bishop of Durostorum, tells us how, in his sermons and treatises, Ulfila "both mourned and avoided the error and the impiety of the homoeusians [Nicens]" (*Sed et omoeusianorum errorem et impietatem fleuit et deuitauit*).<sup>102</sup> This fact would have great ramifications with the rise of Goths to power in the fifth and sixth centuries.

Ulfila also created a Gothic script and translated the Bible from Greek into Gothic, adding his own exegesis in Gothic, as well as in Greek and Latin.<sup>103</sup> Not only did the Goths use Gothic scriptures, but they also conducted scriptural exegesis and scholarship in that language. In addition, we have fragments of a Gothic liturgical calendar and a Gothic homily, as well as a bilingual lectionary, which confirms the use of Gothic for some liturgical purposes. The Gothic Christians, then, used their native language as the language of their new religion from the beginning.<sup>104</sup>

100. Peter Heather, *The Goths* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 61. The sources on Ulfila's life include Philostorgius' *Church History* in the ninth-century epitome of Photius and a letter of Auxentius Mercurinus, bishop of Durostorum, collected with some Arian *scholia* on the Council of Aquileia (381). For a convenient collection and translation of these documents with ample annotation, see Heather and Matthews, *Goths in the Fourth Century*, 133–53; for the dating of Ulfila's mission, 142.

101. See Heather and Matthews, *Goths in the Fourth Century*, 139, on Ulfila's allegiance to the compromise position taken by the Council of Constantinople.

102. Cited by Maximinus, *Dissertatio*, CCL 87:161.

103. Heather, *Goths*, 312. Auxentius, *Ep.* 33; Philostorgius, *Church History* 2.5; Jordanes, *Get.* 267. On the Gothic Bible, see Ackroyd and Evans, *Cambridge History of the Bible*, 2:336–62; Heather and Matthews, *Goths in the Fourth Century*, 155–97; and Herwig Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, tr. Thomas J. Dunlap (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 80.

104. See Heather and Matthews, *Goths in the Fourth Century*, 157–58. The Wolfenbüttel fragment (*Carolinus Fragment*) seems to be a lectionary with parallel texts in Latin and Gothic. See Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy*, 296. For the Gothic liturgy, see also Klaus Gamber, "Die Liturgie der Goten," in *Liturgie und Kirchenbau: Studien zur Geschichte der Messfeier und des Gotteshauses in der Frühzeit* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1976), 72–96. The only surviving Arian liturgy that I know of is in Latin—not surprising, since it is embedded in a Latin anti-Arian tract and was probably used by Latin-speaking Arians. See Giovanni Mercati, *Antiche Reliquie Liturgiche Ambrosiane e Romane*, ST 7 (Rome: Tipografia Vaticana, 1902), 45–56. On the use of Gothic as the liturgical language of the Visigothic Arians in Spain, as well as the adoption of Latin and the destruction of Gothic liturgical books with the conversion to Catholicism, see Judith Herren, *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 231.

Indeed, Peter Heather has argued that both their Arianism and their use of Gothic as their religious language seem to have become markers of ethnicity for the Goths.<sup>105</sup> The *Codex Argenteus* (Uppsala, University Library, 1669) is a beautiful copy of the gospels in Gothic, written in silver letters adorned with gold initials on purple parchment. Copied in the sixth century in the kingdom of the Ostrogoths, it was perhaps made for Theodoric as a presentation copy in the scriptorium of the Arian cathedral of Ravenna, S. Anastasia.<sup>106</sup> This manuscript can be seen as a symbol of the Goths' ethnic pride in their religion and language.<sup>107</sup>

The Goths had an uneasy relationship with the Roman empire in the fourth century. Outside the empire the Goths remained a military threat. By 382, however, large numbers of Goths had entered the empire, either as clients or as citizens. At the same time, Goths became a major presence within the Roman army. The Arian presence in northern Italy was due to the large numbers of Goths in the army stationed in Sirmium and Milan.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, once the pro-Nicene emperor Theodosius came to power in the eastern empire, the western empire was increasingly a more sympathetic place for Arians.

It was probably under these circumstances that Ulfila's pupil Auxentius Mercurinus left the eastern empire for Milan.<sup>109</sup> In his letter in praise of Ulfila, Auxentius Mercurinus emphasizes his debt to his master:

I am not able to praise this man sufficiently worthily but I dare not be completely silent about him, since I am a debtor to him more than are all others, so much and more did he labor over me. He took me from my parents as his student when I was very young, and he taught me the scriptures, and he disclosed the truth to me through the mercy of God and the grace of Christ, and he brought me up, both in body and in spirit, as his own son in the faith.<sup>110</sup>

105. Heather, *Goths*, 312–17.

106. E. A. Thompson, *The Visigoths in the Time of Ulfila* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966), xxiii; Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, 325; and Heather, *Goths*, 2, and 313–15; see also J.-O. Tjäder, "Der Codex Argenteus in Uppsala und der Buchmeister Viliarius in Ravenna," in *Studia Gotica*, ed. U. E. Hagberg (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1972). See also Berschin, *Greek Letters*, 74 on the *Codex Argenteus Brixianus* (CIL 3.281).

107. On their religion as a symbol of Gothic ethnicity, see Heather, *Goths*, 121–27.

108. Peter Heather, *Goths and Romans, 332–489* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 160–64.

109. McLynn, *Ambrose*, 183–84.

110. Auxentius Mercurinus, cited in Maximinus, *Dissertatio* 34 (CCL 87): *Quem condigne laudare non sufficio et penitus tacere non audeo, cui plus omnium ego sum debitor, quantum et amplius in me laborabit [for laboravit]. Qui me a prima etate mea*

Soon after his arrival in Milan, this Auxentius Mercurinus, so closely tied to the missionary to the Goths, would become the major challenger to Ambrose, seen by some as a potential bishop who would support the Arian cause in the city.<sup>111</sup>

From the very beginning, Ambrose's career as bishop of Milan was marked by a struggle against Arianism. Both his biographer Paulinus of Milan and Rufinus of Aquileia describe his election by the people of Milan as a pivotal moment in the struggle between the Arian and Nicene factions in Milan.<sup>112</sup> Once ensconced in the office of bishop, Ambrose would continue to pursue the Nicene cause for much of his career.<sup>113</sup>

An examination of Ambrose's anti-Arian writings reveals that Ambrose repeatedly figures the Arians in Milan as uncivilized, non-Latinate barbarians, despite the reality that both Latin-speakers and Greek-speakers (such as Auxentius Mercurinus himself) also belonged to the Arian community there. Starting with his first theological tract, the *De fide*, which Ambrose probably presented to Gratian on his arrival in Milan in 380, Ambrose puts his attack on Arianism in the context of the emperor's Gothic war.<sup>114</sup> He raises the significance of the war to apocalyptic levels, associating the Goths with Gog, the enemy of God's people prophesied by Ezekiel (*Fid.* 2.16.137–38; CSEL 78), portraying the war as a struggle between the orthodox Romans and the heretical Goths. He opposes the holy emperor (*sanctus imperator*) and Italy to the sacrilegious voices and barbarian attacks threatening the borders of the empire (*totum illum limitem sacrilegis pariter vocibus et barbaricis motibus . . . inhorrentem*) and orthodox faith (*fidei catholica*) to alien faithlessness (*perfidia aliena* [*Fid.* 2.16.139–40]). Ambrose continues,

What profit could such bestial neighbors bring us, or how could the Roman empire be safe with such guards? [. . .] Your name and worship, Lord Jesus, lead the army, not the military eagles nor the flights of birds; here is no infidel region, but that Italy which is accustomed to send forth those professing faith, Italy, on occasion tested but never changed, which you

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*a parentibus meis discipulum suscepit et sacras litteras docuit et ueritatem manifestauit et per misericordiam dei et gratiam Cristi et carnaliter et spiritaliter ut filium suum in fide educauit.*

111. For Arian support for Auxentius and the threat he posed to Ambrose, see McLynn, *Ambrose*, 184.

112. See Paulinus, *Vita Ambrosii* 6–9; Rufinus of Aquileia, *Hist.* 11.11. On Ambrose's election, see McLynn, *Ambrose*, 43–47.

113. See McLynn, *Ambrose*, for an exhaustive account of Ambrose and Arians.

114. *De fide*, ed. Otto Faller, CSEL 78:104–7.

have defended for some time from the barbarian enemy and even now have delivered from them; here the emperor has firm faith, not a shaky mind.<sup>115</sup>

True faith is civilized, not bestial, Italian, not barbarian. Only protected by such faith can the *res Romana* remain safe.<sup>116</sup>

The confrontation in the basilica described in the quotation by Augustine is particularly revealing, for, although Ambrose is in fact defying the imperial palace, he constructs his objections as opposition to Gothic barbarians.<sup>117</sup> According to Ambrose, in 386 the Arians at the court of Valentinian II, led by Ulfila's pupil Auxentius Mercurinus and supported by a member of the imperial household, the emperor's mother Justina, attempted to claim a basilica to use as their church in Milan. This basilica may well have been the Basilica Portiana, an imperial construction outside the city walls, and so not technically under Ambrose's jurisdiction.<sup>118</sup> Nevertheless, Ambrose refused to allow the "heretics" the use of the basilica, defying, he tells us, the emperor himself. His own congregation occupied the basilica in order to preserve it from heretical contamination.

Ambrose continues to figure his struggle with the Arians as a battle between Goths and Italians in a letter to his sister (*Ep.* 76):

I prayed that I might not survive the funeral pyre of so great a city, perhaps even of all Italy; I hated to begrudge shedding my own blood, I offered my neck. The Gothic soldiers were there, and I approached them, saying, "Did Roman territory welcome you so that you might make yourself the instigators of a public disruption? Where will you go, if things here are destroyed?"<sup>119</sup>

115. Ambrose, *Fid.* 2.16.140, 142; *Quid poterat nobis vicinia tam feralis invehere, aut quemadmodum res Romana tali tuta poterat esse custodia? [ . . . ] Non hic aquilae militares neque volatus avium exercitum ducunt, sed tuum, domine Iesu, nomen et cultus, non hic infidelis aliqua regio, sed ea quae confessores mittere solet Italia, Italia aliquando temptata, mutata numquam, quam dudum ab hoste barbaro defendisti, nunc etiam vindicasti, non hic in imperatore mens lubrica, sed fides fixa.*

116. Inglebert, *Romains chrétiens*, 302–4, 307.

117. Our major sources are Ambrose's letters to Valentinian (*Ep.* 75a, CSEL 82.3:82–107) and to his sister (*Ep.* 76, CSEL 82.3:108–25) in which he describes and defends his own role in the controversy. In addition to Augustine, *Conf.* 9.7.5, see also Paulinus, *Vita Ambrosii* 13. On this incident, see McLynn, *Ambrose*, 170–96; Moorhead, *Ambrose*, 132–50.

118. Harry O. Maier, "Private Space as the Social Context of Arianism in Ambrose's Milan," *JTS* n.s. 45 (1994): 87 and n. 61; Andrew Lenox-Conyngham, "The Topography of the Basilica Conflict of 385/6 in Milan," *Historia* 31 (1982): 353–63; and McLynn, *Ambrose*, 174–75.

119. Ambrose, *Ep.* 76.9: *Orabam ne tantae urbis vel totius Italiae busto superviverem; detestabar invidiam fundendi cruoris, offerebam iugulum meum. Aderant Gothi tribuni, adoriebar eos dicens: "Propterea vos possessio Romana*

Here the Arians are presented as armed intruders, who, when they stirred up trouble, violated their obligation to the empire that gave them a safe haven against the chaos beyond her borders. Ambrose goes on to characterize the Arians as barbarians with a distinctly un-Roman way of life: “None of the Arians dared to come out because not one was a citizen, few were from the royal household, but many were Goths, who, having once made their homes in wagons, now make the church their wagon.”<sup>120</sup> Not only are the Arians barbarians, but they strive to make the church as barbarian as themselves.

Ambrose uses similar language when he quotes from the sermon he preached against Auxentius Mercurinus in the basilica in his letter to Valentinian. As in the letter to his sister, Ambrose repeatedly juxtaposes the civilization and culture of his followers with the barbarism of his opponents. Thus, at *Ep.* 75a.2 (CSEL 82.3:83), he exclaims “tears too are my weapons against arms, soldiers, Goths; such are the weapons of a priest” (*adversus arma milites Gothos quoque lacrimae meae arma sunt, talia enim munimenta sunt sacerdotis*). In this passage, the asyndeton *arma milites Gothos* builds from the least offense to the greatest. A passage later in the letter has a similar impact: “the man who does not fear death, who is not chained by any desire of the flesh, fears not arms nor barbarians” (*Non metuit arma, non barbaros, qui mortem non timet, qui nulla carnis voluntate retinetur, Ep.* 75a.6 [CSEL 82.2:86]). Ambrose’s emphasis on the actions of the Gothic soldiers is designed to rouse his Nicene congregation’s indignation at such a visible use by the imperial authority of foreign heretics against citizens. Ambrose goes so far as to make an *ad hominem* attack against Auxentius Mercurinus himself, alluding to his barbarian origin “in Scythian parts” (75a.22: *in Scythiae partibus*).

In his commentary on Luke, written around the same time, Ambrose expands on this idea. Again alluding to Auxentius Mercurinus’ origins on the margins of the Roman empire,<sup>121</sup> Ambrose compares his opponent’s use of the name of the earlier bishop of Milan to the fabled wolf’s use of sheep’s clothing:

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*suscepit ut perturbationis publicae vos praebeatis ministros? Quo transibitis si haec deleta fuerint?*”

120. Ambrose, *Ep.* 76.12: *Prodire de Arrianis nullus audebat, quia nec quisquam de civibus erat, pauci de familia regia, nonnulli etiam Gothi. Quibus ut olim plaustra sedes erat, ita nunc plaustrum ecclesia est.*

121. On this passage, see Moorhead, *Ambrose*, 132–33.

He has a sheep's clothing, but a bandit's deeds: outside a sheep, inside a wolf is the one . . . who wanders around by night, limbs stiffened by the Scythian frost, and mouth bloodied. He circles, looking for someone to devour. Does he not seem to you like a wolf, since, unsated with merciless human slaughter, he desires to satiate his madness with the deaths of the faithful? He wails, rather than using rational discourse; he denies the one who gave him speech and growls out sacrilegious words in a bestial roar rather than confessing the lord Jesus as the leader to eternal life. We have heard his inarticulate wails, when he sent his sword against the world. Preferring harsh teeth and a mouth swollen with pride, he thought he had taken away the voice of all, though he alone had lost his.<sup>122</sup>

Auxentius Mercurinus was probably a native Greek-speaker, who certainly spoke and wrote Latin (and probably, like his teacher Ulfila, Gothic). Nevertheless, his origins on the edges of the empire allow Ambrose to associate him with Scythia, the land associated with barbarism in Greek and Roman literature as far back as Herodotus.<sup>123</sup> Expanding on this idea, Ambrose alleges that the icy climate from which Auxentius Mercurinus has come has reduced him to bestiality. Not only does this bestiality lead to a wolf's ferocity, to unreasoning violence, but it also makes him completely inarticulate and irrational: he is incapable of civilized (Latin) discourse. Only a barbarian such as Auxentius Mercurinus would refuse to recognize and give voice to faith accepted by all who are civilized and, so, rational. Only such a barbarian would try to silence obvious reason.

Paulinus and Augustine agree that this incident was the occasion for the liturgical innovation for which Ambrose is most famous, the use of Latin hymnody and antiphonal singing of the psalms.<sup>124</sup> Augustine emphasizes the emotional impact and solidarity created by the hymns, but as Neil

122. Ambrose, *Expositio euangelii secundum Lucam* 7.52 (CSEL 32.4:303): *uestitum ouis habet, facta praedonis: foris ouis, intus lupus est . . . qui tamquam in nocte Scythico membra duratus gelu, cruentus ora circumuolat quaerens quem deuoret. nonne uobis uidetur lupus, qui humanae necis insaturabilis cruditate fidelium morte populorum rabiem suam desiderauit explere? ululat iste, non tractat qui negat uocis auctorem et sacrilego sermone bestiale murmur interstrepit, qui non confitetur dominum Iesum aeternae praesulem uitae. audiuius eius ululatus, cum in orbem gladius mitteretur. dentes asperos, ora tumida praeferebat et putabat quod uocem omnibus abstulisset quam solus amiserat.*

123. See François Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, tr. Janet Lloyd, *New Historicism* 5 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). James S. Romm (*The Edges of the World in Ancient Thought* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992], 29–30, 45–48) traces this motif back to Hesiod.

124. Augustine, *Conf.* 9.7.15; Paulinus, *Vita Ambrosii* 13.

McLynn argues, they consolidated Ambrose's people theologically as well as emotionally:

But if the themes of persecution and endurance recurrent in the Psalms lent themselves well to the present situation, still more apposite were the hymns that Ambrose composed by himself and which he now taught to his choirs. Through these hymns, the people were able to broadcast their belief in the Trinity and so emphasized that their defiance represented doctrinal commitment rather than political insurrection.<sup>125</sup>

For Neil McLynn the importance of these liturgical innovations is the sense of unity they gave to Ambrose's congregation as they all—male and female, young and old, rich and poor, clergy and laity—affirmed their commitment to Nicene belief as they participated in the liturgical life of the church. This sense of community, however, depended on the same opposition that Ambrose expresses in his letters. Just as the Nicene theology of Ambrose's hymns set the congregation apart from the heterodox Arians, so the Latin of the hymns, classicizing and cultured in style, set them apart from barbarian Goths.<sup>126</sup>

Both Ambrose and his enemies were aware of the power of the liturgy on a congregation which actively participated in it and understood what they were praying. Ambrose defends himself against the charge that he had bewitched the people of Milan with his *carmina* by asserting:

The great song is that than which there is nothing more powerful: for what indeed is more powerful than the confession of the Trinity, which is celebrated daily in the voice of the whole people. Certainly they are all eager to profess their faith, they know that they preach the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit in their verses. Those who had barely been able to be students before are thereby made teachers.<sup>127</sup>

We should place the introduction of the Latin eucharistic prayers into Milan into this context as well. A Latin rite, combined with the new Latin hymns, would enable those who before scarcely understood the service, to “become teachers.” By participating in both liturgical performances, the faithful would confess their belief in the three persons of the Trinity,

125. McLynn, *Ambrose*, 200–201; see also Moorhead, *Ambrose*, 140–43.

126. Moorhead, *Ambrose*, 142; Mohrmann, *Liturgical Latin*, 80; Jacques Fontaine, *Études sur la poésie latine tardive d'Ausone à Prudence* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1980), 84–130 and 146–83.

127. Ambrose, *Ep. 75a.34*: *Grande carmen istud est quo nihil potentius; quid enim potentius quam confessio trinitatis, quae cottidie totius populi ore celebratur? Certatim omnes student fidem fateri, patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum norunt versibus praedicare. Facti sunt igitur omnes magistri, qui vix poterant esse discipuli.*



as they had at the moment of their baptism (*De sacr.* 2.2), but now with new understanding and a new sense of themselves as a congregation which was Roman, unified in voice, Latin in language and orthodox in religion. Ambrose gained the support of the people of Milan through the unifying force of his liturgical innovations as well as through the more old fashioned means of powerful rhetoric in the sermon against Auxentius reported in *Ep.* 75a. With that support, Ambrose would be able to impose his will upon the emperor and his mother, and establish his dominion over the churches of Milan.

In this paper, I have shown that Christian liturgical innovations did not happen in a vacuum, but were responses to local pressures and needs. Placing such innovations into their particular historical, social, and cultural contexts increases our understanding both of the liturgical changes and of the societies in which they occur. When Damasus and Ambrose introduced officially sanctioned, fixed Latin eucharistic prayers into their churches, they were responding to different pressures. Nevertheless, they were both appealing to the ideologies associated with Latinity. The earliest eucharistic prayers evoke and reinvent the Roman by mingling the style of pagan prayer with the diction and syntax of the Christian *Sondersprach*. Damasus used Latin to reinvent Rome: his heroic epitaphs claim that Rome's true triumphs were not those boasted of by his pagan contemporaries, but the glorious ones of the martyrs. Ambrose used Latin to define the Roman, the civilized, and the orthodox against the Gothic, the barbarian, and the heretical. While the concerns of Damasus and Ambrose were different, the end result was a common, and, in the long run, momentous reform.

This reform also served to translate the liturgy into a language that was more accessible to the common people of the two cities. To see this as the primary motive of either bishop, however, would be a mistake. Neither Damasus nor Ambrose were responding to popular pressure (indeed, Ambrose was striving to create it) nor was their primary desire to make the liturgy accessible to larger numbers of people. Here, we must be particularly careful not to impose assumptions drawn from the arguments about Latin by, for example, early Protestants or drawn from the debates leading to the adoption of vernacular liturgies by the Second Vatican Council. Although Latin was the language of the Roman and Milanese common people, its association with civilization, with cultural and political prestige was what made it appealing to Damasus and Ambrose. In late antiquity, bishops were more concerned with incorporating the Roman elite and elite culture into Christianity and with establishing their own position at the top of the hierarchy of the church and as

arbiters of spiritual and ecclesiastical matters, to be consulted and deferred to even by emperors, than with widespread accessibility. For Damasus, the adoption of a Latin liturgy allowed him to identify the Roman church more closely with traditional Roman culture, to appropriate the values and prestige of that culture for Christians, and to claim a share in the aristocratic life of the city for the rulers of the Roman church. For Ambrose, the Latin liturgy excluded barbarians from orthodox Christianity and emphasized the identity of Christianity with Roman civilization and Latin culture. Although the insistence on Latinity may have made the rituals of the church more accessible to ordinary Christians of Milan and Rome, it also served to distance them from non-Latin speakers. The ramifications of this distance would be great, as Roman Christianity was increasingly identified with Latin culture in lands now subject to German rulers, and, as the Roman church exerted its claims, with primacy over the Western church as a whole.

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