

EPILOGUE

Vanishing Identity

The Impossible Definition of Pagans and Paganism in the West from the 4th to the 6th Century

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Abstract

To understand Antiquity, we must avoid starting from our own categories. We therefore reject the contemporary notion of collective identity in favour of a sociological analysis of ancient texts and the authoritative relationships between emic and etic discourses on the definition of religious groups. Taking into account the plurality of Christian discourses, both sociological (those of believers, clerics, monks, the emperor or the king) and thematic (in the theological domain, that of personal morality, collective ethics, relationship to the world) allows us to conceive that between 300 and 600, it was possible to define oneself as Christian ('bad Christian' in the eyes of religious and political authorities) and to venerate certain traditional superhuman entities

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linked to natural forces yet considered by the same authorities as the demons of paganism. This Christian polylatrism can be explained by the difficulty bishops had in controlling certain sectors of society, particularly in the countryside, but also by the impossibility for late antique Christianity to transform its theological claim to truth about salvation in the afterlife into a convincing model for explaining the world here below. Only the cult of holy (wo)men and relics, and the Christianisation of certain sacred places or the acceptance of certain ancient practices in order to neutralise them, were to fill the gaps in the Christian meaning of the world over time.

Keywords: late antique Christianity, late antique paganism, Christianity, identities, ancient world meaning

For a whole generation, historians of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages have worked extensively on the notions of ethnicity (Adshedd 2000, 331–36; Gazeau, Bauduin and Modéran 2008; Pohl and Haydemann 2013) and identity (Drinkwater and Elton 1992; Mathisen and Shanzer 2011; Miles 1999; Wood 2013), mainly in the religious field (see Dunn and Mayer 2015; Frakes and Digeser 2006; Gemeinhardt and Leemans 2012; Iricinschi and Zellentin 2008; Rebillard and Rüpke 2015; Sandwell 2007; Schremer 2010; Smith 2016). One can be surprised by this strange contemporary epidemic of identity. Scholars have of course always asserted that these notions should be understood as constructed or negotiated. Nevertheless, considering the persisting debates on the matter of the definitions of and the relations between pagans, Christians and Jews, we may judge that the use of the terms ‘collective identities’ or ‘group identities’ raises conceptual issues that are not sufficiently analysed by historians.

The first issue relates to terminology: historians generally admit that Christians, pagans and Jews did not form closed, distinct groups. They rightly refuse all essentialist discourses that perturb modern minds and are by-products of nationalisms. They insist on the representations that define rhetorical groups. But what is somewhat understated is the fact that these rhetorical groups were defined either through self-definitions of an emic type, or through external definitions of an etic type. This explains why not all of the rhetorical groups share the same status, because they could correspond to extremely diverse social realities. For example, from an orthodox Christian perspective (and by ‘orthodoxy’ I mean the particular conception defended by a Chris-

tian power at a particular time), the unity of heretics, which was not accepted by them, or that of pagans, which was not conceived by them, did not correspond to that of the Jews, who asserted their unity. Talking about 'identities' in these different cases is problematic because the same term refers to different kinds of mental and social realities.

The second issue is that seeing as one identity is constructed against one or several others, the choice in oppositions necessarily leads to taking sides: 'being pagan, being Christian' is an erroneous symmetrical formula because it is originally Christian. 'Being Jew, being goy' would be a very different approach, and an equally erroneous one. This is not to say that any approach would be unavailing: the tripartition between the adorers of many gods/idols, Jews and Christians was sometimes shared by everyone.

The third issue relates to the link between discourse and power. Identities are produced performatively as narratives. But to say is not always to do, and there is a big difference between speaking and acting. Only the imperial power could create legal identities and subject people to them, as in the case of heretics (after 326; *Theodosian Code* 16.5.1) or of pagans (after 368-370; *Theodosian Code* 16.2.18). Those who analyse representations and forget political power or sociological importance are mistaken.

The final issue is crucial. We should indeed remember that there is no Greek, Latin, Hebrew or Syriac term for what we call 'collective identity'. The Latin term *identitas* belongs to the language of philosophy, and translates a precise, Aristotelian Greek term that corresponds to the logical identity as presented in the formula 'Socrates is Socrates'. This term was used by late antique Christians during Trinitarian debates so as to be able to affirm that the Father was the Father, the Son was the Son, and the Holy Spirit was the Holy Spirit – in other words, that every divine person was indeed a distinct person notwithstanding the commonly shared divine essence. This is the usage we find in Marius Victorinus' writings (*Adversus Arium*, c. 360) and after him (Boethius, translation of the *Analytica priora*, c. 510; Rusticus, *Contra Acephalos*, c. 553-64). But this late antique Christian usage is strictly philosophical and theological. Any other use of the term 'identity' for Late Antiquity is a misapplication, an anachronism and, ultimately, an error in historical method.

Thus, the debate about 'being pagan, being Christian' is only a deviation from a far broader issue. Because if we refuse the existence of

religious, collective identities in Antiquity and the use of such an illusory term, how then shall we understand ancient religious dimensions or reformulate the points in question in an acceptable way when we are thinking about something like social membership?

The first solution is lexical. We should study the ancient terms defining the groups – the Latin terms *gens*, *natio*, *genus* and *nomen*, for example (see Mathisen 2015, 277–86) – and see how they were used to refer to Christians or pagans – for example, *tertium genus*, *vocabulum christianum*, *gentilitas*, *pagani* and *christianitas*. Another approach would be to analyse the way in which collective names were formed: they are commonly used in tribal or civic definitions (the Zagrenses, the Hipponienses) and are evidenced on an ethnic or geographic level (the Mauri, the Italians). Their relevance is being discussed on a provincial, administrative level during the Roman empire, or on an ecclesiastical level during Late Antiquity (see Briand-Ponsart and Modéran 2011). These viewpoints, using the ancient categories, would permit us to avoid anachronisms.

A second solution consists in favouring acts, not words, because acting is a greater commitment than talking and limits the deconstruction of discourse to the advantage of context. It is not the same thing to assert oneself as Christian before a Roman governor's tribunal in c. 200 as it is to do so, like Firmicus Maternus did, before a Christian emperor in c. 350. But to define Christianness in terms of actions supposes that there is a relative continuity to these actions. As such, this model is mostly relevant for Christians committed in Church life who demonstrate their individual Christianness through actions, such as the clerks, the monks or the activist laity (the last group was recently studied by Ariane Bodin; Bodin 2014).

A third solution is to suggest a new hermeneutical model. This was recently achieved by Éric Rebillard, who uses modern, sociological works to try to understand Late Antiquity (Rebillard 2012). He keeps the term 'identity' but restricts it to individual identity, which is acceptable in view of the ancient vocabulary. However, he contends that such individual identity was multiple, and that the individual activated multiple, specific identities intermittently, depending on the circumstances. Finally, he considers that groups only exist in a temporary, constructed way. I am not convinced by this theory for many reasons. I am going here to limit myself to two of these reasons.

First of all, certain appearances were more important and essential than others and limited individual choice in the matter of religion. Conscience is largely social, and it was often affiliation to a particular group defined by constraining, real, legal bonds (the family, the clientele, the city) and the religious, social or political constraint that they could exert which led, or did not lead, to what is called the activation of one's identity. The methodological individualism adopted here favours subjectivity and neglects the reality of the social balance of power.

In addition, according to Rebillard, a Christian chose not to activate his Christian identity, relying on the circumstances – refusing, for example, to go the games or to become a martyr. But this supposes that there is a univocal Christianness shared both by clerics and the laity, while it is in fact clerical in all studied examples. Yet this is precisely what needs to be evidenced and not merely supposed. Otherwise, one uses the ancient texts to illustrate a modern *a priori* (here sociological) thesis. And that is not the right method, even for heuristic purposes.

In the light of such issues related to the use of the notion of identity, it seems wiser to me to follow the distinction brought forward by Amin Maalouf (1998) in his book *In the Name of Identity*.¹ According to him, identity can only be individual and unique (Socrates is Socrates and not someone else) and the psychological and rhetorical plurality relates to social bonds, which are linked to collective affiliations. The particular sum of all collective affiliations defines a unique, individual identity (which is the result of the existence of a biological body, a pluralist social status and self-consciousness). This distinction permits us to avoid the philosophical questions related to the notions of collective identities or pluralist, individual identities, which erroneously mix the Aristotelian categories of substance and relation.

I will therefore suggest a hermeneutical model based on three aspects: personal identity, collective affiliations and assertive identification with the group. Everyone has tens or hundreds of diverse, social affiliations which, when particularly combined, make them what they are and not someone else. Each of these bonds is related to a group, more or less constructed and real, the ultimate group being humankind. But below this last group, there is generally a preferred bond which we now misleadingly call 'collective identity'. Nowadays, these 'collective identities' are mainly religious or national affiliations, as well as bonds related to class, race or gender. During Antiquity, they were tribal (the Arverni), civic (the Romans) or ethnic (the Afri or the

Judeans, because the definition of Jews was ethnic, not religious), as well as philosophical (the Platonists) or religious (the Christians, who created the category of religion in the modern sense and applied it to the Judeans and to the others, qualified by the word 'pagans') (Jürgasch 2016, 115–38).

Of course, people were not defined by their principal affiliation in every moment of their life, and that is why the analysis of Late Antiquity as a confrontation between pagans and Christians is reductive and often erroneous. But this affiliation was the one that was used at essential moments, when these moments were vital in defining the self. This can be found in a civic context, in a formula such as *Romanus sum*, linked to *ciuis* or *homo*, from Cicero to Aulus Gellius and Augustine.² It can be found of course in a Christian context with the sentence *christianus sum*, which is evidenced from Scillitan martyrs and Tertullian to Victor of Vita.³ And this Christian self-definition is also present in the numerous funerary inscriptions, where the religious dimension allowed one to define oneself retrospectively.

It should be remarked that in the Roman empire, unlike in nations nowadays, a personal identity could be composite, which is not the same as pluralist. Thus, every Roman citizen had a dualist definition of their Roman identity based on the Ciceronian combination of their local *origo* (the little fatherland) and their common *ciuitas* (the great homeland). Then, individually, they could insist on some of their other affiliations, like Apuleius of Madauros, a Roman citizen whose *origo* was Madauros but who accepted also defining himself, or being defined, from an ethnic perspective as half-Gaetolian, half-Numidian.⁴ In the same way, Paul of Tarsus, a Roman citizen whose *origo* was Tarsus, equally defined himself as a Judean, a Pharisee, a Christian (but in Luke, *Acts of Apostles*) and probably culturally Hellenic in Athens (also in Luke, *Acts of Apostles*). According to the circumstances and the contexts of use, one could use such-and-such a group affiliation which was related to a specific social status. But this certainly did not mean that such bonds shared an equal value, or that a legal, personal composite identity could be assimilated to a psychological, pluralist consciousness of the self.

The next point I should mention is the identification of the group, which raises issues of rhetoric, because of the emic/etic discourses and because of the existence of authoritative speeches. A self-definition is generally positive, and people did not define themselves as rebels

or heretics. In the case of ancient religious identifications, one must reflect not only on the categories of pagans and Christians but also on those of Jews, or indeed of Christian deviants (and not only from a Christian perspective, because Celsus was aware of the diversity of Christian groups in c. 180, as was Emperor Aurelius in 272 in Antioch). We can distinguish:

1. To consider oneself Christian, and to be recognised as such: emic-etic agreement (parallel examples: a Rabbinic Jew recognised as such by a rabbi; or a worshipper of the gods recognised as such by a governor, as Pliny did in Bithynia);

To be recognised as Christian by the group's internal authority	A Christian (Arnobius) by a bishop A bishop (Athanasius) by a Nicean council A martyr (Cyprianus) by their community
To be recognised as Christian by the group's internal authority but not by part of the group	The laity or the clerks by a monk like Salvian of Marseille Faustinus by the Christians of Hippo (Augustine, <i>Sermo Morin</i> 1) The bishops who became post-mortem 'Nestorian' convicts during the Three-Chapter Controversy
To be recognised as Christian by an external authority	A Christian (martyr) by a governor An 'orthodox' Christian by an 'orthodox' emperor after 312–24

2. To consider oneself Christian and not to be recognised as such: emic-etic disagreement (parallel example: a Jew recognised as a *minim* by a rabbi);

Not to be recognised as Christian by an internal authority	'Heretics' (the Manichaeans, Gnostics or Ebionites defined themselves as Christians) by a bishop or a council, or by an 'orthodox' emperor (cases of Donatists and Eunomians)
	Some Jews converted to Christianity who were considered false Christians and were restored to Judaism in the 4th century (CTh 16.8.23 in 416)
	Some Christians in the East in the 6th century who were considered crypto-pagans
	Some Christians of Jewish descent in 7th-century Spain

Some Christians considered Christians, but with some Jewish behaviours

Some Christians considered Christians, but with some pagan behaviours

3. Not to consider oneself “someone” but to be defined as such: this is then a matter of accusation, testifying to an emic–etic disagreement; judicial constraint (torture) can bring about confession, allowing consistency between self-definition and external recognition;

To be recognised as “someone” by an external authority

A Christian accused of being ‘heretic’ or ‘Jewish’ or ‘pagan’ in front of a religious Christian authority

A person accused of being a ‘magician’ or an ‘astrologer/mathematician’ before the political authority: the sophist Sopater, executed in Constantinople in 325; the bishop Priscillian, executed in Trier in 383

4. Not to consider oneself Christian and not to be defined as such; during Late Antiquity, this emic–etic agreement led to the recognition of a different and often inferior legal status: that of Jew, pagan or heretic.

Finally, it should be remembered that there were at least four Christian discourses – that of the believers, that of the emperor, that of the clerics (mostly bishops) and that of the monks – which were often very different. For example, in c. 400, in the case of the games, most of the laity judged that they could attend them, whereas clerics and monks condemned them violently for moral reasons, because of the cruelty or the immorality that were displayed, or for religious reasons if they considered that the games were tributes paid to demons. Should it then be supposed that the clerics’ discourse defined Christian identity and that the laity did not activate this identity when attending the games? Of course not. Christian emperor Honorius explained in 399 that considering that the games were no longer associated with pagan sacrifices and *superstitiones*, they were the people’s lawful pleasure.⁵ And this remained true throughout the 5th and 6th centuries. The emperor’s religious argument takes up Constantine’s argument regard-

ing the imperial cult and is Christianly irreproachable. It is, then, not possible to suppose that the clerics had a 'hierarchical' arrangement of membership which emphasised Christianness, when the majority of Christians would only have a 'lateral' arrangement of membership, activating their Christianness only on some occasions of interaction, as Rebillard argues. In fact, as far as the games are concerned, after the end of the pagan rituals in 391–92, there was not a single Christian identity but rather two Christian positions diverging on what was Christian and what was not. There was no reason to judge, on this non-dogmatic problem, that the clerical argument was more Christian than that of the emperor. And this was indeed the case on numerous topics (for example, the diverse discourses about the archaic or spherical form of the cosmos, or about astrology).

What it was to be Christian in Late Antiquity may thus be defined according to four criteria:

1. A theological criterion: to believe in Jesus as Saviour and to believe in the existence of eternal life after death, because faith was the core definition of Christianity;
2. A sociological criterion: to display one's adherence to the Christian community comprising the baptised and the catechumens, as Marius Victorinus did (Augustine, *Confessions*, 8.2.3–6);
3. An ecclesiological criterion: to recognise the bishop's authority in his domain, the definition of which varied from one believer to the next – there was no unanimous interpretation of the Bible;
4. A criterion of personal commitment, this last criterion being very different depending on the person's status (the emperor, the laity, the activist laity, clerics more or less engaged in asceticism, monks).

The conclusion is: there is not a clear and distinctive Christian identity, but rather there are many Christian discourses, more or less strong or weak from a social or political perspective. And the goal of the historian is to link rhetoric, ancient mentalities, and ancient social or political realities.

Now that the methodology has been clarified, we may proceed to the analysis of some late antique texts accusing Christians of displaying pagan behaviours.⁶ This is the last line of case 2 of emic–etic disagreement. There should be a distinction between several cases, because it is not the same to present someone as a Christian resorting to pagan practices, which makes him a bad Christian; or as a crypto-pagan,

who is a false Christian; or as an apostate, who is a former Christian. Furthermore, the chronology should be taken into account because the same situation may be presented differently depending on the epoch. Between the 4th and the 6th century in particular, the clerics' religious demands gained power on account of the progress of ascetic ideas and because of the decline in classical, cultural tradition. Finally, the hardening of repressive legislation modified the impact of those accusations or descriptions. Consequently, in the East, after 550, in the repressive context set by Justinian, the accusation of crypto-paganism became fatal, which made it a formidable political weapon for the settling of scores between Christians, as had been the case with heresy in the century before and with magic two centuries before that (Chuvin [1990] 2009).

For more than a century, debates around the Christianisation of populations have been overshadowed by the use of modern meanings for terms such as *religion*, *superstition* or *magic*. In the Latin texts which present Christians accomplishing rites denounced as pagan by the clerics, three groups should be distinguished:⁷

1. The first relates to traditional social practices which made sense in the Roman ensemble of the *religio-superstitio*. Some of them were then included in the Christian cult and were therefore accepted, after discussion, by the Church (incubation, images, ex-voto, songs). Others were rejected as 'pagan' for theological reasons (sacrifices, funerary meals) or for customary reasons (dancing, drink). This may be found in the 4th century in Italy (Ambrose of Milan forbade eating, drinking or dancing near tombs, but Paulinus of Nola accepted a peasant feast near Felix's shrine) and Africa (Augustine of Hippo, who followed Ambrose), and in the 6th century in Gaul⁸ and Hispania. When these practices were reoriented towards a Christian finality, it is erroneous to deduce that they were crypto-pagan.⁹ And in the case of prohibited yet persisting practices, the social, not religious pagan, dimension is generally essential. It is wrong to think that when Christians were feasting on the tombs of saints or during the great Christian feasts, they did not activate their Christianness; it is quite contrarily because they were Christian that they marked the occasions by drinking, singing and dancing. In fact, they activated their own Christianness.

2. The second group of acts relates to Christians who consulted augurs, magicians, seers, spell casters, enchanters and haruspices.¹⁰ The bishops constantly condemned these practices, but to no avail. Their argument according to which everything came from God and that it was diabolical to try and read the future, or that humans¹¹ and animals¹² should be cured only by praying to God (Augustine's and Caesarius' solution), failed to convince. The only acceptable Christian solution came to be the belief in the miraculous potential of saints' relics.
3. The third group gathers cult acts of worship of idols or natural realities (trees, sources) proffered by Christians who distinguished God's cult in expectation of eternal life from the cult of powers for terrestrial purposes. These texts, which are evidenced in the 5th and 6th centuries in Augustine of Hippo (bishop 395-430), Caesarius of Arles (bishop 502-42) and Childebert's *Praeceptum* (king 511-58), are the most interesting to reflect on in relation to 'being pagan, being Christian', because they refer not to clerical interpretations but to rituals which are used by Christians who knew that the rituals were not Christian but were useful to Christians. What should be highlighted in Gaul is mainly the cult of trees with *vota* and the cult of fountains where people went to pray, but the texts also mention sanctuaries, altars and idols, as well as sacrifices and banquets taking place there.

In these texts, the wrongdoers define themselves as Christians, and are known as such (Caesarius' 'Brothers'), even under the designation of bad Christians or imperfect Christians given by the ecclesiastical authorities or a Christian king.¹³ They are not considered pagans (there were still pagans in Asia Minor in Justinianic times or in Corsica at the end of the 6th century), or crypto-pagans, or apostates. This harmony between their self-definition and the external definitions given by ecclesiastical or political authorities leaves no room to doubt the fact that some Christians displayed non-Christian ritual behaviours, whether in Africa in Augustinian times or in Gaul in the era of Caesarius of Arles and Childebert. In this instance, this is nothing like a clerical fantasy. The question is to know what such behaviour meant.

To think that in Hippo around 400 or in Gaul c. 550, these Christians did not activate their Christianness when they worshipped idols is dubious. When they did so, they did not define themselves as pagans

and they well knew that they were Christian. Nor should we think about the unconscious survival of paganism or the lack of explanation by clerics. The simplest solution is that they had a different definition of Christianity. The people who worshipped idols were not pagan, seeing as they defined themselves and were recognised as Christians. They were, however, polylatrics, and this was not opposed to the fact of declaring themselves Christian. It may indeed be possible to conceive of a polylatric and hierarchical kind of Christianity, with the Christian God as supreme creator of the world and ruler hereafter, a *deus summus* dominating other superhuman beings, the powers (*potestates*) mentioned in the Latin Bible. Around 300, a lettered man like Arnobius could defend such an idea. And around 400, Christians from Hippo thought that the rituals dedicated to beings that were closely related to humans were far more efficient than prayers offered to a far-off, celestial God. They distinguished very well what had to be rendered to God or Christ and what to the world. It was not orthodox from Augustine's point of view, but it could be defined as Christian.¹⁴

Most of the pagan rites related to the Roman *religio-superstitio* were forbidden at the end of the 4th century. Some survived and new ones appeared, because the private *superstitio* was more adaptable to Christianity than the public *religio* and because the Church did not keep a firm hold of the whole population, or indeed of the whole territory. That said, the rites, and the beliefs which founded them, had not only a religious aspect but also a most important hermeneutical dimension: they were essential to give meaning to all actions in life. The clerics wanted to impose a new religious truth, but people called for a global signification to the world, and Christianity was incapable of providing it at this time. In fact, there was a hermeneutical rift between 400 and 600, because at that time Christianity did not assume the world's totality. From Augustine to Gregory the Great, it left vacant a large number of social, mental and geographical spaces (Markus 1990, 1997). In order to fill them with signification, there were only two Christian strategies.

The first was that of the monks and ascetic clerics, such as Augustine or Caesarius of Arles, who asserted that God was accountable for everything, including health when one was sick. To consult a physician or a healer equated (for Caesarius) to a lack of trust in God and was similar to idolatry. And yet, such reasoning was not convincing, though every Christian knew that 'what augurs, magicians, and seers

announce is often true¹⁵ and that ‘without the enchanters, many would suffer mortal danger from a snake bite or any other disease.’¹⁶ Historians should not limit themselves to noticing the coexistence of various rhetorical discourses. They must understand the persuasive capacity these discourses bore at a particular time, which is variable. In times when science did not exist, when nothing could be demonstrated with certainty, the only means to found socially shared truths were the traditions (the social habits based on concrete realities) or the authority of public force. But in the 5th and 6th centuries, the social traditions were not Christian everywhere, and public force had other urgencies to resolve.

Yet, it was well known that inferior powers were efficient in the field of prosperity and health, even for bad reasons. Neither the prayers nor the rogations could replace them efficiently without social control, which the Church was incapable of exerting outside the towns. Only the cult of relics and saints was then able to give a broader Christian signification to the world and to try and assume all of people’s preoccupations. But it took centuries. Thus, the vacant mental spaces that could be judged diabolical by some (clerics, monks or activist Christians) or neutral by others (some laypeople or clerics) because they related to knowledge finally became Christian. But before that, some, like Arnobius, believed that the inferior powers and the creation depended on God, and other Christians that worshipping them was equally Christian. Different conceptions of Christianity founded diverse Christiannesses. Of course, clerics and monks can disagree, but these ‘mistakes’ were not truly schism or heresy. ‘Bad Christians’ obeyed most of the time, they accepted the need to give money to the clerics or monks, and that was the most important thing.

In conclusion, historians should build from documents complex models that allow us to account for all the discourses. The dichotomy ‘being pagan, being Christian’ was too theological in Late Antiquity, and is too theoretical today. And in both cases, ancient reality was more complex than words.

During Late Antiquity, against the official model of God’s transcendent omnipotence, most Christians preferred an immanent, hierarchical model. Some of them resorted to a Christian polylatrism that could include idols or veneration of natural forces. They were Christians in their own way, and they accepted the bishop’s authority in many fields. Clerics asked them for complete religious obedience, but

they could not convincingly explain the world. Other Christians, their number ever increasing as time went by, preferred to have recourse to Christian intermediaries, to the saints' relics or to holy (wo)men. These were pious Christians who wanted a world filled with divine meaning without resorting to practices that they deemed diabolical, and the ecclesiastical authorities accompanied this movement. Others, some *literati*, tried to mix human knowledge and divine piety. And others, more ascetic, like Caesarius, trusted only in God to solve their problems.

But relics or clerics could not be found everywhere during the 5th and 6th centuries. And it was not obvious that the Great Biblical God, the God of the Creation and of the afterlife, really cared about the growth of wheat and the illness of cows. Between 400 and 600, the mental world of Late Antiquity remained extremely hazy. Being a polylatric Christian was presumably not a problem for many people, even though it was problematic for the defenders of the exclusive, biblical signification – bishops, monks or the activist laity. But, insensibly, the struggle against the few subsisting idols, and the input of a new meaning of the *saeculum* through the cult of saints, alongside the old veneration of some natural, sometimes Christianised, powers, created a compromise which satisfied both the believers in their daily life and the clerics. Circa 600, 'Being Christian' was eventually a matter of faith, beliefs and community life, as well as a matter of power and money, with the necessity of obeying the clerics and catering for them, at least for a better afterlife.

Notes

- 1 The original French title is better: *Les identités meurtrières*.
- 2 Cuius romanus sum: Cicero, *In Verrem* 2.5.147; 162; 168; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 9.4.102; 11.1.40; Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 10.3.12; Augustinus, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 120, 10. Sum, inquit, homo romanus: Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 1, Praefatio.
- 3 *Passio sanctorum Scillitanorum* 10; Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 2 and 49; *De corona* 1; *Acta sanctorum Perpetuae et Felicitatis* 4.17; Lucifer Calaritanus, *De regibus apostaticis* 9; Victor of Vita, *Historia persecutionis Africanae prouinciae* 3.49.
- 4 *Apologia* 24: De patria mea uero, quod eam sitam Numidiae et Gaetuliae in ipso confinio meis scriptis ostendistis, quibus memet professus sum, cum Lolliano Auito c. u. praesente publice dissererem, Seminumidam et Semigaetulum, non uideo quid mihi sit in ea re pudendum, haud minus quam Cyro maiori, quod genere mixto fuit Semimedus ac Semipersa.

- 5 *Theodosian Code* 16.3.17: Ut profanos ritus iam salubri lege submouimus, ita festos conuentus ciuium et communem omnium laetitiam non patimur submoueri. Unde absque ullo sacrificio atque ulla superstitiones damnabili exhiberi populo uoluptates secundum ueterem consuetudinem, iniri etiam festa conuiuia, si quando exigunt publica uota, discernimus.
- 6 For Jewish behaviours, see Soler (2010, 281–91).
- 7 A fourth group could bring together the examples of rejection of authentic Christian rituals as pagan, such as the cult of relics by Faustus the Manichaean or the Catholic Vigilentius.
- 8 Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo* 13.4: Verba turpia et luxuriosa nolite ex ore proferre ... ne forte detrahendo, male loquendo, et in sanctis festiuitatibus choros ducendo, cantica luxuriosa et turpia proferendo ... Isti enim infelices et miseri, qui ballationes et saltationes antes ante ipsas basilicas sanctorum exercere nec metuunt nec erubescunt; and in Childebert's *Praeceptum* (edition: A. Boretius, MGH Cap., t. I, Hanover, 1883, pp. 2–3): Ad nos quaeremonia processit, multa sacrilegia in populo fieri, unde Deus ledatur et populos per peccatum declinet ad mortem: noctes pervigiles cum ebrietate, scurrilitate vel cantecis, etiam in ipsis sacris diebus pascha, natale Domini et reliquis festiuitatibus vel adueniente die dominico bansatrices (dansatrices) per villas ambulare.
- 9 As MacMullen (1996) often did.
- 10 Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo* 54.1; 3; 5: auguria, caragi, divini, sortileges, praecantatores, haruspices.
- 11 Augustine of Hippo, *Tractatus in Iohannis euangelium* 7.7: Non quando nobis dolet caput, curramus ad praecantatores, ad sortilegos et remedia uanitatis.
- 12 Augustine of Hippo, *Tractatus in Iohannis euangelium* 34.3: Qui saluum facit te, ipse saluum facit equum tuum, ipse ouem tuam, ad minima omnino ueniamus, ipse gallinam tuam.
- 13 Or as semi-Christians or half-Christians by the moderns; cf. Guignebert (1923, 65–102).
- 14 Augustine of Hippo, *Enarratio in Psalmum* 88.2.14: Nemo dicat: ad idola quidem uado, arreptitios et sortilegos consulo, sed tamen dei ecclesiam non relinquo; catholicus sum.
- 15 Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo* 54.3: Sed forte dicit aliquid: Quid facimus quod auguria ipsa et caragi vel divini frequenter nobis uera annunciant?
- 16 Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo* 54.3: Sed iterum dicitis: Interim aliquotiens, si praecantatores non fuerint, aut de morsu serpentis aut de alia qualibet infirmitate prope usque ad mortem multi periclitantur.

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