

CHAPTER 9

In Search of Local People and Rituals in Late Antiquity¹

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Abstract

In Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, ecclesiastical leaders often defined as pagan, superstitious and even magical those rituals and beliefs that they disliked. Augustine of Hippo, for instance, depicted a number of practices as pagan elements that recent converts could not abandon and therefore carried with them into the Church after Constantine's conversion. Augustine and other church leaders were influential in setting out the course of interpreting local popular forms of religiosity as magic ('magical survivals') or leftovers of paganism ('pagan survivals'). In this chapter, I illustrate local and popular forms of late antique religiosity with a few examples taken from the writings of Zeno of Verona, Maximus of Turin and Augustine of Hippo as well as later Latin writers such as Caesarius of Arles and Martin of Braga. I wish to break away from traditional dichotomies such as pagan/Christian, religion/magic and religion/superstition and to observe religious practices in the late antique and early medieval world on their own

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terms. We may call that religious world the third paganism, popular Christianity or whatever, but choosing the term is not relevant here. Instead of taking local forms of religiosity simply as 'magical survivals', 'pagan survivals' or 'Christian superstition', we should analyse local religious worlds in their different socio-political contexts.

Keywords: Late Antiquity, local religion, late Roman West, local Christianity, paganism, popular religion

Introduction

In the peace which came after such numerous and violent persecutions, crowds of pagans who wished to assume the Christian religion were kept back. Because they, having been accustomed to celebrate the feasts connected with their worship of idols in revelling and drunkenness [*in abundantia epularum et ebrietate*], could not easily refrain from pleasures so pernicious but also ancient [*ab his perniciosissimis sed tamen vetustissimis voluptatibus*], it had seemed good to our predecessors to make for the time a concession to this infirmity and permit them to celebrate, instead of the festivals which they renounced, other feasts in honour of the holy martyrs. These feasts in honour of martyrs were then observed, not as before with the same sacrilege, but with similar overindulgence [*non simili sacrilegio quamvis simili luxu*].²

In this way Augustine discusses the popular feasting in honour of Leontius, a local saint, in his famous letter to Alypius, the bishop of Thagaste, in 395. He insists that these celebrations should be abolished, stating that excessive banqueting in honour of martyrs is a pagan custom. The masses of recent converts, Augustine argues, had introduced them in the aftermath of the conversion of the emperor Constantine. In their weakness, these converts, formerly pagans, had not been capable of abandoning the excessive banqueting and drunkenness which had traditionally characterised their feast days. Augustine depicts these habits as harmful and age-old, as well as characteristically pagan. It was in these circumstances that ecclesiastical leaders ended up making concessions to the recent converts, allowing them to incorporate their previous practices into the martyr cult so that they could continue their celebrations but not their sacrilege. This was meant to ease their way into Christianity, Augustine maintains. However, now that

circumstances had changed and people had become established Christians, they should be expected to adopt the rules of sobriety and give up excesses.³

As Augustine's interpretation of the popular celebrations in honour of a local saint shows, defining and redefining the concept of being Christian was an issue of authority.⁴ With his episcopal – as well as intellectual – authority, he redefined what appropriate conduct was for Christians. What he was inclined to despise, he interpreted as a pagan ritual that had *recently* been introduced into church life.⁵

Consequently, Augustine also reinterpreted the past. To convince his parishioners, he maintained that banquets in honour of martyrs were an innovation from the Christian point of view. Accordingly, as Peter Brown writes, Augustine presented a pure and true Christianity as a historical fact dating back to pre-Constantinian times.⁶ Ecclesiastical leaders used their authority to define even what being pagan was and had been and to what extent pagan elements survived in the religious practices of the church.⁷ In addition to Augustine, other bishops were also inclined to define as pagan, superstitious and magical those practices and beliefs that they personally detested and disapproved of. For instance, Maximus of Turin labelled as pagan any custom that did not meet his Christian standards.⁸

From Bishops' Complaints to Local Religiosity

This narrative by Augustine and the approaches of the other late antique church leaders to local popular religious practices have been influential. For a long time, modern research took their views as a given and categorised the local popular forms of religiosity simply as pagan survivals or magicised distortions of Christianity.⁹ In the narrative of the Christian triumph, local religiosity despised by the ecclesiastical elite has often been portrayed as 'bits of the past smuggled into, and leaving a stain on', Christianity (as is appositely described by Maxwell 2012, 852). Researchers still often speak of pagan survivals or leftovers, which as a heritage of the old religions were transferred into popular Christianity. For example, Garth Fowden remarks on the romantic school of scholars who thought that 'ancient polytheism "survived" under a decent yet not suffocating veiling of Christianity' (Fowden 2001, 90, referring to Herzfeld 1982, 116–17; see also Gregory 1986; McKenna 1938; Meslin 1969).

What is actually understood by ‘pagan survivals’? Were they a stubborn resistance to Christianity?¹⁰ How self-conscious was this resistance? In emic terms, how did people understand their own religious allegiances? In etic terms, what do modern scholars think they were?¹¹ People loyal to the old gods? And finally, according to whom? Our literary sources are the writings of the ecclesiastical elite. Or are ‘pagan survivals’ understood – following Augustine and others – as some unwelcome side effects of the rapid Christianisation of the masses? Were they a component coming from outside that polluted – or, to speak more neutrally, influenced or changed – Christianity?

The term ‘pagan survivals’ has been criticised. Clifford Ando remarks that it ‘deflects modern surprise at how little Christian authorities demanded in their litmus-tests’. According to David Frankfurter, ‘pagan survival’ brings an association of timeless primitivity. Behind such a notion, there has often been an imperialist or missionary agenda (Ando 1996, 207; Frankfurter 2005, 267).¹² To these criticisms, I would add the overall vagueness of the term. We really cannot make distinctions between ‘pagan’ and ‘Christian’ survivals, or whatever the practices and beliefs are. The term does not do justice to the diversity of the late antique religious world.¹³ The idea of ‘survival’ implies the narrative of a triumphant Christianity construed by church leaders. We cannot really know the extent, number or level of weakenings and dominations.

The religious changes and diversity can be outlined in many ways, not just as the dichotomy between the alleged pagans and the alleged Christians, or as Christianisation. As many scholars have remarked in recent decades, for centuries the Mediterranean world had been diffused with different cults, practices, religious ideas and beliefs that constantly cross-pollinated one another. The emergence and spread of Christian groups belonged to this religious evolution of Antiquity. Furthermore, people in the Roman empire, especially those in the East with a Hellenistic background, had developed forms of common religious *koine*.

In this chapter, I will illustrate the local and popular forms of late antique religiosity with a few examples taken from the writings of Augustine of Hippo, Zeno of Verona and Maximus of Turin as well as some later Latin writers such as Martin of Braga and Caesarius of Arles. I wish to break away from dichotomies such as pagan/Christian, religion/magic and religion/superstition and to observe religious

practices in the late antique and early medieval world on their own terms. We may call that religious world the third paganism, popular Christianity or whatever, but choosing the term is not relevant here. Instead of taking local forms of religiosity simply as 'magical survivals', 'pagan survivals' or 'Christian superstition', we will analyse local religious worlds in their different socio-political contexts.

Late antique bishops wrote their condemnations of popular practices as ideologues of separation.¹⁴ Their attempts to wipe out 'popular', 'superstitious', 'pagan' and otherwise distorted practices were destined to be useless – there was always some local variation to be censured and despised. This is why imposing classifications from outside (popular, elite, pagan, Christian, religion, superstition, magic) as etic (scholarly) definitions would be deceptive and confusing. Instead, it is important to look at the ancient contexts and discourses within which emic (ancient) terms arose and find out how and why they were used.¹⁵ I have decided to use the neutral term 'local religion' to describe practices and beliefs that church leaders often – but not always – objected to (Frankfurter 2005, 257).

In their sermons, influential bishops such as Augustine of Hippo, Maximus of Turin and Caesarius of Arles complained of people who adhered to idolatrous practices and even enticed their Christian neighbours to attend pagan festivities. Whether these people regarded themselves as pagans or Christians, in the eyes of church leaders they appeared as pagans. Here the pagan label also functioned as a method of chastisement for people in the bishops' audiences. For example, Augustine argues with his listeners about participation in urban celebrations. He reports that some of his parishioners defended this practice, insisting that they were good Christians: the sign of the cross that they have received on their foreheads as catechumens protects them from the pollution of idolatry.¹⁶ In another case, Augustine mentions Christians who think that they can visit idols and consult magi and soothsayers, but still consider themselves good Christians, claiming: 'I have not abandoned the church for I am *catholicus*' (Aug. in *Psalm*. 88.2.14). We can presume that even though these remarks are Augustine's rhetorical constructions, they have some vague point of reference in North African social life.

I follow the local religion model enhanced by David Frankfurter as well as Jörg Rüpke, Hubert Cancik and others for observing the late antique religious world. Building his notions on the *habitus* or 'habit-

memory' developed by Pierre Bourdieu and Paul Connerton, Frankfurter argues that instead of 'an ignorant bondage to archaic ideas or resistance to notions of purity and authority, we find local communities' active engagement with new, hegemonic religious forms and ideas and their attendant notions of authority, power, and text' (Frankfurter 2005, 267). Cancik and Rüpke set out the research on the interplay between universal and local religious traditions in the Roman empire, surveying the many different ways in which people, practices and traditions were in contact with and influenced each other (Cancik and Rüpke 2008; see also Erker 2008). Furthermore, Stanley Stowers distinguishes between the religion of everyday social exchange and that of literate specialists (Stowers 2011, 41–51). As Ramsay MacMullen remarks in his *The Second Church: Popular Christianity, AD 200–400*, we should not take the model of religion that Augustine and his ilk taught to stand for all religiosity in Late Antiquity (MacMullen 2009, 98). Moreover, Georgia Frank and Jaclyn Maxwell draw our attention to the tensions and differences between the Christianity of overachievers such as John Chrysostom and the lay Christianity of ordinary people in town and country (Frank 2007; Maxwell 2012, 852).

Maximus of Turin and the Polluting Practices

One of the complaining 4th-century bishops was Maximus of Turin (d. c. 420). He was concerned about what he called idolatry and in several sermons told the landlords among his listeners to put an end to idolatrous practices on their estates (*Sermo.* 42.1, 106.2, 107.1, 108). To enforce his message, Maximus appealed to pollution, which, he says, idolatry causes to the whole community. Not only those who perform the rites (*exercentes*) but also those who live nearby (*habitantes*) and those who watch (*intuentes*) are defiled. Likewise, the master becomes polluted when his tenants make sacrifices (*Immolante enim rustico inquinatur domnedius*), Maximus insists (*Sermo.* 107.2).¹⁷ In another sermon, Maximus also urges Christian landowners to wipe out idolatry on their properties. Many are sanctified by the holiness of one member of the community but likewise many are polluted by the sacrilege of one.¹⁸ In several sermons, Maximus takes great pains to wake up the Christian landowners in his congregation and make them concerned about the traditional local rituals performed on their properties.¹⁹ His complaints reflect a conflict of interests between local

landlords and bishops at the regional level. Many landowners probably saw traditional religious practices as a convenient way of maintaining tranquillity, order and economic dependencies on their estates. Private religiosity and episcopal authority were often in tension and rivalry with one another in the countryside – not only between pagan landowners and Christian bishops but even between Christian landlords and bishops. From time to time they had shared interests, and this is what Maximus and other bishops repeatedly tried to argue to landlords.²⁰

What were people doing, according to Maximus? For example, in two sermons, he mocks the *vociferatio populi*, the custom of shouting and otherwise making much noise during the eclipse of the moon.²¹ When Maximus was wondering about the custom, he was given the explanation that shouting ‘was helping the moon in its labour and that the clamour was aiding its eclipse’. His reaction is derision and disapproval. He laughs at the *vanitas* that seemingly devout Christians (*quasi devoti Christiani*) thought they could help God in controlling the heavenly body, as if God were weak and unable to protect the heavenly lights that he himself had created. Maximus nonetheless condemns the *sacrilegium* that is in this way committed against the creator.²² In the reading of the ecclesiastical elite, the custom of the people is explained as ridiculous and absurd, and even an insult against the creator God.²³ A similar attitude can be observed in the sermons of Caesarius of Arles, who regrets the clamour, blowing of trumpets and ringing of bells during the eclipse of the moon. These practices are not only sacrilegious (*sacrilegis clamoribus*), but also vain and ridiculous (*vana paganorum persuasione; ridiculo ... tinnitu*). With the superiority of the literate elite, Caesarius derides the *stulti homines* who think that they can help the moon in its labours and gives the scientific explanation of his time on the moon’s fiery globe, which at certain times is covered by the air or is dimmed by the heat of the sun.²⁴ (For further discussion on Caesarius of Arles, see below.)

A few days later Maximus returns to the topic and again attacks ‘those who believed that the moon can be moved from the heaven with magicians’ charms’. He also ironically compares the foolishness of people, the diminution of their soul, with the diminution of moonlight. They should reject ‘their pagan error’ (*errore gentili*) and return as swiftly to wisdom as the moon returns to its fullness.²⁵ Here, in Maximus’ interpretation, the custom of the people has already grown

into magic, *magorum carmina*. The moon is compared to the church that has been troubled by magicians' incantations (*magorum carminibus laborasse*) but eventually cannot be harmed: 'For incantations can have no power where the song of Christ is chanted'.²⁶ Maximus clearly sets up the incantations of the people as rivals for the mightier ones of his church. Here he is clearly following the established convention of ecclesiastical leaders of labelling rival ritual experts as practising sorcery.²⁷

What disturbs Maximus most is the people's conduct, which he takes as revealing divided loyalties. In several instances, he demands that his listeners embrace Christianity only and abandon all other practices (e.g. Max. Taur. *Sermo*. 34.2, 35.1). Maximus and many other ecclesiastical leaders were at pains to argue to their congregations that one feasting is Christian while the other is 'pagan'; participating in both the Christian and the 'pagan' celebrations of the communities was condemnable. The apostle Paul's exclamation 'What portion does righteousness have with wickedness? Or what fellowship is there of light with darkness?' (2 Cor 6:14) was widely used by Christian leaders to draw strict boundaries between the Christian and the 'pagan' according to the lines defined and redefined in each circumstance.²⁸ Maximus also appeals to the Pauline proverb when complaining of 'many who, clinging themselves to the custom of the ancient superstition of vanity, observe the day of the Kalends as the highest festival' (*plerique qui trahentes consuetudinem de veteri superstitione vanitatis Kalendarum diem pro summa festivitate procurent*) and telling them to choose the sacrament of the Lord's birthday (*dominici natalis ... sacramentum*) and leave the drunkenness of Saturnalia and the excess of the Kalendae Ianuariae, the New Year (*ebrietatem ... Saturnalium ... lasciviam Kalendarum*).²⁹ In another sermon on the New Year celebration, Maximus makes 'no small complaint against a great number of you', who celebrate the 'heavenly banquet' (*caeleste convivium*) of the Lord's birthday and thereafter prepare 'a meal of superstition' (*superstitionis ... prandium*). He reminds his listeners that anyone who wants to be a participant in the divine is not allowed to be a companion of idols.³⁰

Bishops and Protesting Voices

Gaudentius, bishop of Brescia (d. 410), recurrently warns his congregation of the dangers of idolatry. In one of his tractates, he urges his audience to avoid being violated by the contagion of idolatry.³¹ In another, he warns recently baptised Christians to keep away from all polluted food (*ab omni pollutione escarum*) that 'pagan superstition' has poisoned. This is a reference to the food and drink offered as sacrifice in traditional communal festivals. Gaudentius contrasts the mortifying food of demons (*a mortifero daemonum cibo*) with the meal of the spiritual Easter (*ad beatae huius ac spiritalis paschae epulas*).³²

Zeno of Verona (fl. c. 360–380) also refers to traditional practices of peasants in the north Italian countryside and lays the blame on landowners who pretend to be unaware of the fuming shrines (*fumantia ... fana*) on their properties. According to him, they know exactly every clod of earth, stone and twig even on their neighbours' domains.³³ Furthermore, Zeno complains about funerary banquets at the tombs of the ordinary deceased as well as at the memorial places of martyrs. What was especially reprehensible was the contamination of divine sacraments by mixing profane fables with them (*profanis fabulis ... divina sacramenta contaminant*).³⁴ Zeno stresses that one should be attentive to the way one either consumes or offers sacrifice: it was as detestable to perform sacrificial rituals as to eat the offered food.³⁵

Numerous 4th and 5th-century bishops criticised their parishioners for dancing and abundant eating and drinking at Christian tombs and *martyria*;³⁶ among others, Ambrose of Milan reproached his fellow Christians for heavy drinking at the martyrs' sepulchres. As Augustine tells us in his *Confessions*, Ambrose forbade Milanese Christians to offer food and wine at the tombs, justifying his prohibition with two arguments: first, there should be no opportunity for drunkenness, and second, the habit of offering food and wine at the tombs of the martyrs was too similar to the superstition of pagans, the traditional Roman celebration at the tombs in memory of the deceased, the feast of Parentalia (*illa quasi parentalia superstitioni gentilium essent simillima*).³⁷ Later, Augustine lamented about the *turbae imperitorum*, who were 'superstitious within the true religion' (*in ipsa vera religione superstitiosi*): they were worshippers of sepulchres and images, they drank abundantly upon the tombs, offered food to the deceased, had

themselves buried upon the graves, and regarded their gluttony and inebriation as religion.³⁸

What about ordinary people? As far as we can tell from indirect evidence found in the complaints of the ecclesiastical leaders, people taking part in feasting at the tombs and *martyria* regarded their funerary customs and the martyr cult as properly Christian (e.g. Aug. *epist.* 29.8). In bishops' admonitions, we can observe echoes of the counter-arguments of these Christian people. Ambrose stated mockingly that some people considered their drunkenness a *sacrificium*.³⁹ Similarly, Augustine confronted the protests raised within his congregation as some sought justification for food and wine offerings at the tombs from a biblical passage. Augustine refuted this counter-argument, arguing that offerings to the dead were actually a custom of pagans (*consuetudinem hanc esse paganorum*).⁴⁰ Similarly, he confronts 'someone who' defends his visits to local ritual experts whom Augustine disapproves of: 'To me, I know, the *mathematicus* spoke the truth, and to me, I know, because the *sortilogus* spoke truth, and I received the remedy and I got well.'⁴¹

These protesting voices are certainly not without problems: they were preachers' rhetorical constructions in which the opposing views were depicted in a selective way, probably as caricatures, and could consequently be conveniently refuted. However, they may have had some vague point of comparison with late Roman social life.⁴² A similar fictive protest appears in a sermon of Petrus Chrysologus, bishop of Ravenna, as someone in his audience is portrayed as explaining the festivities of Kalendae Ianuariae, the New Year, as harmless celebrations – 'vows of entertainment', not 'practices of sacrilegious rites' or 'a pagan transgression'.⁴³

Caesarius of Arles and Non-Conforming Christians

Religious ambivalence and unacceptable conduct were exiled outside the Christian community, and non-conforming Christians were often portrayed as pagans (*gentiles*). In this manner, Caesarius of Arles compared the practices and behaviour of non-conforming Christians with the doings of pagans who had not yet received baptism (*quomodo pagani sine Deo et sine baptismi gratia faciunt*) and wondered why these miserable people took baptism and went to church (*ut quid*

miseri ad ecclesiam venerunt?) if they continued with their idolatrous practices. He reprimanded people for still making vows to trees, praying at the fountains and observing diabolical auguries. They were not only reluctant to demolish the shrines of pagans: they even dared to restore shrines that had already been razed.⁴⁴ Similarly to Maximus of Turin, Caesarius reminded the landowners in his audience that a landlord should have shrines on his land destroyed and sacred trees cut down; otherwise, he would be a participant in the sacrileges performed there (*Sermo*. 54.5).

Like many other church leaders, Caesarius was vexed by this doublemindedness of his parishioners. He complained of people who came to church as Christians, but upon leaving behaved as pagans by dancing, which originated from pagan ritual. After Christ's sacraments, they just returned to the devil's poisons.⁴⁵ He keeps on reminding his listeners that the sacrament of baptism excluded traditional rituals from their lives, sometimes enhanced with an appeal to the authority of the Apostle Paul (1 Cor 10:20–21: 'You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of the devil') (*Sermo*. 54.6).⁴⁶ He also threatens that no one should seek help from *praecantatores*, for if one performs this evil, one will immediately lose the sacrament of baptism and become *sacrilegus et paganus* (Caesar. Arel. *Sermo*. 54.1; also 19.4).

As in other bishops' sermons, we occasionally hear the fictive protesting voices of ordinary people in Caesarius' preaching. He mentions that someone might say: 'What should we do, for auguries and enchanters or diviners often tell us true things?' Appealing to biblical authority (Deut 13:3), Caesarius commands: 'Even if they tell you the truth, do not believe them.' Thus, Caesarius does not deny the abilities of competing ritual experts, for instance, to predict things. He admits that it is sometimes even possible to get some remedy from illness through these sacrileges (*per illa sacrilegia aliqua remedia in infirmitate recipere*; Caesar. Arel. *Sermo*. 54.3; also 54.5). When complaining about those who have no problems eating food sacrificed to demons, Caesarius mentions that some used to say: 'I sign myself [with the cross] and then eat'. However, for the bishop, this will not do.⁴⁷

Sacred trees and fountains recur frequently in Caesarius' admonitions.⁴⁸ Furthermore, he warns repeatedly about various sorts of ritual experts, such as *haruspices*, *divini*, *caraii/caragi/caragii*, *sortilege* and *praecantatores*.⁴⁹ Even amulets were sometimes made and distributed by some Christian clerics, Caesarius regrets.⁵⁰ All of this observation

of omens and consultation of various diviners, all of these practices, were the pomp and work of the devil.⁵¹ Part of the devil's pomp condemned by Caesarius was the processions with dancing, drinking, and masquerading during the *Kalendae Ianuariae*. Caesarius mentions that people mask themselves as elks or other wild animals as well as domestic animals; some wear the heads of animals, 'with joy and exultation', as if they thus transform themselves into beasts and no longer look like humans. Caesarius states that in this way these people prove that they have a bestial mind rather than form.⁵² Moreover, he is appalled at men, especially soldiers, dressing themselves in women's clothes.⁵³ Other bishops also complain about people masking themselves as animals and cross-dressing. There are also mentions of people acting as Saturn, Jupiter, Hercules, Diana and Vulcan.⁵⁴

Among the reprehensible practices of New Year's Eve, Caesarius depicts the convention of country folk covering the dinner table with the widest possible diversity of food and drink for the whole night in order to guarantee their availability for the following year.⁵⁵

Martin of Braga and the Correction of Rustics

Martin of Braga (c. 520–579) was one of the bishops who denounced the custom of taking auspices from the abundance of the dinner table on the night before *Kalendae Ianuariae*.⁵⁶ In *De correctione rusticorum*, he regards the celebration of the New Year as an error (*ille error*) and the attendees as ignorant rustics (*ignorantibus et rusticis*). The most stupid error (*de illo stultissimo errore*) is the observation of the days of moths and mice (*dies tinearum et murium*) in which, Martin claims, a Christian worships moths and mice instead of God. Country folk seem to believe that they will be spared from the harm of moths and mice by dedicating special days to them. Again, with the superiority of the elite, Martin states that bread and clothes are best protected simply by keeping them in boxes and baskets. All these days of pagans are elaborate inventions of demons (*Observationes istae omnes paganorum sunt per adinventiones daemonum exquisitae*).⁵⁷

Martin mentions that these superstitions were practised either in secret or in public but that nonetheless, people never ceased to perform sacrifices to demons. 'How come people are still not always satisfied, safe, and happy?' Martin mocks, adding that these vain sacrifices

do not protect them from locusts, mice and other tribulations that the angered God sends them.⁵⁸

Martin of Braga is keen to show that the rites of country folk are foolish and futile. As a representative of the ecclesiastical elite, he has the more efficient religion to offer. He nonetheless shares a worldview in which divine anger has a fundamental part. Furthermore, Martin criticises the observation of specific days in the annual calendar as well as in the weekly course. He complains of the continued use of the names of the old gods for the days of the week. Disbelieving people (*dubii*) who do not embrace Christianity wholeheartedly (*non ex toto corde*) cling to the names of demons and keep on calling days after Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn (*appellent diem Martis et Mercurii et Iovis et Veneris et Saturni*; Martin. Brac. corr. 8; also 9). However, the issue here is not so much the observing of days in general or calling days by the names of gods; rather, it is the contest over which and whose days are observed. Martin is ultimately worried about people who do not dedicate Sunday as the Lord's day and stresses that there should be no working in field, meadow, vineyard or other places on the Lord's day.⁵⁹

The same applies to Caesarius of Arles, who deplores the fact that stupid people believe that the days, Kalends days, the sun and the moon should be venerated. He especially complains about *Iovis quinta feria*, the fifth day dedicated to Jupiter (Thursday) on which some wretched women refuse to work with loom and spindle (*aliquae mulieres infelices, quae in honore Iovis quinta feria nec telam nec fustum facere velent*). In another sermon, Caesarius mentions that on the *quinta feria* some men do not do their work and some women do not do their wool work (*quinta feria nec viri opera faciant, nec mulieres laneficium*), and this is because the devil has embraced them.⁶⁰

In his *De correctione rusticorum*, Martin of Braga lists various despicable practices, among them the 'lighting of candles beside rocks and beside trees and beside fountains and at crossroads', which he labels as reverence to the devil (*cultura diaboli*). In addition, it is disgraceful to celebrate Vulcanalia and the first days of the months, and set out tables (*mensas ornare*), put up laurel wreaths (*lauros ponere*), watch the foot (*pedem observare*) – it is not clear what Martin means here – make a libation of fruit and wine on a log in the hearth (*fundere in foco super truncum frugem et vinum*), or throw bread into a fountain (*panem in fontem mittere*).⁶¹ Women are said to call on Minerva when working at

their loom, and people celebrated their weddings on the day of Venus (Friday). All this is again reverence to the devil. Martin also connects the custom of taking auspices from the flight of birds, and sneezing, with the devil and reminds his parishioners that they should not reject the sign of the cross (*signum crucis*) that they have accepted in baptism. Other, rival signs therefore are labelled as the signs of the devil (*diaboli signa*).⁶² Likewise, Martin condemns ‘incantations invented by magicians and evil-doers’ (*incantationes ... a magis et maleficis adinventas*) and gives as the salutary opposite the incantation of the holy creed and the Lord’s Prayer (*incantationem sancti symboli et orationis dominicae*).⁶³

Ecclesiastical Councils

In addition to the mentions made by the late antique bishops discussed above, we have lists in imperial legislation, church council canons, heresiological treatises and bishops’ sermons, all of them condemning pagan, heretic, magical or otherwise wicked practices. How should we understand these catalogues? How much can we rely on them as a source for practices that were still actively performed or groups still operating in society?

In recent research, heresiological literature has been analysed as a part of knowledge-ordering in the late Roman world and connected with ethnographic discourse and encyclopaedic literature.⁶⁴ As well as heresies, paganism also needed to be grasped and categorised. One purpose of the imperial legislation was to outline paganism as a legally understandable entity in the form of individual forbidden practices. For example, a law of 392 aimed to cover as many forms of pagan practice as possible – by night or day, in temples, houses or fields, burning incense, erecting cult images, and so forth. It was in these kinds of processes that the concept ‘paganism’ was construed.⁶⁵ The lists of forbidden practices, such as magical acts, made by ecclesiastical councils probably functioned in the same way. The prohibitions were part of disciplining lay Christians as well as the clergy, but also of making sense of the boundaries of Christian conduct.

Canons of church councils produced lists of forbidden rituals and practices, often judged as magical, in the 4th to the 7th century and onwards, thus defining proper Christianity by way of exclusion. The Council of Ancyra held in 314 prohibited Christians from practising

divination and following the customs of pagans, as well as bringing people into their houses to practise sorcery or for lustrations. Here, as in many other regulations, divination, magic and 'pagan' customs were paralleled.⁶⁶ The Council of Braga in 572 forbade people to bring diviners (*divini*) and especially *sortilegi* into their houses in order to cast out evil (*malum*), detect evil deeds (*maleficia*) or perform pagan purifications (*lustrationes paganorum*; Council of Braga 140, *Canones ex orientalium partum synodis*). Likewise, the Council of Trullo in 691 banned cloud-chasers, sorcerers, purveyors of amulets and diviners, who were to be cast out of the Church if they persisted in 'these deadly pagan practices' (Council of Trullo, *Canones ex orientalium partum synodis*; Stolte 2002, 114). Later medieval church councils and monastic writings again include lists of forbidden practices.⁶⁷ The conventional catalogues of prohibited practices have been debated in modern research.⁶⁸ Are these mentions evidence of continuing practices or are they mere topoi, prohibitions repeated over the centuries without any reference to social reality? If the conventional lists are 'only' topoi, they may still have had a purpose. Did these lists function as a kind of exorcism by means of which all unwelcome behaviour was cast out? The accusations of magic and divination were often also a ritualistic way to segregate the problematic elements of the community (Mathisen 1996, 310–11, 320, referring to Caesarius of Arles; see also Noethlichs 1998, 25; Van Dam 1985, 115–76). Or did ecclesiastical leaders reiterate the traditional list of proscribed practices because it was the convention to forbid anything they despised and saw as detrimental but were not able to outline? As Yitzhak Hen remarks, repetitive condemnations are evidence for norms, not facts (Hen 2008, 51, 2015, 186). They tell us about what was felt significant enough to be stressed and condemned.

Conclusion

In our search for local people and rituals in Late Antiquity, we arrive again at the problem of the reliability of our ecclesiastical sources. The representations of local practices depicted by ecclesiastical writers are hardly very accurate reports of how people were acting in their communities. In this, late antique bishops were not different from other elite writers in earlier and later historical periods, whether they were Greek, Roman and early medieval aristocrats, philosophers and historians, legislators, missionaries, or colonisers.

The dichotomy between popular and elite can be seen as part of the construction of a discourse of ritual censure in which a writer wants to articulate cultural difference and appear superior. A group or an individual may aim to become the elite precisely by making such a distinction. This applies to Late Antiquity as well as other periods: one finds the patronising rhetoric of dichotomy and denigration in the writings of the elite – which construed various boundaries to edit out elements deemed ‘vulgar’, ‘barbarian’, ‘superstitious’, ‘old-womanish’, ‘magical’, ‘pagan’, ‘heretical’ and so forth and thus invent notions of proper, sane, Greek, Roman, civic or orthodox religion. The ecclesiastical elite’s ritual censure in the 4th and 5th centuries had its roots in not only the Jewish and early Christian discourses but also early Roman imperial ones. Christian writers even polarised the differences by highlighting them as a dichotomy between pure and demonic.

Is there any value in our late antique sources? What they do tell us about are attitudes, sometimes appreciation, usually wonder, condescension, contempt or fear. Occasionally, as a side effect, they unveil something about the life of local communities, creative adaptations, new and old beliefs intertwined, new and old rituals adapted, new and old divinities venerated. Two late antique aristocratic poets, Ausonius and Paulinus of Nola, are illustrative examples of how the learned elite often describe local forms of religiosity in a formulaic manner. Ausonius envisions an easy-going transition from paganism to Christianity in his own household, depicting it in poetic expressions as abandoning ‘incense to be burnt’, the ‘slice of honey-cake’, and ‘hearths of green turf’ and instead beginning his prayers ‘to God and to the Son of God most high, that co-equal Majesty united in one fellowship with the Holy Spirit’.⁶⁹ Paulinus of Nola describes rituals in which animals are slaughtered in honour of his patron saint, Felix.⁷⁰ Both Ausonius and Paulinus give the impression that rituals were smoothly switched for Christian ones and then everybody’s needs were fulfilled. Both poets observe the domestic and local religiosity of their dependants *von oben*. Their way of looking at local religiosity is highly literary – they formulate their views according to the sophisticated conventions rooted in ‘classical’ poetry, with reminiscences of Vergil, Horace and others, as well as biblical literature.⁷¹ However, despite being formulaic and literary, they *may* reveal something about the flexibility of the local population to respond by adapting or conforming creatively to changed circumstances.

As I argued at the beginning of my chapter, we might call the multifaceted religious world of Late Antiquity the third paganism, popular Christianity, second church, contextualised Christianity, regional micro-Christianity or something else.⁷² However, the choice of the term is not the point here. I am inclined to think that we need not use fixed categories, either contextualised Christianity or contextualised paganism.⁷³ I suggest that instead of categorising local religious phenomena simply on the axis of Christianity and paganism, we should analyse local religious worlds in their different socio-political contexts. Thus, we detect the local creative applications of local populations, and we perceive people who actively engage in making adaptations in their local communities according to their everyday needs, tensions and crises – with ruptures and adaptation, and with continuities.

Notes

- 1 This chapter builds on the author's earlier work: *Religious Dissent in Late Antiquity, 350–450* by Majastina Kahlos. Oxford Studies in Late Antiquity. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. Reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press.
- 2 Augustine, *Epist.* 29.9: *Scilicet post persecutiones tam multas, tamque vehementes, cum facta pace, turbae gentilium in christianum nomen venire cupientes hoc impedirentur, quod dies festos cum idolis suis solerent in abundantia epularum et ebrietate consumere, nec facile ab his perniciosissimis et tam vetustissimis voluptatibus se possent abstinere, visum fuisse maioribus nostris, ut huic infirmitatis parti interim parceretur, diesque festos, post eos quos relinquebant, alios in honorem sanctorum martyrum vel non simili sacrilegio, quamvis simili luxu celebrarentur.* In the English translation, for the sake of clarity, I have cut Augustine's long sentences into shorter ones. For Alypius, Augustine's friend and episcopal colleague, see O'Donnell (2005, 104–06).
- 3 Augustine, *Epist.* 29.9: *Iam Christi nomine colligatis, et tantae auctoritatis iugo subditis salutaria sobrietatis praecepta traderentur, quibus iam propter praeipientis honorem ac timorem resistere non valerent; quocirca iam tempus esse, ut qui non se audent negare christianos, secundum Christi voluntatem vivere incipiant, ut ea quae ut essent christiani concessa sunt, cum christiani sunt, respuantur.*
- 4 On the issue of authority, see Brown (1995, 23–24, 1998, 662–63); Klutz (1998, 183–84); MacMullen (2009, 61–62, 161 n. 38).
- 5 In *Epist.* 22.4 to Aurelius, Augustine outlines the situation in a different way, arguing that while in some places these practices had never existed, in other places they were either of recent or long standing but had been abolished by bishops.

- 6 As Brown (1998, 662) states, 'a generation of articulate clergymen created the notion of Christianization with which we still live'.
- 7 'Pagans' and 'paganism' here refer to the concept construed and used by ancient Christian writers to discuss their religious others. Furthermore, the terms functioned as polemical tools in Christian literature – as a mirror in which a writer's theological views and moral conduct were reflected.
- 8 For Maximus of Turin and popular religion, see Devoti (1981, 165–66).
- 9 Quasten (1940, 253–66) portrays the 'missionary method' of the early church as a way of making an accommodation, retaining the commemoration of the departed and substituting the funeral mass for the pagan rite. Quasten further explains that the *refrigerium* or funeral repast is 'entirely contrary to the Christian outlook, because it represents the dead as still subject to the earthly necessities of food and drink'; Weltin (1987, 6) notes that 'humble converts to Christianity naturally carried over pagan elements into their new faith' with the attempt 'to transfer the potency of old idols to new Christian sacramentals like the sign of the cross, shrines, icons, and relics'; Ramsey (1989, 298) takes the rituals related to the eclipse of the moon mentioned by Maximus of Turin (*Sermo*. 30) as a pagan survival; see also my discussion below.
- 10 See O'Donnell (1979, 83): 'Christianity triumphed, but paganism survived.' See also Dagron (1978, 92–93); Frend (1952, 101); Kaegi (1966, 245–68).
- 11 The emic or subject-oriented approach refers to observations made from inside, the etic or observer-oriented approach to observations made from outside; Headland, Pike and Harris (1990). See also Stratton (2007, 14–16) on the emic and etic perspectives in the research of ancient 'magic'.
- 12 For criticism of the term 'pagan survivals', see also Meltzer (1999, 16–17); Meyer and Smith (1999, 7).
- 13 As Frankfurter (2005, 270) aptly points out, the late antique religious world was far more complex than merely 'the figures of Christ and the saints, evil demons, and shadowy old gods', and individuals at all social levels encountered a diverse range of spirits – all this variety notwithstanding the church leaders' aim of constructing a dualist view of the world.
- 14 Calling local practices 'popular' is by no means unproblematic. The contra-distinction may in several cases be misleading, since some practices were performed not only by 'ordinary people' but by the socioeconomic elite as well. The elite and the common folk often shared the same practices and similar beliefs regarding the sacred and the divine. Devoti (1981, 155) speaks of 'soluzioni religiose di comodo, fenomeni di doppia religione, latente e manifesta, rigurgiti improvvisi di comportamenti pagani, specie in momenti di maggiore crisi'. See the 'second church' in MacMullen (2009, 31), who estimates it as 95% of the whole Christian population. MacMullen (2009, 95) stresses that bishops and the masses pulled in opposite directions.
- 15 Stratton (2007, 14) raises this point in her admonition against making scholarly distinctions between religion and magic.
- 16 Aug. *Sermo*. 301A.8, www.augustinus.it/latino/index.htm. On the social life of North African pagans and Christians in Augustine's time, see Lepelley (1987 2002); MacMullen (2009, 51–67).
- 17 For traditional practices in Maximus' sermons, see also Merkt (1997, 111, 139, 198). For the idea of pollution, see Kahlos (2013, 159–71).

- 18 Max. Tur. *Sermo*. 106. 2: sicut unius sanctitate sanctificantur multi, ita unius sacrilegio plurimi polluuntur. Maximus complained that landlords pretended to be unaware of what peasants were up to on their estates (nescio, non iussi; causa mea non est, non me tangit).
- 19 Moreover, in *Sermo*. 108, Maximus stressed that, even if it were the peasant, not the landlord, who participated in sacrilegious rituals, the horrendous pollution touched the landowner as well; see also *Sermo*. 91.2, in which Maximus reminds Christian landowners that they will become polluted when they accept services from idolatrous tenants' polluted hands (*dextera polluta*) and products that have been consecrated to demons (*primitias ... daemonibus libatas*). See also Dölger (1950, 307–09); Lizzi (2009, 2010, 100).
- 20 For the patronage of the local landowning elite and the Christianisation of the rural population in the Western provinces, see Bowes (2007, 161–66); Kahlos (2018).
- 21 Max. Taur. *Sermo*. 30–31: de defectione lunae.
- 22 Max. Taur. *Sermo*. 30.2: Quod cum requirerem, quid sibi clamor hic velit, dixerunt mihi quod laboranti lunae vestra vociferatio subveniret, et defectum eius suis clamoribus adiuveret. Risi equidem et miratus sum vanitatem, quod quasi devoti Christiani deo ferebatis auxilium—clamabatis enim, ne tacentibus vobis perderet elementum; tamquam infirmus enim et inbecillis, nisi vestris adiuveretur vocibus, non possit luminaria defendere, quae creavit; 30.3.
- 23 The admonitions to keep the creator and the created (universe, elements, nature) separate and to worship the creator only were recurrent in the sermons and tractates of late antique bishops: Max. Taur. *Sermo*. 62.2; Aug. *Sermo*. 198 aug.25–31 = 26.25–31 Dolbeau; Martin of Braca, *De correctione rusticorum* 6–9.
- 24 Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo*. 52.3: quem bucinae sonitu vel ridiculo concussis tintinabulis putant se superare posse tinnitu, aestimantes quod eam sibi vana paganorum persuasionem sacrilegis clamoribus propitiā faciant; also 13.5: quando luna obscuratur, adhuc aliquos clamare cognosciti. See Klingshirn (1994a, 214–15).
- 25 Max. Taur. *Sermo*. 31.1 : Ante dies persecuti sumus, fratres, adversus illos qui putarent lunam de caelo magorum carminibus posse deduci; et eorum retidimus vanitatem qui non minus defectum patiuntur animi quam luminis patitur illa defectum. Quos et hortati sumus, ut praetermisso errore gentili tam cito ad sapientiam redeant, quam cito ad plenitudinem suam illa convertitur.
- 26 Max. Taur. *Sermo*. 31.3: Sed sacris vocibus veneficorum carmen nocere non potuit. Nihil enim incantationes valent, ubi Christi canticum decantatur. Maximus offers biblical examples of Moses, who fought the famous sorcerers Jamnes and Mambres, and the apostles Paul and Peter, who encountered Simon Magus.
- 27 For the label of magic and rival ritual experts, see Kahlos (2015, 162–77).
- 28 Tertullian (*praescr.* 7.9: Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis? Quid academiae et ecclesiae? Quid haereticis et christianis? *apol.* 46.18; *spect.* 28.1) already insisted that a Christian could not have anything in common with pagans, reinforcing his admonitions with quotations from scripture, e.g. Quid luci cum tenebris? Quid vitae et mortis? [2 Cor 6:14]; Stanton (1973).
- 29 Max. Taur. *Sermo*. 98.1. Together the celebration of the Saturnalia and the New Year, the Kalendae Ianuariae, formed a long period of feasting at the turn of the year; in Late Antiquity, *natalis Christi* intensified the feasting. On the official

level, the senate and the army took their oath of allegiance to the emperor; he also received different kinds of offerings (*strenae*) as signs of loyalty from his subjects. Besides the *vota publica* on behalf of the state, there were private vows, gifts and interpretation of omens. During the Christianising empire, the solemn festivities of the *Kalendae Ianuariae*, such as the appointment of the consuls, vows and offering gifts to the emperor, continued, and it was one of the most popular feast days in both East and West, as the many complaints of Christian writers also indicate; Grig (2016); Meslin (1970, 23–46, 73–75).

- 30 Max. Taur. *Sermo*. 63.1: Est mihi adversus plerosque de vestris, fratres, quaerella non modica. De his loquor qui nobiscum natalem domini celebrantes gentilium se feriis dederunt, et post illud caleste convivium superstitionis sibi prandium praepararunt ... Atque ideo qui vult esse divinum particeps, non debet esse socius idolorum. Again, the apostle Paul (2 Cor 6:16) is quoted as an authority.
- 31 Gaudentius of Brescia, *tract.* 9.2 : Unde cavendum nobis est, omni genere dilectissimi, ne aliquo rursus idolatriae violemur contagio et non solum repudiari, sed et damnari in perpetuum mereamur. Gaudentius was the bishop of Brescia from 387 to c. 410.
- 32 Gaudent. Brix. *tract.* 4.13: Vos igitur, neophyti, qui estis ad beatae huius ac spiritualis paschae epulas invitati, videte, quomodo ab omni pollutione escarum, quas superstitione gentilis infecerit, vestras animas conservetis. Nec sufficit, ut a mortifero daemonum cibo vitam suam custodiat Christianus. See Lizzi (2009, 403) on Gaudentius' warnings.
- 33 Zeno of Verona, *Sermo*. 1.25.10: Hic quaerite, Christiani, sacrificium vestrum an esse possit acceptum, qui vicinarum possessionum omnes glebulas, lapillos et surculos nostis, in praediis autem vestris fumantia undique sola fana non nostis, quae, si vera dicenda sunt, dissimulando subtiliter custoditis. Dölger (1950, 305) interprets Zeno's statement 'every clod of earth, stone, and twig' to refer to the vestiges of rural sacrifices.
- 34 Zeno Veron. *Sermo*. 1.25.11: ... qui foetorosis prandia cadaveribus sacrificant mortuorum, qui amore luxuriandi atque bibendi in infamibus locis lagenis et calicibus subito sibi martyres pepererunt.
- 35 Zeno Veron. *Sermo*. 1.25.12: Iam videat unusquisque, quemadmodum sacrificium aut sumat aut offerat; sicut enim indigne offerre sacrilegum est, ita indigne manducare mortiferum, in Levitico scriptura [Lev 7:19] dicente.
- 36 For discussions, see Kahlos (2009, 13–23); MacMullen (2009, 23–25, 55–58); Rebillard (2012, 70–71).
- 37 Aug. *conf.* 6.2.2.: praeceptum esse ista non fieri nec ab eis qui sobrie facerent, ne ulla occasio se ingurgitandi daretur ebriosis, et quia illa quasi parentalia superstitioni gentilium essent simillima. No less a person than Augustine's mother Monnica complied with the proscription, as Augustine reports in his *Confessions*. Gaudentius of Brescia (*tract.* 4.14) also condemned the feasting of Parentalia as the foremost error of idolatry. Ambrose, *Helia* 17.62: Et haec vota ad deum pervenire iudicant sicut illi qui calices ad sepulchra martyrum deferent atque illic in vesperam bibunt; aliter se exaudiri posse non credunt.
- 38 Aug. *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 1.34.75: Nolite consecrari turbas imperitorum, qui vel in ipsa vera religione superstitiosi sunt vel ita libidinibus dediti, ut obliti sint quid promiserint Deo. Novi multos esse sepulcrorum et picturarum adoratores. Novi multos esse qui cum luxuriosissime super mortuos bibant et

- epulas cadaveribus exhibentes super sepultos seipsos sepeliant et voracitates ebrietatesque suas deputent religioni. Being buried upon the graves refers to the increasingly popular custom of setting up sepulchres in the vicinity of powerful martyrs' tombs. Augustine (*Sermo*. 198 aug.16 = 26.16 Dolbeau) mentions that 'pagans' mocked Christians as well for being worshippers of columns and sometimes even images (adoratores columnarum et aliquando etiam picturarum).
- 39 Ambrose, *Helia* 17.62: Stultitia hominum, qui ebrietatem sacrificium putant.
- 40 Aug. *Sermo*. 361.6: Et quod obiciunt quidam de Scripturis: 'Frange panem tuum, et effunde vinum tuum super sepulcra iustorum, et ne tradas eum iniustis' [Tob 4:18]; non est quidem de hoc disserendum, sed tamen posse dico intellegere fideles quod dictum est. Nam quemadmodum ista fideles faciant religiose erga memorias suorum notum est fidelibus.
- 41 Aug. *Sermo*. 360B.22 = 61 Mainz = 25.22 Dolbeau: Exsistat aliquis qui dicat: Mihi, scio, verum dixit mathematicus, et mihi scio quia verum dixit sortilogus, et illud remedium habui, et valuit.
- 42 Even as straw men, the fictive voices of ordinary people had to sound to some extent credible to preachers' audiences; for a discussion, see Rebillard (2012, 6, 75).
- 43 Petrus Chrysologus, *Sermo*. 155.5: Sed dicit aliquis: non sunt haec sacrilegiorum studia, vota sunt haec iocorum; et hoc esse novitatis laetitiam, non vetustatis errorem; esse hoc anni principium, non gentilitatis offensam.
- 44 Caesar. Arel. *Sermo*. 53.1: Audivimus aliquos ex vobis ad arbores vota reddere, ad fontes orare, auguria diabolica observare ... Sunt enim, quod peius est, infelices et miseri, qui paganorum fana non solum destruere nolunt, sed etiam quae destructa fuerant aedificare nec metuunt nec erubescunt; also 54.1: illas sacrilegas paganorum consuetudines observare minime deberetis.
- 45 Caesar. Arel. *Sermo*. 13.4; 19.4; 53.1; 53.2: post Christi sacramenta ad diabolica venena redeatis. Garnsey and Humfress (2001, 142).
- 46 Martin of Braga (*corr.* 14-15) also reminds his listeners that in baptism they had forsaken idolatry.
- 47 Caesar. Arel. *Sermo*. 54.6: Et quia solent aliqui dicere: Ego me signo, et sic manduco, nullus hoc facere praesumat. Klingshirn (1994a, 214).
- 48 Caesar. Arel. *Sermo*. 53.2: the sacrilegious trees should be cut down to the roots: arbores etiam sacrilegas usque ad radicem incidite.
- 49 Caesar. Arel. *Sermo*. 52.1; 54.1; 54.3; The term *caraius* or *caragus* (also appears in the form of *caragius*) means an enchanter.
- 50 Caesar. Arel. *Sermo*. 50.1. See Frankfurter (2002, 165) on the competition between holy men or saints' shrines and local ritual experts, which often reflects 'the intimacy between the experts and their communities'.
- 51 Caesar. Arel. *Sermo*. 12.4: Nam et auguria observare, et praecantatores adhibere, et caragios, sortilogos, divinos inquirere, totum hoc ad pompam vel ad opera diaboli non est dubium pertinere; see also *Sermo*. 54.
- 52 Caesar. Arel. *Sermo*. 192.2: qui cervulum facientes in ferarum se velint habitus commutare? Alii vestiuntur pellibus pecudum; alii adsumunt capita bestiarum, gaudentes et exultantes, si taliter se in ferinas species transformaverint, ut homines non esse videantur. Ex quo indicant ac probant, non tam se habitum beluini habere quam sensum.

- 53 Caesar. Arel. *Sermo*. 192.2: viri nati tunicis muliebribus vestiuntur, et turpissima demutatione puellaribus figuris virile robur effeminant, non erubescences tunicis muliebribus inserere militares lacertos: barbatas facies praeferunt, et videri se feminas volunt.
- 54 Other writers: Max. Taur. *Sermo*. 16: pecudes portenta; Pacian of Barcelona, *Paraenesis ad poenitentiam* 1: Puto, nescierant Cervulum facere nisi illis reprehedendo monstrassem. Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 106, mentions that this Pacianus wrote a (no longer extant) tractate called *Cervus* against the habit of using masks in the celebrations. Ambrose of Milan (*Job* 2.1.5) deplored the habit of wearing elk masks at the New Year festivities. The vague mention in Petrus Chrysologus' *Sermo*. 155.6 of people who make themselves comparable to beasts, put themselves equal to draught animals, turn themselves to cattle and present themselves as demons might also refer to masquerading. Meslin (1970, 74–82).
- 55 Caesar. Arel. *Sermo*. 192.3: Aliqui etiam rustici mensulas suas in ista nocte, quae praeteriit, plenas multis rebus, quae ad manducandum sunt necessariae, componentes, tota nocte sic compositas esse volunt, credentes quod hoc illis Kalendae Ianuariae praestare possint, ut per totum annum convivia illorum in talia abundantia perseverent.
- 56 Martin of Braga, *corr.* 11; 16: si in introitu anni satur est et laetus ex omnibus, ita illi et in toto anno contingat. Hier. *comm. Isa.* 65, v. 11 mentions people who decorate the table and drink a cup of wine with honey, taking auspices for the forthcoming fertility (*futuri fertilitatem auspicantes*). Boniface (epist. ad Zachariam, 314) mentions in 742 that people in the city of Rome continue to load tables with food day and night. Meslin (1969, 519) terms this habit the rite of *mensa fortuna*. For other reproofs, continuing for centuries, see Hen (2008, 49); Meslin (1970, 71).
- 57 Martin. Brac. *corr.* 11: Iam quid de illo stultissimo errore cum dolore dicendum est, quia dies tinearum et murium observant et, si dici fas est, homo Christianus pro deo mures et tineas veneratur? Quibus si per tutelam cupelli aut arculae non subducatur aut panis aut pannus, nullo modo pro feriis sibi exhibitis, quod invenerint, parcent. Sine causa autem sibi miser homo istas praefigurationes ipse facit, ut, quasi sicut in introitu anni satur est et laetus ex omnibus, ita illi et in toto anno contingat. For Martin of Braga, see Meslin (1969, 512–24); Vinzent (1998, 32–33).
- 58 Martin. Brac. *corr.* 11: Ecce istas superstitiones vanas aut occulte aut palam facitis, et numquam cessatis ab istis sacrificiis daemonum. Et quare vobis non praestant ut semper saturi sitis et securi et laeti? Quare, quando deus iratus fuerit, non vos defendunt sacrificia vana de locusta, de mure, et de multis aliis tribulationibus, quas vobis deus iratus immittit? Augustine also appeals to the fact that pagan rites are useless since they do not guarantee prosperity or safety: Aug. in *Psalms*. 62.7.
- 59 Martin. Brac. *corr.* 18. Martin stresses that it is disgraceful enough that pagans do not observe the Lord's day, and Christians should do better.
- 60 Caesar. Arel. *Sermo*. 13.5. Other writers on the names of weekdays: Gaudent. Brix. *tract.* 1.5; Brown (1993, 102); Klingshirn (1994b, 216).
- 61 Martin. Brac. *corr.* 16: Nam ad petras et ad arbores et ad fontes et per trivia cereolos incendere, quid est aliud nisi cultura diaboli?

- 62 Martin. Brac. corr. 16: Dimisistis signum crucis, quod in baptismum accepistis, et alia diaboli signa per avicellos et sternutos et per alia multa adtenditis.
- 63 Martin. Brac. corr. 16. The *auguria* and taking omens *per avium voces* is also condemned in Martin. Brac. corr. 12.
- 64 Berzon (2016, 1–26); Flower (2013). For knowledge-ordering in Antiquity, see König and Whitmarsh (2007).
- 65 *Codex Theodosianus* 16.10.12 (in 392). See also Humfress (2016).
- 66 Council of Ancyra can. 24 = cap. 71: *Canones ex orientalium partum synodis*. Barlow 1950; 140 = Hefele 1907, i.324. For these practices, five years of penance was ordered.
- 67 E.g. *Indiculus Superstitionum et Paganiarum*, 222–223. Lizzi (2010, 86). For a discussion of lists of forbidden practices, see Hen (2015).
- 68 See, e.g., the debates on sacred springs in Sauer (2011, 507–08) (continuing but altered practices) vs. Döring (2003, 13–14) (topoi, based on Caesarius of Arles).
- 69 Auson. *ephem.* 2.2. For the simplified image of Christianisation of Ausonius, see Bowes (2007, 143–44). Furthermore, Bowes (2007, 145, 152–53) criticises the previous scholarship for following Ausonius in viewing the Christianisation of the countryside with ‘tacit swap-sale teleology’. See also Dölger (1950, 314).
- 70 Paulin. Nol. *carm.* 20, on the twelfth Natalicium of St Felix, 14 Jan., 406. For diverging interpretations of the poem, see Grottanelli (2005); Trout (1995).
- 71 Frankfurter (2011, 86–87), speaks of the ‘caricatured “paganism”’ depicted by Paulinus of Nola.
- 72 The ‘third paganism’ could be thought of as the continuation of Veyne’s ‘paganisme seconde’ in Veyne (1986). Frankfurter (2005) speaks of ‘contextualized Christianities’.
- 73 Frankfurter (2005, 268), himself refers to the variety of ways in which traditions are maintained or revitalized: some are recast in Christian terms while others are preserved within older systems of expression (for example, in local cults at springs where a local saint or deity could be venerated).

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