

“Christianization” and the Rural Home

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The “Christianization” of the home is taken up here by examining the specific problem of Christian ritual and ritual spaces on the rural estate. It is argued that most worship in rural villas took place outside ecclesiastical supervision or intervention, and instead was shaped by older seigniorial hierarchies. It was this particular sociology of worship that brought domestic worship under episcopal scrutiny. The dissonance between seigniorial and ecclesiastical social structures might leave Christian estates outside episcopally-centered communities, suggesting that the “Christianization” of the rural home might be an ambiguous, fissiparous process rather than a seamless cultural transformation.

“Hi, boy! Get up! Bring me my slippers and my tunic of lawn: bring all the clothes that you have ready now for my going out. Fetch me spring water to wash my hands and mouth and eyes. Get me the chapel (sacrarium) opened, but with no outward display: holy words and guiltless prayers are furniture enough for worship. I do not call for incense to be burnt nor for any slice of honey-cake: hearths of green turf I leave for the altars of vain gods. I must pray to God and to the Son of God most high, that co-equal Majesty united in one fellowship with the Holy Spirit. And lo, now I begin my prayers. . . .”¹

1. Auson. *Ephem.* 2.2 (R.P.H. Green, ed. *The Works of Ausonius* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991], 7–8). *Puer, eia, surge et calceos et linteam da sindonem; da, quicquid est, amictui quod iam parasti, ut prodeam; da rore fontano abluam manus et os et lumina. Pateatque fac sacrarium nullo paratu extrinsecus: pia verba, vota innoxia rei divinae copia est. Nec tus cremandum postulo nec liba crusti mellei, foculumque vivi caespitis vanis relinquo altaribus. Deus precandus est mihi ac filius summi dei, maiestas unius modi, sociata sacro spiritu—et ecce iam vota ordior. . . .*

Statesman, rhetor, and acolyte of the Muses, the late fourth-century Gallic poet Ausonius seems to embody a late antique status quo.² His Christian sentiments—subdued and neatly knit into a cloak of Roman traditionalism—likewise appear to reflect the ease with which a conservative elite serenely adopted a new faith.³ Ausonius, in other words, seems a poster-child for the Christianization of the Roman aristocracy and the advent of an intensely Roman, “respectable” Christianity.⁴

The *Ephemeris*, penned sometime during the poet’s temporary retirement from public life between 379 and 383 C.E., epitomizes this upper-class normalcy in part through a display of domestic religiosity. The above-quoted preparation for morning prayers in the author’s rural villa, plus the prayer itself that follows, form a significant chunk of Ausonius’s self-described “everyday” rural life.⁵ Purposefully framed as a contrast between traditional household cult and Christian ritual, the rejection of the “vain gods” is firm, but not hysterical. Easy and natural, too, seems his substitution of the pagan *sacrarium*, or chapel, with a Christian version of the same. The prayers themselves continue to focus heavily on traditional themes—the welfare of Ausonius’s household and maintenance of his family’s good name—and end abruptly as the author bustles off to the morning *salutatio* of friends and acquaintances. Ausonius presents Christian domestic rituals as an everyday part of being a Christian aristocrat, a simple matter of sweeping out the pagan detritus from one’s household shrine and wedging in a quick prayer between poetry composition and hobnobbing.

2. For a generally negative assessment of the literary qualities of that status quo, see H. E. White, *Ausonius*, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919), xii–xiv; xxvi–xxviii. N. Chadwick describes Ausonius’s poetry as something akin to school lessons set to verse; N. Chadwick, *Poetry and Letters in Early Christian Gaul* (London: Bowes, 1955), 53–55. For a more sophisticated analysis, see M. Roberts, *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989).

3. On Ausonius’s Christianity, see T.R. Glover, *Life and Letters in the Fourth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901), 109, against which R. Green, “The Christianity of Ausonius,” *SP* 28 (1993): 39–48; and *Works of Ausonius*, xviii–xxxii. On the ease with which he wove Christianity into a traditional Roman life, see R. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1990), 34–35.

4. On “respectable” Christian aristocrats, P. Brown, “Aspects of the Christianization of the Roman Aristocracy,” in *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), esp. 181–82. On Ausonius as typical of the type: J. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and the Imperial Court* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 146, 151.

5. See White, *Ausonius*, 42, for the probable rural context of the poem.

This essay offers a brief analysis of those concerns that Ausonius advertises as commonplace and natural, namely Christian domestic ritual and ritual spaces, and considers what they might reveal about the so-called Christianization of the home.⁶ It will focus specifically on fourth- and fifth-century rural homes (or villas) of the western empire, and thus on the particular problems of Christian domestic practice in rural contexts.⁷ Scholars have often accepted Ausonius's portrayal of these activities as a relatively simple exchange of pagan for Christian domestic ritual. This conception of exchange also dominates more the general narratives of "Christianization" that track the progress of Christianity through the western countryside. I would like to problematize this model somewhat: while Christian domestic ritual retained much of the social qualities of earlier religious traditions, it was this very continuity of domestic religious practice that made domestic ritual neither "normal" nor straightforward in a new Christian world. Missing from Ausonius's narrative is any sense of how his rituals were received outside the home; also missing is any hint of the often troubled relationship between homes and bishops. Indeed, within the very normalcy of domestic ritual practice for aristocrats like Ausonius lay a deeply-seated tension, namely the potential disconnect between age-old Roman modes of private religious experience based around family and dependency networks and those based around a nascent episcopate. This is not meant to suggest that the family and the church were wholly separate, antagonistic categories. Like Tina Sessa's essay elsewhere in this volume, this essay posits that the older powers and expectations of household leaders and those of the more fragile late antique bishop were two overlapping, but potentially fissiparous, forms of social hierarchy and religious community.⁸ This was nowhere more true than in rural homes,

6. Christian domestic ritual will here be considered to be any Christian rituals—prayer, eucharistic rites, relic veneration—that occurred in the home, either with or without the presence of clerical supervision or aid, while domestic churches will be defined as ritual structures that lay in or adjacent to a domestic structure and functioned contemporaneously with it. I will focus here largely on the fourth and first half of the fifth centuries, with some reference to later activities.

7. For analysis of a very different kind of rural domesticity, see O'Connell's article in this volume on monastic rural tomb-houses.

8. As the articles in this volume are testament, dissonance between householders and bishops was neither universal nor inevitable, but was heavily conditioned by time and circumstance. Sessa, for instance, paints a nuanced picture of tension and consensus between bishops and householders in fifth- and sixth-century Rome, in which the problems described in the present essay have been somewhat muted by the steady hand of more powerful bishops. O'Connell and Hillner, on the other hand, describe sixth- through eighth-century monastic contexts in which the bishop/householder

where the seigniorial elite's vast economic and coercive power trumped that of distant bishops and religion was governed by the same dependency networks and status hierarchies that shaped rural life. Behind Ausonius's depiction of estate-based ritual and beneath the archaeological remains of villa-churches lies a kind of socio-religious dissonance, the result of a continuity of socio-religious modes in a changed religious environment and a shifting valuation of those very modes by an episcopal public.

HISTORIOGRAPHY: "CHRISTIANIZATION" AND THE ESTATE

The problems of Christian private ritual or private chapels have never spawned anything like a scholarly industry. Only a handful of books and articles tackle the subject in any detail although some accord it passing mention, while general histories of early Christianity, even surveys of late Roman private life, tend to bypass the problem completely.⁹ This history of silence is reflective of the subject's genuinely problematic sources. The textual descriptions of private cult are numerous, but scattered and frequently vague as to context, a serious dilemma for a phenomenon which is itself context-defined. The archaeological evidence, at least until recently, was scarce and of insufficient quality to distinguish household churches from other domestic spaces like dining rooms or to verify that church and its domestic environment in fact functioned contemporaneously.¹⁰

Rural homes and their religious structures present particular problems, both evidentiary and epistemological. The homes of the rural aristocracy, typically termed villas, are often treated as rural versions of a homogeneous elite domesticity.¹¹ Early excavations that focused almost exclusively on

relationship was largely untroubled. Bishops' increasing power over monasteries in the post-Chalcedonian age probably prompted a significant change in the episcopal/monastic household dynamic: cf. D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks: Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 240.

9. I list full citations of works mentioning liturgical and administrative matters pertaining to private religiosity in the appendix.

10. On the former problem, N. Duval, "Quelques remarques sur les 'églises-halles'," in *Aquileia nel IV secolo*, *Antichità Altoadriatiche* 22 (Udine: Arti grafiche friulane, 1982), 2:399–412; on the latter, Percival, *Roman Villa*, ch. 9.

11. See most recently I. Baldini Lippolis, *La domus tardoantica: forme e rappresentazioni dello spazio domestico nelle città del mediterraneo* (Bologna: University Press Bologna, 2002). See also S. Ellis, "Power, Architecture and Decor: How the Late Roman Aristocrat Appeared to His Guests," in *Roman Art in the Private Sphere*, ed. E. Gazda (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), 117–34.

the habitation quarters of these villas produced a skewed picture of the material remains, while a preoccupation with villa mosaic floors, treated as *membra disjecta* and objects of art historical inquiry, reinforced the view that villas are particularly well-preserved examples of a universalizing elite aesthetic.¹² But villas, as the controversy surrounding their very definition suggests, were far more than simply country houses.¹³ A villa was simultaneously an aristocratic domestic residence, the agricultural land attached to that residence, and the vast array of tenurial relationships by which that land was worked, leased, or rented. In other words, villas embodied in a particular way the inherent expansiveness of the Roman *domus* as home, family, economic unit, and dependency network.¹⁴ Villas also occupied a particular place in the Roman mind. It was the villa that served as the real or imagined space of retired leisure or *otium*, and thus villas were the thought-category around which the Roman mental dichotomies of *negotium* and *otium*, community and self, were built.¹⁵ As the seat of the true self, stripped away from public pretenses, villas were simultaneously the space where that self was displayed to one's aristocratic peers. Ausonius's recital of his daily routine, including his domestic rituals, were part of a

12. For a critique of this way of studying mosaics, see S. Scott, *Art and Society in Fourth-Century Britain: Villa Mosaics in Context* (Oxford: Oxford University School of Archaeology, 2000), 9–17. See also the exemplary study of C. Balmelle, *Les demeures aristocratiques d'Aquitaine: Société et culture de l'antiquité tardive dans le Sud-Ouest de la Gaule*, Aquitania 10 (Bordeaux: Ausonius, 2001).

13. For various definitions of the term, from the confusion in the ancient terminology to its proper application in modern archaeological contexts, see Percival, *Roman Villa*, 13–15; T. Potter, "Villas in South Etruria: Some Comments and Contexts," in *Roman Villas in Italy: Recent Excavations and Research*, ed. K. Painter (London: British Museum Publications, 1980), 73–81; A. Carandini, "Da villa perfecta," in *Settefinestre: Una villa schiavistica nell'Etruria romana*, ed. A. Carandini (Modena: Panini, 1985), 107–37; M. Heinzlmann, "Villa d'après les oeuvres de Grégoire de Tours," in *Aux sources de la gestion publique, Vol. I: Enquête lexicographique sur fundus, villa, domus, mansus*, ed. E. Magnou-Nortier (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses universitaires de Lille) 1993, 45–70; P. Leveau, "Introduction: Les incertitudes du terme villa et la question du vicus en Gaule Narbonnaise," *Revue archéologique de Narbonnaise* 35 (2002): 5–26.

14. On the definition of the Roman *domus*, particularly as a social category in the later empire, see Richard I. Saller, "'Familia,' 'Domus,' and the Roman Conception of the Family," *Phoenix* 38.4 (1984): 336–55.

15. On the *otium/negotium* dichotomy, J. M. André, *Recherches sur l'otium romain*, Annales Littéraires de l'Université de Besançon 52 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1956) is still fundamental. On the ideology in late antiquity, S. Roda, "Fuga nel privato e nostalgia del potere nel IV sec. d.c.: Nuovi accenti di un'antica ideologia," in *Le trasformazioni della cultura nella tarda antichità: Atti del convegno tenuto a Catania* (Rome: Jouvence, 1982), 95–108.

rich, late antique epistolary culture in which landed elites converted the physical villa into verbal *ekphrasis* and sent it winging, in letter form, from estate to estate, using the channels of friendship and family to boost and maintain status.¹⁶ Rural villas were thus not only particular kinds of domestic spaces, they embodied in a particularly fulsome way the complexity of Roman aristocratic lives.

The study of Christian practices in the villa has suffered from some of the same generalizing tendencies that have impacted villa studies generally. Most of the rather limited historiography tends not to treat estate-based religion as having any particular “villa” qualities, but rather considers it under the homogeneous processual rubric of the “Christianization of the countryside.”¹⁷ This trend seems have begun in an earlier generation of scholarship that actually tended to ignore villas and the landed elite altogether and instead emphasized the role of bishops and monks in rural environments.¹⁸ Taking their cue from the legends of Gregory of Tours, which describe earlier Gallic bishops and holy men building rural churches and preaching to the *pagani*, or figures like Severinus of Noricum, who converted the rural denizens of the Rhineland frontier, these scholars ascribed Christianity’s rural “progress” to episcopal and monastic conversion efforts. Monks were cast in the role of proselytizing pioneers, while fourth- and early fifth-century bishops were assumed to have had

16. Among many, see J. Ebbeler, “Pedants in the Apparel of Heros? Cultures of Latin Letter Writing from Cicero to Ennodius,” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2001); C. Conybeare, *Paulinus Noster: Self and Symbols in the Letters of Paulinus of Nola* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); J. Fontaine, “Valeurs antiques et valeurs chrétiennes dans la spiritualité des grands propriétaires terriens à la fin du IV^e siècle occidental,” in *Épektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au cardinal Jean Daniélou*, ed. J. Fontaine and C. Kannengiesser (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972), 571–95.

17. See particularly C. Pietri, “Chiesa e comunità”; F. Monfrin, “La christianisation de l’espace et du temps. A. L’établissement matériel de l’église aux Ve et VI^e siècles,” in *Histoire du christianisme*, Vol. 3: *Les églises d’orient et d’occident*, ed. L. Pietri (Paris: Desclée, 1998), 959–1014; Ripoll and Velázquez, “Origen y desarrollo de la *parrochiae*”; Ripoll and Arce, “The Transformation and End of the Roman *Villae*”; Cantino Wataghin, “Christianisation et organisation ecclésiastique des campagnes”; Brogiolo and Chavarría, “Chiese e insediamenti”; Brenk, *Die Christianisierung der spätrömischen Welt*; A. Chavarría, *El final de las villas en Hispania (siglos IV–VIII)* (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming); K. Bowes, “Building Sacred Landscapes: Villas and Cult,” *Villas tardoantiguas en el Mediterraneo occidental*, *Anejos de Archivo Español de Arqueología* 38 (Madrid: C.S.I.C., 2006), 73–95.

18. For example, see P. David, “Les paroisses rurales dans l’occident latin du IV^e au VI^e siècle,” in *Études historiques sur la Galice et le Portugal* (Paris: Livraria Portuguesa, 1947), 7–18; W. H. C. Frend, “The Winning of the Countryside,” *JEH* 18 (1967): 1–14.

the same job descriptions as their medieval successors, presiding over a parish network, monitoring rural clergy, and converting the recalcitrant rural masses.

Aristocrats, when they entered these stories at all, were frequently assumed to be bishop's natural allies. Martin of Tours's friendly relationships with his seigniorial parishioners or Augustine's abundant correspondence with local Christian landowners seems to typify a natural friendship: as members of an "elite," Christian aristocrats and bishops seemed to form an innate coalition, particularly when it came to the conversion of the rural peasantry.¹⁹ The eventual elevation of some of these elites to the episcopal throne, particularly the famous Gallic cases of Sidonius Apollinaris or Hilary of Arles, seemed the inevitable result of such synergy.²⁰ Thus, villas and their seigniorial impresarios were assumed to be outposts of the urban church.

A flood of new data on the rural landscape has begun to alter this picture somewhat. Generated to a large degree by archaeologists unimpressed by ecclesiastical sources, these new studies have transformed the generic sketches of rural Christianity into detailed, regionally-specific panoramas. The chronology of church building, the progress of parish formation, and the role of local bishops and aristocrats have been precisely examined and carefully catalogued.²¹ Rural elites are increasingly mentioned as playing

19. In general: F. Dölger, "Christliche Grundbesitzer und heidnische Landarbeiter," in *Antike und Christentum: Kultur- und religionsgeschichtliche Studien* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1976), 297–320. On Martin: C. Stancliffe, *St. Martin and His Hagiographer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); Pietri, "Chiesa e comunità." For a careful dissection of Augustine's letters to elites, É. Rebillard, "Augustine et le rituel épistolaire de l'élite sociale et culturelle de son temps," *L'évêque dans la cité du IVe au Ve siècle*, ed. É. Rebillard and C. Sotinel (Rome: École française de Rome, 1998), 127–52.

20. M. Heinzelmann, *Bischofsherrschaft in Gallien: Zur Kontinuität römischer Führungsschichten vom 4. bis zum 7. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Artemis Verlag, 1976).

21. For instance, I. Wood, "Early Merovingian Devotion in Town and Country," in *The Church in Town and Countryside*, ed. D. Baker (London: Blackwell, 1979), 61–76; Violante, "Le strutture organizzative"; R. Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985); Monfrin, "La christianisation de l'espace et du temps"; Ripoll and Velázquez, "Origen y desarrollo de la *parrochia*"; G. Cantino Wataghin, "Il territorio," in *La storia dell'alto Medioevo italiano (VI–X secolo) alla luce dell'archeologia*, ed. R. Francovich and G. Noyé (Siena: All'insegna del giglio, 1994), 142–47; idem, "Christianisation et organisation ecclésiastique"; J. Maciel, *Antiguidade Tardia e Paleocristianismo em Portugal* (Lisbon: Edições Colibri, 1996); Pietri, "Évergétisme chrétien et fondations privées"; Brogiolo and Chavarría, "Chiese e insediamenti"; A. Frondoni, "Chiese rurali fra V e VI secolo in Liguria," in Brogiolo, ed., *Chiese e insediamenti nelle campagne tra V e VI secolo*, 131–71, along with G. Pantò, "Chiese rurali della

important roles in the spread of rural Christianity, and their role in the construction of Christian churches and appearance in Christian funerary epigraphy are now common themes of study.

Although the details of rural religious life are being brought into ever sharper focus, a certain methodological imprecision continues to characterize even the most careful studies. Field surveys, epigraphic collections, church archaeology, and parish topography are frequently examined under the vague rubric of “the Christianization of the countryside,” in which Christianity’s “progress” through the rural hinterlands is measured through various media whose cumulative tally trends inexorably upward. What precisely is meant by “Christianization”—greater numbers of Christians, greater institutional organization, greater social prominence—is rarely specified, while the precise mechanisms of what would have been a deeply complex socio-economic, not to mention religious, change are frequently glossed over.

In particular, the specific character of estate-based projects versus episcopal endeavors are rarely interrogated: thus, the particular social qualities of the rural estate—economic and tenancy structures, rural geographic topographies, seigniorial identity—are assumed to have played no role in Christian practice. The relationship between bishops and landowners remains similarly un-probed: as natural products of a Christianizing impulse which began in urban centers, elites are assumed to behave as bishops *in absentia*, acting on urban, episcopally-inspired ideals—Christian community building and conversion—and translating these ideals to the countryside.

The methodological shortcomings of these studies, many of which are models of careful, regionally-sensitive analysis, can be traced to a series of deeply-entrenched disciplinary constraints and historical assumptions. The first is an understandable tendency to rely predominantly on either texts or on archaeology. In the case of the rural home, this has the result of splitting already fragmentary evidence into two categories of radically different type. The textual corpus is dominated not by the testimony of seigniorial elites like Ausonius, but by church councils, imperial law codes, and episcopally-inspired hagiography.²² These sources tend to present epis-

diocesi di Vercelli,” in the same volume, 87–107; additionally, see L. Pejrani Baricco, “Chiese rurali in Piemonte tra V e VI secolo,” 57–85, and M. Sannazaro, “Chiese e comunità cristiane rurali nelle fonti epigraphiche dell’Italia settentrionale,” 39–55, in the same volume.

22. Imperial legislation: *CTh* 16.5.3 (372); 16.5.8 (381); 16.5.9.1 (382); 16.5.11 (383); 16.5.12 (383); 16.5.14 (388); 16.5.21 (392); 16.5.30 (396); 16.5.33 (397);

copal or imperial responses to domestic cult and the histories constructed from these texts correspondingly emphasize bishops' (and emperors') role as regulators, with relatively little consideration of the goals and motivations of the patrons themselves.²³ Histories of private churches constructed entirely from this evidence tend to characterize these churches as administrative headaches, a regulatory challenge eventually met by an increasingly sophisticated institutional apparatus.²⁴ Archaeology, conversely, produces detailed pictures of patrons, their homes, and their church projects, but frequently stops there, presenting domestic churches at the end of a *longue durée* history of domestic ritual practice, with little sense of their place in broader socio-religious trends. Catalogues of estate churches enumerate them as a site-type of rural Christianity and/or a natural Christian continuation of the aristocratic impetus for display.²⁵ In both cases, the roles of the different protagonists, either bishop or patron, are assumed, and in the absence of their interlocutory counterpart these roles seem to require no explanation.

Most of these histories, whether their bias is textual or material, continue to share a confidence in the power and energies of bishops. Although the

16.5.34 (398); 16.5.36 (399); 16.5.40 (407); 16.5.52.1 (412); 16.5.54.6 (414); 16.5.57.1 (415); 16.5.65.3 (435); 16.5.66.2 (435); 16.6.4.1; 16.7.3 (383) (ed. T. Mommsen and P. Meyer, *Theodosiani Libri XVI cum constitutionibus Sirmondianis* [Berlin: Weidmann, 1905]), on household ritual/meetings banned among heretical groups. On more generic regulations of various kinds: *CTh* 16.2.33 (398); *CJ* 1.5.6 (435), 1.5.8 (457), 1.5.10 (511); *NJ* 57 (537); 58 (537); 67.1–2 (538); 131 (545); 123.18 (546) (ed. P. Kreuger, R. Schoell and G. Kroll, *Corpus iuris civilis*, vols. 2 and 3 [Berlin: Weidmann, 1895]). Church councils: Gangra (c. 340) c. 6; Laodicea (343–381) c. 26, 58; Zaragoza (380) c. 2, 3, 4; Toledo (397–400) c. 5, 9; Orange (441) c. 9; Arles (442–506) c. 37; Chalcedon (451) c. 4 (epitome); Agde (506) c. 21; Orange (511) c. 25; Épaone (517) c. 25, 35; Clermont (535) c. 15; Orange (541) c. 7; Lerida (546) c. 3; Braga (572) c. 5 and 6 (J. Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum: Nova et Amplissima Collectio* [Paris: Huberti Welter, 1903]). Papal letters: Gelasius, *epp.* 14.4; 25; 26; 33; 34; 35; *epp. frag.* 19; 21 (ed. A. Thiel, *Epistolae Romanorum Pontificum Genuinae* [Braunsberg: E. Peter, 1868]); *Epistolae ineditae*, 2 (Col. Brit. Gel. 2.1.1), 15 (Col. Brit. Gel. 29.1.1) (ed. S. Loewenfeld, *Epistolae pontificum romanorum ineditae* [Leipzig: Veit, 1885]); Pelagius I, *epp.* 36; 42; 44; 86; 89 (ed. P. Gassó, *Pelagii I Papae. Epistulae quae supersunt*, Scripta et documenta 8 [In Abatia Montiserrati, 1956]); Gregory, *Reg. Epp.* 2.9, 2.15, 8.5, 9.45, 9.58, 9.71, 9.165 (CCL 140–140A).

23. Although it deals with urban contexts, Sessa's article in this volume provides an important exception.

24. For example, Wood, "Early Merovingian Devotion"; Violante, "Strutture organizzative"; Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations*, 15–27; Pietri, "Évergétisme chrétien et fondations privées."

25. Brogiolo and Chavarría, "Chiese e insediamenti," 19–25.

tendency to attribute all Christian endeavors to direct episcopal intervention has diminished, a guiding, approbatory episcopal presence still hovers over many modern histories. Martin and Gregory of Tours's back-slapping intimacy and influence over local *domini*, as well as the personal approval letters from popes to prospective private church builders, both seem to describe a world where bishops were the principal agents of Christian activity in the estate.²⁶ Heads of households are assumed to have worked hand-in-hand with bishops, the secular aristocracy naturally cleaving to the episcopacy and eventually becoming its spiritual counterpart.

Many of these studies also take the simplicity of Ausonius's religious "exchange" somewhat for granted. Modern Christianization narratives often tend to formulate social change as a swap sale, that is, they describe how the senator exchanged his consular toga for bishop's miter; how the civic bureaucracy was charged with building churches and hostels instead of amphitheaters and baths; and in this particular case, how rural elites like Ausonius replaced temple with church and seasonal fertility rituals with saints' feasts.²⁷ This unalloyed confidence that one practice, thing, or social role is exchanged for another assumes a tacit teleology. The Christian end of the equation is already known and tends to be the object of inquiry, i.e., the Christian basilica, the episcopate, or the Christian countryside; the job of the historian is to discover what practice or thing preceded it, i.e., the dining room, the civic aristocracy, or the estate temple, and to elaborate the functional similarities that bound antecedent and successor. At

26. On Martin and Gregory of Tours, Pietri, "Chiesa e comunità"; papal approval letters, Pietri, "Évergétisme chrétien et fondations privées."

27. Traditional examples of this approach include W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 554–79; R. MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth through Eighth Centuries* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 103–49; and the early work of Peter Brown: *The World of Late Antiquity* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), esp. 82–95, 115–25. Brown's more recent work is considerably less confident in the success of these exchanges: P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom* (2nd edition) (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 84–88. On the countryside explicitly, see Frend, "The Winning of the Countryside." For more recent studies organized around the same principles, see M. Salzman, *The Making of a Christian Aristocracy: Social and Religious Change in the Western Roman Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); B. Brenk, *Die Christianisierung der spätrömischen Welt*. Some critiques, tacit or explicit, include V. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), who rejects an easy "Christianization" of magical practice; or D. Frankfurter, *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), who problematizes easy pagan/Christian dichotomies and the models of historical change built around them, and offers instead a complex model of local/regional tension and interchange.

their worst, then, these Christianization histories are framed less around a historiographical model than a pre-packaged plot-line, grinding inexorably towards the same, inevitable finale, namely an *a priori* conception of Christian society, or in this case, the Christian countryside.

Beneath this tacit swap-sale teleology frequently lies an equally tacit, particular kind of historical functionalism.²⁸ The swap of pagan for Christian practices, things and social structures, including domestic ritual practice, is presumed to take place along functional lines. A thing that "works," like estate-based paganism, is substituted by another thing that serves the same social function, like the Christian estate church, and a new, functioning Christian society is thus slowly born. These swaps are themselves assumed to have been successful; by filling the same functional, societal need, they usher in gradual social change, but through processes of integration and consensus that render change relatively seamless and untroubled. These swaps also succeed because "religion" and "society" are assumed to be umbilically tied, the two changing in lock-step.²⁹ Thus, religious change, i.e., a person or an estate's conversion to Christianity, is presumably accompanied by concomitant social change, i.e., an alteration in the social structure of the family or estate to incorporate episcopal authority.

What tends not to form a part of these narratives are non-successes or more specifically, non-conformities, particularly any potential discord between religious change and social structure. The possibility that the hierarchies of estate and episcopate might not run precisely parallel, or that a Christian homeowner might practice his or her faith within the older structures of family and patronage without reference to newer episcopal

28. Functionalism more narrowly defined in the history of religion (e.g., M. Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie*, 4th ed. [Köln: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1956]; and E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* [New York: Free Press, 1965]) is critiqued by C. Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 87–125. For a critique of the application of functionalist principals, even in Geertz's reformulation, to the study of medieval religion, see P. Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001). My own use of this term derives from this historiography, but is used to describe a particular model of religious-historical change. Functionalism, as I will use it here, refers to a tendency to describe historical change around functional axes; in this model the social function of an act, mentality, or ritual determines its historical relevancy, and change occurs around such functionally-defined points.

29. For a formulation and critique of this paradigm, see C. Geertz, "Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example," in *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 142–69.

hierarchies, is rarely contemplated.³⁰ The potentially fissiparous results of such discontinuities are likewise often sidestepped. And yet, it is precisely these discontinuities, discords, and non-correspondences that bubble through even the most cursory trawl through the evidence, discords which go deeper than episcopal attempts to regulate the private sphere. Indeed, the remainder of this essay will argue that estate-based religious groups and episcopally-organized communities were quite different social organisms and more often than not, failed to mesh smoothly with one another. The non-correspondence between episcopal and estate-based communities actually meant that in a certain sense, Christian households, particularly rural ones, lay in the social interstices untouched by what we typically label as “Christianization,” their own older modes of religious organization often in tension with those of newer Christian institutions.

THE DIALECTICS OF THE PRIVATE: BISHOPS AND ESTATES IN TENSION

Any attempts to enrich the above-described image of domestic cult must reckon first, it seems to me, with the qualities particular to the evidentiary corpus itself. Using either texts or material culture to understand domestic cult will clearly not do, as the resultant histories are not only one-sided, but potentially misleading. Particularly problematic is the tendency of these one-sided analyses to naturalize the object of their inquiries: text-based studies run the risk of essentializing bishops’ roles in the home, while archaeological studies, much like Ausonius, make building private churches seem an obvious aristocratic impulse.³¹ Bringing the two source bases, and two sets of protagonists, into dialogue with one another can shatter the “common sense” assumptions of both positions. For when these distinct voices speak together, they describe Christian estate-based cult not as a set of stable mentalities but as a dynamic organism, propelled by individuals and their debates. That is, the dialogue between texts and archaeology may reveal the differing social perspectives that underlay both bishops’

30. See for instance, G. Constable, “Preface,” in *The Making of Christian Communities in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. M. Williams (London: Anthem Press, 2005), ix–xi, where Christian communities are framed as “. . . a solvent of traditional communities and as the creator of new ones.” The possibility that a traditional community, such as the *domus*, might carry on within a Christian community is not contemplated here or elsewhere in the volume.

31. An exception in the former class of studies as it pertains to urban households is K. Sessa, “The Household and the Bishop: Establishing Episcopal Authority in Late Antique Rome” (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2003).

and *dominus*' actions and their dialogic, indeed dialectical, relationship. It was in this dialectic that the very definitions of the protagonists, of the institutional church and the Christian home, were being sorted out, or frequently, shouted out.

Episcopal Perspectives: The Role of the Bishop

This dialogue between sources most immediately problematizes the role of villa cult's presumed protagonist, the actor whose voice dominates the textual sources, namely the bishop. The great majority of sources for episcopal involvement in estate-based cult are church councils, episcopal letters, and imperial edicts, most of which describe episcopal oversight of domestic churches and ritual.³² From the edicts of the Theodosian Code that prohibited schismatic groups from meeting in rural villas, to the councils in northern Spain convened around the Priscillianist controversy that prohibited singing the antiphones in the home and assembling in villas during Lent, bishops passed periodic legislation limiting estate-based worship, often in the context of broader heretical and disciplinary debates.³³ Whether one reads these as prescriptive molds that shaped rural cultic life, or futile proscriptive attempts whose real historical value is to reveal ongoing practice, they probably had limited impact on most homes and their Christian rituals. Indeed, at least in the fourth and fifth centuries, most of this legislation was promulgated during times of local church crisis and probably aimed at specific individuals; only in the sixth century did local episcopates such as those in Gaul and Italy exert a sustained effort to control private churches and cult.³⁴ Rural estate churches particularly were probably left to their own devices since, with the exception of gung-ho prelates like Martin of Tours, the activities and interests of most fourth- and fifth-century bishops halted at their city walls.³⁵ As

32. For the imperial legislation and church councils, see n. 22 above.

33. The Priscillianist canons mentioning villas are Zaragoza (380) c. 2, 3, 4; Toledo (397–400) c. 5, 9. On these canons as responses to more general problems in the Spanish church: M. Diaz y Diaz, "A proposito del concilio de Zaragoza de 380 y su canon VI," *I Concilio Caesaraugustano: MDC Aniversario* (Zaragoza: Diputación provincial de Zaragoza, 1980), and L. García Iglesias, "Sobre el canon IV del primer concilio de Zaragoza," 189–200 in the same volume.

34. See n. 22 above.

35. On Martin, C. Stancliffe, "From Town to Country: The Christianization of the Touraine 370–600," in *The Church in Town and Countryside*, ed. D. Baker (London: Blackwell, 1979), 43–59. On more run-of-the-mill bishops, R. Lizzi, *Vescovi e strutture ecclesiastiche nella città tardoantica* (Como: Edizioni New Press, 1989), 79; on the late date of the development of the parish system, Violante, "Strutture organizzative."

much current research is beginning to suggest, the run-of-the-mill bishop in the West was a rather anemic creature, with neither the resources nor the impetus to police the countryside, and certainly not to build or even fully control estate churches.³⁶

Indeed, archaeological evidence from the western provinces suggests that in many areas, it was the estate, not the episcopate, which sponsored the first Christian buildings in the countryside. Distinguishing estate churches from episcopal projects is notoriously tricky; documenting ownership archaeologically is impossible, and parish and estate churches often have identical archaeological footprints, including baptismal fonts, graveyards, and complex liturgical furnishings.³⁷ Contextual clues—the presence of an adjacent, functioning villa, architectural parallels between church and villa, and the location of the nearest episcopate—can, however, indicate the probability of one type of affiliation over the other. In a number of specific regions, probable estate-based churches, Christian mausolea, and martyr shrines constitute the earliest rural Christian buildings and thus probably the earliest rurally-based Christian ritual. Britain, for instance, has produced very few urban episcopal churches, while the province's meager three attested bishops signal a frail, thinly-scattered episcopate.³⁸ What little evidence exists for early Christianity in Britain is just as plentiful in the countryside, particularly in rural estates: the villa-church at

36. C. Lepelley, "Le patronat épiscopal aux IVE et Ve siècles: Continuités et ruptures avec le patronat classique," in *L'évêque dans la cité du IVE au Ve siècle*, 17–33; C. Sotinel, "Le personnel episcopal," in *L'évêque dans la cité du IVE au Ve siècle*, 105–24. As a new study of Ambrose makes clear, even the most powerful western bishops had to resort to elaborate stratagems to consolidate their urban power base while leaving the countryside to its own devices: N. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994).

37. Brogiolo and Chavarria, "Chiese e insediamenti"; Ripoll and Velázquez, "Origen y desarrollo de la *parrochia*."

38. On the state of the British church in the fourth century, C. Thomas, *Christianity in Roman Britain to AD 500* (London: Batsford Academic, 1981), is still the fundamental study. See also D. Petts, *Christianity in Roman Britain* (Stroud: Tempus, 2003). Simon Esmonde Cleary analyzes the same evidence and posits a church as wealthy and systematized as that in Gaul: *The Ending of Roman Britain* (London: Batsford, 1989), 121–28. For the archaeological evidence, the best assessment is still Thomas, *Christianity in Roman Britain*, 168–80. See also now C. F. Mawer, *Evidence for Christianity in Roman Britain: The Small Finds*, BAR British Series 243 (Oxford: Tempus Reparatum, 1995). For discussions on the possible churches in Silchester and Icklingham: A. King, "The Roman Church at Silchester Reconsidered," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 2.2 (1983): 225–38; S. West and J. Plouviez, "The Roman Site at Icklingham," *East Anglia Archaeology* 3 (1976): 63–125.

Lullingstone is one of the only positively-identified Christian churches in the whole province, while the newly excavated villa at Bradford-on-Avon may have produced the earliest extant monumental baptismal font.³⁹ In northern Italy, particularly in Lombardy and Piedmont, textual evidence for parish church construction appears only with some regularity in the very late fifth or sixth century, a date supported generally by the archaeological evidence.⁴⁰ Yet a small group of churches set next to or within modest rural villas seems to predate this nascent parish system by a generation or more.⁴¹ In Hispania, almost all the evidence for rural Christian practice in the later fourth and first half of the fifth century appears in villas, most often in the form of monumental mausoleum complexes.⁴²

39. On Lullingstone: G.W. Meates, ed., *The Roman Villa at Lullingstone, Kent, Vol. 1: The Site*, Monograph Series of the Kent Archaeological Society 1 (Maidstone: Kent Archaeological Society, 1979); G. W. Meates, et al. ed., *The Roman Villa at Lullingstone, Kent, Vol. II: The Wall Paintings and Finds*, Monograph Series of the Kent Archaeological Society 3 (Maidstone: Kent Archaeological Society, 1987). On Bradford: M. Corney, "The Roman Villa at Bradford-on-Avon: Investigations at Saint Laurence School," *ARA: The Bulletin of the Association for Roman Archaeology* 16.1 (2004): 10–13, 5. The importance of estates to British Christianity has long been noted: W. H. C. Frend, "Religion in Roman Britain in the Fourth Century a.d.," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association, 3rd Series* 16 (1955): 7; K. S. Painter, "Villas and Christianity in Roman Britain," *British Museum Quarterly* 35 (1971): 156–75; Thomas, *Christianity in Roman Britain*, 180–83, 213; K. Dark, *Britain and the End of the Roman Empire* (Stroud: Tempus, 2000), 17–18.

40. Texts: Violante, "Le strutture organizzative." Archaeology: G. P. Brogiolo, G. Cantino Wataghin, and S. Gelichi, "L'Italia settentrionale," in *Alle origini della parrocchia rurale (IV–VIII sec.)*, ed. P. Pergola (Rome: Pontificio istituto di archeologia cristiana, 1999), 533–38.

41. See for instance, Palazzo Pignano: M. Mirabella Roberti, "Una basilica paleocristiana a Palazzo Pignano," *Insula Fulcheria* 4 (1965): 79–90; J. Bishop and L. Passi Pitcher, "Palazzo Pignano (CR). Pieve di S. Martino. Chiesa battesimale," *Notiziario (Soprintendenza archeologica della Lombardia)* (1988–1989): 294–95; Centallo: G. Mennella, "Cristianismo e latifondi tra Augusta Bagiennorum e Forum Vibi Caburum," *Rivista di archeologia cristiana* 69 (1993): 205–22; G. Pantò and L. Pejrani Baricco, "Chiese nelle campagne del Piemonte in età tardolombarda," in *Le chiese rurali tra VII e VIII secolo in Italia settentrionale*, ed. G. Brogiolo (Mantova: Editrice S.A.P., 2001), 22–25; L. Pejrani Baricco, "Chiese battesimali in Piemonte. Scavi e scoperte," in *L'Edificio battesimale in Italia: Aspetti e problemi* (Bordighera: Istituto internazionale di studi liguri, 2001), 560–66. Sizzano: G. Spagnolo Garzoli, "Sizzano. Insediamento romano," *Quaderni della Soprintendenza Archeologica del Piemonte* 10 (1991): 168–70; Pantó and Pejrani Baricco, "Chiese nelle campagne del Piemonte," 40–42; Pejrani Baricco, "Chiese battesimali in Piemonte," 62–70.

42. For an overview, see K. Bowes, "'Une coterie espagnole pieuse': Christian Archaeology and Christian Communities in Fourth- and Fifth-Century Hispania," in *Hispania in Late Antiquity: Current Approaches*, ed. K. Bowes and M. Kulikowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 189–258.

This possible chronological primacy of estate church over parish church is highly regional, and does not necessarily suggest a general shift from private to parish-type rural topographies. Nonetheless, in certain areas it does describe an estate-based Christianity which thrived well before local bishops took an active interest in rural church-building and governance.

Thus, rather than to assume bishops played an active role on estates, it makes far more sense to evaluate each instance individually. The location of the estate church, the location and individual history of the nearest bishoprics, and the physical relationship between site and episcopate may provide some indication of the probability that a local bishop was sufficiently proximate and energetic to take any interest in the estates on his diocese's edge. By these evaluations, for example, the villa-church at Lullingstone is a terrible candidate for an episcopally-sponsored or monitored domestic church.⁴³ The nearest episcopate, located in London, was at least a one- or two-day journey away. In the late fourth century, when the house church at Lullingstone was founded, its bishop was, by most estimates, poor and relatively powerless.⁴⁴ The more or less contemporary estate church at Loupian, in Languedoc, on the other hand, lay near two contemporary bishoprics, Beziers and Nîmes, and the church's great size, proximity to a major road, and its baptistery would render it a more natural object of episcopal attention.⁴⁵ Even these analyses offer only probabilities and indeed, it is practically impossible to determine for certain the impresario of any domestic cult. These techniques have the advantage of reckoning in some way with the great diversity of power and self-definition among the late antique episcopate.

The probability that bishops were far less active on rural estates than

43. Pace Brenk, *Christianisierung der spätrömischen Welt*, 63–73.

44. See Thomas, *Christianity in Roman Britain*, 175–83, 191–94, 197–98, 213; D. Watts, *Religion in Late Roman Britain* (London: Routledge, 1998), 13–15, 24, 137.

45. On the site and its church, C. Pellecuer, "Loupian. Église Sainte-Cécile," in *Les premiers monuments chrétiens de la France*, Vol. 1, ed. N. Duval (Paris: Picard, 1995), 47–50. On the villa, M. Lugand and C. Pellecuer, "La villa des Prés-Bas à Loupian (Hérault)," in *Actes des IXe journées d'archéologie mérovingienne: Gaule mérovingienne et monde méditerranéen* (Lattes: Musée de Lattes, 1988), 131–41; M. Lugand, *Loupian: De la villa au village* (Loupian: Service archéologique du syndicat intercommunal nord du bassin de Thau, 1994). On the area and its bishops, G. Barrauol, "Languedoc-Roussillon," in *Les premiers monuments chrétiens de la France*, ed. N. Duval (Paris: Picard, 1995), 1:19–25. S. Mauné (*Les campagnes de la cité de Béziers dans l'antiquité (parite nord-orientale) (IIe s. av. J.-C.—VIe ap. J.C.)* [Montagnac: M. Mergoil, 1998], 136) identifies the site as an episcopal project, while Pellecuer ("Loupian. Église Sainte-Cécile," 50), argues for private impetus.

the sources suggest demands that we read those sources in other ways. Rather than as evidence for actual control, the councils and imperial edicts are better interpreted as evidence for changing conceptions of episcopal authority. That is, the attempts to regulate estate-based ritual record an argument about what actions and places properly "belonged" to bishops, and suggest that domestic cult actually helped to shape those conceptions by operating alongside and in competition with the episcopate and its designates. For example, the considerable evidence for domestic baptism in rural homes, from the several later fourth- and fifth-century fonts unearthed in estate churches to descriptions of elaborate estate baptisteries like that of Sulpicius Severus at his estate Primuliacum, finds rural *domini* in the western provinces carrying out baptismal rites seemingly independently of episcopal involvement.⁴⁶ Later, sixth-century edicts prohibiting estate-sponsored baptism were part of a broader drive to place the rite under the episcopal control via its new rural branch, the parish church.⁴⁷ The sense of baptism being proper to parish church activity was thus not born in a vacuum, but may have developed out of competing claims for these rites, often by estate churches.

In addition to questioning the power and interest of bishops in fourth- and fifth-century estates, we must also think about their own conceptions of what being a bishop actually meant.⁴⁸ Episcopal practice in the fourth century was still very much a work in progress, but the ideal was largely

46. For estate baptism, see V. Focchi Nicolai and S. Gelichi, "Battisteri e chiese rurali (IV—VII secolo)," in *L'edificio battesimale in Italia* (Bordighera: Istituto internazionale di studi liguri, 2001), 303–84. Some examples include the church at Loupian (Pellecuer, "Loupian. Église Sainte-Cécile,"); and Palazzo Pignano (Bishop and Passi Pitcher, "Palazzo Pignano"). For Sulpicius's baptistery, Paul. Nol. *ep.* 32.1 (CSEL 29:275). See also Sidonius Apollinaris, *ep.* 4.15.1.

47. See Pelag. I *ep.* 86 (561?), 89 (556–61) (Gassó, *Pelagii I Papae*, 209–11, 215–16); Greg. Mag. *Reg. Ep.* 2.11 (592) (CCL 140:98). I wonder if the repeated insistence that rural clergy obtain the chrism from the bishop and not produce it themselves (Council of Orange [441], c. 2; Council of Auxerre [561–605] c. 6; Council of Braga 1 [561] c. 19) may also related to villa baptism. The injunction first appears at the anti-Priscillianist councils (Toledo [397–400] c. 20), where it may relate to private baptism, and it is unclear if the continued worry similarly reflects private rites or is simply an effort to control all rural clergy.

48. See most recently among many reconsideration of episcopal power and authority, McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*; R. Lizzi, "I vescovi e i *potentes* della terra: definizione e limite del ruolo episcopale nelle due *partes imperii* fra IV e V secolo d.C.," in *L'évêque dans la cité du IVe au Ve siècle*, 81–104; idem, "Prêtre et fonctionnaire: l'essor d'un modèle épiscopal aux IVe et Ve siècles," *Antiquité tardive* 7 (1999): 175–86; C. Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000).

fleshed out. Bishops derived their life-time authority from apostolic succession, passed down through a ritual laying on of hands, the approval of their communities, and, gradually, the completion of a clerical *cursus*.⁴⁹ Their powers—the determination of doctrinal orthodoxy, control of the liturgy, and some judicial authority—derived from this combination of ritually-derived succession and communal delegation. Yet despite their (theoretically) distinct job description, it is becoming increasingly clear that the average fourth- or fifth-century bishop often had little sense of being part of a larger institution governed by church law, but instead behaved very much in the manner of other traditional Roman civic authorities who deployed their public responsibilities as private persons.⁵⁰ Bishops appear buying and selling church property as their own, consecrating family and patrons as fellow bishops, and carrying out masses and church dedications for their friends. Specifically, bishops might themselves undertake domestic rituals or church projects wholly outside, or even in conflict with, their episcopal office, like the bishop of Potenza who was chastened by Gelasius for absconding with his cathedral’s liturgical plate for use in a private church.⁵¹ Of course, these activities were not exclusive to late antiquity, but unlike their medieval or Renaissance successors, late antique bishops lived in a world in which clearly articulated models of episcopal office were new and often fragile. This is not to deny that such models existed, for even in their relatively nascent state they offered a distinctive and powerful definition of socio-religious authority. Rather, it is simply worth remembering that that bishops were also *domini*, patrons, and friends in addition to being bishops, and during late antiquity, the line between bishops and “private” or “lay” people was often no line at all.

Estates’ Perspectives: Doing Religion the Old-Fashioned Way

If episcopal identity and authority was being carved out in dialogue with seignorial authority, what about estates’ own social logic and their

49. The sources for this development are detailed in A. Faivre, *Naissance d’une hiérarchie: Les premières étapes du cursus clerical*, *Théologie Historique* 40 (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1977).

50. Patronage: Lepelley, “Le patronat episcopal”; R. Van Dam, *Becoming Christian: The Conversion of Roman Cappadocia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 59–63; on Augustine’s particular struggle, Rebillard, “Augustine et le rituel épistolaire”; on the novelty of ecclesiastical economies, F. Marazzi, *I ‘Patrimonia Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae’ nel Lazio* (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il Medioevo, 1998), esp. 65–66.

51. Gelasius, *Ep. ineditae* 7 (Col Brit.Gel. 12) (Loewenfeld, *Epistolae pontificium romanorum ineditae*, 4).

assumptions about religious practice?⁵² Here Ausonius's easy substitution of Christian for pagan domestic ritual provides an important, albeit deceptively straightforward, clue. The traditional estate *domus*, bound by ties of blood and economic dependency, were religious communities in and of themselves; they had their own rituals and deities shaped by their rural environment, their own shrines and temples, and a membership defined by the same bonds of blood and dependency that shaped the estate as a social unit.⁵³ From accounts like Ausonius's, as well as a mounting body of archaeological evidence, it is clear that many estate-based churches shared the socio-religious qualities of earlier pagan traditions, namely a conception of sacred space and cultic practice strongly shaped by the rural landscape and seigniorial hierarchies. For instance, estates might boast large, free-standing temples, and later, large, free-standing churches.⁵⁴ In both cases, the liminal location of these religious structures, set well apart from the villa on roads or hilltops, seems to have been purposeful; like cultic satellites of the villa itself, these monuments ritually marked the estate's boundary and laid claim to rural space.⁵⁵ Furthermore, in both pagan and Christian households it was the *dominus/a* who frequently organized the construction of the cult structure and acted as impresario of its rituals. Thus, a late third-century *vir clarissimus* built a temple to the Magna Mater on his estate outside Rome and commemorated his

52. Here I use the plural "households" and "houses" purposefully to gesture toward the diversity of their constitution and practices. Like "the bishop," ancient households and houses were not natural institutions but constructed, conceptual categories whose diversity and rhetorical function have become a recent point of discussion. See D. Martin, "The Construction of the Ancient Family: Methodological Considerations," *JRS* 86 (1996): 40–60; H. Moxnes, "What Is Family? Problems in Constructing Early Christian Families," in *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor*, ed. H. Moxnes (London: Routledge, 1997), 13–41; A. Jacobs and R. Krawiec, "Fathers Know Best? Christian Families in the Age of Asceticism," *J ECS* 11 (2003): 257–63.

53. On Roman domestic cult in the countryside, see Dölger, "Christliche Grundbesitzer und heidnische Landarbeiter"; J. Bodel, "Monumental Villas and Villa Monuments," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 10 (1997): 5–35; Bowes, "Villas and Cult."

54. On rural villa temples in Spain, see Bowes, "Villas and Cult"; in Gaul, X. Lafon, "À propos de Saint Ulrich: Villas et lieux de culte dans la Gaule du nord-est," in *Aspects de la religion celtique et gallo-romaine dans le nord-est de la Gaule* (Saint-Dié-des-Vosges: Société Philomatique Vosgienne, 1989), 1–14.

55. On the boundary- and identity-marking functions of pagan estate temples, see Bodel, "Monumental villas and villa monuments"; Bowes, "Villas and Cult." More generally on the importance of location in the construction of sacrality, see J. Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

taurobolia there with a series of altars, while a century later at Lullingstone it was the church's patrons, dressed in their Sunday best, who featured most prominently in the church's frescoed decoration.⁵⁶ Dependents also played prominent roles: Roman estate temples seem to have served the estate's *coloni* as well as the seigniorial *familiae*. Like periodic estate markets, with which they sometimes seem to have been associated, such temples helped to keep peasant's religious attentions close to home and thus within the seigniorial sphere of influence.⁵⁷ In estate churches, particularly the great basilicas with baptisteries like Loupian, the dependent *coloni* may have comprised the bulk of the worshipping community.⁵⁸ The clergy was likewise drawn from their ranks, recruited and nominated by the *dominus*.⁵⁹ Estate religion, both pagan and Christian, also frequently embraced friends and patrons: just as Censorinus celebrated his patron's birthday as a religious festival and Tibullus venerated his patron's *imagines* on that day, so, too, Sulpicius Severus included images of his friend, Paulinus of Nola, alongside images of the saints in his estate baptistery and considered both Paulinus and his wife, Therasia, as *in absentia* "members" of the Christian estate community.⁶⁰ In short, Ausonius's easy swap of a pagan for a Christian *sacrarium* seems to have reflected, at least in one sense, genuine social realities: Christian estate-based cult contained many traditional elements, particularly certain spatial qualities and much of Roman religion's attendant formative sociology.

56. On the Magna Mater cult: M. J. Vermaseren, *Corpus Cultus Cybelae Attiisque* (Leiden: Brill, 1977–1982), 3.101–2, nos. 357–59; on the Lullingstone frescoes: J. Liversidge and F. Weatherhead, "The Christian Paintings," in *The Roman Villa at Lullingstone, Kent, Vol. II: The Wall Paintings and Finds*, ed. G. W. Meates et al. (Maidstone: Kent Archaeological Society, 1987), 11–40.

57. See L. de Ligt, *Fairs and Markets in the Roman Empire* (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1993), 156–98, esp. 176–85; Dölger, "Christliche Grundbesitzer und heidnische Landarbeiter."

58. Pellecuer, "Loupian. Église Sainte-Cécile," 50.

59. Implicit in *CTh* 16.2.33 (398) and 5.3.1 (434); John Chrysostom, *Homiliae in Acta Apostolorum*, 18.5 (PG 60:147–48); explicit in *NJ* 57.2 (537) and 123.18 (546). See also Thomas, *Private Foundations*, 25–29.

60. On birthday rituals and patronage, Censorinus, *De die natali*, 1.9–11 and 3.5–6 (ed. N. Sallmann, Censorini, *De die natali liber*, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Tevberiana [Leipzig: Teubner, 1983], 2, 4); Tib. *Carm.* 1.7.49–54 (ed. M. Ponchont, *Tibulle et les Auteurs du Corpus Tibullianum*, Collection des Universités des France [Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1968], 56); K. Argetsinger, "Birthday Rituals: Friends and Patrons in Roman Poetry and Cult," *Classical Antiquity* 23.2 (1992): 175–93; on Sulpicius's church decorations, Paul. *Nol. ep.* 32.1–9 (CSEL 29:275–85); on the inclusion of Paulinus, via written correspondence, into Sulpicius's community, Conybeare, *Paulinus Noster*, ch. 1.

Dissonance: Episcopal and Estate Hierarchies in Conflict

However, it would be a mistake to assume, as many modern rural Christianization narratives are content to do, that this "sameness" constitutes the full story. Simply because the estate continued to serve as both sacred space and ritual community does not mean it continued to be regarded in the same way, particularly by non-household members such as bishops. As Tina Sessa has described in this volume, Christian thinkers had always regarded household spaces and household rituals with a certain ambivalence.⁶¹ In the New Testament, home-based rites offered a refuge from mainstream Judaism, their "private" billed as the antithesis to a corrupt, attention-seeking "public." Jesus' injunctions in Matthew 6.6 to pray in the inner-most rooms of the home instead of in the street, as did the "hypocrites," reflect the assumption that homes and home-based rituals were particularly pure and pious. Yet other strands of thought, such as those voiced in Luke 10.37–38, enjoined Christians to renounce their blood families in favor of a new family in Christ, and eventually to regard the home, whose walls were annoyingly impermeable to collective supervision, with increasing suspicion.⁶² With the development of monoepiscopates, whose claims to hierarchical primacy were based in part around ritual privilege, and the slow physical separation of house from church over the third and early fourth centuries, household rituals were increasingly regarded as a separate category of Christian action, distinct in both character and quality than preferable collective worship.⁶³ The Peace of the Church and the creation of a public church persona only deepened the divide. As definitions of orthodoxy became the purview of bishops, the episcopally-organized public church became synonymous with correct belief. But defining an orthodox public also necessitated the creation

61. J. Barclay, "The Family as the Bearer of Religion in Judaism and Early Christianity," in *Constructing Early Christian Families*, 72–78; G. Nathan, *The Family in Late Antiquity* (New York/London: Routledge, 2000), 39–54. Families, of course, were not synonymous with the space of the home, and much of this work ignores the particular problems of domestic space. For a careful consideration of the problems, ideological and physical, introduced by space, see Tina Sessa's piece in this volume.

62. On families, e.g., Luke 14.26 and Matt 10.37–38. For some readings of these passages in the fourth and fifth century that construct new ideologies of the Christian family, see A. Jacobs, "Let Him Guard *Pietas*: Early Christian Exegesis and the Ascetic Family," *J ECS* 11 (2003): 265–81.

63. See for instance Tert. *Ad uxorem* 2.5.2–3 (CCL 1:389–90); Novatian, *De spectaculis* 5.5.4–5 (CCL 4:173–74); *Trad. Apost.* 32 (ed. G. Dix and H. Chadwick, *Apostolike Paradosis: The Treatise on the Apostolic Tradition by Hippolytus of Rome, Bishop and Martyr* [London: Church Historical Society, 1968], 58–59), on worries over the consumption of the reserved Eucharist in the home.

of its defining opposite, namely a negative heretical private. So, too, the increasing centralization of liturgical power in the hands and space of the bishop's church left domestic rituals in a moral no-man's land.

The acceleration of aristocratic conversion in the late fourth century exacerbated the problematic relationship between the episcopal public and seigniorial private.⁶⁴ These new elite Christians brought with them their traditional modes of organizing domestic religious life and their own distinct conception of what constituted "the domestic" or "the private." All the social qualities described above—the creation of clearly-defined sacred spaces in the home and its environs, and the importance of blood and patronage in organizing domestic cult, indeed all those features which had so troubled Christian thinkers—now shaped the domestic ritual practiced by a new, powerful generation of Christian families. Their notions of the value of this private differed in important ways from Christian traditional thought. Legally, traditional Roman religious practices were divided along public/private lines; the *publica sacra* was defined as cult for the benefit of and sponsored by the state, while the *privata sacra* was more or less everything else.⁶⁵ These precise legal distinctions, however, masked a highly porous reality—a family's *genius* might be worshipped in the forum, the imperial priesthoods were passed down through ties of blood and patronage, and even the so-called mystery cults became increasingly intertwined with civic religion.⁶⁶ In other words, honoring the gods in the

64. On the dating for this flood of converts, see now Salzman, *Making of a Christian Aristocracy*, cf. T. D. Barnes, "Review of M. Salzman, *The Making of a Christian Aristocracy: Social and Religious Change in the Western Roman Empire*," *Catholic Historical Review* 88.4 (2002): 748–49.

65. On the legal distinction, see G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer* (Munich: Beck, 1912), 398–99.

66. On the public worship of the familial *genius*: *CIL* 2.1980 (Abdera, Spain); *CIL* 9.2996 (Anxanum, Italy); *CIL* 9.725 (Larinum, Italy); *CIL* 14S.4570.4571; *CIL* 14.32 and 255 (Ostia). On family and civic priesthoods: F. Van Haeperen, *Le collège pontifical (3ème s.a.C.–4ème s.p.C.): Contribution à l'étude de la religion publique romaine*, *Études de philologie, d'archéologie et d'histoire anciennes* 39 (Brussels: Institut historique belge de Rome, 2002); L. Schumacher, "Die vier hohen römischen Priesterkollegien unter den Flaviern, den Antoninen und den Severern," *ANRW* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1978), 773–77. On so-called mystery cults and their increasingly civic qualities: J. Matthews, "Symmachus and the Oriental Cults," *JRS* 63 (1978): 178–80; N. McLynn, "The Fourth-Century *Taurobolium*," *Phoenix* 50 (1996): 312–30. On the porosity of "public" and "private" in Roman religion generally, see J. Bodel, "Cicero's Minerva," in *Household and Family Religion in Mediterranean and West Asian Antiquity*, ed. J. Bodel and S. Olyan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming). Thanks to John Bodel for sharing his work prior to publication.

home and serving as a civic priest were equally central to being religiously Roman. Although the Roman religious "private" did very occasionally fall under suspicion and supervision, it did so not because domestic rituals were valued less than public cult, or because they were inherently suspicious.⁶⁷ The Roman religious private provided a clue to wrong-doing, but had no inherent negative value as such. Indeed, the central role played by the *familia* in both public and private aspects of Roman religion made it practically impossible to isolate "the private," let alone condemn it. The flood of new aristocratic converts that joined the church in the later fourth century would thus probably have failed to recognize the potential problems raised by their "private" Christian rituals, and indeed, probably not have understood these rituals as "private" at all.

As a vast economic and social unit, the estate brought the problem of the traditional religious "private" into specific relief. It potentially embraced thousands of hectares and hundreds of souls, producing agricultural surpluses as well as seigniorial self-identity; in other words, its economic and social reach rivaled that of many dioceses.⁶⁸ As a religious entity, however, it was governed by the same hierarchies and social logic which governed the individual *domus*; family ties, economic dependency, and friendship formed the bases of cultic community. The estate as religious entity represented the traditional conception of the "private" in its most nebulous, farthest-reaching, and most powerful form.

These very different understandings of religious hierarchy and category were manifested by the many heretical controversies that clung to rural estates during these tumultuous years of the fourth and fifth centuries. The anti-heretical edicts in the Theodosian code consistently include houses and rural villas among the most insidious of heretics' hideaways.⁶⁹ In Spain, the charismatic aristocrat and eventual bishop, Priscillian, attempted to organize Christian worship around the structures of the rural estate and was accused of magic and sexual deviancy, while in North Africa, bishops

67. On the private and allegations of magic, see H. Kippenberg, "Magic in Roman Civil Discourse: Why Rituals Could Be Illegal," in *Envisioning Magic: A Princeton Seminar and Symposium*, ed. P. Schäfer and H. Kippenberg (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 137–63. Kippenberg notes the occasions in which the private and the illicit were paired, but does not probe the theoretical basis around which the pairing occurs. See also D. Grodzynski, "Superstitio," *REA* 76 (1974): 52–55.

68. On late antique estates and wealth, see now J. Banaji, *Agrarian Change in Late Antiquity: Gold, Labour and Aristocratic Dominance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

69. See n. 22 above.

railed at landowners who gave Donatist groups churches and support.⁷⁰ Yet was the problem simply that estates were heresy-magnets? On the one hand, the estate was a good place to air views at odds with those of a conveniently distant episcopal or imperial “public.” That is, the estate could become, purposefully or not, a site of religious resistance.⁷¹ Something deeper and more insidious, however, lurks beneath this equation of estates with heretical haunts. The canons of Zaragoza and Toledo councils that condemned Priscillian intimate that simply the allegation of rural villa worship was sufficient to produce heretical accusation. Even the repetitious legalese of the repeated imperial edicts associating heresy with homes and estates seems far from the world of observed reality, of actual heretics found in actual estates. Rather, behind these texts seems to lurk a powerful heresiological trope, one which associated a specific activity and locale, namely worship in the home, with heretical belief.⁷²

This heresiological trope, it seems to me, was a particularly noisome signal of the typically quiet, but systemic, disconnect between bishops and estates, or better, between ecclesiastical and household social structures, two socio-religious communities that frequently resisted easy meshing. Episcopally-led communities, as discussed briefly above, derived their identity above all from their bishop-leaders whose authority lay in their claims to apostolic succession and (theoretical) monopoly over liturgical and doctrinal affairs. Estates as religious units were led and organized in different ways. As we have seen, leadership of the religious *familia* derived from blood hierarchies and/or dependency and required no external adju-

70. On the Priscillianist controversy and the home, Council of Zaragoza, c. 1, 2, 3, 4; Council of Toledo, c. 5, 6, 9; V. Burrus, *The Making of a Heretic: Gender, Authority and the Priscillianist Controversy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995); K. Bowes, “‘*Nec sedere in villam*’: Villa-Churches, Rural Piety and the Priscillianist Controversy,” in *Urban Centers and Rural Contexts in Late Antiquity*, ed. T. Burns and J. Eadie (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001), 323–48. On Donatism and the rural estate: Council of Carthage 411, *Edictum cognitoris* 40–45 (CCL 149A:178); Augustine, *ep.* 139.2 (CSEL 43:150–51).

71. The opinion of H. Maier, “Private Space as the Social Context of Arianism”; and idem, “Religious Dissent.” See also E. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992). On the countryside generally as a place of social/doctrinal “resistance,” see now the largely discredited theories of W. H. C. Frend, e.g., “Town and Countryside in Early Christianity,” *Studies in Church History* 16 (1979): 25–42.

72. On the construction and function of such tropes, see A. Le Boulluec, *La Notion d’hérésie dans la littérature grecque. IIe et IIIe siècles*, 2 vols. (Paris: Etudes augustiniennes, 1985); V. Burrus, “The Heretical Woman as Symbol in Alexander, Athanasius, Epiphanius and Jerome,” *HTR* 84 (1991): 229–48; Bowes, “Personal Devotions and Private Chapels,” 205–9.

dication. The sacred spaces of the home and its worshipping community were defined by the house itself: shrines and chapels took their form from the home's walls, external churches from the estate's property boundaries, while the community was defined by estate membership and even far-flung friendship networks. That is, at a socio-structural level, episcopal and domestic religious communities could potentially be quite distinct.

In the real world, of course, this neat schematic disintegrated: labels like "bishop," "father," or "dependent" describe only one of the many social hats group members might wear, while the familial, episcopal, and ascetic communities made up of these multi-stranded individuals were themselves amorphous entities, not hard categories. That is, the structures of the family and the episcopate were not straightjackets, but operated according to fluid sets of rules constantly rewritten by the complex individuals who inhabited them. Thus, while heads of household may have served as their community's impresarios, they also employed clerics, who were simultaneously their own economic dependents as well as dependents of the bishops who ordained them.⁷³ Aristocrats might also become bishops, just as bishops, as suggested above, often behaved as private people.⁷⁴ Despite their theoretical differences, episcopal and familial communities were not separated into black-and-white camps, but existed in a state of flux, their overlaps and divergences the product of their members' many social roles and individual proclivities.⁷⁵

At times, these communities might be so entangled that their potential fault lines could be erased through a combination of episcopal/familial bonds. Yet such a happy marriage between estate-based cult and episcopal ambition, was, at least in the fourth- and early fifth-century rural west, relatively rare.⁷⁶ More often, the two communities simply went their own

73. The best known example may be Jerome, who acted as a client to his many female patrons while officially employed by Damasus. For evidence of Jerome's behavior as client: Jerome, *epp.* 31, 44 (CSEL 54:249–51, 322–23). On priests employed in estate churches: *CTh* 16.2.33 (398) and 5.3.1 (434); Thomas, *Private Foundations*, 25–29.

74. Although in the west, this phenomenon only occurred with any frequency in mid- to later fifth century and even then, not everywhere. See C. Sotinel, "Le recrutement des évêques in Italie au IVe et Ve siècles," in *Vescovi e pastori in epoca teodosiana*, *Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum* 58 (Rome: Institutum patristicum augustinianum, 1997), 193–204.

75. For Rome, see Sessa, "The Household and the Bishop."

76. One notable possibility are the estate churches of northern Italy, whose chronology and location may perhaps coincide with a small, but fierce, group of bishops, including Maximus of Turin and Gaudentius of Brescia, who encouraged their seigniorial parishioners to convert their rural peasantry. Could these churches represent a

ways. For Paulinus in his suburban estate outside Nola, the local clout commanded by his own family, combined with his adept takeover and promotion of the cult of Felix, simply sidelined the local bishop, the shadowy Paul, allowing Paulinus to construct his massive estate-cum-martyr shrine-cum-monastery without notable outside interference.⁷⁷ Paulinus's public relations campaign of letters and yearly *natalica* helped to make what was an extraordinary act of usurpation seem natural and right. Those who lacked Paulinus's family connections, like Paulinus's friend Sulpicius Severus who complained bitterly that his local bishops were tormenting him, or the nameless persons who prompted the edicts of emperors and church councils, found their own estate-based activities the object of episcopal oversight and censure.⁷⁸ In these cases, the potential disconnect between estate and episcopal communities flared into very real problems. Episcopal hierarchy clashed with seigniorial hierarchies; the more restrictive communities organized by blood and dependency failed to fold easily into the broadly-defined community of the episcopal diocese; and the distant and opaque walls of the estate and its sacred places remained stubbornly distinct from the only real center of public episcopal activity, the urban episcopal church.

These *domini* need not, and probably did not, engage in any purposeful act of resistance to incite episcopal ire; many, like Sulpicius, were genuinely puzzled that their pious activities met with such debate.⁷⁹ It seems clear that aristocrats like Ausonius and Sulpicius viewed their estate Christian practices as participating fully in the Christian community. The problem, of course, was that their definition of "community" was shaped by a traditional conception of household religious communities as equal and integrated partners in a larger Roman whole. This conception of the

positive response on the part of local elites? For the sermons, see Maximus of Turin, *Serm.* 42.1; 63.2; 91; 98.2; 105–8 (CCL 23:169, 266–67, 369, 390–91, 414–23); Gaudentius, *Tract.* 13.23, 28 (CSEL 68:120, 122).

77. On bishop Paul, Paul. Nol. *ep.* 32.15 (CSEL 29:290). See D. Trout, *Paulinus of Nola: Life, Letters and Poems* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 162 n. 15. A note of anger at the machinations of jealous clergymen does creep in at *ep.* 5.13–14 (CSEL 29:33–34).

78. For Sulpicius Severus's troubles at Primuliacum, Sulp. Sev. *Dial.* 1.2 (CSEL 1:153–54). For a more general lambaste of bishops, *Dial.* 1.21 (CSEL 1:173–74); *Chron.* 2.51.8–10 (CSEL 1:104–5). See also Stancliffe, *St. Martin and His Hagiographer*, 106 and 292–94, who attributes his troubles more narrowly to the conflict between asceticism and episcopal power.

79. Sulpicius Severus, *Dial.* 1.2.2 (CSEL 1:154): . . . *quia in his regionibus inter ista quae uiuimus ipsa nobis uita fastidio est, libenter ex te audiemus, si uel in eremo uiuere Christianus licet.*

religious household was not framed "against" the institutional church; rather, it simply ignored this new and still fragile apparatus for something far older. Thus, in trying to simply "live as a Christian," people like Sulpicius were unwittingly digging ever deeper those latent chasms that separated traditional, familial modes of religious life and the newer ones of the institutional church.⁸⁰

CONCLUSIONS

The "Christianization" of the estate thus seems to be both as straightforward as the respectable Ausonius would have us believe, and for those very reasons, infinitely more unruly. I have argued above that in some sense, Christian estates like Ausonius's were not "Christianized," if "Christianization" is defined as the transformation of social lives via new religious practice. Ausonius's religion changed, but the social practice of his faith did not; he continued to shape his household devotions around family and home in traditional fashion. For all kinds of households and particularly for the rural estate, the Peace of the Church and the rise of a new public religious authority called into question precisely the confidence in household communities that Ausonius takes for granted. Who should control the vast apparatus of estate-based cult? What was the place of the private estate and the house more generally in the new public church? The enormous controversy generated by what would seem the most Christian of activities, domestic piety, was in some sense a controversy about the proper form of Christian life. The term "Christianization" suggests this process moved towards some identifiable final goal; rather, it is precisely the disagreement over that goal, over what defined a Christian home, that propelled the history of Christian houses.

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APPENDIX

E. Herman, "Die kirchlichen Einkünfte des byzantinischen Niederklerus," *OCP* 8 (1942): 402–10; idem, "The Secular Church," in *The Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. 4.2, ed. J. M. Hussey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 104–33; O. Nußbaum, *Die Aufbewahrung der Eucharistie* (Bonn: Hanstein, 1979); J. P. Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire* (Washington,

80. Sulp. Sev. *Dial.* 1.2.2 (CSEL 1:154).

DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1987). On the archaeology of urban domestic churches, see A. Cerrito, "Oratori ed edifici di culto minori di Roma tra il IV secolo ed i primi decenni del V," in *Ecclesiae urbis. Atti del congresso internazionale di studi sulle chiese di Roma (IV–X secolo)*, ed. F. Guidobaldi and A. Guiglia Guidobaldi (Vatican: Pontificio istituto di archeologia cristiana, 2002), 1:397–418; B. Brenk, *Die Christianisierung der spätrömischen Welt: Stadt, Land, Haus, Kirche und Kloster in frühchristlicher Zeit* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2003), ch. 2–4; S. Ellis, "The 'Palace of the Dux' at Apollonia and Related Houses," in *Cyrenaica in Antiquity*, ed. G. Barker, J. Lloyd, and J. Reynolds, B.A.R. International Series 236 (London: B.A.R., 1985), 15–25. On the archaeology of villa churches see, J. Percival, *The Roman Villa: A Historical Introduction* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), ch. 9; M. Fernández Castro, "Villa romana y basilica cristiana en Hispania," in *La Religión Romana en Hispania* (Madrid: Subdirección general de arqueología del ministerio de cultura, 1981), 381–89; J. Percival, "Villas and Monasteries in Late Roman Gaul," *JEH* 48.1 (1997): 1–21; G. Ripoll and I. Velázquez, "Origen y desarrollo de la *parrochia* en la Hispania de la antigüedad tardía," in *Alle origini della parrocchia rurale (IV–VIII sec.)*, ed. P. Pergola (Vatican: Pontificio istituto di archeologia cristiana, 1999), 107–65; G. Ripoll and J. Arce, "The Transformation and End of the Roman *Villae* in the West (Fourth-Seventh Centuries): Problems and Perspectives," in *Towns and Their Territories between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. G. P. Brogiolo, N. Gauthier, and N. Christie (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 74–88; G. Cantino Wataghin, "Christianisation et organisation ecclésiastique des campagnes: L'Italie du nord aux IVe–VIIIe siècles," in *Towns and Their Territories*, 209–34; G. P. Brogiolo and A. Chavarría, "Chiese e insediamenti tra V e VI secolo: Italia settentrionale, Gallia Meridionale e Hispania," in *Chiese e insediamenti nelle campagne tra V e VI secolo*, ed. G. P. Brogiolo (Mantova: Editrice S.A.P., 2003), 9–37. On the textual sources for private churches, see H. Maier, "Private Space as the Social Context of Arianism in Ambrose's Milan," *JTS* 45 (1994): 72–93; and "Religious Dissent, Heresy and Households in Late Antiquity," *VC* 49 (1995): 49–63; C. Violante, "Le strutture organizzative della cura d'anime nelle campagne dell'Italia centrosettentrionale," in *Cristianizzazione ed organizzazione ecclesiastica delle campagne nell'alto medioevo: espansione e resistenze*, Settimane di studi del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 28 (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 1982), 963–1158; C. Pietri, "Chiesa e comunità locali nell'occidente cristiano (IV–VI d.c.): L'esempio della Gallia," in *Società romana ed impero tardoantico*, Vol. 3. *Le merci gli insediamenti*, ed. A. Giardina (Rome: Laterza, 1986), 761–95; L. Pietri, "Évergétisme chrétien et fondations privées dans l'Italie de l'antiquité tardive," in "*Humana sapit*": *Études d'antiquité tardive offertes à Lellia Cracco Ruggini*, ed. J.-M. Carrié and R. Lizzi Testa (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 253–63. For a very general overview of the whole problem, K. Bowes, "Personal Devotions and Private Chapels," in *Late Ancient Christianity: A People's History of Christianity*, Vol. 2, ed. V. Burrus (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2005), 188–210.